

Social Economy & Sustainability

Innovations in
Bridging, Bonding &
Capacity Building

The Atlantic Node

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Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network
Partenariat sur l'économie sociale et la durabilité
Bridging, Bonding, and Building / Renforcement des liens et des capacités

Presentation to the
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partenariale en économie sociale
Rencontre du comité de coordination

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Background for This Project

- Tradition of innovation & cooperation – self-help through mutual aid; especially strong in rural & small Atl. communities
- Historic connection with co-op movement
- Non-profits, community organizations, informal reciprocal economic relations
- Huge gaps in our knowledge & understanding



What do we mean by the Social Economy?

- For now, decided to think of the SE in descriptive terms rather than precise definitional ones
- Consider the SE as composed of organizations with a social mission and located in relation to 6 “ideal type” features



Ideal-Type Features

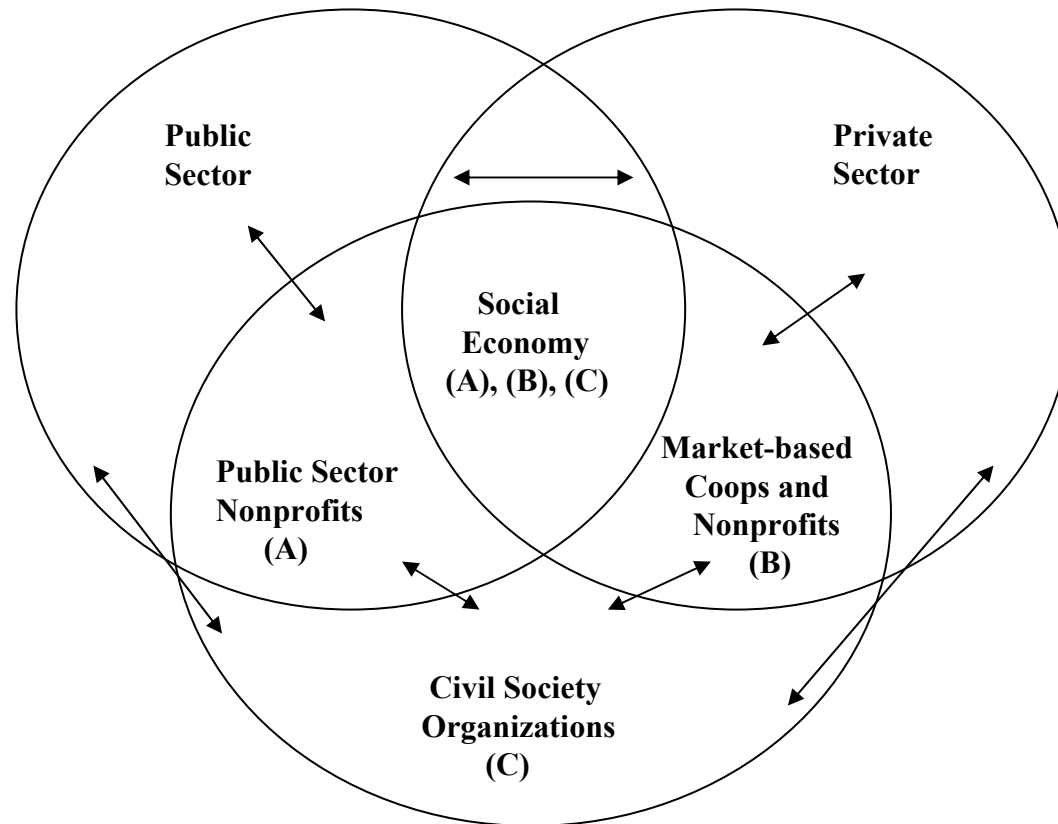
(suggested by Luc Thériault)

1. Provide goods and services for members without orienting primarily towards making a profit
2. Management is independent of government
3. Elements of democratic decision making by workers/users
4. Priority of people over capital
5. Emphasis on participation and empowerment
6. Individual and collective responsibility



The Social Economy in Relation to the Private and Public Sectors

Jack Quarter et al., *What Counts: Social Accounting for Nonprofits and Cooperatives* (Pearson Education Inc., 2003), 23, fig. 2.1



Research Goals – 5 year project

- Contribute to theory & practice of the social economy in the Atlantic region
- Internal bridging & bonding
- Encourage the use of the term “social economy” as a framing concept in the region
- Draw out broader implications of research
- Link Atlantic Canadian partners with other parts of Canada & the world

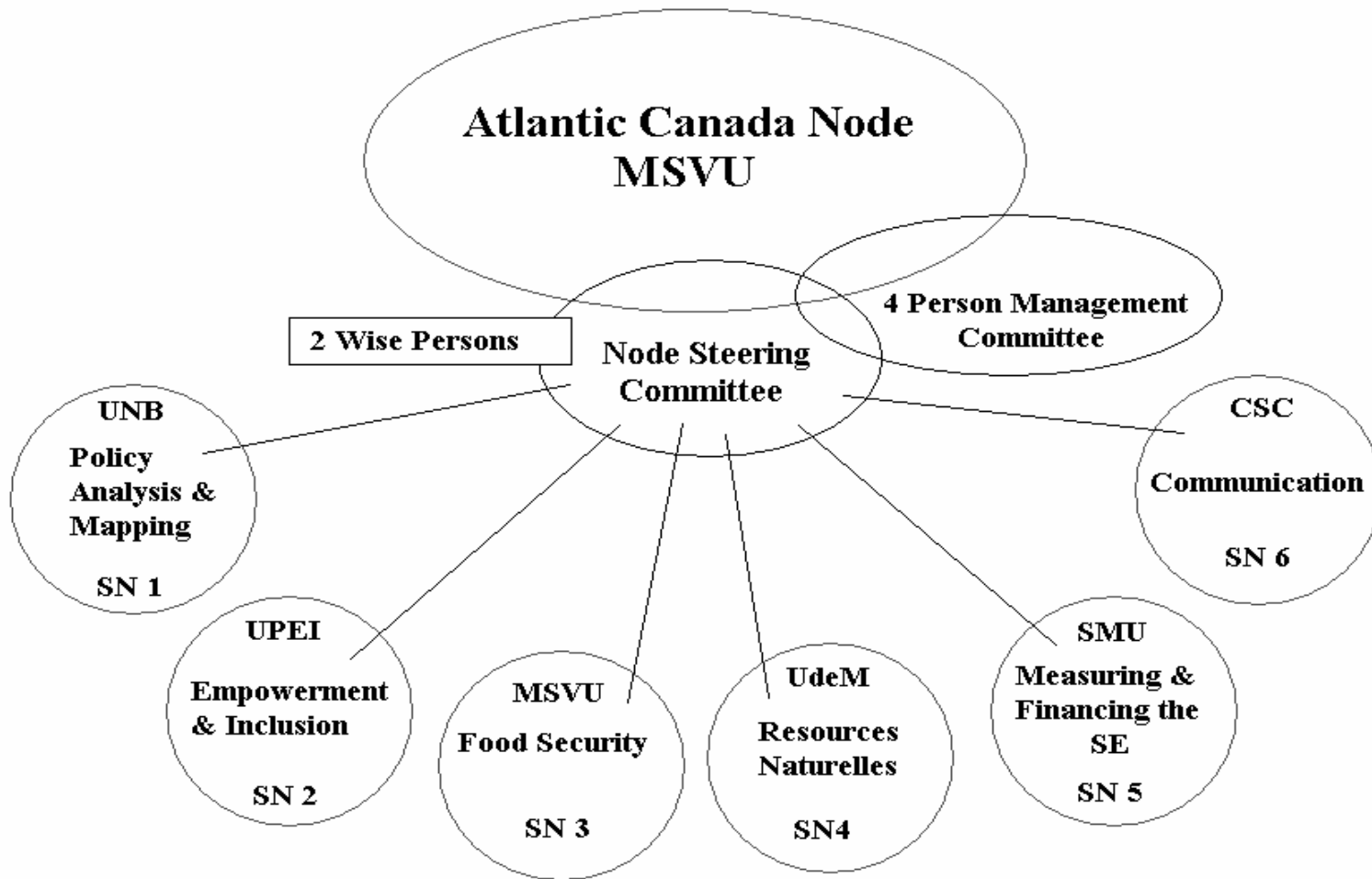


Research Themes

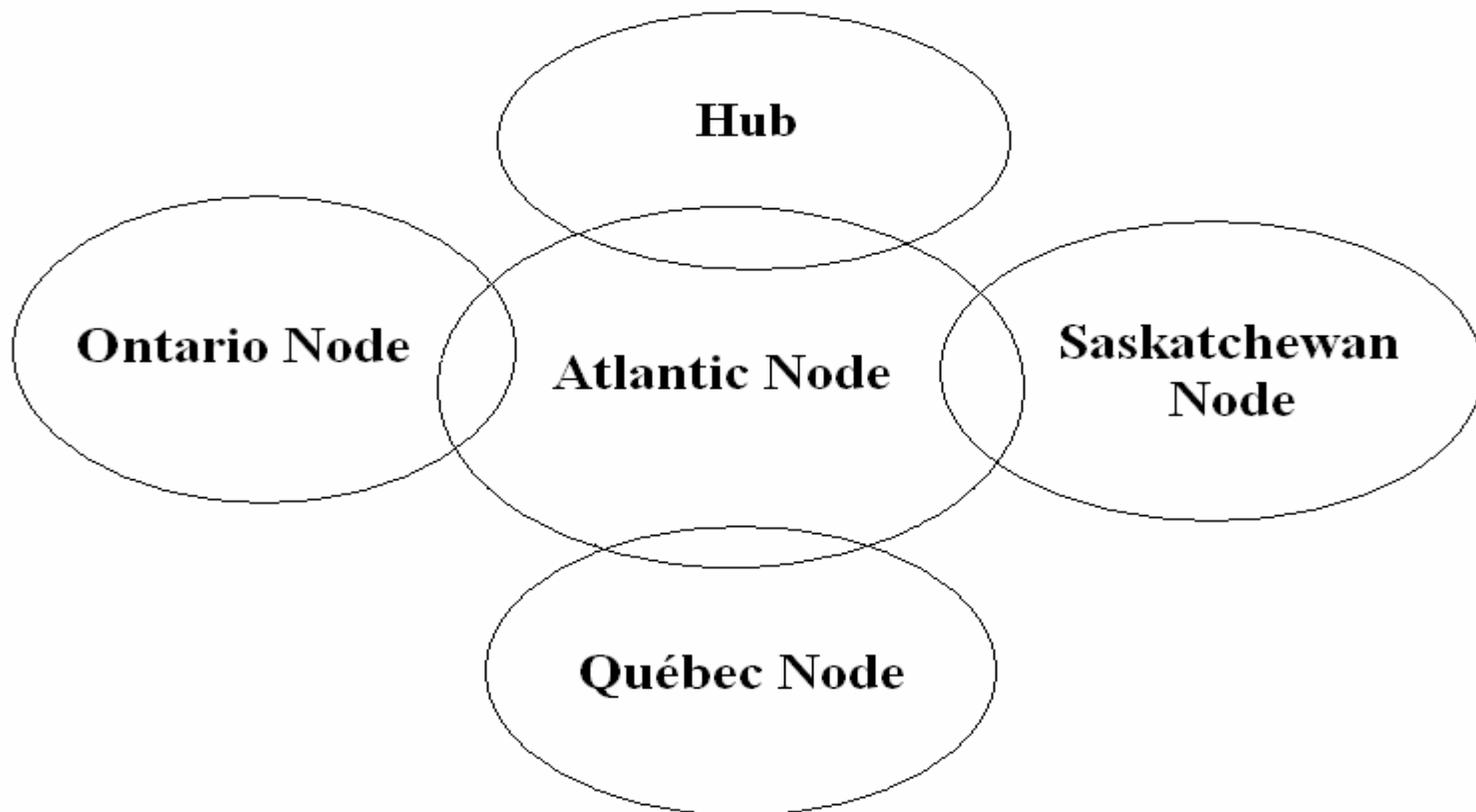
- Conceptualizing & describing the social economy in Atlantic Canada (SN 1)
- Policy inventory & analysis (SN 1, 5)
- Community mobilization around issues of common concern (SN 2,3,4)
- Measuring & financing the social economy (SN 5)
- Modeling & researching innovative, traditional, & IT-based communication & dissemination (SN 6)



Social Economy & Sustainability Atlantic Node Governance Structure



Regional Nodes & Canadian Hub



Questions by Research Theme

Conceptualizing & describing the social economy in Atlantic Canada

- What does SE look like? What needs does it address?
- How can we best capture this sector conceptually?
- What, if anything, makes it distinctive or innovative? How interconnected are its facets, & to what effect?
- What are the characteristics of SE organizations?
- What are the implications for government policy?



Questions by Research Theme

Policy inventory and analysis

- How are different understandings of SE reflected in government policy?
- What needs are not being met, & what changes are needed in regulatory environment?
- What indicators can we develop to aid in policy development?



Questions by Research Theme

Community mobilization around issues of common concern

- Do SE organizations contribute to social inclusion, the democratization of the economy, & empowerment?
- What inputs are needed to overcome obstacles & build capacity?
- What can we learn from research on mobilization around food security, marginalization & inclusion, community management of natural resources & energy?



Questions by Research Theme

Measuring and Financing the Social Economy

1. What can social accounting, co-operative accounting, social auditing, & other techniques contribute towards a better understanding of the work and contributions of SE organizations?
2. Where do SE organizations obtain the financing that they need?
3. What do SE organizations contribute towards financing the social economy?



Questions by Research Theme

Modeling & researching innovative, traditional, & IT-based communication & dissemination processes

- How can SE actors best communicate?
- What can our team contribute by developing & modeling processes and techniques?
- Technology as equalizer/technology as barrier



Outputs / Outcomes

- Creation of network of researchers & community partners - bridging & bonding
- Policy documents & impact - links with government
- Increased understanding of the nature & role of the SE in the region & in particular communities
- Enhancement of regional communication processes & innovative use of technology
- Increased self-awareness of social economy actors in the region + use of the term “social economy” as a framing concept (across silos)
- Enduring links for research and practice outside of the region



Knowledge Impact

- Curriculum development (post-secondary courses); Educational materials for adults & for schools; toolkits/advising tools
- Mentoring and training students
- Publications / presentations / workshops in a variety of venues, that will allow informed analysis & decision making about the SE (region & Canada)
- Capacity building (research and practice - for partners & region)



Where we are now

- Team building (full team meeting in Feb.06, website and team site under development)
- Protocols and MOUs (SN policies and guidelines developed)
- Project proposals
- Relationships with Hub, HRSDC
- Presentations/workshops
- Preparing/revising Milestones & Sub-node Workplans



Some of Our Projects

- *A Survey Profiling Co-ops and Credit Unions in Atlantic Canada*
- *Analyse descriptive du modèle des organismes communautaires de gestion par bassin versant du Nouveau-Brunswick dans une perspective d'économie sociale.*
- *Détermination de la contribution des organismes de l'économie sociale à la gestion de ressources forestières des Maritimes*
- *CMEC: Working toward the development of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles for Co-operatives to reflect the “co-operative difference”*



Si vous avez des questions:

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For more information

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