Beyond the Business Case

A Community Economies Approach to Gender, Development and Social Economy

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Abstract

This paper makes a case for reconfiguring current gender and development initiatives that rest on the business case for investing in women as "smart economics" toward non-capitalist practices and ideals associated with the social and solidarity economy. Drawing upon the Community Economies approach of "taking back the economy," we identify the limitations and possibilities for appropriating toward alternative ends the ideals of care, cooperation and interdependence invoked in business-case gender policy frameworks. While cognizant of the potential for cooptation of projects of social economy given the neoliberal economization of social relations that characterizes the business case for gender equity in development, we also locate space to imagine some innovative forms of social economy that can emerge within development's own fragmented discourses and practices. Finally, we offer some suggestions for connecting gender and development to a politics of ethical transformation toward non-capitalist subjectivities that engages gender with a social and solidarity economy framework.

Introduction

Over the past decade or so, attention to gender has moved from the margins to the center of development rhetoric and practice. With this shift, many of those issues once viewed as "outside" of development – such as non-capitalist production and unpaid non-market transactions - are now foregrounded as resources for fostering economic and social progress. So, too, are attitudes once determined as "non-economic" such as care, cooperation and interdependence. In this sense, the gender turn in development can be viewed as a project of potential transformation toward social and solidarity economy (SSE) ends, where space for economic justice, non-market production and social subjectivities of care, cooperation and interdependence is recognized, negotiated and expanded.[1]

But while the inclusion of gender and economic difference marks an important shift in thinking, it has not been matched by an attempt to imagine economic development in new ways. This is true of institutional approaches at the World Bank and elsewhere, which largely reduce issues of gender and economic difference, including insights about household labor and women's caring and cooperative motivations, to a "business case" for investing in women as "smart economics," aimed at capturing market efficiencies and growth. But it is also true of left and feminist critics, who by and large dismiss this attention to gender and difference as "business as usual" in which progressive efforts to bring attention to non-market and care economies are subsumed to a logic of neoliberal capitalism that determines the course of development.

While we are sympathetic to critical feminist concerns about how progressive ideals can be steered toward neoliberal ends in global development – in fact one of us has written on this topic for a decade – we are also left thinking that the way these concerns are currently framed limit feminist and left interventions. It seems to us that critical voices have granted too much power to global capitalism such that even these emerging possibilities for imagining economy otherwise are viewed as being subsumed within a neoliberal project. Further, we worry that the guiding narratives used to represent the (im)possibility for transformation also participate in *performing* that world by portraying alternatives as weak and destined for defeat. This further limits space to build on the expressed intentions of progressive frameworks in order to foster economic difference produced within an ethical dynamic of development.

This paper represents our attempt to move beyond the business case discourse that haunts contemporary gender and development. Our project involves re-reading the inclusion of non-capitalist processes and alternative subjectivities into development in ways that might open space for social transformation toward both gender equity and SSE ends. By

[1] for a discussion of these concepts as central within many of the competing meanings of SSE, see Ash Amin, *The Social Economy*, particularly essays 1, 5 and 7.

re-reading for difference, we hope to expand the terrain of development to include unpaid household and community production -as well as values and subjectivities that revolve around justice, care and cooperation – as irreducible to capitalism. We also hope to contribute to a political project of building upon and transforming the expressed intensions of gender and development to foster ethical dynamics, a goal which we believe are shared by a wide range of feminist and SSE activists and scholars.

Our work draws heavily upon new understandings of economic difference developed by J.K. Gibson-Graham and the Community Economics Collective (which one of us has been a member of for thirteen years) to "take back" the economy.[2] This work highlights the importance of alternative, non-capitalist economic practices that are otherwise devalued and marginalized in both mainstream and critical discourses, and disrupts the presumptive dominance of capitalism. A further insight of this work is that with a recognition of economic difference comes the possibility of a different political economy of development--one that involves a process of ethical negotiation around shared concerns within the "community economy."

Our re-reading of gender and development initiatives for difference and ethical negotiation also connects to the diversity of economic practices and subjectivities brought into being by social movements associated w/ social and solidarity economies. Finally, it attempts to engage with some current projects of rethinking development itself. By highlighting the fragmented and partial nature of capitalism, we create space for acknowledging the contingency of neoliberal projects that emerge from development institutions such as the World Bank. This may help to imagine and bring about forms of social and solidarity economy that can emerge within development's own polyvalent discourses and practices (Ferguson 2010).

The "business case" for gender and development: social justice or business as usual?

While issues related to women and gender have been included in development since the 1980s, they have become more central within international development policy and aid during the last ten years.[3] The focus of gender and development has also shifted significantly during this time. Where past practices were often structured by a "common sense" of the inevitability of global marketization that was forged around the Washington Consensus - paying little or no attention to equity considerations, power dynamics, caring labor, local and participatory economic practices and so forth - a new agenda has emerged that supports many of the alternatives associated with gender equity and social/ solidarity economies called for by progressives. Now, gender and development policies take care work into account, value participatory approaches and associative values,

[2]For more information, see http://www.communityeconomies.org.

[3] Some examples include the adoption of Women's Empowerment Principles by UN Global Compact in 2009, the creation of UN Women in 2011, the World Bank's choice of gender equality as the theme of its 2012 *World Development Report*, the Girl Effect Campaign of the Nike Foundation, and *10,000 women* advocacy campaign of Goldman Sachs corporation.

support microcredit and local development, and claim to take poverty seriously.

Of particular note in this shift, for us, is the placement of activities and motivations formerly viewed as "outside" the economy as now crucial to economic success. In the past, activities associated with social reproduction such as caring labor, subsistence production, voluntary efforts, and community work had been invisibilized (Bakker and Gill 2003). Now new projects of gender and development are now addressing this variety of economic practices associated with social reproduction directly (Bedford 2009). In addition to recognizing non-market production such as work in households and voluntary activities, development policy now values motivations and ethics not usually associated with the market, such as care and cooperation. With regard to care, development texts increasingly offer stories about "rational economic women" (Rankin 2001) whose combination of altruism, cooperation and efficiency make them ideal clients of development. Women are targeted for development projects because in their presumed role as carers they are more likely to use their income to better their children's and communities' well being (World Bank 2001, World Bank 2012). For example, women migrants are said to send a higher percentage of their remittances home to their families than men because of their caring nature (United Nations 2009, 74), and with these assumptions in mind countries like the Philippines have specifically targeted women as the ideal migrant workers from the perspective of the home country (Parrenas 2008). Policies that value an ethic of care have even been extended to men to foster caring motivations toward their children and partners to get them to share more care work in their households (Bedford 2009). The cooperative proclivities of women are seen as related to their ethic of care as "working in partnership tends to be more of a female attitude, experience and asset" (Picciotto1998, 1). Women's greater cooperative attitudes are now valued as a form of social capital that allows them to engage in collective, and what we might even refer to as "solidarity economy," practices such as microcredit lending circles. Thus current gender and development policy is not as fixated on capitalist markets or individualistic rationality as in past frameworks. It includes a recognition of those non-capitalist practices and motivations such as unpaid household and community work, care, and collective allegiances that had previously been imagined as un-economic.

Ideologically and rhetorically, these recent gender and development initiatives are tied together by what is broadly referred to as the "business case" for gender equality.[4] The business case approach sees gender equity as instrumentally valuable for achieving economic goals. To offer one prominent example, the World Bank's 2012 *World Development Report* begins with the assertion that "gender equality is a core development objective in its own right. It is also smart economics." The business case now extends to a wide array of conversations about gender equity in development, including labor, credit, land, and even gender-based violence. For example the managing

[4] See for instance the World Bank's *World Development Report; Gender Equality and Development* (2012) and its *Gender Equality as Smart Economics* (2006), Goldman Sachs Womenomics: The Time is Now (2010), International Labour Organization's *Women in Labour Markets* (2010), the Nike Girl Effect Campaign http://nikeinc.com/pages/the-girl-effect.

director of the World Bank recently stated that the only way to really get the problem of violence against women on the policy map was to show it causes GDP loss (Antsey 2013).

This marks a significant shift in thinking from previous decades when the social goals associated with gender equity were viewed as unrelated to, or at odds with, efficiency goals of economic growth and productivity. While the "smart economics" approach focuses largely on integrating women into wage-labor, it also recognizes forms of economic difference, including non-market production and an ethic of care. For example, business case discourse tends to view women as a particularly *good* investment because their ethic of care makes them more likely to use their income to improve the wellbeing of their children and their families. As the 2012 *World Development Report: Gender Equality and Development* states, "(g)reater control over household resources by women leads to more investment in children's human capital, with dynamic positive effects on economic growth" (World Bank 2012, 5). Investing in altruistic women, then, is seen as contributing to the development of human capital in not only themselves, but in their children through improved nutrition, better health, and higher rates of educational attainment (ibid.). Further, attention has been placed on recognizing the economic contributions of non-capitalist activities. For example, policies now aim to make households more egalitarian in order to reduce the inequity of women's care burdens, with the belief that these efforts will improve the wellbeing of family members and also yield economic efficiencies (Bedford 2009). This attention to the household as a locus of gender struggle and a sphere or production marks an extraordinary shift from past practices.

Yet despite the expanded space for tackling gender equity in development, and acknowledgement that policies must be carried out in a broadened economic terrain that extends beyond the market, these recent changes have not engendered much optimism on the part of left and feminist observers. For many, the business case for gender equity is better understood as "business as usual:" a reformed project of neoliberalism which is wrapped in a rhetoric of gender equity, care, community and the like that makes it all the more insidious. This shape shifting neoliberalism is an effort to increase the "penetration of capital into new spaces and social relations" (Roberts 2008, 535). The language of gender equity, participation and microcredit, care etc. is an attempt to gain legitimacy with some of its former critics, but what little space this language creates for effecting real change is prone to be coopted.

Through dominant forms of development discourse, these glimmers of alternative economy become subsumed to capitalist logics. Microcredit fits more closely with the project of expanding global finance rather than fostering cooperation, by integrating women into circuits of global credit and the marketized production sphere (Roy 2010, Karim 2011). The ethic of care attributed to poor migrant women does not make them more valuable or supported in development, but rather more subject to exploitation in a "global care chain" that provides remittances to cash-strapped countries as sources of international aid have dried up (Hochschild and Ehrenreich, 2003). Attention to caring labor is less about acknowledging the contribution this work makes to human wellbeing

as it is about removing constraints to women's labor force participation (Razavi 2012). Further, development's attention to households often poses a marketization solution to women's care burdens, substituting commodity goods and services for those formerly produced in the home through projects of capitalist accumulation (Bakker 2007).

Even the ethic of care is subsumed to a reformed neoliberal governance strategies aimed not only at restructuring the economy but also in reorienting economic subjects in ways that serve politico-economic objectives of neoliberalism. For example, gender and development policies call upon values of care by attempts at constructing women as altruistic and self-managing economic subjects who do not have to rely on state supports. (Brodie 2005). These neoliberal projects of subjectivication are especially pernicious as they reproduce patriarchal and heteronormative structures of power (Bergeron 2011). They maintain traditional gender roles of caring, even as they claim to transform them, in attempts to harness women's contribution to economic goals such as capitalist efficiency in their presumed identities as wives and mothers (Roy 2010, Chant 2006, Molyneux 2006).

Beyond the business case: Imagining economy - and development - otherwise

In reflecting on these careful feminist analyses of gender and development policy, we are struck by the frequency with which they conclude, somewhat depressingly, that seemingly progressive initiatives are fated to be subsumed to the dominant logic of neoliberal capitalism. Its not that we necessarily disagree with the argument that feminist aims can be thwarted when filtered through certain aspects of neoliberal governmentality in development. And further, we appreciate the counternarrative these authors provide to the claims made by development institutions that the consolidation of gender policy under the "business case" constitutes a victory for equity and social justice, when so clearly it is not. But we worry that the way the neoliberal project of development is presented in this literature - as a *fait accompli* – makes it difficult to imagine projects outside of it. The theoretical choice made in representing these innovations in gender and development within a discourse of capitalism as a self-regulating force gives little breathing space to the glimmers of alternative economic and social practices that might emerge from them. Instead, it restricts us to the perspective of the critic who can only voice their ethical concerns in relation to a lamentable inevitability.

For example, the explicit inclusion of unpaid household labor within new development frameworks is viewed as either mobilizing non-market efforts to support capitalist profitability, or drawing households into processes of marketization that include additional participation in wage labor and capitalist consumption circuits. Here, the activities in the household are represented as occurring within a system determined by capitalism, rather than part of a diverse economic landscape. Similarly, development's acknowledgement of affects and practices associated with care and interdependence are, for feminist critics, framed through a representational politics in which they are subordinate to global capitalism. And indeed, to the extent that they are viewed through the narrow efficacy lens as "resources" for achieving market efficiency and growth within dominant discourses, feminist critics are not wrong in criticizing these framings.

But instead of challenging these representational politics with an alternative view of household economies, cooperative efforts, etc. as retaining some independent dynamics within a heterogeneous economic landscape, the critics tend to view the dynamics of change as singular. This ontological commitment to defining everything with reference to capitalism as a determining force, we worry, accedes political space that might be open for cultivating economic subjects-in-becoming who are guided by motivations of care, ethical concern and collectivity (Graham and Amariglio 2006). By assuming outcomes are structurally given and foreclosing the possibility for economic difference, the critics may unwittingly increase the credibility of those institutions and actors who argue we have no choice but to go along with the market and pursue a "business case" for gender equity in the first place.

In this regard, much of the critical feminist scholarship on the business case is engaged in what James Ferguson has referred to as the "politics of denunciation" (Ferguson 2009) that dominates left development criticism. Ferguson makes a case for moving beyond this oppositional stance to examining the potential affinities that might exist between neoliberalism and progressive politics. Through a study of the basic income grant program in South Africa, he shows how a neoliberal social policy aimed at expanding investments in human capital and inculcating rational subjectivities in its clients also achieved progressive, pro-poor outcomes. While Ferguson does not make an explicit link between this politics of denunciation and a discourse of economy organized around a centering order of capitalism, for us that link seems tight. Many critics view development institutions as handmaidens of neoliberalism. Even those critics who acknowledge and value a diversity of economic practices including non-market household production, economic forms characterized by values of care and interdependence, communal production – including the feminist scholars we cite above – give too much power to the capitalist economy as an arbiter of possibility (Gibson-Graham 2006, 53). And when development is seen doing the work of "global capitalism," it is itself presented as a unified force, rather than a site of contradiction and contestation over a divergence of political projects (Ferguson 2009, 182).

So while we agree with the feminist critics that we cannot move forward without acknowledging the ways that the business case is implicated in reformed projects of neoliberalism, we also cannot afford to be caught up in a one-sided politics of denunciation that enacts a determining global capitalist order. What if instead we could acknowledge these glimmers of caring and interdependence, unpaid and community labor, social policy and concern about equity, through an imaginary of development and change in which the possibility for other economies can emerge? How would we begin to decenter projects of neoliberal subjectivication by finding space within gender and development for fostering projects of "individual self-transformation (which) are the foundation on which alternative economic interventions are built" (Gibson-Graham 2006, xxv)? How might we place care and interdependence at the center, rather the margins, of our politics? How could we begin to imagine gender and development otherwise in ways that align with SSE aims, by placing the diversity of economic activity and thus our ethical commitments to the possible more centrally? These are some of the questions to which we now turn.

Taking Back the Economy

For us, the recognition of care and cooperation that contributes to the valorization of women as icons of efficiency and altruism in contemporary development theory carries a beguiling promise. But it is one that, as the critics note, isn't delivered in mainstream discourse and practice. This configuration relies upon both a very constrained, essentialized conception of economic subjectivity as rational and calculating tempered by an equally essentialist vision of the feminine-caring subject. Further, while an ethic of care is figured in this discourse, it becomes a means, an instrument of economic growth. This reduction is consistent with broader trends in economic thought. Witness the popularity of Joseph Stiglitz's recent book *The Price of Inequality* (2012) where he makes the case that economic inequality must be addressed because it leads to less than optimal economic growth. In a similar fashion, in the business case approach, gender equity has been captured by a neoliberal governmental logic of efficacy rather than ethical first principles. But are efficiency arguments the only ones that can mobilize forces against poverty? Is our vision and political will so limited that, as the World Bank's managing director recently stated, only the "price tag (of GDP loss) will finally persuade policymakers, communities and societies to take (even) domestic violence seriously"? (Anstley 2013).

Like Stiglitz's argument around the inefficiency of inequality, the logic of instrumental gender equity in contemporary development discourse is appealing because it asks so little of us, and the little that is asked is set against the familiar back drop of a reified economy. Ethical commitment, deliberation and political struggle are not required. What is required is identification of how conditions may be shifted so that the economic logic may play itself out. As appealing as this is, we have two objections. First, by privileging a reified economy, it avoids conversations around ethical commitments as it forestalls their proper nomination. Further, only efforts that support narrowly defined goals of human well-being such as market efficiency and GDP expansion are given space within these instrumental logics. So while we understand why many feminists working in development have employed efficacy arguments to get a hearing, we worry about the distance this places between them and the normative values that motivate them, and all discussions about the economy, in the first place.

Second, and central to our work here, positioning ethical values such as inclusion, care, or equity as instruments of economic growth forecloses ways of imagining how they might be starting points for a different conversation around economy. To be sure, the economy we are habituated to speak of is one where normative commitments are regarded at best as sentimentality and at worst as dangerous and misguided. Speaking of ethics, and an ethic of care in particular, in relation to economics comes with an attendant vulnerability that can be difficult to bear - but this is also what it means to remain in fidelity with ethical principles.

What if we were to abandon this usual language of economy long enough to explore another that allowed for inhabiting the economy as an ethical subject? It is in relation to

this question that we would like to consider two central aspects of the work of the Community Economies Collective, mindful of their consonance with the SSE: the notion of economic difference and how difference creates the possibility for a different relationship between economics and ethics. From our perspective, economic difference foregrounds the possibility of ethical choice and, in so doing, recasts the process of development as one centered on building an economy through ethical negotiation. In our view this re-imagining of development process and the emergent social and solidarity economy makes a profound difference in how we understand gender, market and non-market economic activity, productive and so-called social-reproductive practices.

Economic Difference

The pioneering work of J.K. Gibson-Graham and the Community Economies Collective to imagine a diverse economic landscape begins with a challenge to an unstated premise of much political economy: the presumed dominance of capitalism and the subordinate positioning of all other social relationships and spaces - from households to development institutions, non-market production and the state – within capitalist reproduction. While political economy produces masterful representations of naturalized, dominant capitalism, they argue, these representations re-enforce the discursive dominance of the very thing they aim to critique, and push to the margins non-capitalist economic spaces, relationships and practices. One consequence to this capitalocentric thinking is a reduction in the ethical and political options available to us as feminists in a world where capitalism calls all the shots, making attempts at valuing cooperation, care, non-market household production, cooperative enterprises and so forth weak, fragile, and easily subject to cooptation.

Instead, what if we were to imagine economy differently, as itself made up of heterogeneous forms of production, exchange and distribution? In order to explore this possibility, Gibson-Graham's analysis initially offers a "thin definition" of the economy as the production, circulation and consumption of goods and services, encompassing market and non-market, goods produced from rational as well as care motivations, and so forth. They also offer a "thin definition" of capitalism itself: an organizational form that involves wage workers in the production of goods and services where the surplus wealth they produce is appropriated and subsequently distributed by a group of non-producers (a capitalist owner or board of directors). Given these thin definitions, which do not reduce the economy to capitalism, nor reduce capitalism itself to a particular set of practices and values beyond surplus wage labor extraction, it becomes possible to see other forms of economy. By working within the Marxian tradition that identifies class as process of surplus production, appropriation and distribution, it becomes possible to recognize different forms of enterprise organizations. For example, it is possible to have an alternative capitalist enterprise that is funded through alternative finance such as crowd sourcing. Capitalist firms may or may not own the property or means of production used in their enterprise--choosing instead to rent it. Cooperatives can and do receive finance from mainstream credit institutions. Imagining the economy as a landscape of difference makes visible these heterogeneous practices--which in turn enables us to see the material,

cultural and subjective impacts of these multiple organizational forms on people's lives (e.g. DeMartino 2003, Byrne Healy 2006, Cornwell 2011).

A number of CEC scholars, drawing upon and extending the important work of feminist economists to make household labor more visible, have examined organizational forms of household economies quite closely, and here, we also find a heterogeneous landscape. Some households are organized around traditional partriarchal divisions of labor in which women are assumed with the care role, but there are also independent households (headed by women or men) or households with a more cooperative structure in terms of the division of labor (Cameron 2002). Likewise others have studied how the challenges of informal caregiving for the frail elderly introduce new division of labor in many households including community based mutual aid practices (Healy 2008). Others within the collective have used mixed methodological research to show how major economic transformation, such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, have had on the material economy of households (Pavlovskaya 2004). They have also shown how households, like enterprises, can function internationally in terms of flows of financial support, labor, obligations, and acts of mutual aid (Safri and Graham 2010).[5] This "thin definition" of household economies allows us to register this economic activity as both significant and as the locus of a potential political struggle. For example, through the lens of the diverse economy it becomes possible to see the possible relationship between unpaid caregiving labor and supportive institutions in the community or public sphere, or to imagine conditions that could otherwise reduce the significant care burdens that have been put on households as social supports have diminished. This diverse economy lens also provides further support to the crucial feminist policy project of challenging essentializing views of women in households as always-already carers due to gender divisions of labor in that site. As many households – in fact, a sizable percentage of them – represent alternative forms of economy outside of the patriarchal norm such as individually headed, global householding, cooperative, care among friends, etc., it becomes impossible to assume the particular division of labor from which this feminized caring subjectivity is assumed to spring in the first place. In its place, we begin to see multiple practices of care and caring subjects, and multiple sites where the ethic of care may motivating economic activity – including capitalist firms themselves – thus challenging the gendered binaries of masculine/feminine, rationality/care, capitalism/household that limits so much contemporary development thinking.

Community Economies and subjects-in-becoming

For us, operating within such a landscape of economic difference prefigures the possibility of having intentional, ethically directed conversations about the choices we might make in our individual and collective economic lives. Gibson-Graham refer to this as a process of forming community economies. From Gibson-Graham's perspective,

[5] The research of progressive feminist development scholars has also highlighted the diversity of household forms – often with consternation at the flawed assumption that guides much of current policy that all households conform to the dominant patriarchal norm where women are the primary carers (Chant 2996, Bedford 2009, Bergeron 2011).

moving from a recognition of economic difference to theorizing and documenting how economies are structured through relationships between market and non-market spaces, capitalist and non-capitalist entities, involves us in the process of forming community economies. Through an ontological reframing of what is commonly viewed as "given," we move from a politics in which economy acts upon us to something that can be shaped by people and communities (Cameron 2009).

Recasting economic development as the process of ethical negotiation highlights two salient facts. First, while ethics can direct the intentions of those negotiating they cannot guarantee the outcomes--if there is no human nature guiding our efforts and no economic "laws" guaranteeing outcomes than there are only the uncertain decisions we make. Second, to paraphrase the sentiment imagining economic development as ethical engagement makes us cognizant that we are not in control of the circumstances in which we build community economies. One implication is that the process may involve us in negotiations with others who have different agendas and motivations and that the process may upset our normative sensibilities as we engage in the process.

We offer one of example that relates directly to the goals of SSE and to gender and development. Katherine Gibson and other members of the CEC undertook a AUSAID funded participatory action research project in the rural Philippines, working with a migrant savings group focused on marshaling remittance income from women domestic workers abroad (CEC and Gibson 2009). This project was funded under a program aimed at decentralizing rural development and reducing state involvement. To look at the stated objectives of reducing government support and fostering remittances from women already experiencing significant privation, it would be easy to write this off as another project contributing to neoliberal devolution. What's harder is seeing in this moment is the possibility of producing an economy based on care, guided by solidarity and directed towards justice. Nevertheless, that is precisely what Gibson and the CED endeavored to do by making direct use of the diverse economies framework to produce a different development.

The migrant savings group, called Unlad Kabayan, aimed to invest in social enterprises with the ultimate goal of generating employment alternatives to outmigration. So here we already see evidence of difference as migrant workers are putting aside money from what is already too little to live on with the goal of creating social enterprises. Through this process, new economic subjects are coming into being who are motivated by care and solidarity. For example, the group worked with an entrepreneur named Elsa whose social enterprise was a rice processing center in her village. In the process of working with rice farmers, Elsa found that many of them were effectively locked by debt into a semi-feudal relationship with wholesalers. Her response was to stake everything to buy the farmers out of their indebted relationship (CEC and Gibson 2009, 122). Elsa also diversified the producer services offered by the mill to ones that might assist farmers in an aim to build community around her enterprise. As time passed, the rice processing center offered a number of interlinked social enterprises serving poor farmers (CEC and Gibson 2009, 135). Another loan was made to a group of local woman who began a social enterprise that produced ginger tea. Many of these women moved from individualized home-based

production into this cooperative enterprise. It has fostered networks of support and mutual assistance among its members, and they have saved a percentage of their earnings to set up a local revolving credit practice to assist others in the community (CEC and Gibson 2009, 131).

We highlight three things in this brief example. First social enterprise development involved ethical negotiations between the entrepreneurs and the community they were hoping to serve. For instance in the first case, the ethical negotiations involved Elsa, the farm families, Unlad, Katherine and the CEC, development agencies, and the state. Second, while the outcome is not perhaps what we consider ideal and is far from certain, it is also an example of how diverse elements in an economy can be strung together in a process of development that resulted in class transformation from feudal to independent production, from self-employment to cooperatives, and more. Third, in the process of building community economies, relations of interdependence and care that did not emerge from gender roles in households, and increasingly fostered diverse practices of mutual assistance (CEC and Gibson 2009, 136). In our view this example has implications for how we understand development agencies, practitioners, and academics in a process of development recast as ethical negotiation within difference, rather than submission to the dominant logic of capitalism. While risking vulnerability, failure, or even usurpation by others agendas is no guarantee of a good outcome, not engaging in solidarity practices that can wrest neoliberal-seeming initiatives toward potentially transformative ends can only mean that things will remain as they are.

Conclusion

> Foucault (2008: 94) concluded his discussion of socialist governmentality by insisting that the answers to the Left's governmental problems require not yet another search through our sacred texts, but a process of conceptual and institutional innovation. "[I]f there is a really socialist governmentality, then it is not hidden within socialism and its texts. It cannot be deduced from them. It must be invented". But invention in the domain of governmental technique is rarely something worked up out of whole cloth. More often, it involves a kind of *bricolage* (Lévi- Strauss 1966), a piecing together of something new out of scavenged parts originally intended for some other purpose…If we can go beyond seeing in "neoliberalism" an evil essence or an automatic unity, and instead learn to see a field of specific governmental techniques, we may be surprised to find that some of them can be repurposed, and put to work in the service of political projects very different from those usually associated with that word. If so, we may find that the cabinet of governmental arts available to us is a bit less bare than first appeared, and that some rather useful little mechanisms may be nearer to hand than we thought. (Ferguson 2009, 318)

This extended quote suggests the possibility of practicing a different approach to economic development that moves out from neoliberalism's conceptual shadow. Like Ferguson, we wish to move beyond the mere critique of neoliberalism. We do not mean

to minimize here the shortcomings of the practice of development it inspires and the limits of an economic vision that fetishizes the logical efficacy of markets while essentializing the behavior of human participants, even while switching women to a new position as "global saviors." But for us, moving beyond critique would have to involve developing different ways of practicing development, which includes different ways of valuing market and non-market, capitalist and non-capitalist economic activity, but also includes different ways of understanding and valuing ourselves. It means recognizing that neoliberalism is a discourse linked to the essentialized subjects it performatively constitutes, and that even the critique of neoliberalism can serve to increase its effectiveness by granting it more power than it is due.

If instead we let go of a monolithic vision of economy we can recognize the diversity of alternative enterprises (cooperatives, households), alternative systems of finance (micro-credit) as well as motivations of care, interdependence, community aid etc. as not inevitably reproducing neoliberal capitalism. Even if it is possible that these terms can be enrolled in the project of capitalist reproduction, it is equally true that they *could* be enrolled in something else. Likewise, if we let go of essentialized conceptions of gender as the feminist critics rightly insist, we can still value care, interdependence, and attentiveness to others. We can do this without re-enforcing essentialist notions of gender and risking complicity with a politics that enrolls these qualities in capitalist reproduction, in part by locating them in diverse economic and social locations (Cameron, Gibson-Graham 2003).

In our view, if economy is divorced from capitalism, if development governance is divorced from neoliberalism, and if care and cooperation are divorced from their gender essentialist dimensions, we can begin to imagine a process of development that is directed to the totality of interdependent relationships--in households, firms, communities, commons, in and non-market exchange that allows us a chance of a future worth living in.

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