Metadata of the chapter that will be visualized online

Chapter Title	"Politics Without Politics": Affordances and Limitations of the Solidarity Economy's Libertarian Socialist Grammar	
Copyright Year	2019	
Copyright Holder	The Author(s)	
Corresponding Author	Family Name	**Frère**
	Particle	
	Given Name	**Bruno**
	Suffix	
	Division	Faculty of Social Sciences
	Organization/University	University of Liège
	Address	Liège, Belgium
	Email	bfrere@ulg.ac.be
Abstract	The "solidarity economy" is generally thought of as comprising four distinct classes of activity: community services consultancy, micro-finance, Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS), community services and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). Because they try to emphasise the citizen's activism, these solidarity initiatives are thought to be deeply political in the philosophical sense of the term. But today an important question arises regarding the kind of formal political institution that might speak *in the name of* all these initiatives. Some commentators see solidarity initiatives as new economic models with the potential to solve the ethical impasse of advanced capitalism. They are eager for academic researchers and movement leaders to reach consensus about the kind of concrete political identity such initiatives may be expected to generate. My research examines the failure to move from micro-level initiatives to an overarching "macro" political entity. This chapter, using the insights of pragmatic sociology, aims to understand how the obstacles to this goal are rooted in the libertarian socialist grammar of the solidarity economy itself.	

CHAPTER 10

"Politics Without Politics": Affordances and Limitations of the Solidarity Economy's Libertarian Socialist Grammar

Bruno Frère

Introduction

The "solidarity economy" (SE) is understood in France as a form of Walzer's "critical associationism". For Walzer, democracy is consubstantial with association: "the civility that makes democratic politics possible can only be learned in associational networks" (1992: 104). Bringing entrepreneurs, producers and consumers together as citizens in the same association whose goals are collectively determined, the solidarity economy even seems to embody at a local scale the industrial democracy that the author calls for (Walzer 1983: 301–303). Taking up this Walzerian perspective, solidarity economy specialists write that it constructs a "positive ideology", one where the interests of citizens are brought together locally to negotiate a collective meaning. "The dramatic expansion of associative practices makes it possible to foresee the change of the workers' move-

B. Frère (✉)
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Liège, Liège, Belgium
e-mail: bfrere@ulg.ac.be

B. Frère, M. Jacquemain (eds.), *Everyday Resistance*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-18987-7_10

ment's motto, 'all power to workers' (…) into *all power to associated citizens*" (Caillé 2003: 323, see also Laville and Salmon 2016: 145–162).

Some authors, such as Habermas, even think that the local political significance of these organisations should naturally lead to a more global level of organisation (1985). But over the 15 years during which I have been observing the field of SE, I have seen these organisations experience great difficulty in federating at national and international levels. How can we explain these difficulties? While most of these organisations do undeniably have civic ambitions, the question of their political institutionalisation has to be raised. Even though it is widely agreed that each local solidarity economy organisation is ontologically political because it represents the interests of citizens in the local political field, there is no satisfactory answer to this "meta political organisation" question in the existing literature on the solidarity economy.

To help answer this question, the chapter will be split into four stages.

First, I will summarise my theoretical framework—which draws on the pragmatic sociology of Boltanski and Thévenot and its notion of "grammar", borrowed from Wittgenstein—to bring to light the specific opportunities and challenges thrown up by the solidarity economy. I focus on the problems raised for the construction of an overarching political identity and governance capable of challenging traditional political structures such as parties and trade unions.

Secondly, I draw on texts produced by analysts and actors in the solidarity economy to examine how they have problematised the task facing them. On the one hand, I will show how these actors articulate the ontological political dimension of the solidarity economy in a way that brings it close to the civil society argument of Walzer's critical associationism. On the other hand, I will examine how they present the solidarity economy as a critique of far-left modes of organisation. That critique can be understood as a revival of the libertarian socialist tradition of the French Marxist philosophers Castoriadis (1974 [1959]) and Lefort (1979 [1958]), which is cited as a European anarchist tradition opposed to American Libertarianism by Chomsky (2013: 19 and 30) and represented today by Holloway (and also to some extent by Graeber and by Chomsky himself), among others. More precisely, I will argue that there are overlaps between the justification and argumentation of Castoriadis, Lefort and Holloway, and that of researchers and key actors in the solidarity economy. Using pragmatic sociology, I will show that these philosophers provide the rules of a political grammar (a way of seeing and talking about the world) for

AU1 AU2

the solidarity economy which is "libertarian socialist". By employing this grammar, participants in the solidarity economy seek to marginalise and disenfranchise far-left political parties and trade unions, which they argue "only denounce without acting".

But we will also see that, while this critique can be formulated from within the socialist libertarian language, the way in which actors deploy this language's grammar proves problematic and brings about real tensions. This is what the third stage of analysis—which is concerned with how this grammar operates in the field—reveals. The interviews from which I quote elicited solidarity economy actors' memories of the recent past. I analyse two political struggles for representation between two competing umbrella organisations, MES (Solidarity Economy Movement) and Les Pénélopes, both of which bring together solidarity economy initiatives. Analysing these organisations' justifications, I show how they indeed talk the same language structured by the same libertarian socialist grammar. I then attend to the question of why, despite being manifestations of the same grammar, these organisations fight each other and do not manage to agree on a common political medium of representation that would allow them to gain a powerful political voice. I will argue that certain features internal to this grammar itself give rise to tensions and conflicts that can act as barriers to the construction of a meta-level political identity. And that this illustrates a common organisational problem encountered not only by libertarian socialist activists since the 19th century but also by the broader anti-globalisation movement today (Frère and Reinecke 2011; Frère 2018).

In my fourth and final stage of analysis (discussion), I will focus on some other features of the formal "libertarian socialist grammar" elaborated by the theorists mentioned above. My hypothesis is that actors' overlooking of these features may help us understand problems in their use of their own grammar and, incidentally, why a meta-democratic system—a system that would give citizens a real voice capable of addressing governments, trade unions and other public figures—is absent from the grassroots. In light of this analysis, I will then try to answer the question at the heart of this chapter: Does the solidarity economy really provide a new way of doing politics, as Walzer suggests? Or is it another manifestation of "virtual reality", as Žižek calls it, which is essentially a "Politics without politics": a kind of political thought deprived of its "malignant property" like a whole series of products on the market: "coffee without caffeine, cream without fat, beer without alcohol…" (Žižek 1991: LXXVI)?

Background and Theoretical Framing

What Is the Solidarity Economy?

The focus of this chapter is the solidarity economy, a widely-used term whose most common French equivalent is *l'économie solidaire*. I prefer this term over "social economy", "solidarity-based economy" or "Third Sector". On the one hand, unlike the Third Sector, many solidarity economy initiatives have a commercial dimension and operate on the economic market (like Community Supported Agriculture [CSA] and micro-finance). This contrasts with charities, which are run by largely middle-class people for the benefit of unemployed or poor people. On the other hand, some solidarity economy initiatives, such as the Local Exchange Trading System (LETS), reject the official currency issued by central banks and introduce a new egalitarian currency based on local exchange. This suggests an alternative or a parallel economy (with an alternative money form). So "social economy" must also be avoided because it leads us to think either that all of these organisations are based on the usual market economy (like regular workers' cooperatives, mutual insurance schemes) or that they aim to construct a Third Sector alongside the public sector and market capitalism (Defourny et al. 2009). The term "solidarity economy", by contrast, suggests that all of these organisations belong to a specific alternative economy that aims to replace capitalism—one that seeks to eradicate a pure market sphere controlled by private shareholders rather than by citizens organised democratically (Davidson 2008; Frère 2009; Frère and Reinecke 2011; Lemaître and Hemlsing 2012; Bauhardt 2014; Saguize and Brent 2017)

Solidarity economy initiatives can be placed in one of the following four categories (Laville 2009) (examples are drawn from France):

1. Micro-credit and savings make up the first category. These include organisations such as Garrigue in France, which is different to the famous "Grameen Bank" (Bangladesh). Garrigue helps to finance the above-mentioned micro-companies set up by and for unemployed workers. But it only invests in cooperatives, does not issue dividends and demands that benefits be redistributed among workers. These organisations usually work with bodies such as community services consultancies to support small-scale ventures launched by the unemployed which are in need of management guidance and other technical advice (Ledgerwood et al. 2001; Bateman 2010; Artis 2017).

2. Initiatives for *non-monetary exchange* make up a second category. In France, these mostly take the form of *Local Exchange Trading Systems* (LETS), that is, community-based groups exchanging goods and services among themselves using vouchers or other designated accounting units to balance internal transactions. Their operation may include services such as non-monetised swaps of decorating services, language lessons or childcare. Some poorly-off participants subsist almost entirely on such swaps and service exchanges (Frase and Parry 2001; Peacock 2006; Westra 2016).
3. A third category comprises parallel local *food distribution networks*, namely products from organic farming and fair trade distribution. That is, in France, networks such as *AMAP*[1] for assisting Community Supported Agriculture. In these cases, the economy of scale necessary to pay those producers who wish to produce high-quality unprocessed food can only be achieved through voluntary investments. Participants share the tasks of running these cooperatives and give their time for free as unsalaried managers (Cone and Myhre 2000; Booth and Coveney 2015; Weschenfelder et al. 2016).
4. The fourth category is that of so-called *community services* (Services de proximité), a term widely used for the last 30 years to refer to initiatives such as neighbourhood cooperatives. Community service organisations include providers of everyday support such as help for older people; urban initiatives such as communitarian restaurants and public space improvement groups; hobbyists' networks and other leisure-time and cultural organisations; and environmental initiatives such as local recycling. These initiatives are usually established by *consulting services* such as the *Pôles d'économie solidaire* (*Solidarity economy centres*), which bring together professionals and voluntary workers whose aim is to launch local businesses with one or more "alternative" features rather than being exclusively profit-driven (Laville and Nyssens 2000; Petrella 2001; Soria and Mitchell 2016). These consulting services will be our concern here.

What Is a Grammar?

Following French pragmatic sociology, a grammar can be understood as a set of rules that forms the basis of people's judgments about their own experience. These rules underpin how people justify their own actions (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]). Pragmatic sociology uses a

"grammatical approach" that starts from what people say when they are justifying their actions and identifies the building blocks that structure what they express. In contrast to the structuralist approach, the justification approach seeks to show the convergence between grammar and data (speech) by starting from people's own experience and from the reflexive relationship they have with that experience (through argumentation), instead of starting from an external point of view. A grammar is a way of representing the world, a state of mind that provides and is manifested in justifications that preclude other unwanted representations (Boltanski 2009; Frère and Jaster 2018).

To emphasise the non-technical nature of a grammar and contrast it to a structuralist approach, I propose to understand it in a Wittgensteinian sense, as a language game. Here the term language game is meant to highlight the fact that speaking language is part of an activity. "To imagine a language game means to imagine a form of life" (2001 [1953]: 19/7e). In a language game, the grammar becomes a sense-making device that renders a situation intelligible and meaningful. It does so precisely by organising elements according to a particular system of grammatical rules. "Grammar tells what kind of object anything is" (2001 [1953]: 373/99e, see also Cervera-Marzal and Frère, Forthcoming). Living in and speaking about the world according to a grammar is about mastering a language game, rather than about compliance with Durkheimian social rules or a Bourdieusian Embodied Habitus provided by the social order (Frère 2004). A grammar is both enabling and constraining. Grammatical rules are resources for people's language, while at the same time they draw its boundaries by prescribing a specific way of speaking. For example, two artists from two different artistic traditions, facing the same reality, would not speak the same language in their works and would not offer the same representation. To invoke Wittgenstein once again: it is possible to shift from one grammar to another, to find a new way of speaking, "a new way of looking at things" (which "might even be called a new sensation") "as if you had invented a new way of painting [the situation]" (2001 [1953]: 400–401/103e).

A grammar must not be understood as an external structure forced upon action through socially internalised norms. These rules of action are not unconscious—they do not act as a form of censorship, nor are they in opposition to the actors' own justifications of their actions (as suggested by a Bourdieusian understanding of social action, for instance). In most situations, people do not need to explain and rationalise their actions

(Boltanski 2012 [1990]: 37–40). Contra Bourdieu, the sociologist is no longer seen as the only one with the ability to highlight the determinations that supposedly drive social actors' behaviours because these determinations are embodied as habitus and therefore hidden from these actors' own reflexivity (Bourdieu 1987). Within the pragmatic sociology paradigm—which shares common ground with Latour's Actor-Network-Theory approach (2005; Guggenheim and Potthast 2011)—sociologists "abandon their belief that their interpretations carry more weight than those of social actors" and instead attempt "to clarify the words used by actors to justify their actions because actors themselves do not have the time to do so" (Frère 2004).

Pragmatic sociology, therefore, problematises the object of sociological enquiry. It is based on the assumption that ordinary people have the competence to critically reflect on their own actions (or on the actions of others) and provide judgement and justification.

A grammar is a condition of legitimacy as it limits the possibilities of justification and action if one wants to be recognised within a *particular* moral or political order. Trying to formalise a grammar of justification can also help us understand how ideology can have an effect within the practical organisation of social lives. To elicit a grammar of justification means understanding how actors engage in social struggles by using the principles of political philosophy and ideology to argue.

Data

The data presented in the following analysis is drawn from a larger research project on the solidarity economy and anti-globalisation movement that has been running since 2002. I used pragmatic sociology to study argumentations "in action" and follow actors and theorists on the ground. I then worked outwards to understand the meta-level syntax on which local action in the field was based. I first used textual data: 300 texts written by actors and theorists about their commitment to the social movement (articles in journals, magazines and collections connected to the solidarity economy[2]). Some of them were written by members of the CRIDA (Centre de Recherche et d'Information sur la Démocratie et l'Autonomie), an "action-research" centre affiliated to the MES. Within these reflexive texts, what I call the solidarity economy's "libertarian socialist grammar of praxis" is used by both actors and sociologists (against the Far Left), as I will show here. We will see how a common libertarian socialist representa-

tion of what political organisation in the solidarity economy would look like emerges in these actors' language games. In line with how Boltanski and Thévenot represent their grammars of justification—as rooted in classical moral philosophies whose features reappear in actors' common sense—I have drawn out the philosophical contents of recurrent themes and values found in the empirical material and have looked for their ideal articulation in theoretical texts about the solidarity economy. I find strong parallels with Lefort and Castoriadis' work on the 1960s workers' social movement in France and a classical content analysis (Titscher et al. 2000) reveals how much the grammar of the solidarity economy owes to their influence in the history of French political thought, as well as to the contemporary thought of libertarian socialists and anarchists such as Graeber, Chomsky and Holloway.

The rest of my empirical material consists of data from participant observation and interviews. During the qualitative field study—the first stage of research about the solidarity economy—organisations were selected from each of the four sectors listed earlier: micro-finance, LETS, community services consultancies and Community Supported Agriculture. In each of the 25 selected organisations, which are located in seven of the bigger French cities (Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse, Caen, Lille, Dijon), I conducted participant observation sessions lasting between three days and a week. Within each of these organisations, between one and six semi-structured interviews (depending on the organisation's size) were conducted to account for the voices of people holding different positions (a total of 75 interviews). These lasted for an hour and a half on average and were concerned with how people understood their own action within the solidarity economy—both in the present and during the last decade. Interview transcripts and field notes were systematically coded. Half of these organisations were affiliated with the MES. The other half were affiliated with smaller networks, including Les Pénélopes.

Both the MES and Les Pénélopes are networks of associations that try to create a federation of solidarity economy initiatives. The main difference is that Les Pénélopes—a Paris-based cooperative whose name refers to the wife of Ulysses in Greek mythology[3]—focuses on women's initiatives (its main activity is to support and link together women's solidarity economy initiatives around the world) and its network is concerned with causes beyond the solidarity economy, such as feminist movements. It has a website and publishes an online magazine concerned with the solidarity economy called "Médiasol". Of the interviews I conducted in Les

Pénélopes, I have chosen to focus on those with the president (Martha) and with a Médiasol employee (Roger[4]). To analyse the contestations around Médiasol, I contrast the account of representatives from Les Pénélopes with those of two MES members: Monique, the president, and Marcel, a member of the Executive Committee, who are also both directors from two community services consultancies.

The Lexical Analysis of the Grammar

The Politics of Everyday Life

A common claim about new social movements such as the present-day anti-globalisation campaign is that involvement in their many-faceted initiatives is political: the solidarity economy is an opportunity to claim that traditional political parties and trade unions do not represent the only way to engage in or practise politics, as Martha, one of Les Pénélopes' leaders, explained during an interview:

> We have to go beyond a **political definition of politics** to open it up to other practices that are not recognised as belonging to politics or to legitimate citizenship even though they lie at the very heart of the institution of a common world in **our everyday lives**.

In the same spirit, a solidarity economy researcher (from the CRIDA) writes:

> It is not only the "official political organisations" (such as the National Assembly and other places where laws and rules are created by the city's political representatives) that prevail but also smaller organisations, the whole civic and **local arena**, in which arguments about everyday concerns are discussed and weighed up by social actors. The rules and laws of micro public space "are not only those that are offered by established systems, they result from a rationality that belongs to discussion, argumentation and the procedural rationality developed in **micro public spaces**".[5]

Occasional help with everyday tasks, the exchange of services in neighbourhoods (fixing the plumbing, minding children, etc.), in short all those activities that are part of community services (whether or not they are already embedded within an "official" cooperative as in the LETS) tend not to be seen as political because they constitute a "modest, **ordinary form of citizenship**" (id.). However, what is at stake is far more than a

mere survival strategy: there is a need to recognise a public space in which we are in connection with each other—one that is structured and managed.

In other words, conceived of as many **micro public spaces**, solidarity economy associations are depicted as almost unwittingly answering the political question *par excellence*: "Given our inclination to live together, how best can we organise our shared life in the city" (Aristotle 2007: 58, book 3, ch. 6, 1278b. See also page 3, book 1, ch. 2, 1253a)?

> Professionals from community services consultancies, who provide active support for project founders, claim that their commitment to the solidarity economy is a "**political commitment**" through their rejection of any form of exclusion, inequality, degradation of the environment and of our living conditions, and of a single model of development imposed on all. This commitment aims at **defending weaker social groups,** at promoting a **more direct and participatory democracy**, at restoring principles of **equality in the decision-making process** and at social justice.[6]

As Warren (2000) has observed, the potential for political engagement is inscribed in the types of actions these initiatives carry out, which are unconstrained by formal rules, and the possibility of a renewed belief in democracy. Experience in a cooperative is a source of political awareness in itself since the association is a school for citizenship which expects its members **to exercise choice** and commit themselves to the "city". In this sense, the solidarity economy is seen by researchers as an infra-political social movement (Spicer and Böhm 2007).

What emerges here, according to pragmatic sociology, is a specific order of justification/argumentation. This can be compared to a grammatical system—the rules of a language game—because it imposes restrictions on which terms may legitimately be used as subjects and objects (1), qualifiers/adjectives (2) and verbs designating relationships (3) (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]: 140). Thus, the language games of researchers and actors are conducted using the terms "micro public spaces" (1), "ordinary citizen" (1), "local arena" (1), "political commitment" (2), "direct democracy" (2), "equality in the decision-making process" (2), to defend the unemployed (3), to take part (3), to exercise choice (3), and so on. These are opposed to terms such as "political definition of politics", "State", "big politics" and "representative democracy". These words are meant to convey a specific representation of action in the world that structures justification. Researchers and actors make the same judgement about

the solidarity economy experience and have a common way of talking about it, a common language game: what they seek to articulate is a new democratic style of politics.

The Critique of the Far Left

The MES is an umbrella networking organisation that seeks to coordinate local-level initiatives. Its members all belong to the four categories of association described above (see introduction). Within the MES, actors insist that the solidarity economy is inherently anti-capitalist because action is based on cooperation.

MES people are convinced that in LETS (and so on) lie natural alternatives. This is why their affiliates have often made a point of attending events such as the World Social Forum (in Porto Alegre) and the European Social Forum (in Paris, London or Athens) that have been held in recent years, even if they fear that these new political organisations might already have been co-opted by **political parties and trade unions**.

For example, MES calls for a *Village de l'économie solidaire* to be part of the Paris Fora (2003), expressing this fear and suggesting that only a natural and libertarian confluence of associations can protect against it. Once again, the grammar of justification is anti-authoritarian:

> The president of the MES, Monique, complains in an article: This call to resistance, this wave of interest in civil society for social forums "naturally breeds envy. We can see new **apparatchiks pop up who would like to control the movement in the interest of particular chapters.** They are only interested in the movement insofar as they see it as a fishing pond for activists, not as something with intrinsic worth. This tension can keenly be felt in the ESF, first in Florence, then in Paris-St-Denis. The Revolutionary Communist League (LCR[7]) calls for the Local Social Forum, the French Communist Party (PCF) and related associations (the major trade unions such as CGT[8]) are everywhere to be seen (…). Trade union employees try to control the secretariat of the organisation, i.e. the forum's organising body that meets once a week (…) Forums are wavering between the tradition of the International Workers'Association and the **Leninist [and Trotskyite] tradition**. On both a global and a national level the Leninist influence remains very difficult to eradicate and still hampers creativity and thus the possibility of constructing political alternatives".[9]

The MES' objective is to turn the solidarity economy into the concrete basis for a practical proposed alternative form of globalisation that can be set against **neocommunist** organisations and their abstract criticisms of capitalism. Even though the solidarity economy stands in the same oppositional relation to capitalism, it maintains that neocommunist organisations have failed to develop any genuine revolutionary praxis. From a solidarity point of view, the **Trotskyite** Far Left—such as the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR; today the New Anticapitalist Party, NPA) in France—has failed to come up with any new proposal beyond blaming the government, the state and now the European Commission in Brussels. Its only concern has been to denounce capitalism and seize power without translating this into action. Its commitment is to **words alone** (Boltanski 1999 [1993]), which serve to relieve moral anxieties without in any way lessening the plight of those who are excluded.

Many, if not all, proponents of the solidarity economy agree in defining solidarity praxis in opposition to the Far Left. For them economic action is essential. But as it focuses on action, attention is turned away from the task of shaping a visible identity.

> The MES is an absolute political necessity that represents the bringing together of social actors; it plays the part of an initiator, a gatekeeper, and this raises the issue of alliances (with NGOs, elected representatives etc.). The forum model no longer suits us because we must no longer function with **classical forms of representation**. We need a **horizontal redevelopment** that allows local citizens to speak anywhere and at any time in the name of the solidarity economy.[10]

Such political vocabulary no longer requires the classical forms of activist legitimation such as those traditionally provided by political parties, trade unions or, in a more general way, federation.

Another researcher writes that:

> what should be retained from the current crisis of **"big" politics** is the greater independence that cooperative action enjoys from far-left **political parties**, and probably also a weakened distinction between the **intellectual** and the activist within civil society. What might become possible is the **presence of the subordinate classes** in the public sphere, freed from structures of representation and formerly **compulsory channels of expression**.[11]

Once again, we can see the vocabulary characteristic of a language game operating according to a specific grammar: "horizontal redevelopment", "new proposal" and "praxis". A political ideology gives rise to a shared representation of the world governed by specific lexical rules. These rules exclude the usage of words such as "parties", "trade unions", "structures of representation", "federation" and "verbal protest".

Philosophical Expression of the Grammar

My hypothesis is that all the solidarity economy actors and researchers respect the same grammar of justification. This grammar is "libertarian" in the socialist sense of French philosopher Claude Lefort (1979: 14–15), rather than in the individualist definition of Nozick (1974). As early as the 1950s, Lefort gave content and meaning to what was then the fashionable vocabulary of "participation" and "network" in France. As the co-founder of the unorthodox Marxist organisation known as Socialisme ou Barbarie (Socialism or Barbarism[12]) with the philosopher/psychoanalyst Castoriadis, his goal was to forge what were known as self-management initiatives among militant French factory workers. "What S or B was to accomplish (which Marx had not achieved) was to delve into workers' **everyday lives** so as to determine **their actual political content** rather than what was projected onto them. Marx described the proletariat in such a dark way that it becomes difficult to envisage how its members might develop any consciousness of their material conditions and rise towards a leadership role. Capitalism has deprived it of its full physical, moral, political and human character" (Lefort 1979 [1958]: 73).

In contrast, according to Lefort and Castoriadis, we must look at the deprived and abject conditions in which workers live for the potential to act politically. "Politics is not something to be taught, it is rather what has to be brought out from its latent **inscription within workers'** lives and behaviours" (Lefort 1979 [1958]: 104). The creativity and inventiveness of **local events** or collectives will generate its own praxis. "The workers' movement will only find its way if it breaks away from the notion of **party** or any **centralised** instance to find its specific forms of action in multiple groups of activists who freely organise their actions and whose contacts, mutual information and connections make for both a confrontation and a commonality of experience" (1979 [1958]: 113).

It has been shown how this libertarian socialist grammar is deeply rooted in the anarcho-syndicalist tradition and, more specifically, in the work of

Proudhon, who opposed the state socialism that Marxists would defend from the third quarter of the 19th century (Frère 2018). Today, as Day (2005) argues, this grammar is mobilised by new theorists such as Holloway, who focus on praxis rather than protest. "To begin to think about power and changing the world without taking power (or indeed anything else) we need to start from **doing**" (Holloway 2002: 27). To reclaim emancipatory practices in this way first of all requires that we no longer rely too heavily on the "party" form, which Holloway critiques both in the sections about Lukacs (2002: Ch. 6) and in those about the state (Ch. 1).

The **party form,** whether **vanguardist** or parliamentary, presupposes an orientation towards the state and makes little difference without it. The party is in fact a way of disciplining the class struggle, of subordinating the myriad forms class struggle takes to the overriding aim of gaining control of the state. A fixed hierarchy of struggles is usually expressed in the form of the party programme. This instrumentalist impoverishment of struggle is not characteristic of particular parties or tendencies (**Stalinism, Trotskyism, Leninism** [128–132[13]], etc.): it is inherent in the idea that the movement's goal is to conquer political power. To move beyond parties, we have to think "of an anti-politics of events rather than a politics of **organization**. Or better, think of organization not in terms of being but in term of **doing** (…). The shift from a politics of organization to a politics of **events** is already taking place" but is usually not seen (Holloway 2002: 214, see also Chomsky 2013: 5–20).

For Holloway, politics is everywhere in everyday life, but television, newspapers and politicians' speeches give little indication of the existence of this micro-level infra-politics. "For them, politics is the politics of power, political conflict is about winning power, political reality is the reality of power. For them, anti-power is invisible. Look more closely however, look at the world around us, look beyond the newspapers, **look beyond the political parties, beyond the institutions of the labour movement** and you can see a world of struggle: the autonomous municipalities in Chiapas, the students in the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, the Liverpool Dockers", and so on. (Holloway 2002: 155–156). We should add AU8
the solidarity economy.[14] "Anti-power is in the dignity of **everyday existence**" (2002: 158).[15] As Chomsky writes, "the problem that is set for our time is that of freeing man from the curse of economic exploitation and political and social enslavement; and the method isn't the conquest and exercise of state power, nor stultifying parliamentarianism, but rather to reconstruct the economic life of the people from the ground up" (2013: 3).

In the book in which he illustrates "doing" concretely by developing the idea of what he calls "cracks", Holloway shows how (as is well known today) the horizontal organisation of resistance to capitalism is the horizontal network: "The pursuit of autonomy involves a nomadic moving between or creating of these transient zones of freedom and intensity of experience. The link between these zones is provided by the Web, 'the alternate **horizontal open structure** of info-change, the **non-hierarchic network**'" (Holloway 2010: 33). The "network form is not new. It was the form adopted by the libertarian socialist councils, by the workers of the Paris Commune, by the anarchists during the Spanish civil war, and more recently seen in the *Zapatistas'* communal councils, the *cabildos* in Bolivia, the *asambleas barriales* in Argentina and the forms of horizontal (or anti-vertical) organization adopted by groups all over the world. These are non-instrumental forms of organization that focus on articulating the opinions of all those involved in the struggles, working outwards from there rather than backwards from the goal to be achieved. The council, then, is **quite different from the party**, which is a form of organization conceived as a means to an end, the end of gaining state power (2010: 40)". And, Holloway concludes, "all of this expresses the rejection of **representative democracy** as a form of organization that excludes the represented. All the organisational forms that we have mentioned can be seen as developments of **direct democracy**, not as a set of rules but as a constant process of experimenting with **democratic forms**, ways of overcoming people's inhibitions, ways of controlling people's aggressions or sexist or racist assumptions" (2010: 44).

This is clearly reminiscent of the anarchist principle of decision by consensus suggested by Graeber. "Behind all good consensus process is that one should not even try to convert others to one's overall point of view; the point of consensus process is to allow a group to decide on a common course of action. Instead of voting proposals up and down, then, proposals are worked and reworked, scotched or reinvented, until one ends up with something everyone can live with" (Graeber 2004: 84–85). This is an older form of democracy than the kind we usually associate with the term. Quoting Castoriadis' critique of representative democracy, Graeber concludes that "it was only once the term 'democracy' could be almost completely transformed to incorporate the principle of representation (…) that it was rehabilitated in the eyes of the

well-born political theorists, and took on the meaning it has today" (2004: 91–92). And Chomsky argues that libertarian socialism in Europe, contra US Libertarianism, has retained that direct and horizontal idea of democracy. As he writes: "it meant, and always meant to me, an antistate branch of socialism, which meant a highly organized society, nothing to do with chaos, but based on democracy all the way through. That means democratic control of communities, of workplaces, of federal structures, built on systems of voluntary association spreading internationally. That's traditional anarchism" (2013: 107).

As we can see, the libertarian socialist grammars of Graeber, Chomsky, Holloway, Lefort and Castoriadis are as similar to each other as to that of the solidarity economy actors. They all respect the same rules of the same language game to talk about their world. Theirs are praxis-based ("doing"-based) grammars that privilege the use of terms such as **horizontal political participation, direct democracy, democratic equality, a natural sense of the political, local public space, the political content of everyday life, local events**, **communities and voluntary association**. Their grammars also reject the use of the same words: **vertical, party, institutions of the labour movement, Stalinism, Trotskyism, Leninism, centralisation, representative democracy**, **state** and so on. And their conclusions are the same: there is no need for any political **organisation (e.g. a party form organised to take state power)** since stakeholders are already spontaneously political as in Walzer's critical associationism. They are probably going to collaborate internationally. All that is necessary is to provide them with the opportunity to network.

In his "Politische Schriften", Habermas seems convinced that cooperatives can easily associate with each other simply because they are already a kind of "workers' association". To use his own words, those lower-level public spaces that fight against the bureaucratisation and commodification imposed by higher-level public spaces (the market and the state) and that are immersed in the micro-sectors of daily communication "occasionally come together in public debates or intersubjectivities of a higher level (…), they can also communicate with each other as soon as the potential for self-organisation and self-organised use of the means of communication is deployed. Forms of self-organisation strengthen the collective ability to act", the philosopher concludes (1985: 159–160, my translation). But can we be so sure?

Case Study Analysis: The Problem of Representation

What we now need to do is hold this libertarian socialist grammar up against the language of the Solidarity Economy Movement (MES) as it is actually spoken by some of its key actors.

The Pénélopes Incident

The incident that follows illustrates the paradoxes of refusing to create political structures while seeking representation across the movement based on a common grammar of action. It concerns the clash between the women's association Les Pénélopes and the MES (the Solidarity Economy Movement in France). Representatives of the two organisations met in a workshop during the second World Social Forum in Porto Alegre entitled "Women in the solidarity economy".

In a face-to-face interview Martha, President of Les Pénélopes, describes the initiation of the network:

> Act I: At the first forum in Porto Alegre (January 2001) of Les Pénélopes, which had started some 5 or 6 days earlier, we thought "we are not going to come to a social forum on the other side of the world without meeting potential collaborators". We had made a start earlier**, we had established connections. We were already very interested in women's solidarity-economy activity because it is a way of resisting globalisation, patriarchy, violence**, etc. We met two of the cooperatives – it was great! We filmed everything, we took pictures of us all together, then we decided to set up partnerships with those cooperatives seeing as we are in touch with other cooperatives over here. This is act I.
>
> Act II: At the second Porto Alegre forum, we thought: we're going to set up a workshop for these cooperatives to meet … and thus try and start a network. **Not a network of representatives, no: of actual active partners**. And since it's a world forum, it's fantastic, there'll be lots of people from all over the world. And indeed there were lots of people, including MES people. (They) **were very late, they hadn't proposed a workshop, so there was no possibility of their having their own workshop, so she** (a member of MES, AN) negotiated with Les Pénélopes for them to participate in our workshop. We said all right but couldn't agree on a title, so we said "we'll just share the allotted time, you can have an hour and a half". They were first and launched a proper attack on Les Pénélopes (the speaker quotes the MES delegate, AN): "*it's outrageous, you cannot set up an international network in the solidarity economy, it's much too soon, anyway you're new to the field, you have no previous history in the solidarity economy, we were*

> *first in that field*". Imagine! In our workshop! There were people from the Brazilian Workers' Party, feminists involved in the solidarity economy we had invited because they were quite interested (those people the speaker said they had made friends with during the first forum, AN**).** And what do they do?! They start a dog fight, they **take over our right to speak**. People had come to say things and instead they attended an undignified brawl (…). We were very angry (…). This was repeated at the European Social Forum and it was just a clash between people.

Les Pénélopes represent another network of actors involved in the solidarity economy at an international level, but in competition with the MES. The logic of networking suggests that MES members should accept Les Pénélopes. However, who in the web of networks can claim to be a "better" representative of the solidarity economy? There is no doubt that the Brazilian cooperatives, which Les Pénélopes have met and which its president is talking about, belong to the solidarity economy, a movement that is highly developed in Brazil. They also use a grammar of praxis and action rather than one of representation and denunciation (the grammar of the Far Left). In addition, the president of Les Pénélopes chairs a cooperative in Paris. But this is not enough for those who see MES as the only worthy representative of the solidarity economy.

Here is the presentation of the same situation (the workshop in Porto Alegre) put forward by Monique, President of MES (and director of a community services consultancy in Paris), who was present:

> Les Pénélopes, that's bullshit. We keep having problems with them. In Porto Alegre in 2002 we had a workshop with them. It also ended in a fight. Les Pénélopes **think they speak in the name of solidarity economy actors.** *I* say no. You do a lot of things other than the solidarity economy. You do feminist activities, theoretical articles against domination and capitalism on your website, and so on. If you want us to work together, you do your job, but you are not actors, it's not the same. You can't represent them (…). At that shared workshop we insulted each other. We said "let's set up a common network of women in the solidarity economy", they said "Les Pénélopes must lead it!". There were 100 people in the room who said "No!" Pénélopes can't lead an international solidarity economy movement". They went and did it anyway. (…). They didn't care about what had been achieved before. It led to the large-scale exchange of abuse (…). **I've been doing this for 20 years (working within the solidarity economy), it took me time. I will continue, even if there is no Ministry for the Solidarity Economy or its subsidies. You see, some people just pop up one morning, and because the solidarity economy is in fashion, they are ready to kill**!

AU12

As we can see, the confrontation in the Porto Alegre Social Forum is presented in two different and opposing ways. It is characterised by personal conflicts. An agreement between the two parties on this issue would have considerably strengthened the visibility and cohesion of the solidarity economy. Yet personal fallings-out between activists meant that Les Pénélopes and the MES turned away from each other without acknowledging that the other organisation could legitimately claim to speak in the solidarity economy's name.

The Médiasol *Incident*

The clash between the MES and Les Pénélopes was revived when "Les Pénélopes" launched a new initiative in 2003: Médiasol (for "Media for the Solidarity Economy").

Médiasol was an Internet portal launched in response to a call for proposals from the French Ministry for the Solidarity Economy.[16] The aim was to create a communication platform for all actors in the solidarity economy. The initiative only lasted for two years. A former employee of Médiasol has a lucid explanation for its failure. He accuses the MES leaders of trying to designate the MES as the only legitimate space in which the solidarity economy can express itself:

> **Roger**: "As Médiasol employees, what we have come across is an **aggressive rejection of the project from the MES**. (…) **We feel that people in the MES want to be alone on the visible part of the 'Solidarity Economy' iceberg**. **They did not understand what a great tool Médiasol was and how they could use it. (…) Yet they could have posted their texts there.** This was one of the nice things about it: it wasn't meant just for journalists. But they immediately said 'it's made by the **Ministry for the Solidarity Economy**, we don't want it'. We are going to have the European Social Forum in November (2003) and people say 'The problem with the solidarity economy is that it's not visible enough' (…) They didn't want to see how crucial it is to communicate, to develop tools. If they had had a **communication structure when we had to be organised and apply for subsidies we could have said 'hey there!** We represent 10% of the country's economy' or something similar. But people didn't understand that we had to communicate".

This critique of the MES includes the libertarian criticism of a confiscation of the power of representation. But the same accusation can be found in what MES leaders say to account for the boycott of the Médiasol

project. The argument that there is an absence of democracy is used to accuse Médiasol of attempting a Trotskyite appropriation of the solidarity economy.

Marcel, a member of the MES board and director of a community services consultancy, explains:

> Médiasol is something they set up with people we couldn't stand as people but also with those who had not been involved in the solidarity economy (Les Pénélopes) and who suddenly wanted to carry its banner; this was rather odd. Médiasol is a project **that was started entirely undemocratically;** it started in some corridor of power, with the **Ministry for the Solidarity Economy**. […] It was shocking – a bad start in terms of visibility. (…) **It claimed it was something done by actors for actors.** But from the start it was a closed thing if you didn't belong to the inner circle [Marcel is referring to Martha from Les Pénélopes, who is also employed by the **Ministry for the Solidarity Economy**]. *I* had a problem with joining Médiasol because 1) it wasn't democratic, 2) I found it annoying that an **allegedly Far Left** organisation [Les Pénélopes] should set up yet another channel of communication. I thought: 'this is one newspaper chain claiming an issue that isn't theirs'. It was politically annoying (…). **It was a critical analysis of the system and all that. But what did they propose**???

The possibility of publishing texts in Médiasol did not appeal to MES members. What they wanted was to be recognised as the "tip of the iceberg" by the Ministry for the Solidarity Economy. The MES preferred to set up their own web portal rather than collaborate on a project with Les Pénélopes. Nor is there any doubt that the democratic process which led to the creation of Médiasol can be questioned. Martha, the president of Les Pénélopes, is affiliated with the Ministry for the Solidarity Economy as technical advisor in charge of associative life and cooperatives. But what the MES finds most insulting is the fact that they are not included in the Ministry's inner circle, where Les Pénélopes is well established. MES members think they are the only ones who can legitimately speak in the name of all others. It is, therefore, difficult for them to accept that Les Pénélopes or Médiasol can also develop the solidarity economy on a higher meta-level in France (Habermas), or indeed on an international scale through their network of cooperatives in Brazil, without relying on the MES.

MES members (Monique, Marcel) use the libertarian socialist grammar **of praxis** to disqualify Les Pénélopes and Médiasol. They accuse them of belonging to the "Far Left" movement, which pretends to represent and

speak in the name of workers and cooperatives without really allowing them to contribute. Les Pénélopes, just like Trotskyists, secretly try to assume all the power of the Solidarity Economy Movement by infiltrating the Ministry for the Solidarity Economy. They will not let local organisations (who produce the real solidarity economy through their "praxis") create their own network in a free, democratic and horizontal movement. They want to impose a vertical unity from the top down with their media platform project. In doing so, they manipulate solidarity economy actors just as communist and Trotskyite parties and trade unions—such as the French Communist Party (PCF), the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) and the General Trade Union of Workers (CGT)—try to do with workers. For the MES leaders, Médiasol is just a webzine containing the Pénélopes' theoretical feminist criticisms of capitalism which do not contain any concrete proposals for building an alternative model of the economy in practice. And, in the minds of MES leaders, these concrete proposals (micro-finance organisations, LETS, CSA, etc.) must be those of their own network. As a reminder, the libertarian socialist grammar used by the solidarity economy imbues words such as "parties", "trade unions", "structures of representation", "federation", "verbal protest" with negative connotations. In embracing these terms, as the MES leaders see it, Les Pénélopes and Médiasol neglect the very thing that actually constitutes the solidarity economy: concrete praxis.

Discussion

Politics Within the Solidarity Economy: A Corporatist Representation of Action?

As I sought to show in the first section, there was a remarkable commonality in the way that solidarity economy activists and academic researchers spoke about their engagement. A common language game was played to celebrate the Solidarity Economy Movement as a new horizontal way of doing politics (anchored in the local and everyday) against the old vertical way relying on political parties and trade unions. The latter were accused of re-appropriating the power of representation in the anti-globalisation fight. Those connected to the solidarity economy identified themselves in contrast to their far-left enemies: for instance, the French Communist Party (PCF), the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) and the General Trade Union of Workers (CGT). As one solidarity economy theo-

rist writes: "the sense of powerlessness that could be overcome thanks to the (World and European) Social Fora comes as much from the strength of neoliberal ideology as from the questioning of alternative visions too thoroughly pervaded by authoritarian traditions. As they claimed a right to interpret collective actions and demands they delegitimated any position not focused on 'toppling the system' (…). By freeing themselves from the guardianship of these self-proclaimed keepers of the truth, the Social Fora have opened a space where expectations of democratic debate can be realised" (Laville 2003: 18–19). In this sense, the aspirations of the anti-globalisation fora correspond to those of the solidarity economy cluster. AU13

Having given a theoretical definition of grammar, I have tried to show how the concept can be used to formalise the aspiration towards a libertarian way of acting and talking politics (following the libertarian socialist philosophy of Lefort, Castoriadis and Holloway).

But the struggles between two organisations, the MES and Les Pénélopes, reveal that the Solidarity Economy Movement is much less harmonious and messianic than its actors and researchers want to believe. Of course, the MES and Les Pénélopes share the same representation of the world and use the same language to describe it. Their grammar has the same specific lexical rules permitting and forbidding words: "direct democracy" rather than "representative democracy", "public micro-spaces" rather than trade unions, local (workers' or citizens') political power rather than that of a party, spontaneous forms rather than centralisation, network rather than federation, "ordinary citizenship" rather than "intellectual apparatchiks", "libertarian socialism" rather than a communist state of any kind, whether defined in a Trotskyist, a Leninist, or any other way. The grammar also promotes practices of "engaging in economic praxis" rather than "verbal protest", and participating actively in the new economy rather than passively contesting the existing one.

The problem is that the MES and Les Pénélopes used this well-organised rational discourse to condemn each other within the social movement rather than to condemn those who they identify as their common adversary outside it (the radical and Trotskyite left, capitalism, etc.). The MES takes the moral high ground using the grammar of the solidarity economy to assert its own legitimacy and to weaken rival networks. Thus, its libertarian socialist grammar paradoxically becomes a weapon with which to argue for the right to "speak in the name of". But why, we might ask, should the solidarity economy be more legitimately represented by the MES than by those who Monique calls "apparatchiks"?

Like the MES, Médiasol describes itself—using concepts drawn from the solidarity economy's socialist libertarian grammar—as a virtual space of "direct democracy", of "ordinary citizenship", as a "small-scale participative political world" that involves both civic commitment and a personal anchoring in the local solidarity economy project. Yet, their specific use of this grammar does not permit concepts such as power, representation, delegation and institution, as this would be the language of a political programme. The fact that Médiasol appears, from the MES point of view, to embody these prohibited concepts makes it unacceptable to a very large proportion of actors from the Solidarity Economy Movement and the Social Forum. Though we might expect these movements to be a source of creativity, mobilisation and renewed modes of thinking, the censoring of any language reminiscent of traditional political programmes in their official lexicon means that other modes of domination might creep in. While their justifications mostly employ a libertarian socialist grammar, when it comes to supra-local organisation leaders of both the MES and Les Pénélopes (Médiasol) still justify their actions using corporatist registers that prioritise the preferential treatment of relatives and friends. The relationships they create at this meta-level, thus, constitute corporatist networks that undermine the democracy they are trying to achieve.

In this sense, in the solidarity economy, as elsewhere in the anti-globalisation movement, the tendency to fall back on personal relationships when confronted with the challenge of large-scale political organisation is made inevitable by a form of libertarian socialist grammar that is only equipped to conceptualise politics as located within the boundaries of small circles of friends. Some specialists note how several contemporary social movements are indeed organised in this way—as small non-hierarchical affinity groups working through consensus—mainly underlining their advantages (Snow and Soule 2010: 157–158). Others go further and point out the problem with such affinity-based organisations: the absence of explicit rules can allow an individual or a group to exercise unchecked influence (Pleyers 2010: 28). But very few reflect on possible solutions to this problem that do not simply reintroduce a grammar of representative democracy or leadership (Morris and Staggenborg 2007: 170–196).

The Incompleteness of the Solidarity Economy Grammar: Can Praxis and Representative Politics Ever Be Reconciled?

The problem with the solidarity economy in its current multi-faceted form was well understood by Castells when he wrote about contemporary social movements in the era of globalisation. Its paradoxical ambivalence results from its network model: its main strength is "a networking, decentred form of organisation and intervention, characteristic of the new social movements, mirroring and counteracting the networking logic of domination in civil society". On the other hand, "it is the decentred, subtle character of networks of social change that makes it so difficult to perceive, and identify, new identity projects coming into being" (1997: 362).

Formalising the solidarity economy's grammar of justification reveals its libertarian socialist representation of an ideal world. Associations and cooperatives built by actors are seen as forms of non-reflexive, spontaneous and democratic micro public space at a very local level. The "on-the-ground" experience in local cooperatives must, it is thought, be used as the model for constructing a higher organisational level within the Social Forum. Actors, therefore, insist on the lexicon of horizontal participation and praxis in opposition to abstract and intellectual politics, which manifests in the vertical organisation of far-left parties and trade unions (etc.). Sentences involving terms such as "leader" as subject, "represent" as verb and "vertical federation" as complement are not grammatically correct in the minds of the solidarity economy actors. Moreover, a discourse about theoretical political questions is rejected. Because solidarity economy activists avoid the explicit exercise of power, it is impossible to "empower" any particular political institution or network to describe what an alternative to capitalism might look like. Because everyone claims to be uninterested in achieving power in any form, the power that *does* exist is exercised informally by leaders through corporatist means.

Because both the MES and Les Pénélopes keep rejecting all political forms (parties, trade unions and federations), they refuse any form of power. But perhaps Giddens was not entirely wrong when he said that Third-Sector organisations must acknowledge the inevitability of power and stop seeing its use as inevitably evil. Power, in the broader sense of the term, is how we can achieve things. For Giddens, power can be positive when it is not used for hoarding caste privileges, but rather takes all citizens into account (1990: 162–163).

The question that then arises is the following: how can we suggest a way for libertarian socialist organisations to act in a way that is not libertarian in the neoliberal sense? Neoliberal reasoning would argue that nobody can have power over anybody else. Any individual actor is free to leave the network (or the association) at the slightest vexation (Nozick 1974: 299). And this is exactly what happens when cooperatives decide to leave the MES network (as did e.g. some *consulting services* such as the *Pôles d'économie solidaire*). Or when others decide to not join it (as did Les Pénélopes) just because of some personal disputes with the MES' leaders. Power is an ordinary disruptive force in the solidarity economy as it is everywhere else. In both cases, the MES is losing members because they think (rightly or not) that its leaders monopolise the power to "talk in the name of". By either leaving or not joining in the first place, they weaken the voice of the solidarity economy more than ever.

On both a national and an international scale, the MES cannot continue to proceed as if power did not exist, as in an ideal Aristotelian public micro-space where everything can be decided and managed by a very small group of citizens. This is because, contrary to Habermas' optimistic depiction, there are challenges of political organisation at larger scales that simply do not exist—at least not to the same degree—at smaller scales, and meeting these challenges requires some engagement with questions of power. How to shift from a world where micro public spaces proliferate to produce a large common public space? In his discussion of critical associationism, Walzer pointed out this problem—the very problem experienced by the solidarity economy—by referring to Aristotle: "In his Politics, Aristotle argued that justice in a democracy requires the citizens to rule and be ruled in turn. They take turns governing one another". But if this is easy to do within a micro public space (agora), "that is not a likely picture of a political community that includes tens millions of citizens" (1983: 320).

Because of this scale-related difficulty, Walzer (like Giddens) gives up the libertarian socialist idea of the "turn". What "justice requires is not that citizens rule and are ruled in turn, but that they rule in one sphere and are ruled in another" (1983: 321). According to Walzer, politics is only one sphere of social activity. The economy is another. The problem with this conception is that it runs the risk of compromising what the solidarity economy achieves: the (citizen) politicisation of the economy.

In my opinion, to have power in one sphere does not necessarily mean that actors have to delegate it elsewhere. A real democratic meta-level, rather than a corporatist one, could address the "turn" question every-

where, even on a large scale. How can we make power circulate between several hands, resting in each for only a short period of time, in an organisation in which there are more than 20 members?

A possible response could be to ask actors to be aware of that other property of their own libertarian socialist tradition, self-management (autogestion), and of that tradition's writings about the rotation of work and leadership tasks and about the possibility of removing "collective representatives" (Castoriadis 1974 [1952]; Holloway 2010: 44). In the 1950s, France was struck by large-scale workers' strikes in the major industrial centres (Groux and Pernot 2008). During that large trade-union movement, Castoriadis suggested that the Renault workers' meeting in Paris and St. Nazaire could have joined forces with the metal workers in Paris. For this another level of political organisation would have been necessary—one that was not a political party or trade union such as the PC or CGT, respectively—to connect them with one another and allow them to form meta-level delegations (Castoriadis 1974 [1959]: 216–217). Castoriadis further suggested that the 50s libertarian socialist group "Socialism or Barbarism" should provide support for the construction of such an "organisation" and maintain its role in providing a space in which "workers can have a voice and exercise power" (1973 [1960]: 95 & 411sq; 1974 [1952]: 44–47). They could be the "voice" of the movement—but only for a short time. In these articles, Castoriadis and friends suggested very strong rules to ensure that power alternated between workers within Socialism or Barbarism, just as Holloway has done in his more recent theory developed through analysing the Zapatistas' organisation. Indeed the Zapatistas, Holloway writes, "have a system of rapid rotation in the composition of their Juntas de Buen Gobierno not just to involve more and more people in the self-government of their communities, but also to eliminate the dangers of corruption" (2010: 65). Representative mandates are also immediately revocable (Lederman 2015: 258)

It is possible to find in the solidarity economy a large part of the original libertarian socialist lexicon of Castoriadis and the group "Socialism or Barbarism" (ordinary citizenship, to participate, direct democracy, etc.), as well as the same opponents (centralised political parties, trade unions and any other authority figures). But we can also see that certain terms in the solidarity economy grammar as it is really used by actors still preclude anarchist ideas such as that of organising power through short-term representation and rotation, even though these were embraced by the libertarian socialist theorists. In short, they are playing the libertarian socialist

language game badly. Judging by the way in which Castoriadis, Lefort and Holloway frame the correct libertarian socialist way of "acting in" and "talking about" the world, we should say that they are making grammatical mistakes.

The writings of Castoriadis, Lefort and Holloway in fact articulate a pure form of libertarian socialist grammar that uses concepts such as "representation", "power" and "delegation" freely. As Žižek would have said, these concepts are perceived by solidarity economy actors as referring to malignant properties of political activity. The properties they describe are seen as dangerous, and this justifies their elimination. But in the process, we divest these things of their very essence.

For an effective political form of libertarian socialist grammar, it would be necessary for the malignant properties of political activity (power, representation, delegation, etc.) to be known and accepted as inevitable. According to Castoriadis, accepting them provides the only chance of managing them collectively. By censoring questions of power and representation in their theoretical writings, solidarity economy activists have deprived themselves of the tools that would enable them to make a powerful counter-proposal to capitalist hegemony.

Conclusion

My aim in this chapter has been to ask why local-level solidarity economy initiatives have consistently failed to join forces to take their professed goals of citizen activism and political ontology to a higher level of effectiveness and organisation. To do so, I have summarised the theoretical framework and the notion of "grammar" to bring to light the solidarity economy's specific political praxis. I have also examined how actors and researchers respect the grammatical rules of the same language game and brought to light their philosophical underpinnings.

The language game played in the solidarity economy is more than just a way of speaking. It is also a way of seeing and acting in the world that is typically "libertarian socialist". But in analysing the conflicts between the MES and Les Pénélopes within the anti-globalisation forum, I have uncovered a fundamental contradiction: although actors and researchers all agree that the solidarity economy's micro-organisations are ontologically and locally "political" and anti-authoritarian, these micro-organisations do not succeed in managing political disputes (manifest in their justifica-

tions) at the macro level. I have argued that oral justifications bring to light what texts hide: the will to power of representation.

The critique of representation is embodied in the "form of life", as Wittgenstein said, of the solidarity economy's political grammar. The MES and Les Pénélopes accuse each other, using this libertarian socialist grammar of justification, of the censored act of "representing". We have seen how accusations of belonging to the Trotskyist or Leninist Far Left conceal a genuine struggle over how to organise without compromising representation. Paradoxically, actors play the same language game to accuse each other of not respecting that game. This renders it impossible for the democratic ontology of the solidarity economy on the local level to be scaled up to a higher level, whether supra-local, international or global. Researchers from these organisations, who use the same grammar, do not understand this contradiction.

Academic political theorists who talk about the world using the same libertarian socialist language critique the usual forms of representative democracy as well. But they do not restrict themselves to critique; they go on to address the issue of a "new way of representing". Yet contrary to this formal libertarian socialist model—which can be found in the texts of Socialism or Barbarism's two main contributors as well as Holloway's writings—the grammar used in the solidarity economy forbids the use of words such as "delegation", "representation" and "power". Thus, any discussion about how to share power will create tensions. The risk of not confronting issues of power is that the solidarity economy becomes a form of corporatism worrying to those who would like to give politics a new foundation based on participation and initiative. Their arguments are always framed within a libertarian socialist grammar that allows them to prove how participatory and egalitarian they are at the local level of their initiatives (in towns, villages, neighbourhoods). Because the delegation involved in political representation contains the risk of a withdrawal of power, they all want to keep their own voice within the anti-globalisation social movement. There is a symmetry between justifications in which each of the movement's actors quickly accuse others of arbitrarily usurping the right to "speak in the name of". It is being libertarian socialist without taking into account certain political properties of libertarian socialist thought that leads to this paradox: renewing political commitment at the micro level does not solve the problem of how to organise legitimate structures in which power is allowed to circulate at the macro level.

The solidarity economy—a distinctive and important form of anti-globalisation activity—is ontologically "political" by virtue of its powerful civic activism. But, to answer Žižek's question, as long as it does not really direct its libertarian socialist spirit towards a libertarian socialist overturning of the power of representation, the solidarity economy might remain a virtual product: a "politics without politics", or a politics deprived of some of its malignant—but essential—properties.

Notes

1. Associations pour le Maintien d'une Agriculture Paysanne (AMAP): literally Associations for the Protection of Small-scale Farming—the main form of Community Supported Agriculture in France.
2. *Cultures en mouvement* (http://wbenjamin.canalblog.com), *Territoires* (http://www.adels.org), *Economie et humanisme* (http://www.developpements-et-humanisme.eu), *Alternatives économiques* (http://www.alternatives-economiques.fr), Médiasol (http://www.Mediasol.org). *La lettre du Mouvement pour l'Economie Solidaire* (http://le-mes.org/M.E.S/Accueil_MES.html). *Pour* (http://www.grep.fr/pour). Collective books were too numerous to be quoted here. I will just mention the two I use in this chapter: MB2, *Pour une économie alternative et solidaire*. Paris. L'Harmattan. Ion, Jacques. ed. *L'engagement pluriel*. Saint-Etienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Etienne.
3. The name is an ironic way of saying we are Penelope-like, referring to the story of patient, devious Penelope and the suitors in the Odyssey.
4. All names have been changed.
5. Eme, B. 2001, "Les solidarités vécues ou la résistance au système" in *Pour*, 172: 189–103.
6. MB2. 2001, *Pour une économie alternative et solidaire*. Paris, L'Harmattan: 48.
7. Ligue communiste révolutionnaire (renamed, since January 2009, Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste: New Anticapitalist Party).
8. *Centrale Générale des Travailleurs: General Workers' Union*.
9. Hersent, M. 2003, "Les dynamiques des forums sociaux" in *Cultures en mouvement*, 62:31–33.
10. MES Executive Committee, 2004, About the General Assembly of the 23rd April. In *La lettre du MES*, 12.
11. Ion, J. 2001, "Affranchissements et engagements personnels" in Ion, J., *L'engagement pluriel*, Saint-Etienne: Presses de l'Université de Saint-Etienne: 21–45.
12. *Socialisme ou Barbarie* (Socialism or Barbarism) was a radical libertarian socialist group of the post-World War II period based in France (the name

comes from a phrase Rosa Luxemburg used in a 1916 essay ("The Junius Pamphlet"). It existed from 1948 until 1965. Castoriadis was its most prominent leader. It was linked to the Johnson-Forrest Tendency, which developed as a body of ideas within American Trotskyist organisations. One faction of this group later formed Facing Reality. The early days also brought debate with Anton Pannekoek and an influx of ex-Bordigists into the group. *Socialisme ou Barbarie* was composed of both intellectuals and workers who wrote in the Journal that had the same name (S or B). They agreed that the main enemies of society were the bureaucracies that governed modern capitalism and soviet socialism (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialisme_ou_Barbarie and Gottraux 1997).

13. In this section of the text Lenin is not mentioned (though maybe he is implicitly present in the "and so on"), probably because Holloway dedicates a full chapter to him later on, unlike Trotsky or Stalin.
14. Holloway does not recognise the solidarity economy as a possible breach; he expresses fears about this mode of "doing" remaining "economic" (2010: 69–70), but he does not realise that several of the initiatives he welcomes as "cracks"—from enterprises taken over by their workers to community-supported agriculture and community services delivered by Italian social centres—are themselves initiatives characteristic of the solidarity economy (which all, moreover, engage in the economic activity of selling or exchanging goods or services).
15. "Another politics must be based on the critique of the very separation of politics from the rest of our everyday activity, on the overcoming of the separation of politics from doing (…). Bring [the political] home, to our activity, our own doing and the way it is organised, what we do each day" (2010: 133–134).
16. Secrétariat d'Etat à l'Economie Solidaire (Ministry for the Solidarity Economy).

References

AU14

Aristotle. (2007). *Politics* (B. Jowett, Trans.). London: Forgotten Books.

Artis, A. (2017). Social and Solidarity Finance: A Conceptual Approach. *Research in International Business and Finance, 39*, 737–749.

Bateman, M. (2010). *Why Doesn't Microfinance Work? The Destructive Rise of Local Neoliberalism*. London: Zed Books.

Bauhardt, C. (2014). Solutions to the Crisis? The Green New Deal, Degrowth, and the Solidarity Economy: Alternatives to the Capitalist Growth Economy from an Ecofeminist Economics Perspective. *Ecological Economics, 102*, 60–68.

Boissevain, J. (1974). *Friends of Friends, Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Boltanski, L. (1999) [1993]. *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Boltanski, L. (2009). Autour de la justification: un parcours dans le domaine de la sociologie morale. In *Compétences critiques et sens de la justice. Actes du colloque du GSPM* (pp. 15–35). Paris: Economica.

Boltanski, L. (2012) [1990]. *Love and Justice as Competences*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Boltanski, L., & Thévenot, L. (2006) [1991]. *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (C. Porter, Trans.). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Booth, S., & Coveney, J. (2015). *Food Democracy. From Consumer to Food Citizen*. New York: Springer.

Bourdieu, P. (1987). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Caillé, A. (2003). Sur le concept d'économie en général et d'économie solidaire en particulier. *Revue du MAUSS, 21*, 215–236.

Castells, E. (1997). *The Power of Identity. The Information Age, Vol II*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Castoriadis, C. (1974) [1952]. La question de l'histoire du mouvement ouvrier. *L'expérience du mouvement ouvrier I, Comment lutter*, Paris, 10/18: 11–116 (first edition: *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, 10).

Castoriadis, C. (1974) [1959]. Prolétariat et organisation. *L'expérience du mouvement ouvrier II, Prolétariat et organisation*, Paris, 10/18: 123–248 (first edition: *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, 27–28).

Castoriadis, C. (1973) [1960]. Conception et programme de *Socialisme ou Barbarie*. *La société bureaucratique II, La révolution contre la barbarie*, Paris, 10/18: 395–417 (first edition: *Etudes*, 6).

Cervera-Marzal, M., & Frère, B. (Forthcoming). *The Sociology of Critique. Towards a Grammatical Approach to Civil Disobedience*. Working Paper.

Cone, C. A., & Myhre, A. (2000). Community-Supported Agriculture: A Sustainable Alternative to Industrial Agriculture? *Human Organization, 50*(2), 187–197.

Davidson, C. (2008). *Solidarity Economy. Building Alternatives for People and Planet*. Chicago: Changemaker.

Defourny, J., Develtere, P., Fonteneau, B., & Nyssens, M. (2009). *The Worldwide Making of the Social Economy, Innovations and Changes*. Leuven: Acco.

Frase, D., & Parry, H. (2001). *Exchanges and Alternative Trading Systems: Law and Regulation*. London: Sweet & Maxwell.

Frère, B. (2004). Genetic Structuralism, Psychological Sociology and Pragmatic Social Actor Theory, Proposals for a Convergence of French Sociologies. *Theory, Culture and Society, 21*(2–3), 85–99.

Frère, B. (2018). Back to Materialism. Reflections on Marx's Representation of Labour, Praxis, Cooperative and Libertarian Socialism in the 19th Century. *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society, 31*(1), 69–94.

AU15

Frère, B., & Jaster, D. (2018). French Sociological Pragmatism: Inheritor and Innovator in the American Pragmatic and Sociological Phenomenological Traditions. *Journal of Classical Sociology, 19*(2), 138–160.
Frère, B., & Reinecke, J. (2011). Libertarian Socialism and Solidarity Economy. *Dialogues in Critical Management Studies, 1*(1), 117–127.
Giddens, A. (1990). *The Consequence of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity press.
Gottraux, P. (1997). *Socialisme ou Barbarie, Un engagement dans la France de l'après-guerre*. Lausanne: Payot.
Graeber, D. (2004). *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.
Groux, G., & Pernot, J.-M. (2008). *La Grève*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.
Guggenheim, M., & Potthast, J. (2011). Symmetrical Twins: On the Relationship Between Actor-Network Theory and the Sociology of Critical Capacities. *European Journal of Social Theory, 15*(2), 157–178.
Habermas, J. (1985). *Die Neue Unübersichtlichkeit: Kleine Politische Schriften V*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag.
Latour, B. (2005). *Re-assembling the Social. An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford: University Press.
Laville, J. L. (2003). Désir de démocratie. *Cultures en mouvement, 62*, 18–19.
Laville, J. L. (2009). *Politique de l'association*. Paris: Seuil.
Laville, J. L., & Nyssens, M. (2000). Solidarity-Based Third Sector Organizations in the 'Proximity Services' Field: A European Francophone Perspective. *International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, 1*(1), 67–84.
Laville, J. L., & Salmon, A. (2016). Rethinking the Relationship Between Governance and Democracy. The Theoretical Framework of the Solidarity Economy. In J. L. Laville, D. R. Young, & P. Eynaud (Eds.), *Civil Society, the Third Sector and Social Enterprise* (pp. 145–162). London: Routledge.
Lederman, S. (2015). Councils and Revolution: Participatory Democracy in Anarchist Thought and the New Social Movements. *Science and Society, 79*(2), 243–263.
Ledgerwood, J., Johnson, I., & Severino, J.-M. (2001). *Microfinance Handbook: An Institutional and Financial Perspective*. Washington, DC: World Bank Publications.
Lefort, C. (1979) [1958]. Organisation et parti, contribution à une discussion. In *Eléments d'une critique de la bureaucratie* (pp. 98–113). Paris: Gallimard (first edition: *Socialisme ou Barbarie,* 26).
Lefort, C. (1979). Préface. In *Eléments d'une critique de la bureaucratie* (pp. 7–28). Paris: Gallimard.
Lemaître, A., & Hemlsing, A. (2012). Solidarity Economy in Brazil: Movement, Discourse and Practice Analysis Through a Polanyian Understanding of the Economy. *Journal of International Development, 24*, 745–762.

Morris, A., & Staggenborg, S. (2007). Leadership in Social Movements. In Snow et al. (Eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (pp. 170–196). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Nozick, R. (1974). *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. New York: Basic Books.

Peacock, M. S. (2006). The Moral Economy of Parallel Currencies. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology, 65*(5), 1059–1083.

Petrella, F. (2001). Proximity Services in Belgium: An Analysis of Public and Nonprofit Relations. *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics, 72*(1), 77–101.

Pleyers, G. (2010). *Alter-globalization: Becoming Actors in the Global Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Saguier, M., & Brent, Z. (2017). Social and Solidarity Economy in South American Regional Governance. *Global Social Policy, 17*(3), 259–278.

Snow, D., & Soule, S. A. (2010). *A Primer on Social Movements*. New York: Norton & Company.

Soria, K. M., & Mitchell, T. D. (2016). *Civic Engagement and Community Service at Research Universities: Engaging Undergraduates for Social Justice, Social Change and Responsible Citizenship*. London: Palgrave.

Spicer, A., & Böhm, S. (2007). Moving Management: Theorizing Struggles Against the Hegemony of Management. *Organization Studies, 28*(11), 1667–1698.

Titscher, S., et al. (2000). *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage.

Walzer, M. (1983). *Spheres of Justice*. New York: Basic Books.

Walzer, M. (1992). The Civil Society Argument. In C. Mouffe (Ed.), *Dimensions of Radical Democracy*. London: Verso.

Warren, M. E. (2000). *Democracy and Association*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Weschenfelder, S., et al. (2016). Food Production in Solidarity Economy: An Issue That Goes Beyond Laws. *Food Science and Technology, 36*(1), 12–14.

Westra, R. (2016). Local Trade and Exchange/Employment Systems (LETS) in Future Eco-sustainable Societies. *Anthropology in Action, 23*(2), 35–41.

Wittgenstein, L. (2001) [1953]. *Philosophical Investigations* (G. E. M. Anscombe, Trans.). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Žižek, S. (1991). *For They Know Not What They Do. Enjoyment as a Political Factor*. London: Verso.

Author Queries

Chapter No.: 10 0004401216

Queries	Details Required	Author's Response
AU1	Both 'far-left' (lowercased and hyphenated) and 'Far Left' (capitalized and non-hyphenated) have been used in this chapter. Should one style be made consistent or are they ok as given?	
AU2	"Chomsky (2013), Frère (2009), Day (2005), Holloway (2002, 2010), Lukacs (2002)" was mentioned here but not in the reference list. Please provide its bibliographic information.	
AU3	The term 'Third Sector' is both capitalized and lowercased in the chapter. We have capitalized it throughout the chapter for consistency. Please check if this is ok.	
AU4	The citation Frère and Cervera-Marzal (Forthcoming) has been changed to Cervera-Marzal and Frère (Forthcoming) to match the author name/date in the reference list. Please check if the change is fine.	
AU5	Please check if the word 'Embodied' should be lowercased in the term 'Bourdieusian Embodied Habitus'.	
AU6	Please provide closing parentheses in the sentence starting "*Socialisme ou Barbarie*…".	I don't find this
AU7	Quotations that stretch for more than four to five lines are set as extracts, as per standard practice. Should the in-line quote starting with "What S or B was…" be set as an extract?	There are already a lot of sentences and interviews set as extras. I would prefere to keep it like that but in case of necessity YES
AU8	Quotations that stretch for more than four to five lines are set as extracts, as per standard practice. Should the in-line quote starting with "For them, politics…" be set as an extract?	There are already a lot of sentences and interviews set as extras. I would prefere to keep it like that but in case of necessity YES
AU9	Quotations that stretch for more than four to five lines are set as extracts, as per standard practice. Should the in-line quote starting with "network form is not…" be set as an extract?	There are already a lot of sentences and interviews set as extras. I would prefere to keep it like that but in case of necessity YES
AU10	Quotations that stretch for more than four to five lines are set as extracts, as per standard practice. Should the in-line quote starting with "all of this expresses the…" be set as an extract?	There are already a lot of sentences and interviews set as extras. I would prefere to keep it like that but in case of necessity YES

AU11	The term 'Solidarity Economy Movement' is both lowercased and capitalized in the chapter. We have capitalized it throughout for consistency. Please check if this is ok.	
AU12	Please provide opening quotes in the sentence starting "There were 100…".	
AU13	Quotations that stretch for more than four to five line are set as extracts, as per standard practice. Should th in-line quote starting with "the sense of powerlessness… be set as an extract?	
AU14	Reference "Boissevain (1974)" was not cited anywher in the text. Please provide in text citation or delete the reference from the reference list.	
AU15	Please provide year of publication for Cervera-Marzal and Frère (Forthcoming).	

There are already a lot of sentences and interviews set as extras. I would prefere to keep it
like that but in case of necessity YES