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The hidden side of social and solidarity economy: Social movements and the 'Translation' of SSE into policy (Latin America)

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The Hidden Side of Social and Solidarity Economy

Social Movements and the “Translation” of SSE into Policy (Latin America)

Ana Cecilia Dinerstein

Occasional Paper 9

Potential and Limits of Social and Solidarity Economy

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Acronyms

AD	Alternative Development
AT	Argentina Trabaja (<i>Argentina Works</i>)
CDD	Community Driven Development
CTDAV	Coordinadora de Trabajadores Desocupados Aníbal Verón (<i>Unemployed Workers Network Aníbal Verón</i>)
EZLN	Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (<i>The Zapatista National Liberation Army</i>)
HM	Hope as Method
JBG	Juntas del Buen Gobierno (<i>Good Government Councils</i>)
INAES	Instituto Nacional de Asociativismo y Economía Social (<i>National Institute of Cooperatives and Social Economy</i>)
MDS	Ministerio de Desarrollo Social (<i>Ministry for Social Development</i>)
MST	Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (<i>Brazil's Rural Landless Workers Movement</i>)
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NGO	Non-governmental organization
RIPESS	Red Intercontinental para la promoción de la economía social y Solidaria / Réseau Intercontinental de promotion de l'économie sociale solidaire (<i>Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of the Social and Solidarity Economy</i>)
SAA	San Andres Accords
UWO	Unemployed Worker Organization

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Summary

International organizations and governmental institutions are increasingly interested in obtaining support from social movements and SSE organizations for new public policies and laws that encourage their engagement and participation from below, and facilitate their access to the new policy schemes. This underscores the growing importance of civil society actors (including social movements) in rethinking “development” and in devising and effecting development policy, particularly in the current period of global crisis.

This paper addresses another concern resulting from this disposition of international development policy with regards to social movements—namely, the process of translation of SSE practices into state policy. Translation here refers to the processes, mechanisms and dynamics through which the state incorporates into policy the cooperative and solidarity ethos of SSE practised by social movements. The problem that arises is that the state tends to fit SSE into the logic of power rather than enabling the transformative aspects of SSE to flourish.

Drawing on the example of three well-known Latin American movements—the Zapatista Movement in Mexico, the Unemployed Workers Movement in Argentina and Brazil’s Rural Landless Workers Movement—the paper examines the tension underpinning SSE practices and the state, and how the former can be subordinated to the logic of the state with significant implications for emancipatory politics and practice.

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Introduction

We strongly believe not only that another world is possible, but also that it is increasingly necessary (Manifesto of the European Network of Social and Solidarity Economy, Barcelona, 2011).¹

There is growing interest within international organizations and governmental institutions in obtaining support from social movements and SSE organizations for new public policies and laws that encourage their engagement and participation from below, and facilitate their access to the new policy schemes (Fonteneau et al. 2010; UNRISD 2010). This underscores the growing importance of civil society actors (including social movements) in rethinking “development” and in devising and effecting development policy, particularly in the current period of global crisis.

In this paper I address another concern emanating from this disposition of international development policy with regards to social movements—namely the process of *translation* of SSE practices into state policy. By translation I mean the processes, mechanisms and dynamics through which the state incorporates the cooperative and solidarity ethos of the SSE practised by social movements into policy. The problem lies in that, in order to integrate SSE practices into policy, the state tends to demarcate a terrain that, as Vázquez (2011:36) suggests with reference to the epistemic violence of modernity, “renders invisible everything that does not fit in the ‘parameters of legibility’ of [its] epistemic territory”. In this case, translation entails the subjugation of the emancipatory dimension of SSE into the logic of power rather than enabling the transformative aspects of SSE to flourish. Drawing on the example of three well-known Latin American movements, I examine the tension underpinning SSE practices and the state, and how the former can be subordinated to the logic of the state with significant implications for emancipatory politics and practice.

The struggle over the meaning of SSE

For the past two decades, civil society organizations and social movements—particularly in the Global South—have been experimenting with non-profit forms of local and cooperative production, distribution, land occupation and use, driven by communal values, and organized thorough collective decision-making processes and direct participation of those involved in these endeavours. Many of these movements belong to national and transnational networks such as the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of the Social and Solidarity Economy (RIPESS), which are concerned with facilitating the development of the SSE as well as rendering it visible worldwide.

These pioneering developments have received attention from critical scholars who propose participatory and “people-centred development” (Nieverdeen Pieterse 1998). Under the “Alternative Development” (AD) paradigm, the SSE offers a critique of the liberal vision of development, for it embraces the principles of collective property, distribution of wealth to meet the needs of people rather than capital; freedom of association and autonomous decision-making (Dacheaux and Goujon 2012:206 and 208). The AD discourse encourages associative forms of production, sustainable development, the economic support for the marginalized through the provision of land and housing,

¹ See <http://www.ripesseu.net/en/presentation/manifest.html>, accessed on 7 July 2014.

women's empowerment and the revival of "the local" (Santos and Rodríguez Garavito 2006; Escobar 1992).

However, while AD introduces elements of solidarity and proposes changes in the type and scope of growth, it neither challenges the market economy (Coraggio 2010) nor "the concept of economic growth *per se*" (Santos and Rodríguez Garavito 2006: xxxix-xl). This is problematic for many who believe that human realization cannot be attained by means of improving the management of capitalism and the distribution of wealth (Esteva 2010). Many social movements repudiate the "growth" development model and see themselves as articulating alternatives to development, with SSE being at the heart of these elaborations around the notion of *buen vivir* (living well).

In Latin America, SSE movements and networks diagnosed that capitalism is undergoing a multiple, interconnected and unparalleled crisis that combines ecological, energy, food, environmental, poverty and hunger crises, which are matched with the increase in the means of violence and social control by nation states and the free movement of global capital. While important strands within the SSE movement actively support forms of social enterprise that fit comfortably with the AD paradigm, others embrace a more radical paradigm that, as Utting (2012) suggests, "call for very different growth, production and consumption patterns, and power relations". Since the pressure for growth is embedded in capitalism (Smith 2011), these radical strands of SSE claim that we are required to engage with "alternative visions of democracy, economy and society" (Escobar 1992:22) and non-capitalist political practices (see Coraggio 2011). They disagree with the idea that "capitalist efficiency and resource allocation is the best we can come up with" (Smith 2011) with SSE contributing to this. As Smith highlights, "this belief is incompatible with an ecological economy". Gudynas calls it "the dream of benevolent capitalism" (2012a). Conceived in this way, SSE "seeks to change the whole social and economic system and put forward a different paradigm of development that upholds solidarity economy principles" (Kawano 2013): SSE would be about "re-socializing economic relations" (Gibson-Graham 2006:79).

As a counter-hegemonic practice, SSE is inherently *political* and it is located at the centre of a broader debate about the viability and desirability of capitalism. In Latin America, where the crisis of capitalism is explained as a "crisis of civilization", that is an impossibility of (re)production of dignified human life on the planet (Lander 2010), has become a political laboratory of SSE practices. Alternative socioeconomic arrangements by a variety of civil society actors emerged strongly in response to unemployment, deprivation or resourcelessness (Wilkes 2004) during the 1980s and 1990s when a wave of citizen's and movements' protests led by the landless, jobless, the "poor" and indigenous people began to put their "emancipatory energy" (Santos 2001:78) at the service of this "social and political construction" (Coraggio 2010).

In this paper, I suggest that the SSE is a tool for "*organizing hope*" (Dinerstein, forthcoming-a), that is, a practice that enables people to anticipate alternatives—future practices, relationships and horizons—in the present. By hope, I do not mean the wish for a better future or dream of a utopian fantasy but, following German philosopher Ernst Bloch (1959/86), that the "real is process" and the "world is unclosed". To Bloch, there exists in the present a concrete possibility of prefiguring what he calls "the-not-yet-become".

Hence, hope is not "utopian" in the wishful sense of the word, but wilful, that is, it guides concrete action (Levitas 1990).

In recent years, the process of translation of SSE into the logic of the state and international development has intensified. Moving from being directed to alleviate poverty to promoting development (Coraggio 1999, 2008), World Bank funded Community Driven Development (CDD) programme² support "participatory decision-making, local capacity building, and community control of resources" (Dinerstein 2010). These policies transform SSE into a tool for neoliberal governance promoted by international development, which encourages decentralization, micro-ventures and community sustainability. But rather than enabling the free development of SSE, this kind of translation dispossessed SSE from its emancipatory potential as it befits institutional efforts to reframe social policies along the lines of market-oriented liberalism from the state and international development institutions.

As Cornwall and Brock (2005:4) highlight, new policy buzzwords such as "participation", "empowerment" and "poverty reduction" are used for the reframing of World Bank policy discourse as "feel-good terms". The policy rhetoric demarcates the limits of what "participation" and "empowerment" mean. Insofar as it excludes dissident meanings, this rhetoric is inevitably realized through political processes that include co-optation, coercion and, in many instances, direct state violence that is imposed on those who do not buy into this rhetoric. This leads to a struggle over the meaning of SSE as movements are compelled to "navigate the tensions" between being integrated into the logics of power and development, and the possibility of moving beyond it (Böhm et al. 2010). The struggle over the meaning of SSE unfolds through conflicts over the scope of the law, welfare provision, participatory processes and budgets, and policy that might enable or deter the free development of SSE.

Social Movements and Progressive Governments in Latin America: Demarcating the Meaning of SSE

In Latin America, the contentious politics between movements and the state that spread out during the neoliberal period when mobilized citizens and movements openly confronted neoliberal reforms and policy did not disappear with the political shift to the centre-left during the first decade of 2000s, but attained a different form. Unlike neoliberal governments, Centre-Left administrations claim to be determined to take on board movements' demands and expand the rights of indigenous and non-indigenous subaltern groups, facilitating self-determination, self-organization and self-management (Seoane et al. 2011). This political shift to the left by new governments, which many see as a revolutionary process in itself, is largely credited to the social mobilizations against neoliberalism (Prevost et al. 2012). Most of these governments brought about political innovation such as the creation of "plurinational" states and the incorporation of the *buen vivir* indigenous cosmology into the state's agenda. Overall, they are presently achieving economic growth, decline of income inequality, improvements in education, social and labour policy and healthcare systems.

² See <http://go.worldbank.org/24K8IHVVS0>, accessed on 18 July 2014.

However, economic policies of the new governments have not always reflected the aspirations of the movements. SSE-inspired policies often required the simultaneous commodification of natural resources, the intensification of extractivism, changes in energy and agrarian policies that are affecting rural livelihoods and indigenous communal life, on behalf of transnational corporations.

Indigenous movements and the problem of autonomy

Indigenous autonomies present challenges to international development institutions and nation states, for they oppose “development” altogether (Dinerstein and Deneulin 2012). In some cases these movements embrace indigenous cosmologies such as *buen vivir*, which draw on indigenous ancestral practices and experiences, particularly from those in the Amazon and Andean regions. As well as containing practical orientations toward production, organization and distribution, *buen vivir* covers specific meanings attributed to time, progress, human realization and the relationship between sociability, sustainability and nature. It draws on communal traditions, customs and cosmologies that are alien to Eurocentric notions of “participation”, “empowerment” and “civil society”.

Although the *Zapatista movement* is not a social movement in the traditional sense, its experience is useful to illustrate my argument about the process of translation of innovative practices. The National Liberation Zapatista Army (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional/EZLN) appeared in the Lacandona jungle (South East Mexico, Chiapas) on 1 January 1994 and declared war on the Mexican government. The Zapatistas (as they call themselves in honour of Emiliano Zapata) stood in opposition to the Mexican government’s participation in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which demanded the opening up of indigenous lands to large agrobusiness. But it was more than that. The EZLN argued that globalization was a war against humanity. Unlike other armed movements, they claimed that they did not want the power of the state and that they had armed themselves to be heard. With their faces covered “to make themselves visible”, they claimed “enough is enough!” and demanded democracy, liberty and justice. They became a symbol of dignity and resistance worldwide.

Since 2003 the Zapatistas’ practice “autonomy de facto” in many communities of Chiapas through autonomous self-governing municipalities called Good Government Councils (Juntas del Buen Gobierno/JBG). Each JBG delivers and administers justice, mediates conflicts between autonomous councils and government councils, issues identity cards, discusses goals related to welfare provision, promotes and supervises projects and community programmes; denounces violations of human rights, guarantees bicultural education and health, organizes cooperatives, and implements agrarian legislation.

As their way of organizing hope, their autonomy de facto is the outcome of a long-term struggle over the meaning of autonomy between the Zapatistas, on the one hand, and the Mexican state, transnational corporations and international institutions, which have sought to translate the Zapatistas resistance into a tool for neoliberal governance. In 1996, the Zapatistas and the Mexican government signed the San Andres Accords (SAA) by which the latter committed to recognize indigenous people’s rights to exercise autonomy and the guarantee of self-government and collective production by the law. But the SAA were *not* immediately put into practice. Instead the Zedillo government opted for a repressive policy.

After a year of intense mobilization following the Acteal massacre of December 1997, the law was enacted. It accredited the right to self-government to indigenous communities on the basis of their territorial organization, and political and administrative organization of free municipality. The law specified what kind of indigenous authorities were legally recognized and how they should be elected. The legislation, proposed a form of local democracy (Burguete and Mayor 2004) that encouraged "decentralization", "empowerment" and "participation from below". Deeply disappointed, the Zapatistas began a process of demilitarization of the movement toward the strengthening of its civil component, and emerged after three years of silence with the JBG.

The government's response to the Zapatistas dream of autonomy has been a counter-insurgent policy that intended to disempower the movement. Paramilitary organizations became NGOs and began to promote the formation of cooperatives and facilitated access to deeds to indigenous land after the "illegal distribution" made by the Zapatista agrarian reform (Dinerstein et al. 2013). Between 2006 and 2008, new social programmes were launched in order to re-organize and channel citizens' demands (for example, the Chiapas Solidarity Institute and the programme of Sustainable Rural Cities, both established in 2007). To the Zapatistas, these policies, and particularly the latter plan, matches the World Bank Programme Puebla-Panamá, which is a regional development strategy that involves the use of indigenous lands for exploitation of resources in the Southeast of Mexico. The concrete utopia created by the Zapatistas' JBG must be seen as rehearsals of a better world, and as the anticipation of a future alternative in the present.

Urban movements and the meaning of dignified work

One of the most significant dimensions of SSE is the development of alternative forms of cooperative work and self-management connected to communal needs and the democratization of decision-making processes. The Unemployed Workers Movement (also called *Piqueteros*) in Argentina—born out of a series of protest ("roadblocks") carried out since 1996 in areas affected by mass unemployment produced by privatization and decentralization—constitute an example of such endeavours. While mobilizing the unemployed and their communities to demand employment programmes, job creation and the end of criminalization of poverty, the Unemployed Worker Organizations (UWOs) began to create work cooperatives and develop communal projects. They did so by means of appropriation of state resources (employment and social programmes) and use them for collective purposes, which challenged the individualistic logic of workfare and state focus policy and reconceptualized "work" in capitalist society.

During the late 1990s and beginning of 2000s, the *Piqueteros* offered a critique of capitalist work from "outside the labour market" (Dinerstein 2002) connecting work with the quality of dignity and a non-capitalist practice of solidarity and cooperation. While advocating different forms of understanding dignified work—ranging from "decent work" (ILO), to non-exploitative anti-capitalist forms (Ghiotto and Pascual 2010), all UWOs inspired communitarian, cooperative and solidarity collective practices in the neighbourhoods. Through intense mobilization at the roadblocks, the UWOs achieved funding for their autonomous ventures through state programmes. State resources became available as a result of mobilization of the unemployed (Dinerstein 2010).

With the crisis of 2001, the struggle over the meaning of dignified work intensified, reaching its apex in June 2002 when two young activists, Maximiliano Kosteki and Darío

Santillán from the Unemployed Workers Network Aníbal Verón (Coordinadora de Trabajadores Desocupados Aníbal Verón/CTDAV) were assassinated by the police while many others were injured during the convoluted period post-crisis. After the repression, which marked a turning point in Argentine politics, narratives of dignified work as incompatible with capitalist exploitation and connected with the attainment of human dignity—as claimed by the CTDAV— disappeared from the public debate.

The introduction of new social programmes that promoted local state intervention, bottom-up decision-making processes and the social economy (MDS 2004) supported by a new National Institute of Cooperatives and Social Economy (Instituto Nacional de Asociativismo y Economía Social/INAES) began to provide technical and financial support for communitarian projects run by the UWOs through programmes such as the “National Plan for Local Development and Social Economy: Let’s Work!” (Plan Manos a la Obra). The idea is to incorporate the communitarian and cooperative methods of the SSE led by the UWO to encourage self-sustainability, thus breaking marginalized groups’ dependency on *asistencialistas* (welfarist) policies (Hintze 2006:107; Kirchner 2012). But in order to get resources from the state, the UWOs were asked to become non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (through registration, inspection by appropriate ministries and assessment of the worth of their proposed project), or to negotiate with existing NGOs to be included in their fold to receive state funds.

More recently, in 2009, in addition to the Plan Manos a la Obra, another programme, “Social Income with Work” (Ingreso Social con Trabajo) also known as “Argentina Works” (Argentina Trabaja/AT) continued sanctioning the government intention to assist existing cooperative projects that have been created by grassroots’ movements, but also expanded the government’s role in the creation of cooperatives from above (Kirchner 2012:191; see also INAES 2008 and Vuotto 2011). This is achieved by an active role for municipal and provincial governments, with the INAES, which preselect members of newly formed cooperatives and monitor their progress (see Fernández 2012). This “cooperativism without cooperatives” (Bertolini 2011) has entailed clientelistic practices where the UWOs routinely confront the power of Peronist “*punteros*”, that is, front line workers who make political use of social programmes and maintain the clientelistic system among the poor, making them depend on party favours to have access to policy (Auyero 2000; Dinerstein, forthcoming-b). The programme has been also criticized for imposing the involvement of a specific form of association in order for participants to be considered as beneficiaries. To its critics, this goes against the cooperative spirit, which reconciles democratic workers’ associations with self-management (Lo Vuolo 2010:14).³

Clearly, many of the UWOs have made a distinction between “decent” and dignified work and described their struggle as a struggle for dignified work (also called genuine, autonomous or authentic work). Particularly the autonomous sector of the UWOs is adamant that dignified work is work that responds to a non-capitalist ethic and therefore cannot be achieved through inclusion into the system of exploitation.

³ While it “guarantees the ...recovery of so-called ‘dignified work’, the promotion of collective and not merely individual endeavours, cooperation and solidarity among those affected ...in fact the programme forces beneficiaries to ‘self-organise’ in groups (*cuadrillas*) called ‘work cooperatives’ in order to undertake jobs in public works and services that are established by the state” (Lo Vuolo 2010:5).

Rural landless workers and the meaning of agrarian reform

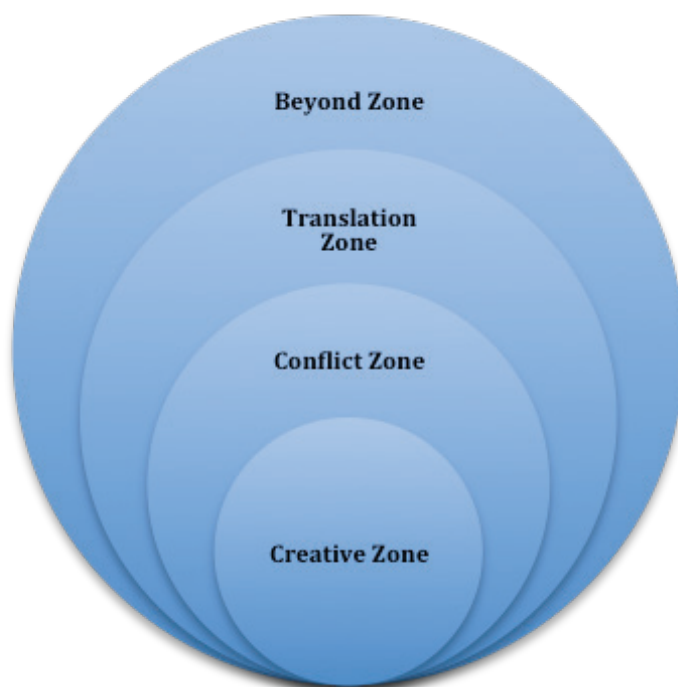
Brazil's Rural Landless Workers Movement, the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST), emerged in 1985 after a period of massive land occupations (1979–1984) and, since then, has struggled for land and agrarian reforms. To the MST, agrarian reform means the capacity of the Brazilian people to decide over the property and use of the land. The new agrarian reform proposed by the MST is based on an alternative socioeconomic model that includes education and cooperation. Their agrarian reform de facto is realized in encampments and regional settlements created after the occupation of the land, and where “revolutionary” values concerning solidarity work, property, the distribution and exploitation of land, community life, education toward an equalitarian and fair society are attained in harmony with the environment. This includes several educational projects (like the National School Florestán Fernández), and community projects involving cooperative farms, housing cooperatives, schools for children and adults, clinics and the promotion of indigenous cultures, a healthy and sustainable environment, and gender equality. The settlements help to defend occupation toward the creation of *agrovilas*. The *agrovilas* are habitats formed by groups of around 30 families facilitating access to essential services like water, electricity and primary school education. The most important aspect of the *agrovilas* is that they provide a space for the creation and development of new cooperatives. The *agrovilas* are the “nodes” of the MST's agrarian reform, which aims at creating new solidarity and cooperative values among rural workers and their families, attain organizational and financial autonomy and embrace the principles of food sovereignty.

Since its creation, the MST has been engaged in *a struggle over agrarian reform* with successive Brazilian governments. This entailed the use of state violence against the MST and rural workers, not only during the Collor de Melho and Cardoso administrations, when the massacres of Corumbiara and Carajás took place in the mid-1990s, but also under Lula da Silva. Although an MST ally, he could not extricate himself from the strong alliance between powerful landowners, agrobusiness and the judicial power against the MST (Stédile 2013).

Yet, under President da Silva, agrarian reform—which for the MST was never only about “land distribution”—was partially achieved with the allocation of land to many MST settlers. Thus approved by international agencies, “agrarian reform” was then appropriated by the state and translated into an activity, which became functional to agribusiness for now rural workers and farmers' would depend on agri-business for purchasing technology, machinery, pesticides, seeds and fertilizers. The government's intention was to “emancipate” the settlements from the MST's rule and, in two years' time, transform them into “family farms” (Servolo Medeiros 2000:43). Like in the other cases, decentralization—the backbone of neoliberal governance—disputed the autonomously created territories to use them as a tool for the implementation of a policy that was adverse to those participating in these territories. But the MST's dream of peasant-led agrarian reform is not over. After a period of reflection, the MST, a founder member of La Via Campesina, joined the rural workers' global struggle for food sovereignty. The MST celebrated its thirtieth birthday with a debate about how to tackle the imposition of a model of agro-production that responded to transnational capital. Between 10 and 14 of February 2014, more than 16,000 delegates from 23 estates and the federal district gathered at the VI MST Congress in Brasília, titled “To Fight To Create a Popular Agrarian Reform” (“*Luta por uma Reforma Agrária Popular*”) They continue campaigning and working for agrarian reform of the new type.

SSE's Research Zones

Figure 1: SSE's research zones



Latin American social movements have opened new spaces for the collective elaboration of alternative forms of work, cooperation, production, relationship with the commune, autonomy, use of the land, education, democratic practices. The state intended to delineate the “parameters of legibility” of adequate and inadequate forms of autonomy, work and agrarian reform. While mobilizing against and also engaging in negotiation processes with governmental authorities at all levels, the movements have challenged state policies and legislation that intended to translate their collective practices into tools for neoliberal governance promoted by international development institutions. The struggle over the meaning of SSE asserted itself in the form of contentions politics over the law and policy. In all cases, extreme state violence was used against the movements and, on some occasions, such violence was a key factor in the process of paving the way for the process of translation of SSE into policy.

Figure 1 distinguishes four dimensions or SSE “zones”. First, the “creative zone”, is where alternative practices unfold at organizational level (the collective, leadership, time), socioeconomic level (sociabilities, relations and values, economic possibilities, use of space) and politico-institutional level (political engagement, non-representational politics, direct democracy, autonomy) levels. Second, the “conflict zone” where disagreements, negotiations and struggles between movements and the state, corporate power and development discourses take place within specific configurations of power, class relations, and forms of capital accumulation, development and crises. Third, closely connected to the conflict zone, is the “translation zone”, where mechanisms of interpretation and rephrasing of SSE by policy makers takes place in ways that might facilitate or deter the development of SSE. The fourth zone (“beyond zone”) emerges out of the breach between

the realities prefigured by SSE movements and the ways SSE inspired policy is organized (Dinerstein and Deneulin 2012). This gap evokes the impossibility of completely translating SSE practice that is led by movements into policy (programmes and legislation) and poses the question of the function of the law and state policy in those cases where movements are striving for a collective life beyond capitalism.

Understanding the SSE "beyond zone": From claim-making to alternative-creating capacity

SSE movements venture beyond the given reality, with little certainty about their praxis, which is facilitated by ongoing collective self-reflection and self-learning (*aprendizaje*). The fact that the law or policy demarcate the terrain of "what exists" and "what does not exist" (legibility) does not mean that SSE practices that are moving beyond those parameters do not exist at all. Following Vázquez (2011:36) the possibility of translation "begs the question of untranslatability: so what is that which remains untranslatable, outside the scope of translation?" SSE practice is about shaping absences and, as we have seen, it produces excess. Although interesting policies have emerged to support some aspects of the claim for food sovereignty or dignified work, the full realization of the two latter would entail a profound socioeconomic and political transformation that would frame policy differently. Policy has tended to fall into the category of "food security" or "decent work". Let us take the example of food sovereignty. While food security is a tool for neoliberal governance and can provide a patchy and temporary solution to the problem of hunger, food sovereignty confronts agribusiness with hope in a democratic and autonomous agrarian project. As the *Nyeléni Newsletter* (International Movement for Food Sovereignty 2013:1)⁴ suggests, unlike food security, food sovereignty is a concept that both "challenges the corporate dominated, market driven model of globalized food, as well as offering a new paradigm to fight hunger and poverty by developing and strengthening local economies ... where food security is a given, food sovereignty is a space of resistance". Food sovereignty alludes to an inalienable right to food and requires a radical and more comprehensive process than "securing" food to eliminate hunger in the world. Food sovereignty, therefore, goes well beyond "land distribution" and demands that governments respect, protect and implement people's right to food (Rosset 2006), as well as other principles such as local development and agro-ecology, as an alternative to agribusiness. As it is, food sovereignty (as well as indigenous autonomy and dignified work) has no representation in the grammar of state policy as it is and, therefore, remains untranslatable.

While movements are benefiting from state technical, legal and financial support, my contention is that the innovation created in the "beyond zone", which transcends the parameters of legibility demarcated by the state, has been neglected. We have paid little attention to this fourth "*invisibilized*" dimension, which is of fundamental importance for SSE movements. SSE movements of Latin America and the world are unmistakably expressing a desire to explore alternative realities. In the statement of the SSE movement at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), more than 370 social organizations defined SSE as "a social movement that together with others is

⁴ Nyéléni is the newsletter of a broader Food Sovereignty Movement that considers the Nyéléni 2007 declaration as its political platform. The *Nyeléni Newsletter* aims to be the voice of this international movement. The organizations involved are Development Fund, ETC Group, FIAN, Focus on the Global South, Food First, Friends of the Earth International, GRAIN, Grassroots International, IPC for food sovereignty, La Via Campesina, Marcha Mundial de las Mujeres, Oxfam Solidarity, Real World Radio, Roppa, The World Forum Of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers, and VSF–Justicia Alimentaria Global.

contributing to the consolidation of a genuine economic and political democracy”. They scorn the creation of institutions of governance that are not “structurally grounded in ongoing consultation and participation of all sectors of society at local, regional and international levels”, and are:

dominated by those whose financial contributions are the greatest, or managed by ‘experts’...people’s sovereignty must be respected, as well as that of communities who are the only ones to have the legitimate right and the capacity to implement the solidarity development that can guarantee the preservation of the Commons.(RIPESS 2012).⁵

Likewise, the declaration of the Convergence Assembly on Economic Alternatives at the RIPESS World Social Forum, 2013, declared that:

social solidarity economy in its various forms throughout the world represents the alternative to the global capitalist system...the Assembly calls upon all civil society actors to network their actions at global level in order to enable people all over the world to assert their rights, and to replace the current system that is based on individual selfishness, over-consumption of resources, competition, male hegemony and war, by a peaceful, fraternal, sober economy of cooperation and peace between all humankind (Participants in the Assembly of Convergence, *Another World Already Exists Here and Now*, World Social Forum 2013, Tunis).⁶

Exploring Prefigurative Methods

In order to grasp the dimension of hope presented by the aforementioned movements, we need to rethink our methodological and epistemological assumptions that tend to “naturalize” capitalism and therefore contradict the emancipatory spirit of the movements’ new practices. It is important to acknowledge that there has been a significant change in social mobilization where movements are moving away from their claim-making role to perceive themselves as creators of new worlds.

Social sciences methods of enquiry entail differentiated ways of guiding the research process, including a particular understanding of reality and the possibility of change as well as techniques and procedures for data collection and analyses related to the research question posed by the social scientist. However, at present, many movements are challenging the parameters of the given reality within which social sciences operate in a way that makes existing methods of enquiry insufficient or even obsolete. As an example, while many social scientists continue trying to find the solution to unemployment, members of the Piquetero movement from the Movement of Unemployed Workers Solano (Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados Solano/MTD Solano) define their struggle not as a working class struggle for job creation, social reform or even for a future revolution in the traditional sense, but as a practice projected into the future and, therefore, able to anticipate an alternative reality, the reality of “dignity” (MTD Solano and Colectivo Situaciones, 2002, in Dinerstein 2014b:70) which cannot be attained through capitalist work. As argued elsewhere “for the past two decades, we are witnessing

⁵ This declaration, written in 2012 by the Board of the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social and Solidarity Economy (RIPESS), was based on the discussions at Rio +20 of the 5th Latin American and Caribbean Conference on Solidarity Economy and fair trade, and inputs from the delegates from the other continents. After the declaration follow signatures from more than 370 organizations and networks from all over the world who expressed their support between 16 and 25 June 2012: <http://rio20.net/en/propuestas/the-economy-we-need-declaration-of-the-social-and-solidarity-economy-movement-at-rio20>.

⁶ See http://www.ripest.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Declaration_Assembly_of_Convergence_SSE_WSF_2013_EN.pdf, accessed on 18 July 2014.

a turning point in autonomous movement activity that, consequently, requires of a shift in our approach to 'autonomy' in Latin America. ...the new quality of Latin American movements is that autonomous organizing is a tool for *prefiguring* alternatives with political imagination" (Dinerstein, forthcoming-a). In other words, autonomous (SSE) movements experience daily a territorial and political reality where radical pedagogies, cooperative work, art and entertainment, care, new forms of defending indigenous traditions and customs, environmental awareness and territorialized resistance are developed in imaginative forms. These allow for the demarcation of new parameters than those designated by the state, global capital and the law. Hence, they pose new questions to both the politics and consequently about the epistemological, theoretical and methodological understandings of their actions.

In light of this, I would like to suggest that an all-encompassing method of enquiry, Hope as Method (HM) accompany the process of creation of new world without suffocating their emancipatory ethos. HM can simultaneously problematize reality, engage with the open-ended and process-like quality of reality, and recognize the movements' alternative-creating capacity. This method postulates that insofar as hope guides contemporary social mobilization, as previously discussed, policy needs also to be *prefigurative*, that is, it must be directed to render visible what is already being proposed and experienced by SSE movements. Rather than encouraging participation and empowerment of SSE actors, HM aims to learn from the movements' alternatives to development and to facilitate the "construction of a common voice" and a "collective intelligence" (RIPESS Europe 2012).⁷ Another kind of translation is required: a translation that enhances rather than oppresses, alternative possibilities.

Far from being naïve, utopian or romantic, an engagement of the "beyond zone" of SSE requires an intellectual effort to transcend capitalist realism, which, according to Fisher, "has been socially constructed as the only possible way by suppressing alternative realities" (2009:18). He suggests that one way of doing this would be to invoke "the Real(s) underlying the reality that capitalism presents to us" (Fisher 2009:18). We are compelled to render visible what has been actively produced as non-existent and, as a result, "reality is reduced to what exists" (Santos 2007:8).

Prefigurative policy does not classify or measure SSE practices with ossified concepts of a reality that naturalizes capitalism: it enhances the development of SSE practices by learning how these are experienced as beyond capitalism. Ironically, as the examples show, the universe of "surplus possibilities" (Gibson-Graham 2006) offered by movements-led SSE practices is usually made invisible by the same law or policy that claimed to enable them to develop and expand. Translation "by erasure" (Vázquez 2011) inevitably removes the surplus possibility thus impoverishing SSE-inspired policy.

To immerse ourselves into the dimension of the not-yet is challenging for, as Lear suggests, radical hope "anticipates a good for which those who have the hope as yet lack the appropriate concepts with which to understand it" (Lear 2006:103). Faced with this problem, Gibson-Graham (2006:xxx) advises that "as a practice of theorising, we need one that tolerates 'not knowing' and allows for contingent connections and the hiddenness of unfolding; one that at the same time foregrounds specificity, divergence,

⁷ See <http://www.ripesseu.net/en/presentation.html>, accessed on 18 July 2014.

incoherence, surplus possibility”. Any policy intervention that engages with the movements’ alternative-creating capacity can only constitute an open programme for an open and unclosed reality. Our key questions are, what are the projects, practices and horizons that new movements are engaged in and in what ways are they contributing to reinventing social emancipation? Does SSE open new horizons and practices, that is, open spaces for prefiguring other realities not yet materialized that contest the capitalist reality? Do they elicit expansive waves of ideas, feeling, actions that open the horizons of the mind widely? In the end, as Bloch suggests: “It is a question of learning hope...The work of this emotion requires people who throw themselves actively into what is becoming to which they themselves belong” (Bloch 1959/86:3).

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