

"Macaronesia`s Solidarity Economy, an Ecocentric Concept - on the road to the Ecocene (Oikoscene) or the Chthulucene ?"

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Abstract

When, at the end of the 1980s in the Autonomous Region of the Azores (Portugal), the process began that led, later, in the mid-1990s, to the emergence of the concept of the Macaronesian Solidarity Economy (involving, in a European INTERREG Project, also the Republic of Cape Verde and the Autonomous Regions of the Canary Islands - Spain and Madeira - Portugal), it was decisive to observe the activities and initiatives that were taking place, and to dialogue and learn from the authors of these activities. From this authentic "Ecology of Knowledge" (Santos, 2007), it became clear that the new type of economy being practised had a multidimensional and substantive dynamic (Polanyi, 2021 and Laville, 2018), involving eight projects or dimensions: These were the economic, social, environmental, cultural, territorial, cognitive, managerial and political dimensions (Amaro and Madelino, 2004, Amaro, 2009, Amaro, 2011 and Amaro, 2016), later added to by a ninth project or dimension, the ethical one (Amaro, Correia & Ferreira, 2022).

But the fundamental "discovery", probably facilitated by the island and archipelagic nature of the four territories and the intense and telluric relationship established between human beings and nature, including other living beings and, perhaps more importantly, abiotic elements (such as geological ones, so present in the volcanic phenomena so frequent there), was the **ecocentric and not merely anthropocentric perspective of Solidarity present in these economic activities.**

This ecocentric view of Solidarity and, consequently, of the Economy and, even more so, of Life and the Universe, contrasts with the predominant anthropocentric view of Life, Nature and the Universe in the last 200 years, after the Industrial Revolution, which in turn followed predominantly theocentric views.

From the ontological point of view of History as read by human beings, we can then speak of three great periods: the Theocene, the Anthropocene and the Ecocene or Oikoscene, which is now beginning... if we have the creativity and courage to do so and if the Anthropocene doesn't stop it and destroy Life, all types of Life.

The aim of this communication is to show how an Ecocentric Solidarity Economy can make a decisive contribution to a new historical period centred on Our Common Home, or Oikos, i.e. the Ecocene,

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articulating and combining all its elements, living or not, in a logic of Sympoietic Cooperation (Haraway, 2016), and also in what ways this scenario combines with the concept of the Chthulucene, a neologism proposed by Donna Haraway (Haraway, 2016), or with the "pachamamist" perspectives of Buen Viver (Giraldo, 2014 and Lalander, 2015) or even recovers some of Aldo Leopold's proposals (Leopold, 1968 and Knight & Riedel, 2002).

Keywords: Solidarity Economy, Ecocene, Chthulucene, Macaronesia.

1. Introduction and methodological framework

Macaronesia is a term of Greek origin meaning Fortunate Islands (*Makarón* - Happiness and *Nesoi* - Islands), to designate the four North Atlantic archipelagos situated close to the coasts of Europe and Africa and west of the Strait of Gibraltar - the Autonomous Regions of the Azores and Madeira (Portugal), the Autonomous Region of the Canary Islands (Spain) and the Republic of Cape Verde.

Between the late 1980s and early 1990s, a process developed in the Azores to tackle serious situations of poverty and social exclusion, which resulted in innovative economic responses, from which the concept of Solidarity Economy emerged inductively. Later, the economic practices trialled and the concept proposed in the Azores were shared with other Macaronesian regions in the context of various European projects, defining and consolidating an innovative concept of Solidarity Economy, in an original formulation.

One of the epistemological innovations of this concept is its ecocentric perspective, contrasting with the anthropocentric visions dominant in other versions of the Solidarity Economy concept and in mainstream economics.

The main aim of this text is to characterise and analyse this initial process in the Azores and its extension to Macaronesia and the resulting ecocentric concept of Solidarity Economy, in contrast to the anthropocentric perspectives that are largely dominant, including in other Solidarity Economy proposals.

If the widespread dominance of anthropocentric perspectives has marked the last 250 years or so (since the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution), characterising what is usually called the Anthropocene, the emergence of ecocentric logics could be the sign and the challenge for a new historical period, which could be called the Ecocene (or Oikoscene), centred not on the self-sufficiency and arrogance of the Human Being (male...), but rather on our Common Home (Oikos). Therefore, a second objective of this reflection is to establish bridges with Donna Haraway's approach to the "Anthropocene, Capitalocene and Chthulucene" (Haraway, 2016).

With these objectives in mind, this analysis consists of five more points, in addition to this Introduction.

The second point presents the fundamental theoretical framework for this reflection, centred on the concept of Solidarity Economy in its main versions. This section also explains the methodological choices made for the analysis.

The third section characterises the initial social situation in the Azores, which determined the process that led to the innovative economic experiments, that were the basis for the concept of Solidarity Economy.

The fourth point discusses the process of sharing these experiences with the other three Macaronesian regions, especially with the Republic of Cape Verde, within the framework of various European projects under the INTERREG Programme (then MAC).

The fifth point characterises and reflects the ecocentric identity of the Solidarity Economy concept, which was inductively built up from the economic responses promoted in the Azores and then consolidated with the reflections and projects shared with the other regions of Macaronesia, especially Cape Verde.

Finally, the last point presents some conclusions, particularly on the possible relationships and interactions between the ecocentric perspective of the Macaronesian Solidarity Economy concept and the corresponding hypothesis of a historical period called the Ecocene (or Oikoscene) and Donna Haraway's reflections and proposals on the Anthropocene, Capitalocene and Chthulucene.

From a methodological point of view, this article was written by combining three methods: bibliographical research and analysis; documentary research and analysis (of documents presenting and characterising Solidarity Economy organisations in Macaronesia); participant observation by the authors, accompanying several of the organisations in question; and active involvement in several of the moments in the history of Solidarity Economy in Macaronesia, in an Action-Research logic (Fals Borda and Rahman, 1091; Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014; and Lewin, 1946).

2. The concept of Solidarity Economy - theoretical framework

The emergence of the Solidarity Economy concept is usually associated with the 1980s and above all with two geographical and cultural currents: Latin American and European.

In the case of Latin America, the concept of Solidarity Economy has sought to systematise a diverse set of initiatives or "*emprendimientos*", linked to informal popular economy activities, the labour economy (particularly companies that are occupied and converted into self-managed cooperatives by workers), community activities and mutual aid, often religiously inspired (linked to Liberation Theology and the Basic Ecclesial Communities) and indigenous survival economies.

Paul Singer (Brazil) is undoubtedly the most referenced author of this current, and is mainly linked to the more labour and trade union perspective of the Solidarity Economy (Singer, 1997 and 2002 and Singer e Souza, 2000). He was also National Secretary for Solidarity Economy in Lula da Silva's first two governments (2003-2010) and in Dilma Rousseff's two governments (2011-2016).

He defined the Solidarity Economy as follows (Singer, 2002: 9):

"In order for us to have a society in which equality between all its members, it would be necessary for the economy to be one of solidarity rather than competition. This means that

participants in economic activity should co-operate with each other instead of competing” (we translate).

And further on (ibidem):

“Solidarity in the economy can only be achieved if it is organised on an equal footing by those who join together to produce, trade, consume or save. The key to this proposal is association between equals rather than contracts between unequals. In a production cooperative, the prototype of a solidarity company, all the members have the same share of the capital and, consequently, the same voting rights in all decisions. This is its basic principle.” (we translate).

Another pioneering author in the Solidarity Economy approach is the Chilean Luis Razeto (Razeto, 1984, 1997, 1999 and 2010). For this author, the "Economy of Solidarity", i.e. the combination of Economy and Solidarity, an unusual relationship³, implies "the search for a new structure of society that is capable of constituting a new structural relationship between economy, politics and culture, in which solidarity is the founding and preponderant ethical element" (Razeto, 1997: 35). It means that "When we say 'Economy of Solidarity', we are suggesting the need to introduce Solidarity in the economy, to incorporate solidarity in the theory and practice of the economy." (idem: 4). The result is "a new way of doing economics, a new economic rationality" (idem: 5) and a democratisation of the market (Razeto, 1984 - we translate).

He yet points out that:

“Cooperative, self-managed, mutual and other similar experiences, lacking their own conceptual and analytical tools to guide them in their decision-making processes, often resort to those analytical tools provided by conventional economic science, which has been formulated on the basis of experiences and operational rationalities that are very different from, and in a certain sense opposed to those of solidarity.” (Razeto, 2010: 51 - we translate).

Another leading author, Luiz Inácio Gaiger (Brazil - 2009, 2015, 2021 and 2023) also emphasises the importance of self-management, participation and cooperation as central components of the Solidarity Economy concept:

“In the solidarity vector, the self-management dimension is linked to democracy, participation and autonomy of the SEE in its management processes, relating both to members and to external organisations and forces; the cooperation dimension refers to values and practices of mutuality, collaboration, social commitment and gratuitousness.” (Gaiger, 2015: 48 - we translate).

He also mentions the central importance of the economic principle of Reciprocity for the Solidarity Economy (Gaiger, 2023).

Another important author, José Luis Coraggio (Argentina - 2005 and 2012) values the popular economy and what he calls the "labour economy" as two of the most essential foundations of the Solidarity

³ To illustrate this poor relationship between economics and solidarity, the author even quotes a famous 1921 article by Charles Gide, the first economist to hold a chair in Social Economics at the Sorbonne (Paris), entitled "Why economists don't like co-operation"...(Razeto, 1997: 2).

Economy in Latin America, pointing out that the "labour economy" is a utopian ideal, in which the extended reproduction of Life takes precedence over the reproduction of capital, which is dominant in the capitalist mode of production (Coraggio, 2012).

The importance and precise meaning of Solidarity in this concept is well explained by another author from this current - Armando Lisboa:

“The novelty, strength and difference of the solidarity economy is centred around the idea of ‘solidarity’. In the solidarity economy, solidarity is not just an adjective. It is central and gives a new shape to economic logic and metabolism. As the solidarity economy incorporates solidarity, making it the centre of economic activity, the name socio-economy of solidarity is more appropriate, because it makes explicit both the embedment of the economy in society and its subordination to it.” (Lisboa, 2005: 110 - we translate).

In the European trend (which also includes French-speaking Canada, Québec), the most referenced experiences and the most relevant authors are French and Catalan. Jean-Louis Laville (Laville, 2009, 2010 and 2018; Laville et al., 2005; Laville e Gaiger, 2009; Laville et Salmon, 2015; and Eynaud and Laville, 2017) stands out above all others. For this author, the Solidarity Economy is fundamentally defined by the following characteristics (Laville, 2009, 2010 and 2018: 241-268 and Laville e Gaiger, 2009):

- Its theoretical basis is the economic principle of Reciprocity;
- It sees itself as a plural economy, also mobilising the economic principles of the Market, Redistribution and Domestic Administration to reinforce its core economic principle of Reciprocity;
- It is based on democratic, horizontal and emancipatory Solidarity, which differs from the philanthropic solidarity often found in the Social Economy;
- It combines its plural economy project with plural democracy, both internally (self-management) and in the public arena;
- It proposes a concept of "public" and "public action", connected to the dynamics of the Solidarity Economy, which goes beyond the state, involving civil society and communities;
- It establishes a very intimate and creative relationship with the theme of the Commons (see also Eynaud and Laville, 2017).

In short, the Solidarity Economy proposes "another economy", "beyond the market", based on a "different kind of democratic solidarity" and a "politics beyond the state", with "public action to be reinvented" and "social change to be rethought" (Laville, 2018: 269-278).

Also interesting is the proposal by another French author, Eric Dacheux, who defends the thesis that the participatory and democratic dynamics of the Solidarity Economy can innovate in the creation of a Radical Democracy, which can configure a model that he calls Deliberalism, against neo-liberalism (Dacheux et Goujon, 2020, 2022 and 2024).

We should also emphasise the bridges that have been established in this current between Solidarity Economy and Feminist Economics and the Care Economy, especially by authors such as Isabelle Hillenkamp, Isabelle Guérin and Christine Verschuur, claiming the importance and interest of a "double

vision" and proposing an economy that can be plural, solidarity-based, democratic and feminist (Hillenkamp, Guérin et Verschuur, 2014, Hersent et Guérin, 2014; Guérin, 2003; and Verschuur, Guérin et Hillenkamp, 2015).

Also noteworthy are the experiences framed by the Catalan Solidarity Economy Network (*Xarxa Catalana de Economia Solidaria*) and by authors such as Jordi Estivill, Jordi Garcia Sané and Ivan Miró (Estivill, 2009, Sané, 2010 and Estivill and Miró, 2020, for example), pointing out in particular the specificities of the "Mediterranean course" and the strong links to the original ideals of worker-based and libertarian co-operativism, so historically present in Catalonia.

It is also worth mentioning some contributions from the US, namely from a perspective that can be categorised as neo-anarchist, by authors such as Ethan Miller, a founding member of the U.S. Solidarity Economy Network, and Michael Albert. The first emphasises that "solidarity economy is not so much a *model of economic organization* as it is a *process of economic organizing*; it is not a *vision*, but an active process of collective *visioning*" (Miller, 2010: 3). The latter proposed the concept of "Parecon", a "new economy based on democracy, justice and ecological sustainability", combining the words "Participatory" and "Economy", in order to emphasise the importance of a participatory approach to the economy, in perfect harmony with the concept of Solidarity Economy (Albert, 2003).

3. The social context of departure in the Azores

In the 1980s, the Autonomous Region of the Azores was an "unequal society with various situations of poverty and social and psychosocial exclusion", although statistical data on the social situation for this period is very scarce (Amaro, Correia e Ferreira, 2022: 10).

However, the existing data and, above all, the qualitative information and observations available allow us to identify three major situations of social fragility and challenges at that time: poor families suffering social exclusion, young people with organic disabilities and functional incapacities, and adults deported from the United States and Canada (idem: 10-16).

Firstly, the situations of extreme poverty, social exclusion, marginalised behaviour and multiple risks were the real expression of the indignities that marked the society of S. Miguel⁴, affecting adult women and men as well as young people and the elderly, in areas such as Bairro das Laranjeiras and the parish of S. Roque, in Ponta Delgada, the parish of Rabo de Peixe (especially near the harbour), in the municipality of Ribeira Grande and the municipality of Lagoa (idem: 12).

Another situation that was also referred to as very fragile, especially by psychologists, teachers and other education technicians, as well as mothers and fathers themselves, was that of children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs, for whom there were not enough appropriate responses, and who were left exclusively, or almost exclusively, in the hands of their families, often without support, effectively living on the margins of society, in other words, in social exclusion (idem: 12).

⁴ The main island of the Azores archipelago.

At the end of the 1980s, a new social problem hit the Autonomous Region of the Azores: the Repatriates, also known as Deportees. These were individuals (the vast majority of whom were male), born in the Azores or of Azorean descent, and therefore with Portuguese nationality, who had emigrated to the United States and Canada, often since childhood, or were even born in those countries, and whom the justice systems began to expel, deporting them to their countries/regions of origin (in this case, to the Azores), without prior warning to the respective authorities, for having committed a certain type of crime.

The first recorded case was in 1987 (from Canada), but it quickly accelerated, especially from the US, reaching its peak at the end of the 1990s, largely as a result of the more securitarian and punitive legislative developments in that country, especially since 1996⁵ (idem:13-15).

In addition to identifying and characterising these serious problems and social injustices, there was also a clear awareness, on the part of some groups, of the insufficiency or non-existence of public responses, in the context of the very late and incomplete implementation of the welfare state in Portugal, timidly initiated in the so-called "Marcellista spring", but in fact only implemented after 25 April 1974, some 30 years later than in most Western European countries, and at a time when it was already beginning to be attacked by the first neo-liberal anti-social state offensives, that were unleashed afterwards. Although these shortcomings were generalised throughout the country, they were particularly evident in the Autonomous Region of the Azores and in the areas of the problems highlighted in the previous paragraphs (idem: 15).

Faced with the observations made in the previous points, a small group of people linked to the Social and Parish Centres, especially, in the initial phase, St Peter's and St Joseph's, and to Education, became motivated and mobilised to take action, after becoming aware of the existing situations, the associated injustices and the need to build responses that would be opportunities for choice, for projects of change. and life alternatives for the social groups most affected by the problems mentioned: poverty and social exclusion, passed down from generation to generation; pre-delinquency among young people; social marginalisation due to organic disabilities; deportation (idem: 16).

In addition to these findings, Portugal's entry into the European Union has provided opportunities. With the support of the European Social Fund, this group of people promoted a series of training and skills-building activities for the disadvantaged people mentioned.

As a working platform, there were some Social and Parish Centres that were more closely involved with these situations of vulnerability, such as St Peter's (which had the Laranjeiras neighbourhood on its territory, where some families from Rabo de Peixe had come) and St Joseph's (which was already dealing with children and young people with special educational needs), these two centres presented and then organised training projects under the European programmes NOW (for women), HORIZON (for people with heightened vulnerabilities, such as young people at risk of delinquency and marginalisation, adolescents and young people with disabilities and deportees) and P.E.D.R.A.A. (for young people, especially those with special educational needs), between the late 1980s and early 1990s (idem: 21-24).

⁵ On the main security and punitive measures of the US administrations, see, for example: Rocha e Borralho (coord.) (2012), pp. 19-21; and Kanstroom e Chico (2012), pp. 99-112.

But after the trainings, despite being empowered, people continued to be seen as "people on the margins" and therefore unable to find opportunities. Society still saw them as "incapable". It was at this point that the idea of creating economic organisations arose, but without relying on philanthropic support. From the outset, they sought to be an economy based on solidarity, democracy and sustainability, but an economy of quality, with value in itself. This is how the first two so-called Solidarity Economy initiatives were born in the Azores in the mid-1990s, although they were still unfamiliar with the concept and experiences of Latin America and Europe: KAIRÓS - Cooperativa de Incubação de Iniciativas de Economia Solidária (Cooperative for the Incubation of Solidarity Economy Initiatives) and the "Aurora Social" Association (idem: 24-28).

In the following years, until 2000, a further 19 Solidarity Economy projects were set up, with a demonstration effect. That year saw the creation of the Azores Solidarity Economy Network - CRESAÇOR - Cooperativa Regional de Economia Solidária dos Açores, a second level co-operative (idem: 28-36).

4. From the Azores to Macaronesia

Taking advantage of co-operations and joint projects that already existed with two other nearby ultra-peripheral regions, belonging to the European Union (the Autonomous Regions of the Canary Islands and Madeira), particularly in the social field, the Solidarity Economy was extended to Macaronesia, as part of various European Union projects, in which Cape Verde was included as a "third country".

Within the framework of the INTERREG III B European Programme, then PCT MAC (Madeira, Azores and Canary Islands Transnational Cooperation Programme), several projects focusing on the Solidarity Economy were promoted between 2001 and 2013, based on transregional partnerships between IAS - Instituto de Acção Social dos Açores, CRESAÇOR, Dirección General de Servicios Sociales de Canarias, Instituto Regional de Emprego da Madeira, Direcção Geral de Solidariedade Social de Cabo Verde and Plataforma das ONG de Cabo Verde. (Amaro, Correia e Ferreira, 2022: 36-37).

Some of the most notable projects include: "CORES", "EXTREMOS", "GESFUNDO", "CEESA", "SÍCARO" and "ECOS" projects. Above all, these projects have made it possible to (Amaro, 2011: 157-159; Amaro, 2016: 107-108; and Amaro, Correia e Ferreira, 2022: 37-38):

- Sharing Solidarity Economy practices between protagonists from the four Regions/Countries (all Projects);
- Debate (between Actors and Authors from the four Regions/Countries), define and deepen the concept of Solidarity Economy (CORES Project);
- Lay the foundations for the Solidarity Economy in each Region/Country (CORES Project);
- Develop alternative financing systems and programmes for Solidarity Economy organisations and activities, compatible with their principles and reference values (GESFUNDO Project);
- Create a Solidarity Economy Study Centre and Journal, based in the Azores, to research and report on innovative experiences in this field, systematise and deepen their theoretical foundations and promote practical and theoretical dialogue with other Solidarity Economy knowledge centres on all continents (CEESA Project - Atlantic Solidarity Economy Study Centre);

- Define and apply Integrated Sustainability criteria and indicators for Solidarity Economy organisations in Macaronesia (ECOS Project);
- Organise Transregional Solidarity Economy Fairs, covering the four Regions/Countries (all Projects);
- Organizing International Conferences and Seminars to share and debate practical and theoretical Solidarity Economy issues in the four Regions/Countries, inviting experts in this field from various continents, especially Africa, South America (particularly Brazil) and Europe (particularly Catalonia, Spain, France, England, Portugal and Sweden - all Projects).

Undoubtedly, the two main effects of these projects were to sow the seeds of a "Macaronesian Solidarity Economy Collective", albeit with different reception and repercussions in each region/country, and to define a "Macaronesian Solidarity Economy Concept", distinct from those that have been formulated in Latin America and Europe in the meantime and with which it has been possible to dialogue and debate, not only at the Conferences and Seminars mentioned, but also in the pages of the Journal of Solidarity Economy, the first issue of which came out in 2009.

It has to be said, however, that Cape Verdean organisations clearly adhered much more to the concept of Solidarity Economy, proposed on the basis of the processes initiated in the Azores, than in the Canary Islands and Madeira. Perhaps because in Cape Verde the prevailing cultural values, notably expressed by the Creole phrase "nô djunta mon" ("we join hands"), were more favourable and closer to the values and principles of the Solidarity Economy, while in the Canary Islands the strong presence of traditional Social Economy organisations and networks viewed the proposal of a new concept with great suspicion. In Madeira, the problem was something else: the authoritarianism of the president of the Regional Government, who saw these proposals as the "leftist" tendencies of "Cubans"⁶ from the Mainland.

5. An ecocentric perspective on the Solidarity Economy

It was within this framework that the concept of the "Solidarity Economy of Macaronesia" was defined: in debate and co-construction with the actors and actresses, much more than with authors and academics, much more inductively than deductively, much more from practices, from a perspective that finds its foundations in the "grounded theory" approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

This is the main reason why, although innovative practices began in the late 1980s/early 1990s, the concept was only defined and consolidated at the beginning of the 21st century, more precisely within the framework of the "CORES" project (2001-2004).

Later, the concept entered into dialogue with the perspectives of Latin America, Europe and French-speaking Canada, through the conferences and meetings organised as part of the aforementioned projects. In this context, authors such as Paul Singer, Euclides Mance, Cláudio Furtado, Jean-Louis Laville, Anne Salmon, Viviane Vandemeulebroucke and Jordi Estivill travelled to Azores.

⁶ An expression he used to categorise the Portuguese of the Mainland.

These dialogues allowed the concept of Solidarity Economy of Macaronesia to be deepened and consolidated.

It was clearly an inductive and collective process, involving the protagonists of these “Utopias in Action”, especially during the “CORES” Project. It was based on five fundamental phases or processes (Amaro, Correia and Ferreira, 2022: 41-42):

- Direct observation and analysis of Solidarity Economy experiences and activities;
- Reflection and systematization of these experiences and their characteristics with other academic “Specialists” and with Public Service Technicians involved and Actors/Actresses in the field, from the four Regions/Countries, in formal meetings of the aforementioned projects, especially within the scope of “CORES” Project;
- Share these reflections with other authors and observers, particularly from other countries/continents, at Conferences and Seminars organised in the four Regions/Countries, within the scope of Macaronesia projects;
- Deepening and detailing reflections on concrete experiences and practices, with the protagonists, in multiple informal conversations, at Trans-Regional Fairs and during breaks and free time at Meetings, held in each of the four Regions/Countries involved in the European projects , especially in the “CORES” Project - this was the most important and determining phase of the entire process of inductive construction of the concept;
- Systematization of synthesis and return to the protagonists involved, for a final decision on the terms of the concept to be assumed collectively.

It was therefore a constructive and participatory process, based on an intense dialogue between authors and actors/actresses, where systematically reflecting (in Theory) and evaluating (with Practices), according to a “grounded theory” logic, that is, using an inductive theoretical construction methodology, based on the collection and analysis of data and information, which allows the construction of theoretical hypotheses, in contrast to the hypothetical-deductive model, used in traditional scientific research (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

The concept of Solidarity Economy, based on the experiences and cultural contexts of Macaronesia, is then defined, first of all, centered on (Amaro, Correia e Ferreira, 2022: 56): “Use value, more than exchange value; Systemic Solidarity (including all living beings and all dimensions of Life) and not in Competition; Multidimensional and substantive view of the economic process and not an economic view, uprooted from society and ecosystems; Ecocentric perspective and not merely Anthropocentric, as has predominated in the last approximately 200 years.” (we translate).

“It is a proposal for an Economy that is compatible and supportive of Life, in all its dimensions, respecting it, safeguarding it and valuing it, against the destruction and diminishment to which it has been subject, on the part of economic forms (market and the State) predominant” (ibidem - we translate).

It is defined as the articulation of nine dimensions or projects (Amaro e Madelino, 2004; Amaro, 2009; Amaro, 2011; Amaro, 2016; Amaro, Correia e Ferreira, 2022):

- A plural economic project, centred on the principle of Reciprocity;
- An emancipatory social project, stimulating “empowerment” processes and not philanthropic logics;
- A cultural project respecting diversity and promoting intercultural dialogues;
- An eco-centered environmental project, which values a new relationship with our Common Home (the *OIKOS*);
- A territorial project to support the Local Development of the communities where it is located;
- A cognitive, inductive-based Knowledge project and Permanent Learning, which continues to fuel reflection and renewal of the concept and correction of practices;
- A democratic political project, which frames a logic of Internal Democracy (self-management), which encourages Participatory Democracy in the surrounding public space (community) and which is the basis of co-responsibility in a Shared, Participatory, Integrated and Multi-territorial Governance, with State actors (at global, European, national and local levels) and with market companies;
- An innovative and alternative management project, which is not dependent on the «import» of concepts and instruments coming from «classical business management», but which creates and experiments them;
- An ethical project that respects and promotes the values of Solidarity, Equity, Democracy, Sustainability and Transparency.

As the main specificities and innovations brought by this concept, the following seven stand out above all (Amaro, Correia e Ferreira, 2022: 59-60):

It is a concept with a strongly inductive and participatory basis, permanently under construction and updating, according to a “grounded theory” logic, which is not the usual register of other concepts.

It proposes a multidimensional view of Economy, combining it with eight more dimensions, which is also not the characteristic of other concepts of Economy: that of Market, focuses only on the economic dimension and the purpose of maximizing profit; that of the State (Public Economy), in fact, seeks to combine the economic dimension with the political and social dimension; the Social Economy has traditionally also sought to combine these three dimensions, although it has often devalued or even forgotten” the political dimension (of Participatory Democracy); even the other two versions of Solidarity Economy are usually limited to only some of these dimensions.

In particular, it places an important emphasis on the dimension of Knowledge, in a logic of Knowledge Ecology (Santos, 2007), as happened in its construction, and this dimension is not an explicit part of the definition of the other concepts.

It also attributes an important role to the Ethics dimension, which was added due to the influence of the actors/actresses, and the normal attitude is to ignore the issue of values, in the definition of the concepts, confusing “Ethics” with “Morals”, condemning, in “Science”, what is called normativism, and defending a “scientific” attitude, neutral, objective and “pure”.

It addresses its political dimension, not only in its internal and external components of presence in the public space, but also of co-responsibility, in the regulation of Society's problems, proposing, in this sense, the innovative concept of Shared and Participatory Governance.

It is based on Systemic Solidarity, with seven dimensions (economic, social, cultural, environmental, territorial, cognitive and political), which is also unusual in the definition of other concepts.

It assumes, in an innovative way, the essential principle of an **Ecocentric Solidarity**, therefore with all Living Beings and also with the abiotic elements of our Common Home, and not just with Human Beings, which is the traditional Anthropocentric Solidarity.

This innovative ecocentric perspective is closely related to the character of the Macaronesian islands, where the relationship with Nature is more fragile and relativized, even due to the frequency of episodes of reactivation of volcanoes (Azores, Cape Verde and Canary Islands) and earthquakes, with some frequency (especially in the Azores). All of this limits an arrogant anthropocentric perspective and favors an ecocentric perspective, in which Human Beings are part of a collective that is the Common Home, our “spaceship” (Boulding, 1966).

6. Conclusion - from the Anthropocene to the Ecocene and from the Capitalocene to the Chthulucene ?

The term proposed in this concept, Ecocentrism or, if we want, Ecocene, intends to oppose the term Anthropocene, which refers to the historical period in which Human Beings rejected the gods (the Theocene) and arrogantly assumed themselves as the “lords of the Universe” and Nature, using it as resources for their individual and/or collective interests. This logic was translated, in the 20th century, into two types of society and ideology - capitalism and bureaucratic socialism, both anthropocentric, one with an individualistic discourse, the other with a collectivist discourse.

The Macaronesian Solidarity Economy experience is based on a subconsciousness (more than consciousness) of the relationship and interactions with Nature, so present and so difficult to master in these islands (and thank goodness...).

On the one hand, it is highlighted that the Anthropocene is not only capitalist, but has also historically seen a distorted version of socialism, not exactly capitalist. This does not nullify the term Capitalocene (used by Donna Haraway, 2016), but it relativizes and restores it.

On the other hand, the relativization of the role and place of Human Beings, tellurically imposed on the Macaronesian islands, translated into an ecocentric perspective of the Solidarity Economy, seems to open a path and a possibility for another vision of the Universe and the Economy.

This vision and experience imply understanding, accepting and implementing a complementary relationship with our “companions” in Nature (“making kin”). Which finds a very interesting echo in Donna Haraway's analysis (Haraway, 2016).

In this sense, the term that this author proposes of Chthulucene, from a tentacular perspective, which has as its image, from a biological point of view, a spider (*Pimoida cthulhu*) and other beings and

bacteria, which move under the earth, is extremely interesting for a challenge... tentacular with our kin in Nature.

From this perspective, the proposal for the term Chthulucene enriches and complements what is proposed here with the ecocentric vision of Life and of the Solidarity Economy (which does not happen explicitly with the other concepts of Solidarity Economy) and, therefore, with the Ecocene (or *Oikoscene*). With one difference: Ecoceno is easy to explain and say to any actor or actress of the Solidarity Economy, as well as in Society. It will be more difficult with Chthulucene.

Another interesting aspect is that the ecocentric vision of Life and the Solidarity Economy is perfectly aligned with the "pachamamist" perspectives of Buen Viver (Giraldo, 2014 and Lalander, 2015) or even recovers some of Aldo Leopold's proposals (Leopold, 1968 and Knight & Riedel, 2002). This is a reflection to be announced here and to be developed in other contexts.

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