

**« Public policies and the social and democratic issues
of globalisation »**

What challenges for the public, social and cooperative economy?

31st CIRIEC-Congress – Reims (France), 21-23 September 2016

AND

CIRIEC Transversal Research Project 2016-2018

**The hybrid public-economy / social-economy organisations and the issues of
the development of commons and global public goods**

**A possible complementarity serving public policies heralding a paradigm
shift?**

Intention for participation in a working group

- * “Governance of the commons, a pragmatic approach : the case of urban food”
- * Theme 4: the new governances of public economy / social economy organisations in contributing towards sustainable development and the introduction of new general-interest policies
 - * Alexandrine LAPOUTTE, Assistant Professor in Management
 - * Alexandrine.lapoutte@univ-lyon2.fr
- * Univ Lyon, Univ Lyon 2, COACTIS, EA 4161, F-69363, LYON, France

A key point of the common good approach lies in its governance, that will ensure the three main features of the commons: the sharing of the resource, the nature of the rights and obligations linking the participants and, finally, a form of governance allowing participants to ensure respect, over time, of the system of rights and obligations that regulate it (Coriat, 2015). Governance of the commons requires participation and often relies at a local level. The commons are then related to a territorial governance (Leloup, Moyart and Pecqueur, 2005), raising questions about coordination between actors but also about the construction of a territory. Commons are also marked by hybridity. Hybrid organizations are characterized by highly incompatible logics that are central to organizational functioning (Besharov and

Smith, 2014). They appear as a promising way of organizing, yet they experience intense internal conflicts.

Governance is traditionally approached according to two different points of view: either shareholders or stakeholders. Governance of the commons refers to the second approach, gathering different stakeholders around a common issue. If we look closer at the stakeholder approach, although it often relies on the “contract nexus” (Jensen and Meckling, 1976) of a contractualist approach, it can also be based on a pragmatist approach, considering that people build their own preferences through interaction (Renou et Renault, 2007). Because of this special emphasis on interaction, a pragmatist stakeholder approach seems to be a relevant point of view to study the governance of social economy and of the commons. As underlined by Bensebaa and Beji-Becheur (2007), it allows to overcome the usual problem of a tension between logics, which often prevail to understand social economy.

More precisely, pragmatism, initially proposed by Dewey (1938) and recently influencing management (Lorino, 2011), considers the situation, not from a principle point of view, but in its specific and unique context. Actors face a situation marked by uncertainty, and they resolve it through an inquiry. The situation is unique and specific. It is a contextual whole that is experienced and felt. Through the inquiry, the uncertain situation becomes a structured issue. Solutions come from this process progressively and with some creativity. Governance is then the structuration and resolution of a situation.

Originality of the contribution

Pragmatism remains a quite confidential inspiration for management field. It seems promising to understand the governance of hybrid organizations. The existing researches highlight the challenge to make use of instrumentation consistent with this approach, that is organizational disposition and tools that would integrate experience to the decision (Journé and Raulet-Croset, 2012).

Nature of the contribution

In a first step, we propose a theoretical contribution that analysis to what extent a pragmatist approach may help to understand the governance of the commons. We further anticipate to be able to gather datas allowing to draw some conclusions on the appropriate conditions and tools for an efficient governance of the commons.

The case: urban food system

We will specifically study the case of food system in a big urban area. This problem emerges contemporary to metropolization, that implies new forms of living together, and also in a period of searching for a reconnexion of the consumer to the production process: short-circuits, food security... Feeding a city appears as a common good. This question is more and more being addressed in a collective way. This matter binds a diversity of actors that have different logics: traditional farmers, biological farmers, citizens, associations, public authorities. For historical and political reasons, traditional and alternative farmers don't communicate so much. Public authorities have to meet the goal of being able to feed the city in case of a crisis. A urban food system is clearly hybrid, marked by highly incompatible logics, mainly an economic

and a social one. Economically, professional actors, mainly producers, have to be able to withdraw an income from their activity. Socially, it raises the questions of access to food, conditions of production, inclusion of the consumer... This initiative brings together multiple stakeholders, especially public economy and social economy. This raises questions about who has to be associated and how to coordinate these actors, what is the role and legitimacy of each participant, what tools can be used.

The methodology will be qualitative with participant observation and semi-directive interviews.

References

Bensebaa F. et A. Béji-Bécheur (2007), Pragmatisme et responsabilité sociale de l'entreprise, *Revue Française de gestion*, 34(180) : 177-198.

Besharov M. L. and Smith W. K. (2014), Multiple Institutional Logics in Organizations: Explaining Their Varied Nature and Implications, *Academy of Management Review*, 39 (3) : 364-381.

Coriat B. (dir.), 2015, Le retour des communs, La crise de l'idéologie propriétaire, Les liens qui libèrent.

Dewey J. (1993). *Logique. La théorie de l'enquête* (première édition 1938 ed.). Paris, PUF.

Journé B, Raulet-Croset N. (2012), La décision comme activité managériale située. Une approche pragmatiste, *Revue Française de Gestion*, 38(225) : 109-128.

Lorino, P. (2011), Research Methods for Non-Representational Approaches of Organizational Complexity: The Dialogical and Mediated Inquiry, *Organization Studies*, 32(6): 769-801.

Renou, Y., Renault, M. (2007), Une conception pragmatique de la firme partenariale. *Économie appliquée*, 60(4) : 51-79.