

Social Economy as Life- Value

Project 7

J.J. McMurtry

Contact info: jmcmurtr@yorku.ca

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Introduction

- ❑ This project examines the underlying values which inform the Social Economy
- ❑ It surveys existing Social Economy theory using Life-Value theory as a heuristic guide
- ❑ It examines communities on the margins of economic discourse (First Nations, Religious Communities, Emerging Social Movements) as case studies to discover how pre-existing value frameworks inform Social Economy activity

Background and Rationale

- ❑ There have been a number of recent attempts to articulate a “life-value” at the root of social and political action (e.g. Habermas 1984/1987 and McMurtry 2002)
- ❑ These projects have not been applied specifically to the Social Economy
- ❑ However they are potentially rich grounds for examining the Social Economy
- ❑ Help understand existing practice in marginalized communities

Project Methodology

- ❑ This project employs two methodologies
- ❑ First, it conducts a literature review of existing theory on the Social Economy and examines it from a Life-Value framework
- ❑ Second, it employs a survey methodology to question a select number of Social Economy actors on the value-sets which inform their practice
- ❑ These are then used to expose lacunae in the theory

Role and Participation of Community Partners

- ❑ Community partners have been asked to participate in the survey component of the study
- ❑ This is not a “survey and leave” project, but rather one which will engage theory with practice
- ❑ Community partners will receive the research both as it is being developed for critique as well as at the conclusion of the project

Main Findings/Deliverables

- ❑ There are three main deliverables
- ❑ First, a survey of theoretical conceptions of the Social Economy will be mapped
- ❑ Second, these conceptions will be brought into engagement with Life-Value theory in order to deepen the theoretical basis of Social Economy theory
- ❑ Third, this theory will be tested in its application to Social Economy practice in the areas where it has been least successful

Implications for the Social Economy

- ❑ Theoretical framing of the Social Economy has been both a contested and underdeveloped component of its articulation
- ❑ To ground Social Economy theory in a broader literature is therefore crucial to its development and practice
- ❑ Taking theory into heretofore problematic practices further enhances Social Economy practice, policy and understanding

How Students Benefited from the Project

- ❑ This project has benefited students in three areas
- ❑ First, funding has been provided for graduate assistantships at York University for two summers, with a third upcoming
- ❑ Second, this project has helped inform the theoretical chapter of a dissertation
- ❑ Third, the results of this project have been incorporated in two undergraduate courses at York University

Next Steps

- ❑ Summer 08, the theoretical survey will be completed
- ❑ Key areas for a value-survey will be finalized from this research
- ❑ The survey instrument for community partners will result from this survey in the Fall 08
- ❑ The survey will be delivered and followed up upon in Winter 09