

Social Solidarity Economy and Worker Cooperative:

The case of *Happy Bridge Cooperative* in Korea

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Inchang SONG¹, Jong Ho WON² & Seungkwon JANG³

This study aims to investigate and describe the status and role of worker cooperatives in terms of social solidarity economy through the case study of Happy Bridge Cooperative (Happy Bridge) in Korea. Cooperatives are paid increasingly attention as an alternative to amend the current social and economic problems. Among them, worker cooperatives are important contributors to social solidarity economy. Happy Bridge, one of the largest worker cooperative in Korea, has reached sales of 38 million US Dollar (42.5 billion Korean Won), and membership of 73 in 2016. It should be highlighted that Happy Bridge originally a joint stock company has decided to mutualize to be a worker cooperative in 2013. The business model of Happy Bridge is a cooperative franchise system, which supplies processed food materials to franchisees. Through the transformation process of cooperative, Happy Bridge have witnessed the precarious situations of organizational democracy including explosive voices expressing complaints. Nevertheless Happy Bridge has tried enthusiastically to build an ecosystem of social solidarity economies with helping and promoting various social solidarity economy actors. In conclusion, practical implications of worker cooperative in social solidarity economy are suggested through the case of Happy Bridge.

Keywords: Social Solidarity Economy, Worker Cooperative, Happy Bridge Cooperative, Cooperative Business System, Organizational Democracy

¹ CEO, HBM Cooperatives Management Institute, Seoul, Korea, hansic21@gmail.com

² Doctoral Student, Department of Management of Co-operatives, Graduate School, Sungkonghoe University, Seoul, Korea, jongho1@skhu.kr

³ Professor, Department of Management of Co-operatives, Graduate School, Sungkonghoe University, Seoul, Korea, serijang@skhu.ac.kr