PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPMENT

AN EXERCISE IN WORLDMAKING

overshoot

shortfall

biodiversity loss

land conversion

air pollution

Gender Equality

housing

Education

climate change

water

peace & justice

chemical pollution

Energy

Food

Health

social equity

Political voice

Income & work

nitrogen & phosphorus loading

freshwater withdrawals

THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL STUDIES

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2020/2021

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2020/2021

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Acronyms

AFES – Agrarian, Food, and Environmental Studies

ECD – Economics of Development

GDP – Governance and Development Policy

GMD – Governance of Migration and Diversity

MMAPP – Mundus Master Programme in Public Policy

SJP – Social Justice Perspectives

SPD – Social Policy for Development

Acknowledgements

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Foreword

"Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign. But stories can also be used to empower and to humanize" - Chimananda Ngozi Adichie

The International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) always encourages us, its students, to question knowledge, especially knowledge perceived as 'correct'. We are taught to 'unlearn', listen to multiple perspectives, and be aware that many worldviews exist. These teachings embody our responsibility as development specialists: to advocate and promote the respectful dialogue needed to ensure that ideas, cultures, and voices outside the mainstream discourse are not silenced. Everyone deserves to be heard and appreciated for their knowledge, life experiences, and identities.

This collection of essays from the 2020/21 ISS batch endeavours to tell many stories, shedding light on new approaches to gaze at structurally obscured issues or simply at issues that still remain unknown. The editing team has carefully curated this journal to inspire us to think critically. Hence, the selection process was a challenge in itself, since we strived to

include every ISS Major and continent present in our batch, to ensure that the diversity of ISS was genuinely represented in the selected papers. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that this representation required choices to be made. Consequently, some nominated essays were not included, and the editorial process was limited to those essays nominated by the professors that replied to our call.

Despite our potential biases and constraints, we did our best to protect pluralism and deliver an original and enriching 2021 edition of '*Perspectives in Development: An Exercise in Worldmaking'.* This year's essays focus on a broad range of topics and cover multiple regions of the world, exploring issues that go from human rights, LGBTQ, exploitation of indigenous resources and resistance, to conflict, peacebuilding, hunger, poverty, gender, degrowth, Covid-19 and education, to name a few. This collection includes papers that are astute, factual and analytical; telling us stories about topics that the authors are passionate about.

Finally, we owe a word of gratitude to ISS for giving us this editing opportunity, and to Peter Bardoel (ISS staff) for heading the team. The heterogeneity in the nature of essays hereby presented reflects the diversity of the people at ISS, and the multifaceted flow of knowledge and ideas that this community inspires. We hope you enjoy reading this Journal as much as we enjoyed editing it.

Sincerely,

Student Editors,
2020/21 ISS batch
A.K.A. The Covid Batch

Synopses

Poetics and Politics of Water from a Coastal Land, *Fahmid Al Zaid (AFES, Bangladesh)*
This paper reflects, through a political ecology lens, on one of the most important resources: water. It delves into the intersections between politics, development, and social justice by looking at water scarcity in the Gabura island in Bangladesh.

***Colona Cocalero* Peasants: Amid the Market Control and their Right to Subsistence**, *Juliana Cubides Sánchez (AFES, Colombia)*
This essay focuses on addressing the dialogical relation between the global and the local, and among structure and agency of *Colono Cocalero Peasants'* dynamic. The writer argues that the *colono cocalero peasants* can be understood as rightless subjects due to their location between the brunt of both a vicious illegal market and a negligent State. The argument is developed using Marxist Political Economy and Moral Economy perspectives.

The Dialogue of Knowledges as Requisite for Peaceful Living, *Sergio Martínez Castillo (AFES, Colombia)*
This paper explores the asymmetries of power and inequality within the Global North and South dichotomies in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. The author discusses the disproportionate effects the pandemic has had, and possible alternatives for the future of development through the exchanges of different knowledges.

Emerging Tensions from Hunger Commodification, *Adriana Melgar (AFES, Peru)*
Melgar introduces the reader to the global food and agriculture structure and provides interesting historical and developmental explanations on how the global food system, policies and practices are framed and organized. She presents contradictions between the global food system and the existing dominant development framework; at the same time suggests alternatives to further democratize and reform prevailing global food and agriculture policies. Her analysis is made through a Marxist political economy framework using the four key questions developed by Bernstein.

Testing Claims about Large Land Deals in Africa: Findings from a Multi-Country Study, *Ha Nguyen Hai (AFES, Vietnam)*

This article makes a detailed analysis of the given case study, including research design, research evaluation, data collection steps, and possible improvement. This is a relatively complete example of case analysis.

A Critical Degrowth Reflection on the Neoclassical/New Institutional Economics Stance on Food Systems Transformation, *Stefan Schüller (AFES, Germany)*

This paper meticulously questions the food production systems in a capitalist system. The essay would help the reader in grasping the nuances of the concepts of degrowth connected to the food production systems.

The Rationale of Social Impact Funds and the Institutionalization of their Investment Thesis in Latin America, *Ernesto Daza Lacouture (ECD, Colombia)*

This essay discusses the impact social impact funds (SIF) can have on Latin American countries. It goes on to discuss how social impact funds and investors. It further goes how social impact funds and social investors adapt to the populations they invest into.

Reflection on the Status of the '*Boa Me Na Me Mmoa Wo*' Social Enterprise, *Loan Nguyen (ECD, Vietnam)*

This reflection will focus on analyzing the agreements, disagreements between the author and the team in which the author worked, as well as how they deal with issues from the perspective of the community relations manager. This reflection's goal is to show how the group matured overtime to reach the final agreement in their business model. In general, the team had a project that could not be too successful but a typical project for future reference.

A Summary and Critical Analysis: "Gender and the Dynamics of Economics Seminars", *Nicole Salazar (ECD, Ecuador)*

This essay offers a critical review of a study that examined the gender-based differences in treatment of male and female economists at a research conference. The critical analysis

entails the author's assessment of how the study was undertaken by reflecting on the research methods used and the potential biases embedded in the research, along with also offering insights on mitigating these biases and providing recommendations for further bolstering the research using complementary strategies.

Degrowing the North, Growing the South?, *Irene Margetousaki (GDP, Greece)*
This essay explores the concept and application of degrowth. It discusses the theory of degrowth in relation to its implications for the global South. The author argues that degrowth in the North -on its own- would not necessarily lead to more independent economic development in the South.

Let's Talk Trash: A Case Study in Colombia, *Sandra Tuor (GDP, Ghana)*
This essay focuses on the social enterprise of waste management and the living conditions of waste pickers in Colombia. By engaging with the concept of 'pragmatist approach', the essay highlights the importance of fact finding through field visits that makes development practitioners realist and action oriented. The essay concluded that solving social problems requires divergent expertise and diverse knowledge stemming from different experts to tackle different aspects of the problem.

Is this Peace? A Critical Media Campaign on the Representation of a 'Peacefully-militarized' Society, *Xander Creed (GMD, United States of America)*
An original and thought-provoking essay that visualizes through art the contradictions connected to the concept of "peace". The text is a sharp critical analysis of the theoretical and social ambiguities surrounding the meaning of peace, war, power and militarized society in our time.

Barriers to Social Transformation – Exploring Tensions between '*khawaja sira*' Culture and Trans Rights in Pakistan, and the Possibility of a Critical and Interpretive Approach, *Fatima Abbas (SJP, Pakistan)*
Abbas takes the reader to the unique and fascinating, but often misunderstood, world of the *khawaja sira* community and the transgender movement in Pakistan – their histories, the

sociocultural dynamics between the two, the established relationships of the *gurus* and *chelas*, and how these elements impact on individual and community rights over the passage of time. She also highlighted the existing tensions between the two communities: while the transgender movement had been criticized for being influenced by Western neocolonial thinking; the *khawaja sira* community, specifically some of the *guru-chela* relationships, was rebuked by transgender activists for being coercive and exploitative. She proposed the use of a critical and interpretive approach in understanding both cultures for them to find a common ground and achieve internal cultural transformation.

Reflections on the 'Right to Health': A Closer Look at the Indigenous Peoples of Southern Palawan, Philippines, *Albert Angelo Concepcion (SJP, Philippines)*

This essay sheds light on malaria endemicity as a case of health inequality among the indigenous people of Southern Palawan in the Philippines. The essay shows how traditional health beliefs and practises have contributed to the persistence of malaria infections and therefore, stresses on the need for finding solutions to address health inequalities. Finally, it also highlights how such inequalities, although not intentional, are an infringement on indigenous peoples' rights and requires political action.

Hunger is deadlier than COVID-19, *Giulianna Delgadillo Parra (SJP, Colombia)*

This essay presents an engaging analysis of development imposed from the global North to the global South and its consequences. This topic is developed in connection with the topical theme of the COVID-19 pandemic which brought to the surface the weaknesses of the current status quo.

What is the Story of my Research Paper? My Experience with Imposter Syndrome During the Research Process, *Esther Kallon (SJP, Sierra Leone)*

In this essay, Kallon critically evaluates her own positionality regarding the final research paper. By sharing her experience with imposter syndrome, Kallon locates the ways in which the social, institutional, and interpersonal dimensions shape her struggles throughout the research process. These struggles are overcome through grounding herself and the research topic in the actions of sensing, refusing, caring, and healing.

Playing a Role in Peacebuilding: A Reflection, *Selma Theofany (SJP, Indonesia)*

This paper reflects on the different roles and stakeholders of peacebuilding. It goes into depth discussing the roles of minorities in parliament and indigenous people in Great Lakes and East Africa while arguing a more comprehensive understanding of the problem can help facilitate a more just peacebuilding.

The Impact of Digital Transformation on Legal (dis)Empowerment of 'Vulnerabilised' Women in Northern Uganda, *Robert Okello (SJP, Uganda)*

This essay deliberates on the contradictions and complexities of using technology as a tool for accessing justice in resource-constrained settings, particularly in the context of Uganda, as drawn from a personal experience of the essay's author. The essay outlines the key research questions that emerge from this reflection, and their implications on assuming a more critical understanding, in theory and in practice, of using technology to empower and enable individual and community-level access to justice.

Violence and Liberal Peace in the Netherlands, *Rosa Witziers (SJP, Netherlands)*

To offer a critique of the liberal peace framework, Witziers uses the case study of racism in the Netherlands in order to illustrate how the dominant Western interpretations of peace fall short and mask the presence of racial conflict. Witziers deepens the understanding of racism by positioning it as a conflict through the inclusion of the 'moral imagination' and time, linking together the historic injustices of colonialism to the present-day marginalization and discrimination of people of color.

Republic of Armenia Education Provision System, *Giulia Bisogni (SPD, Italy)*

Taking a historical and international approach towards understanding the Armenian education system, Bisogni maps out the ways in which the system has been affected by European and (Post-)Soviet influences. Education has been hailed as an essential way forward for the Armenian state, although as Bisogni locates there is no one clear way - the influences of Europe and Russia collide and result in diverse forms of education provision.

Social Provisioning System of Ageing Population in the Republic of Moldova, *Christina Buza (SPD, Moldova)*

This article mainly introduces the old-age system of Moldova. In addition to the national pension with the largest proportion providing help to the elderly, category oriented social assistance also provides a lot of support. However, in fact, the poverty alleviation transfer is very weak, the pertinence of the social protection system is not enough, and the old-age life of the elderly cannot be fully guaranteed. This paper expounds it from two aspects: fact introduction and theoretical analysis.

Mobilising LGBT Rights in Indonesia: From Local Culture to International Pressure, *Firmansyah Sarbini (SPD, Indonesia)*

The essay focuses on the ongoing struggles of the Indonesian LGBT community. The author argues for mobilizing native cultures and local terms to strive for LGBT acceptance. The essay explores various ways in which the dialogue around equality and fair treatment of LGBT Indonesians can be foregrounded, such as through association with feminist groups and labor rights and health organizations, deeper involvement of academia, and pressure from the international human and queer rights advocates and community.

Poverty Approaches to Address Race and Racism: Channelling Race and Class Solidarity to Achieve Economic and Racial Justice in the United States, *Surabhi Srivastava (SPD, India)*

This essay is a challenging critique of the nexus between poverty approaches and race and racialization issues. The author presents three different approaches and how they work in connection with race and on this basis propose a more effective, combined way to address poverty issues.

Policy Brief: Male Employment in Italian Childcare Services, *Bianca Burdo (MMAPP, Italy)*

The writer proposes a policy recommendation on incentivising male employment in Early Childhood Education (ECE) Services. It is prepared for the Minister for Equal Opportunities

and Families of Italy and advocates for government intervention. The recommendation in this policy brief is based on the production and reproduction of gender differences and inequalities in ECE.

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Poetics and Politics of Water from a Coastal Island

By *Fahmid Al Zaid, AFES, Bangladesh*

Introduction

Situated within a political ecological perspective and water justice movement, my research paper (RP) will explore how people from a small coastal island are coping with water scarcity with their indigenous knowledge and practices. How this other form of ecological knowledge, which is local and place-based, but at the same time, considered anti-modern, contributes to the ensuring of water justice in the coastal area. So, this is a story about water, its symbolic, economic and political value. This research will be conducted on a costal island called Gabura under Satkhira district of Khulna Division in Bangladesh. This island has 38,825 inhabitants and its area is 33 square kilometers. Though most of the islanders are Bengali, there are more than 200 indigenous Munda families who live on the Island. Munda were the first inhabitant of the island who cleared the jungle in the 17th century to make it cultivable. The island is surrounded by Kholpetua and Kopotakkho, two active tidal rivers with saline water. This island is situated beside the Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest in the world. Though most of the islanders depend on shrimp farming, a small section, and the Munda indigenous people are dependent on the forest's resources like fish, honey, crab, shrimp, firewood etc. Gabura received international media attention when a prominent British newspaper published a photo story after the island was severely hit by cyclone *Aila* in 2009 (*The Guardian* 2009). Furthermore, cyclones *Amphan* in 2020 and *Yaas* in 2021 have had a devastating impact on the islanders.

The place from where I will do my RP is complex. First, I am an urban middle-class man, who does a 'white-collar' job in Bangladesh, and who is now studying in the Netherlands. Compared to my research respondents, I am not only privileged, but also, I live in a very comfortable zone where I don't face any water crisis. I have also not experienced any natural disasters like cyclones or riverbank erosion in my whole life. Nonetheless, one advantage for me during my RP journey would be that the islanders know me personally through an event. In 2009, just after cyclone *Aila* hit the island, I worked there as a volunteer on behalf of a network of NGOs whose primary responsibility was to provide drinking water to the islanders from the outside. From that event and my involvement during the post-

disaster relief work, I have been acquainted with the islanders for the last few years. In fact, many of them still remembered me (because we took some pictures during the relief work together) when I contacted them again for my RP. This event has also shaped my positionality as a researcher. Besides this, I support and write for the anti-shrimp campaign as a part of the environmental justice movement for the coastal area of Bangladesh. This role as a researcher will also help me to gain confidence from the people who have been suffering from freshwater crisis due to massive shrimp farming in the whole coastal area.

Manufacturing Scarcity

Destruction of embankment due to tidal surges is a very common sight in coastal Bangladesh. Usually, people tend to see this fact on print and electric media as 'natural' events. Before experiencing post-disaster (cyclone) situation in 2009 directly, I was not aware of the political economic dimensions behind these so-called 'natural' disasters. In that cyclone, some points of embankment were broken due to the pressure of tidal surge. After the temporary repair of the embankment, the islanders expressed anger about two specific things. In the daylight, they blamed the Water Development Board (WDB) for using second-hand construction materials and the lack of maintenance of the same. Later, I heard from many islanders that the embankment was weakened because few shrimp farmers (they were the village elites) made holes inside the embankment and brought saline water from the surrounding tidal river. This was the main reason why the embankment couldn't hold the pressure of tidal surges. Thus, I realized the fact that political economic dimensions are also responsible for any environmental changes. I also understood the fact that access to the environment is hindered by social inequalities; in other words, social hierarchy shapes the way we interact with environmental resources.

Shrimp Farms in Saline Water: The Name of a Dilemma

Saline water on the island poses a very complex but interesting dilemma. After the intrusion of saline water during cyclone *Aila*, rice cultivation has almost disappeared from the island. A small section of the village elite owns most of the farmlands, so they have turned all the rice fields into shrimp farms to take advantage of the saline water that has seeped into the island. Many islanders work as laborers on these farms. So, on one hand, shrimp farming

provides an alternative livelihood, but on the other hand, it is one of the main causes destroying the surface and underground fresh water sources day by day. The rich people on the island are happy in this situation because they have money to buy or bring drinking water from the outside; they also have good infrastructures (for example, huge plastic tanks) to store rainwater for a long period of time. So, shrimp farming is profitable for them by destroying the sweet water ecosystem. However, the poor villagers are forced to take part in the production process due to the lack of livelihood options available outside the island. Hence, they suffer the most.

Indigenous Cosmology and Practices: Challenging the Dominant Discourses

It is important to think about nature from different perspectives. Our relationship with nature is largely determined by what we think, and how we think about it. As previously mentioned, the Munda indigenous people claim to be the first inhabitants of the island because a local landlord brought their ancestors to clear the jungle for cultivation in the 17th century. They have 'ancestrality' (Escobar 2014: 19), which means an ancestral mandate that inspires today's struggle against moving to another place either by enforcement, threat, or voluntarily. Besides this, colonial law pushed indigenous customs to a very marginal position (Watson 2018: 121). For example, the Permanent Land Settlement Act of 1793 created a landlord system in British India which gave supreme authority to the local landlords to extract revenue from the peasants. Furthermore, the native people's lands were taken very easily because they didn't have any documents to prove their private ownership of the fields they cultivated. The saddest thing is that no Munda indigenous family owns any shrimp and rice fields now. Their lands were 'taken' by document forgery, threats, and in some cases, due to family crisis or debt, they were even forced to sell at a very cheap price. However, it is important to see their relationship with the natural world (like forest or water) and how it is part of their societal, political, ecological, economic, and legal struggles.

Nonetheless, the multiplicity of gods and deities in Munda indigenous society play an important role in how they interact with water. Water is not a resource to them, not even an opportunity. It is very interesting to note that while most of the islanders, who are Bengalis (both Muslim and Hindu) and came to this island later, have turned the rice fields into shrimp

and crab fields, and that also many of them work as day laborers in these farms, not a single indigenous Munda person works there. Furthermore, none of the indigenous families are involved in the shrimp business. The Munda population on the island usually go to the forest for collecting honey, crab, fish, firewood, and some of them even work in the small industries in cities or as day labourers or rickshaw pullers. Significantly, they are never involved in shrimp farming.

As water is very sacred to them; it is believed that there are deities who protect water sources in the village. Drinking water sources for the Munda people are linked to a few water deities. In fact, there are two female deities who 'protect' several water sources on the island for the Munda people. As they heavily depend on the forest for their livelihood, and the forest is filled with tigers, crocodiles, snakes, and pirates, they usually sacrifice to the *Monosa* deity for their safety when they enter the forest every day. While the *Monosa* deity is respected by the Hindu, Muslim, and indigenous islanders, the water deities are respected only by the Munda community. Munda people believe that the deities protect the water from any harm. They are divided into several clans; the *Tut* clan believes that they originated from the *Sundari* tree, while the *Baghor* clan believes that they originated from tigers.

Besides this, water is also very holy to them. If we aim to examine the uses of water among the Munda community, we need to go beyond its practical use like drinking, bathing, and washing activities. For the Munda people, on certain symbolic realms, water has a very sacred and powerful role. First, water, together with rice, is the chief element for making rice beer (strong alcohol), which is used in all social festivals. The ponds with sweet water are the focal point of daily life for the Munda community. Every ritual and rite, either social or religious, starts here and ends here. All the rituals require sweet water, either from the pond or from the deep tube well. No saline water is used in any rituals among the Munda people because they consider it profane, not sacred. When they sacrifice any cow or goat, it must be bathed in pond water. Sometimes, they spread the ritualized water, which they consider more scared, onto the rice field and vegetable orchards with the expectation that they will get a good harvest.

This story of a relationship with water (nature) tells us a unique thing that is absent in the modernist/state/development discourses. Indigenous cosmologies are one of the sites where continuous effort should be pondered to go beyond the western (modern)

epistemological framework. This means that another way of seeing and understanding the world and nature is possible. The recognition and acceptance of non-western epistemologies are very important because without cognitive justice, no social justice is achievable (Santos and Meneses 2019: xx). The West looks at the global South with ethnocentric, supremacist, racist, misogynist and Eurocentric lenses, which prompt epistemicide, i.e., the murder of non-Western knowledges. Epistemicide involves the destruction of social practices, and disqualification of social agents that operate based on such (in this case, indigenous) knowledge traditions (Santos 2014: 153). Seeing nature as a resource is one of the main causes of epistemicide. For example, the West sees nature as a resource for endless extraction, but to many indigenous populations of the global south, nature is a living thing; it is comparable to Mother Earth. A mother is not an object, not a resource, she is sacred and to be respected because the understanding of the world is much broader than the western perception of it (Escobar 2016: 16). While all the sweet water ponds, canals, tanks, and natural depressions are seen by most of the islanders as resources for shrimp and crab farming, the Munda indigenous people view these sites as a part of them. They don't view nature as outside there waiting for human touch. As opposed to the binary opposition of the modernist discourse, the Munda community's eyes of relationality manifests relations (Escobar 2016: 17), and presents a different form of nature, which is largely unknown to us, and which doesn't differentiate culture from nature.

One of the reasons why outsiders (non-islanders) and state officials are not keen on listening to local stories is because these alternative narratives will cause a hindrance to the modernization, privatization, and commodification of nature. For example, almost every 'poor' household has its own earthen pots and techniques (some local herbs) to preserve rain waters for future use, but nowadays, many outsiders claim that these techniques are not safe for preserving drinking water. They are encouraging islanders to use certain tablets to filter their water for drinking and to buy plastic tanks. Though the hegemonic presence of modern biomedicine is everywhere, islanders continue to use herbs and other indigenous techniques for preserving drinking water for a long time. Unfortunately, these local herbs can't grow properly due to the salinity in the island water nowadays.

Saving the Water Commons

The landscape of the southern part of the island is much higher than sea level. So, inhabitants of this part have continued rice cultivation. They also collect freshwater from two big communal ponds (even the underground water is salty there). In 2006, several village elites wanted to dig one-kilometre-long cannel beside the two ponds to bring saline water from the tidal river for their shrimp farms. The villagers opposed it because it would have totally destroyed the two freshwater ponds. The Munda indigenous people were at the forefront of this opposition. This is because the Munda people see any commons in a very different perspective where the "commons exist in these relational worlds, not in worlds that are imagined as inert and waiting to be occupied" (Escobar 2014:18). So, the conversion of commons into resources and its treatment as objects are resisted by indigenous cosmologies. However, two things are important for commoning water here: the shrimp cultivation must be stopped, and the privatization of water should be banned. The outsiders' (government officials, journalists, even development workers) perspective of the island as 'shrimp island', and thus, treating it as a 'resource' from the outside is part of the problem, not the solution. Due to the increasing privatization of the ponds, canals and tanks, which were traditionally the water reservoirs during monsoon, and due to the advent of shrimp farming, water as commons has lost its character. This must be stopped.

Conclusion

When social struggle is seen as an epistemic struggle (Icaza and Vazquez 2013), water justice should be seen as epistemic justice too. Water's broader connection with development, democracy, and social justice is important here (Sultana 2018). If we stop seeing nature as a resource, if we stop seeing saline water as an opportunity to produce commodity and to make a profit, and if we start seeing nature in a very relational way, only then can we tackle many environmental and social problems, as these two are intricately connected. I am not claiming that I have found a solution or discovered a perfect resistance. What interests me is that there exists a different world view, different ontology among the Munda indigenous people of the island, which could be a starting point of 'pluriversal worlds' (Escobar 2016: 2) where many worlds would fit. Another interest lies in exploring under which conditions this pluriversal world survives and speaks to us.

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Colono Cocalero Peasants: Amid the Market Control and Their Right to Subsistence

By Juliana Cubides Sánchez, AFES, Colombia

Introduction

This essay will argue that the *colono cocalero peasants*[1] can be understood as rightless subjects due to their location between the brunt of both a vicious illegal market and a negligent State. It will analyse coca leaf production using a Marxist Political Economy and a Moral Economy perspective. The aim is to address the dialogical relation between the global and the local dynamics, and among structure and agency. For that purpose, from a Marxist Political Economy perspective, this essay will explore how the boom of the cocaine market led to the incorporation of the labour of frontier areas[2] into the dynamics of accumulation by a scheme similar to *contract farming* (Bernstein, 2010; Torres, 2018). However, to avoid falling in a deterministic comprehension, from a Moral Economy approach, it will discuss how engaging in coca leaf production was a survival and political strategy of *colono* peasants (Ramírez, 2001; Salgado, 2012). While both understandings will allow appreciating (respectively) the economic structures and political experience that shaped the dynamics of the *colono cocaleros peasants* in frontier areas of Colombia, the "incorporation of greater complexity inevitably generated analytical tensions" (Edelman, 2005, p. 335). Therefore, this essay will end up discussing the possibilities and emerging contradiction of this cross-analysis.

Pushes and Pulls in the Configuration of the Coca Frontier

Before engaging in the analytical consideration of the coca leaf production, it is important to acknowledge the historical factors that place the *colono cocaleros peasants* between the

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[1] *Colono* as they opened the agrarian frontier "colonising" territory that traditionally belonged to indigenous communities; *Cocalero* as they live from coca leaf cultivation; and *peasants* because they identify themselves as such.

[2] Frontier areas are considered areas outside the agrarian frontier that have been constructed by the state as wild, isolated, marginalised, empty territories, containers of natural resources (Serje, 2011).

market control and their right to subsistence —more blatantly, between a rock and a hard place. I will argue this is strongly related to the migration of peasants to frontier area which can be explained by two main factors, the pushes and the pulls. The *pushes,* referring to the politics of the administrative and geographical centre of the country that constrained the migration of small landowners to peripheral areas. And the *pulls,* denoting the boom of the cocaine market which attracted the peasants of this marginalised space into their vertical integration (Cubides, 2021a).

The high concentration of land in Colombia[3], together with precarious cadastral registration, has caused a constant *push* of small landowners to remote areas outside the agricultural frontier (Vera, Valencia and Cubides, 2020). Since colonisation, much of the Andean and inter-Andean region has been shaped by a latifundial order, later reinforced by models of large-scale land appropriation and dispossession. In the second half of the 20th century, these dynamics of agrarian change were accelerated due to the strong integration of Colombia into the global market and the civil war known as the period of *La Violencia* (see Torres, 2018; Vera, Valencia and Cubides, 2020). The combination of these factors resulted in the concentration of property within the agrarian frontier, and the displacement of thousands of peasants to peripheral areas (Fals-Borda, 1994; Torres, 2018).

Furthermore, as marginalised areas are *"the ideal setting for the development of enclave economies"* (Vera, Valencia and Cubides, 2020, p. 8), the economic booms also *pulled* peasants to migrate. In the late 1980s there was a significant change in the organization of the cocaine market. Due to political changes in Latin America and the economic boom of the cocaine (see Gootenberg, 2008; Torres, 2018) [4.] The cocaine market had to make way for a new socio-spatial configuration to supply the demand for coca leaf. Since this capital is, by all means, illegal, its location was only possible deep into the forest beyond the reach of State

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[3] The most recent statistics about land concentration show that "1% of the largest farms manage 80% of the land" (OXFAM, 2017)

[4] The wave of right-wing military regimes in South America, especially the dictatorship of Chile, closed several smuggling routes (Gootenberg, 2008, p. 301). This entailed the migration of the *capital space* of this illegal market to another *place*. In addition, the criminalisation of marijuana uses and the perception of cocaine as a gourmet and non-dangerous drug during Nixon's administration, significantly increased the demand for cocaine till a tipping point where the existing market was unable to satisfy demand (Gootenberg, 2008, p. 307).

regulatory institutions (Vera, Valencia and Cubides, 2020, p. 6). Consequently, areas beyond the agrarian frontier, of recent colonisation where peasants were seeking to make a living, became propitious places for its territorialisation.

As it will be argued below, these pushes and pulls were leveraged in some ways by the interests of a global market and experienced differently by the peasants. While there are numerous factors intertwined here, this essay will focus only on the *social conditions of production* of the coca leaf and the moral economy of the decision to cultivate it which will be discussed in the following sections.

Cocaleros under the Market Control

When looking into the dynamics of an illegal market that operates beyond legal frames of possession of resources, the bundle of power is what needs to be analysed (Cubides, 2021b). Marxist Political Economy analysis is then useful in this case insofar as it considers "all the relations between people [...]shape how production is organized" (Bernstein, 2010, p. 16). This relational approach focuses on the social relation and dynamics of production and power stressing the politics of how globalised markets find spaces of accumulation and shift the patterns of labour exploitation (Bernstein, 2010; Oya, 2012). Current debates on that matter have emphasised that "regardless of the form of formal property rights, focusing on the 'bundle of powers' and not just on the 'bundle of rights'" is central in contemporary agrarian (Franco and Borras jr., 2012, p. 55). By looking beyond property and dispossession, this approach is practical to acknowledge how the appropriation of resources by capital takes form in illegal markets. This section will analyse how the boom cocaine market in the 1980s and its spatial shift implied a quick transformation over the control of resources in the new location (Hall, 2011, p. 841). As this market required the land but also the existing labour force, without the need to displace people, the capital "devour[ed] socio-ecological relations" (Ballvé, 2019, p. 216).

In the coca frontier, the way in which capital started to exploit labour in the pursuit of profit and accumulation, and how labour started to work for capital to obtain its means of subsistence (Bernstein, 2010, p. 1) can resemble *contract farming*. The cocaine market adopted forms of vertical coordination specific to contract farming schemes, where buyers/processors directly shaped grower's production decisions by stipulating market

obligations, such as volume, value, quality etc. (Little and Watts, 1994, p.9 in Oya, 2012, p. 2). The new configuration of relations emerging from the coca boom and its territorialization was characterized by three main aspects. First, the unequal bargaining power between coca growers and buyers (Oya, 2012). Second, the lack of State regulation and the total exposition of out-growers to the market. And third, the redefinition of cash flow into the household, and thus, the commodification of their subsistence (Bernstein, 2010; Adams *et al.*, 2019). All three aspects transformed people's uses of land, allowing the market to grab control over resources without dispossession. This is what Borras et al. (2012) have called *control grabbing*.

Drug traffickers, as the main actors in the cocaine value chain, act as a corporation in charge of processing and exporting the product. They "exercised a total monopoly over the circulation of this commodity, determining its quantity and price" (Salgado, 2017, p. 15). Building upon the unequal power relationship between them and peasants, they aggressively reorganised the local use of resources (Adams *et al.*, 2019, p. 1436). Rather than seeking the possession of the land —which was risky and useless[5]—, they established the 'rules of the game' to ensure the commodity supply needed, and guarantee that the distribution of benefits, costs, and risks were in their favour (Adams *et al.*, 2019, p. 1436).

Through informal arrangements, they coordinated the vertical integration of peasants as coca out-growers into the market, outsourcing one of the riskiest and more criminalised parts of the cocaine value chain. By this technical division of labour, drug traffickers were able to minimise risks as an export company usually does (Oya, 2012, p. 19). They managed to avoid the threat of losing a harvest due to forced eradication policies, the heavy work of deforesting and clearing the area for cultivation, and the physical danger of interacting with illegal armed actors and facing military forces. Additionally, this scheme of organisation allowed them a spatial fragmentation and mobility that was particularly necessary when

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[5] This land was located in "areas where the structures of use and tenure of land did not allow for them to be part of the productive processes with socio-political rights (Vera, Valencia and Cubides, 2020); many of these occupations were not nearly even acknowledged by the state because of the lack of technical instruments of recognition to begin with (such as rural cadastres, updated cartography, etc.) and/or because such occupations were located deep within forest reserves and natural national parks where the crops or livestock activities were not allowed (Vera, Valencia and Cubides, 2020)" (Cubides, 2021a).

operating at the edge of the law. Within these social conditions of production smallholders "carr[ied] a disproportionate share of production and market risks" (Adams *et al.*, 2019, p. 1436).

Moreover, in this scenario, capital accumulation could run rampant as coca leaf production was carried out beyond the State's protection, where there were no legal restrictions for the functioning of this market. Unlike legal markets, the land deals that occurred in these frontier areas did not go through the consent of the State to create "cross-borders spaces and arrangements" to transfer sovereignty rights (Margulis, Mckeon and Borras, 2013, p. 5) nor did they operate under the supervision of the State. On the contrary, this market located itself in the already existing holes of State sovereignty where citizenship did not translate into welfare, and the relationship with the State was experienced in terms of technologies of exclusion, historical marginalisation and violence (Vera, Valencia and Cubides, 2020). There were no official protection instances to which farmers could appeal in order to safeguard their rights or enforce fair market transactions. The imperative of accumulation was the main factor that shaped social relations of production, so unjust and exploitative relations took place (Hough, 2011, p. 1020).

However, the level of control over the use of resources and the capacity to exploit peasants not only depends on the direct power relation, but it also relies on the lack of "alternative sources of livelihood that may provide a safety net or 'exit' against the monopsony power of [the buyer]" (Oya, 2012, p. 7). Thus, effective control of the local social relations and resources is reinforced by the increasing dependence of the peasants on that one commodity. The greater flow of cash into households gradually reduced the complexity of a household social relation of production and reproduction "to a single source of cash income" (Adams *et al.*, 2019, p. 1438). Salgado (2017, p. 11) explain that the cocalisation[6] of frontier areas generated

> The absence of agricultural and livestock production in the local market and the excesses of circulating capital in the region [which] provoked both dependence on the external food market and significant inflation in basic necessities, liquor, luxury goods and agricultural inputs. The traditional recruitment of family or reciprocal labour force, typical of the early years of colonisation, was quickly absorbed by

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[6] Expansion of coca crops.

an economy in which labour became basically salaried and expensive.

Hence, crash crops grew at the expense of food security and relations of reciprocity (Oya, 2012; Adams *et al.*, 2019).

From a Marxist perspective, without effective control over means of production —as aforementioned—, peasants became 'petty commodity producers', more precisely, self-employed proletarians working on their own land (Watts 1994 in Niño, 2016; Adams *et al.*, 2019). Through peasants "integration into wider social divisions of labour and markets" their alternative sources of livelihood were diminished almost to the point of despairing; their subsistence was commodified, their social institutions of reciprocity were eroded, and their willingness of collective action weakened (Bernstein, 2010, p. 10).

Colonos Claiming Their Right to Subsistence

While the previous analysis is useful to understand the structural economic forces that shape the labour dynamics of coca leaf production, it does not explore much the agency of peasants. As it ends up equating peasant to 'petty commodity producers', it neglects other identities beyond class that are key in the way peasants relate with the market and the State; for instance, their identity as *colonos*[7]. Therefore, this section will explore further the political driver of coca production highlighting the peasants' agency. Through a Moral Economy perspective, it will go beyond the Marxist definition of exploitation[8], to analyse coca leaf production "far more in accord with the major existential problems of peasant life" (Scott, 1977, p. 33); hence, in terms of which relations aid or hinder peasants meeting their basic needs (Scott, 1977).

Building upon Thompson's (1972) statement that "each fact can be given meaning only within an ensemble of other meanings" (in Edelman, 2012, p. 53), coca leaf production cannot be understood just in economic terms. It has to be analysed in relation to a broader historical process, which includes other actors beyond the market. This change in the angle of the analysis allows recognizing that certain forms of exploitation —like *contract farming*

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[7] *Colono* is a way of calling people that opened the agrarian frontier "colonising" territory that traditionally belonged to indigenous communities.

[8] Understood as "the proportion of the product expropriated [surplus value] as a measure of the level of exploitation" (Scott, 1977, p. 33).

in this case— "tend to offer built-in subsistence security and which, in this sense, adapt themselves to the central dilemma of peasants economies" (Scott, 1977, p. 32). In this respect, land deals that are conceived as exploitative when analysing the bundles of power, can be perceived by peasants as less harmful than other power relations that threaten their subsistence (Scott, 1977, p. 32).

Cocalero peasants in the frontier areas of Colombia have to be comprehended not only by their function as cocaleros (coca leaf growers) but also, by their position as *colonos.* As María Clara Torres (2018, p. 135) argues "small coca producers […] are the historical result of the unresolved legacy of the rural tensions that unfolded between the 1950s and the late 1980s". Therefore, acknowledging the historical factors that pushed peasants to colonise marginal areas and the role of the State in this process will help explain the odd decision of engaging in an illegal market.

In this regard, Salgado (2017) mentioned that the decision to cultivate coca is intrinsically related to State's expulsion and segregation of a large section of the peasantry from the economic, political and social national dynamics. The peripheral areas that were conceived by the State as wild, isolated, and empty territories, ended up being the refuge for many displaced peasants (Serje, 2011). Thus, the fact that peasants ended up settling in spaces with several ecological and infrastructural difficulties is related to the State's inability to guarantee rights in their homelands.

The *colono peasants,* therefore, can be characterized by a conflicting relationship with the State. As Ballvé (2019, p. 212) exposes "The drug trade [found] fertile ground in frontier zones […] in which the rule of law [was] already contested, political authority [was] already explicitly in question, and economic relations [were] already wrought by violence". On the account that the basic standards of justice and the minimum resources for living were by no means assured, resentment and resistance was a widespread feeling (Scott, 1977, p. 6). Thereupon, it is possible to argue, in James Scott (1977, p.3) terms, that the indignation and rage of not only having unmet need but violated right was what provoked peasants to engage in coca production.

The involvement of the peasants in the coca market was not automatically determined by the global dynamics of the capital rather gradual and dialogical. Peasants are actors in this

process who, within the possibilities they had, chose rationally and deliberately to join this market to claim their right to live. Initially, there was moral resistance to the cultivation of this crop; they knew its illegality carried high risk and was stigmatised (Salgado, 2017; Torres, 2018). However, what made peasants decide to cultivate coca was wanting to live, "if it is not coca, then from what are we going to live?" (Salgado, 2017, p. 4). As a peasant from the region states:

> You carry a kilo of coca in your pocket, but if you plant a hectare of yuca [a vegetable], that's 100 loads more or less. How do you do it if you don't have any roads for cars, how do you get it out? (...) We plant coca not because we like it, but because we have to (Cesycme in Vera, Valencia and Cubides, 2020, p.10)

Growing coca was seen as one of the few possibilities for survival in a context lacking local markets, sources of agricultural production, infrastructure, and communication routes (Vera, Valencia and Cubides, 2020). Accordingly, Gutierrez (2020, p. 1010) affirms that "[i]n Colombia, coca play[ed] a key role for coping and survival in neglected territories settled by those displaced and dispossessed by the country's multiple conflicts and agricultural commercialization".

Cultivating coca was then experienced as a matter of moral rights because the State was not fulfilling its moral obligation to provide maintenance needs (Scott, 1977). Even when it was illegal gradually it started to gain legitimacy grounded upon the social perception of State abandonment. Peasants believed they had "a moral and legitimate right not to die of hunger and to demand political inclusion and attention to their basic needs from the state" (Salgado, 2012, p.186); what Scott (1977) named "the right of subsistence security" (in Edelman, 2005, p. 332). Therefore, with time coca cultivation became not only a socio-economic strategy to articulate peasants to the market, but also a tool for peasants to claim their right to live, and from there to negotiate with the State their inclusion in the national development project and the guarantee of their rights[9] (Salgado, 2017, p.4).

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[9] For this discussion see Ramírez, M. (2001) 'Entre el Estado y la Guerrilla: Identidad y Ciudadanía en el Movimiento de los Campesinos Cocaleros del Putumayo' who talks about the cocalero mobilization. And Torres, M. C. (2011). Estado y coca en la frontera colombiana. El caso de Putumayo. Bogotá: Odecofi, Cinep that shows how coca may attract state presence in Putumayo.

The Paradoxes of Exploitation in A Cross-analysis of Coca Leaf Production

As shown throughout this essay, the historical pushes and pulls that gave birth to the *colono cocalero peasants* were leveraged in specific ways by the interests of a global market and experienced differently by the peasants. Coca leaf production is the result of the intersection of global, national and local dynamics that —in the words of Thompson (1971, p. 107)— created a "far more complex pattern of action than one which can be satisfactory explained" by one isolated perspective. The two approaches used here for the analysis shed light on different and relevant dimensions of this reality. While the Marxist political Economy perspective explains "How much is taken" from the peasants, a Moral economy approach apprehends "What is left" (Scott, 1977, p. 7). These offer a significantly different understandings of exploitation, which are at the same time complementary and contradictory.

The cross-analysis here exhibits how the *social conditions of production* and the appropriation of space by the capital build upon historical exclusions of institutional configurations. On the one hand, it shows how capital's control of resources does not occur in an empty space of docile subjects who end up acting under the domination of structural economic forces. Rather it helps to nourish the interaction between structure and agency by providing a historical and political framework to exploitative relations which enriches their understanding. These additional dimensions reveal that beyond class identity there are other fundamental axes underpinning processes of organisation and change (Edelman, 2012). This insofar as the *colono cocalero peasants* would not be coca growers if they were not colonisers of frontier areas.

On the other hand, it shows that it is also a mistake not analysing critically the power relations that mediate these political processes. The consideration of the role of market forces and how they also endanger peasants and take advantage of their vulnerabilities is also extremely important. As Gutiérrez-Sanín (2019, p. 78) argues, the subsistence security achieved with coca is made at the expense of risk, instability, dependence and violence. In fact, peasants stress that "daily life in illegality is very hard" (Gutiérrez-Sanín, 2019, p. 78)

This exposes a tension that exists between the "modes of expropriation" and the "phenomenology of peasant experience" (Scott, 1977, p. 7); the narrow space amid the market control and the right to subsistence where the *colono cocalero peasants* are seeking

to make a living. To some extent, Thompson's analysis of the early nineteenth-century working-class had already considered this. Although in a very particular context and probably from a quite different angle, he acknowledges the present contradiction "between working people's historical experience, customary practices, and moral expectations, on the one hand, and the cruel exigencies of the new industrial capitalist order, on the other" (Edelman, 2012, p. 56). The cross-analysis carried out in this essay shows how this paradox takes a particular form in the context of coca leaf cultivation in Colombia.

However, the question that remains is how this interaction between economic structures and political agencies unfolds over time. To what extent will the market forces completely erode the forms of moral economy and perpetuate fully capitalist subjects? Or, from the other side, up to what point will the moral economy maintain the peasant political struggle alive? The two dimensions only coexist in conflict, thus —in theory— the extended existence of one will imply the deterioration of the other.

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The dialogue of knowledges as a requisite for peaceful living

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> *"(…) even love has changed. Even death.*
> *Everything has changed. Everything but us"*
> *(Alexievich, 2013: 55)*

Svetlana Alexievich's (2013) reaction towards the catastrophe in Chernobyl portrays similarities between the effects of the current pandemic and such disaster while stressing how much can be learned from calamity, but only if these lessons are actively pursued. Just as then, the terms *far-close* or *us-them* changed their meaning after the global spread of the corresponding hazard. Suddenly, we have a new sense of space and an invitation to question our conception of humanity and its relationship with the Earth. In this essay I explore how the binaries of modernity, of a Global North and a Global South, contain asymmetries of power and economic inequalities that have manifested in the COVID-19 pandemic and that invite us to rethink this division. The current scenario strengthens Escobar's (2007: 26) argument that we are in a moment of transition between modernity, where capitalism and colonialism have shaped the present, and an uncertain future that could lead either to a consolidation of these paradigms or to different alternatives that challenge them in different degrees.

Challenging dichotomies without falling in the falsity of equality

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the dangers of creating a false assumption of equality that conceals the contrasting conditions of different populations, as well as a nationalist fragmentation that raises questions for the recovery from the current crisis. For Caduff (2020), while different alternatives emerged to handle the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, two options have had greater visibility. One that adopted a differentiated intervention that focused on testing and contact tracing, and another that relied on curfews and confinement as a way to control the spread of the disease (p. 3). Several government officials opted for the latter, avoiding the side effects of a differentiated strategy by promoting the need of a national compromise given that the consequences of the disease would affect society. However, by imposing a generalized confinement they ignored how

lockdowns would affect differently those who have low incomes and face additional disadvantages (Caduff, 2020: 5). While a message was promoted that the pandemic required an effort from all, it was not considered that "the social determinants of health, including poverty, physical environment, race and ethnicity" (Abrams & Szefler, 2020 in Oldekop et al. 2020: 2) define the differentiated effects the disease has had in different populations. Caduff (2020) links the current crisis and the topic of this essay, by asking "how did we end up (…) [normalizing] that biological life is an absolute value separate from politics?" (p.17).

The silencing of the disproportionate effects of the pandemic for different people is an expression of the overrepresentation of an expert knowledge that has a one-sided narrative, a narrative of the privileged. This privilege manifests even between countries. While the Global North has greater capacity to deal with the social costs of an economic slowdown, countries in the Global South must incur in greater debt at the expense of future investment on other social programs (Oldekop et al. 2020: 3). Rutazibwa (2019) considers that behind this one-sided narrative – consistent of knowledges and ethical behaviors – that is usually projected as universal, there is a relation with the colonial which should be resisted as it invisibilizes "the ills of poverty, conflict, deprivation, diseases, environmental degradation and exploitation of the colonial project" (p.160). This colonial imaginary is sustained by the traditional/modern, backward/progressive dichotomies that continue to shape the relationships between developed and underdeveloped countries (Kothari, 2006: 13). According to Escobar (2007), science and market create different forms of exclusion that have resulted in a new kind of social fascism which is expressed in the increasing number of people that is "thrown in a veritable 'state of nature'" (p. 27) and that is concentrated in poorer countries. Moreover, he denotes financial fascism as a way of marginalizing regions by limiting the access of credit to those countries that are in an economic crisis and who do not comply with favorable conditions for the expansion of the market and, therefore, perceive a greater influence of foreign economic actors on their economy (Ibid.: 28). The COVID-19 pandemic is just another expression of this social fascism that results from modernity and a market logic that favors the Global North through globalization.

However, economic globalization has also taken a hit as the pandemic has disrupted global value chains. This has affected different industries but most notably the medical industry because of growing protectionism and nationalism (Oldekop et al. 2020: 2). The risk behind a nationalist fragmentation is that technical capacities to cope with the current crisis are unevenly distributed among countries, as capitalist logic has focused on concentrating highly technical processes on the Global North, and resource extraction on the Global South. Moreover, capitalist fixation with growth has "undermined meaningful local activities, fostered accumulation by dispossession and contamination, and destroyed the livelihood of people formerly directly dependent on ecosystems" (Gerber and Raina, 2018: 255). These challenges, exclusions and segregations underline the importance of finding alternatives to the current narrative of development. Following Rutazibwa (2019), there is a need to challenge the ideologies, studies and institutions that underpin the current narrative of development while protecting the ideas of global justice and solidarity to live in "a world in which many worlds are possible" (p.163).

Decolonizing the mind and revitalizing local knowledges

The power of development as a narrative lies in the appropriation of the aspirations for present and future social transformations (Morarji, 2014: 185). Hence, the need of regaining control of such narrative with an alternative understanding of progress that focuses on a practicable concept of livelihood (Bebbington, 2000 in Escobar 2007: 24). To resist the inequalities of power implicated in the processes of (under)development, Kothari (2006: 15) suggests an enhanced recognition of our own positionality within a history of segregation. In other terms, we need to fight the exclusion of knowledges that took place with the development project by promoting a narrative that goes beyond current hegemony of the North and rescues the importance of cultures that rely more on "constructing more humane and culturally and ecologically sustainable worlds, (…) taking seriously social movements and grassroots mobilizations as the basis for moving towards the new era" (Escobar 2007: 20). The COVID-19 pandemic serves as well as an example of how solidarity emerges in popular movements, grassroots organizations, and citizens providing mutual support to communities that lack the attention of the government. Pleyers (2020) presents some of these expression in favelas in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro where local

residents and organizations have supported the most vulnerable, homeless people, migrants and even victims of domestic violence which have increased under the different lockdowns. He presents as well how these expressions of solidarity have emerged on the South in the North through aid groups that help those who have greater challenges to access the programs of the government and who present some kind of vulnerability (pp. 5-7). These expressions portray resistance towards a market culture that undermines community where it gets and imposes a single "imagined community of the nation" (Marglin 2009: 292) based upon selfish interests and hyper-individualism (Pleyers 2020: 7).

Going beyond the dominance of expert knowledge goes hand in hand with challenging the present asymmetrical global relations and imply moving beyond the paradigms of modernity. This, promoting a dialogue between different forms on knowledge while transitioning towards different ways to relate with each other and the environment as a response to the consequences of global capitalism (Escobar 2007: 27). There is a need to decenter white-European knowledge as its hypervisibility "reinforces marginalization, criminalization and 'memory loss' of racialized peoples" (Icaza 2015 in Harcourt 2019: 250). While for Marglin (2009: 296), this can be achieved by giving greater importance to experience and spirituality, for Rutazibwa (2019) we need to "start from an idea of co-creation and relationality in time and space" (p. 165). Two complementary expressions of these statements are to focus on the adaptations and resistance of local communities to the totalizing project of development and emphasizing the relevance of social movements that have been able to take a distance from the principles that underlie the classical understanding of development (Escobar 2007: 21). This argument can be summed up in the drawing of the artist Joaquín Torres García in which he portrays South America with the South at the top. Beyond its regional specificity, the artist invites the viewer to reflect that there are important lessons and valuable expertise in the South that are helpful to address current global challenges. Nonetheless, this does not have the purpose of satanizing the knowledge of the North, but rather "to liberate ourselves from its dominion over our minds" (Sachs, 2010: xix).

Figure 1. Joaquín Torres García – América (1946) (Moyano and Muzante, n.d.)

The division between humanity and nature and the importance to recover such balance

As a concluding remark it is important to stress that the current pandemic can teach us several lessons not only from its consequences but from its origin. In an interview to Fernando Valladares, an academic that focuses on understanding the effects of climate change on land ecosystems, he states that the increasing number of affectations of new pathogens (i.e. SARS, MERS, Ebola, Zika, SARS-CoV-2) is a consequence of the increasing degradation of ecosystems whose lost biodiversity affects its natural checks and balances for the viral load of all the species (Soto, 2020). This is just another consequence of the biophysical impossibility of the growth-led economic logic of modernity. We need to promote a society with a smaller metabolism that focus on life-in- common strategies that replace material accumulation as a social value (Gerber and Raina, 2018: 353). At the same time, it is important to recognize that there are still important lacks to be fulfilled in several communities around the globe, and the invitation to shift towards a sustainable economy must not ignore this. The fact that we need to stop growing, doesn't mean that we need to stop fulfilling these lacks through qualitative improvement of products (Daly,

2005: 103) and a redistributive logic that unpack its links with power, agency, culture, identity and history (Kothari, 2006: 21). We need to transition towards a post-development era that promotes a true respect of diversity of cultures and knowledges that entails equity, an understanding of the oneness with nature that challenges exclusion through commonalities, pluriversality and peace (Harcourt, 2019: 247). As Escobar (2007) recognizes, "it is not unreasonable to think that postdevelopment is wishful thinking. However, it might also mean that in rethinking radically development and modernity could lie powerful possibilities" (p. 29).

> *"The history of catastrophes has begun… but humans do not want to think about that, because they have not done it before; they hide behind of what they know. Behind the past."*
> *(Alexievich, 2013: 45)*

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Emerging Tensions from Hunger Commodification

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Introduction

> *"To isolate (land) and to form a market for it was perhaps the weirdest of all undertakings of our ancestors." - Karl Polanyi*

This paper builds on my first essay for this course, "New Institutional Economics (NIE) and hunger: a critical analysis", where I exposed the limitations of the NIE approach in effectively addressing the global problem of hunger. I argued that official responses to this issue rely heavily on the power of institutions in fulfilling the task of bringing agriculture to the market (World Bank 2007: 118), which is considered the main way to attain the Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) of ending hunger by 2030. This path for achieving food security is evidence of a biased view of rural and agrarian societies. Clarifying this departure point, the aim of this essay is to critically interrogate this perspective by applying a Marxist political economy approach (Bernstein 2009: 56) to agrarian transformation and rural development. I propose that a class analysis of agrarian structures is key to examine the underlying causes of rural poverty and hunger.

In the first part of the essay, I provide a brief review of the consolidation of world agriculture and its links to the development project, to describe the context in which the global agenda to end hunger is framed. This is useful for a deeper understanding of the NIE ideas that support the agricultural development enterprise. I focus particularly on the role of multinational organizations on the task of "modernizing the rural world", but also on the role of the state in facilitating this process and its current alliance with the corporate power. After, I critically examine the NIE standpoint on food and agriculture, exposing the strengths and weaknesses of its global agenda to tackle hunger. I scrutinize the contradictions of world agriculture by going through the four key questions of agrarian political economy (Bernstein 2010: 22), addressing the discussion's shortcomings on food security. Finally, I conclude with a reflection on the process of commodification of food and agriculture.

Context: world agriculture to feed the world

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG) provides a framework and line of action to face the global challenges that arise in the context of rapid population growth and environmental degradation. SDG 2 aims to free the world from hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in any of its forms (Food and Agriculture Organization et al. 2019: ix). The 2019 report on 'The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World' reveals that "the global level of the prevalence of undernourishment has stabilized; however, the absolute number of undernourished people continues to increase, albeit slowly" (Food and Agriculture Organization et al. 2019: vii). While the world already produces enough food to feed 10 billion people, more than 820 million people are still hungry and two billion are food insecure (Food and Agriculture Organization et al. 2019: vii). This exhibits the deep contradiction of the global food system: the constant existence of hunger amidst abundance. In this respect, it could be inferred that hunger is not a consequence of scarcity, but a result of poverty and inequality (Holt-Giménez and Shattuck 2011: 111). In other words, hunger is not only about food, but also about politics.

If compared to the last few centuries, humanity has come a long way in combating hunger. Yet, having the resources, technological advances and connectivity the world has today, this basic human right should have been guaranteed long ago. Following Clapp (2014: 3), the uneven distribution of food production, food trade and limited access to food are the essential reasons that people continue going hungry. To explore its prevalence amongst abundance, it is essential to trace the historical roots of consolidation of world agriculture and its links to the development agenda for food and agriculture, since it played a major role in deepening the international interconnections and commoditizing food and agriculture.

World agriculture refers to the current global division of agricultural labor that deepens the dependent relationships between the North and the South. This perpetuates a:

> … widespread subordination of producing regions to global production and consumption relations organized by transnational food companies. Under these conditions, which affect world regions differentially, agriculture becomes less and less an anchor of societies, states and cultures, and more and more a tenuous component of corporate global sourcing strategies (McMichael 2000: 23).

In other words, for the purposes of this essay, I use this term to refer to the global food and agriculture structure that frames the organization of food systems, food policies, food and agricultural practices, among others.

The period between 1950 and 1970 was characterized by a series of developmental reforms meant to modernize the Global South (Bernstein 2010: 74). The paradigm of modernization conceives development as an immediate consequence of economic growth, portrayed as the main way of achieving progress and tackling poverty. The World Bank (WB) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the 'Integrated Rural Development Programs' (IRDPs) to enhance the living conditions in the countryside (Bernstein 2010: 74). For example, an intervention aimed to modernize the rural world is the land reforms promoted in the Global South, seeking a reconfiguration of agriculture, land and resources to boost efficiency among farmers to increase their incomes and lift them out of poverty. "The economic rationale of land reform from above is that small farmers with secure possession of land and the right incentives will increase productivity, unlike those large landowners who leave land idle, use it for speculation or appropriate rents that they fail to reinvest in farm production" (Bernstein 2010: 99).

The period of development reforms provided the ground for continuous structural shifts in the world economy that restructured the state-society relations (Bernstein 2010: 79). During the 1990s there was a 'new wave' land reform, characterized for being market-based and involving civil society in the process of accelerating capitalist development in farming (IFAD 2001: 79). This market- centric shift towards flexible accumulation and prolonged commodification represented the rise of the neoliberal world order, marked by the subordination of the state to the free market (Gill 2014: 34). In the so-called 'developing world', states "experienced a triple 'squeeze': globalisation, (partial) decentralisation, and the privatisation of some of their functions" (Borras Jr 2009: 10). This remodeled the role of nation-states in development processes, where they still have a significant role, but national politics are ultimately shaped by international development and financial institutions (Kay 2006: 476).

Whether it is a state-led or neoliberal development, the unifying mantra is the modernization of agriculture as a path for achieving national development. Globalization

triggered the formation of a world order understood as a continuation of the development project (McMichael 2000: 22). The rise of the world agriculture as the comprehensive framework that shapes our relation to food and (farm)land thus emerged as an adjacent project of neoliberal globalization that fostered a:

> … more productive agriculture based in deepening commodity relations… This was often pursued by governments in the South in "partnership" with the World Bank, bilateral aid donors, notably the U.S., Britain and France, and private agribusiness capital (national and international), all of which supplied designs for modernization (Bernstein 2010: 74).

Hence, integrating smallholder farmers into the market and raising agricultural productivity by providing institutional capacities and policy measures were the principal responses to succeed in the challenge of feeding the world. These solutions repackage the 'productionist' approach to food security (Clapp 2014: 1).

Boosting productivity to fight hunger

The 'new agriculture for development' project evidence NIE ideas. The latter's standpoint shares some features of neoclassical economics, as they both highlight the centrality of profit-maximizing individuals and their capacity to make rational choices measuring potential risks and seeking opportunities to obtain major benefits. Thus, agency is mainly understood at the individual level. Specifically, NIE's general premise is the existence of market failures, legitimizing the need for institutional intervention to correct them. For example, granting property rights, creating registration mechanisms and implementing formalization projects. In this sense, strong institutions can bolster society's productivity by enhancing formality and securing a stable environment for individuals to accumulate assets and freely participate in the formal economy (De Soto 2000: 59).

These ideas are aligned with the development agenda for food and agriculture, based on a deep conviction that capitalist agriculture is the only one capable of feeding the world (Bernstein 2010: 90). Initially, the project of agricultural development was mainly promoted by multinational organizations, such as the WB, the United Nations (UN) World Food Program, World Trade Organization, and the International Monetary Fund through structural reforms in alliance with the states. Under this view, "efficient markets require good governance and public policy – infrastructure, institutions, and services that provide

market information, establish grades and standards, manage risks, and enforce contracts – a continuing challenge in many countries" (World Bank 2007: 118). Today, this agenda continues with the strong collaboration of multinational companies, relying particularly on the power of technological innovations. The NIE ideas that supported the structural reforms of the 1970s are still valid today, but the neoliberal world order provides a particular totalizing framework that has changed the scope of agrarian transformations within and among countries (Borras Jr 2009: 12). However, the central ideas of the approach are still in force: increase efficiency and boost productivity. Ensuring the ground for integrating farmers into the market underlines a neoliberal ideology that shapes hunger as a technical matter that must be tackled through increased productivity (Moragues-Faus 2017a in Moragues-Faus and Marsden 2017: 275-276).

Whilst this approach of strengthening institutions and promoting efficiency in agriculture has been submitted to high scrutiny, some aspects are worth highlighting. Institutions, both formal and informal, are crucial when examining rural and agrarian societies. They are decisive in any process of agrarian change, as they facilitate or constrain people's options. Thus, the current institutional infrastructure composed of multilateral organizations provides a strong framework to deal with hunger and address policies around it. So far, interventions followed NIE ideas, setting the focus on increasing efficiency and productivity among smallholders, as well as promoting climate smart agriculture initiatives.

However, alternative proposals can and are starting to occupy these channels. For example, in recent years, there has been an increasing embracement of agroecology initiatives among UN institutions (Food and Agriculture Organization 2018: 1). The Food and Agriculture Organization has elaborated reports of sustainable and agroecological practices, resonating with local movements and grassroots organizations' proposals. For instance, Food Sovereignty ideas are starting to gain space in these dialogues. The fact that an institutional infrastructure already exists means that it can be challenged by different movements and organizations, as *La Via Campesina* (LVC) has shown. The role of LVC has been fundamental in the democratization of the UN, which provides an encouraging outlook for permeating the official agenda with grassroots organizations' demands. As a matter of fact:

> LVC has had a critical role in the reform of UN food policy processes after the 2008 food crisis. The

> crisis made UN bodies and member states recognize the importance of including the voices of rural social movements and civil society in shaping food policies (La Via Campesina 2020: 1).

In this sense, the institutional structure could be used to position other voices in the global political agenda, creating inflection points of convergence.

Despite this institutional strength, the main understanding of 'agriculture for development' is a conceptualization of rural poverty because of its separation from the urban world. The World Development Report 2008 on Agriculture for Development is a key document that integrates these ideas, drawing pathways to get out of poverty where the central element is bringing farmers to the market (World Bank 2007: 72). The working assumption is that the "dominant form of agricultural production, the small-scale agricultural producer or peasant farmer, is economically backward, marginal and unproductive" (Veltmeyer 2009: 395) and that imperfect markets and institutional inconsistencies increase disarray and vulnerability among smallholders, threatening their competitiveness (World Bank 2007: 18-19). Hence, institutional intervention is needed to ensure a good environment, reinforce value chains and increase market access to advance in the institutional reconfiguration of agriculture. The NIE approach advocates for linking smallholder farmers to the market through commodity chains, a scheme reinforced by the technical packages of climate smart agriculture and biotechnology. Nowadays, the technological packages can be considered the most iconic expression of NIE, since they wrap up the ideas of productivity and efficiency. Climate smart agriculture is positioned as an alternative to unproductive ways of farming, as well as a superior path for achieving food security.

Marxist political economy and the agenda to end hunger

According to Bernstein (2007), two theoretical perspectives can be followed when approaching rural development: residual and relational (in Borras Jr 2009: 13). The former implies development is a unidirectional process that is sternly linked to economic development. In this sense, the roots of rural poverty are related to the exclusion of these societies from the benefits of the market. The latter looks at the social relations that generate poverty, particularly by focusing on the power dynamics between different social classes.

Marxist political economy is ascribed within the relational perspective, critically

delving the distribution of power and the unequal relations that constrain the interactions between different actors within agrarian structures. It provides a tool for analyzing the dynamics of social change, the latter achieved by looking at the interplay between the agrarian structure, the set of social relations that perpetuate the status quo; institutions, the rules or regulations that govern individual's actions; and actors, autonomous individuals who have the power to understand and transform their current situation (Borras Jr 2009: 22). A political economy perspective studies them together to understand the dynamics and forces that generate poverty, inequality and hunger.

Under a Marxist political economy lens, the NIE approach to hunger undercuts important elements of rural and agrarian societies by tackling hunger mainly through institutional intervention and by placing the market as a central element for agricultural development. As highlighted in my first essay, this ends up portraying a homogeneous view of rural societies, undermining collective action and reproducing a slanted view of politics. Conversely, a critical approach to the dynamics of social relations of production and reproduction implies asking the following four questions (Bernstein 2010: 22-23):

- *Who owns what? (social relations of property, e.g., land, capital, machinery)*
- *Who does what? (social relations of labor)*
- *Who gets what? (distribution of wealth)*
- *What do they do with it? (reproduction, both related to capital, e.g., how wealth is distributed among the different groups, and to social reproduction)*

Going through the four key questions of political economy is convenient to expose the shortcomings of the NIE approach to hunger. These "can be usefully applied across different sites and scales of economic activity, from households to 'communities' to regional, national and global economic formations" (Bernstein 2010: 24).

Summarizing, I have analyzed how NIE ideas provided the basis for the reforms implemented in the 'developmentalism' period (Bernstein 2010: 73) and for the continuation of the modernizing paradigm in the era of neoliberalism, resulting in the consolidation of the world agriculture. Consequently, it is key to answer the four questions by setting rural development and agrarian change in the context of neoliberal globalization, to generate a nuanced view of the structures and conditions that keep perpetuating hunger.

First, asking "who owns what?" speaks directly to the distribution of political power

around the ownership of the means of production. As Bernstein (2010: 22-23) mentions, this question aims to examine the relations of property, particularly concerning land, the basis of farming. The rise of world agriculture triggered the commodification of land, which has been converted into private property. This has had enormous consequences on farming, as it dispossesses smallholder from their means of production. Lacking assets, they are pushed to sell their labor force, for example, to richer peasants or agribusiness enterprises. Moreover, the current process of land grabbing is a manifestation of the unequal distribution of political power perpetuating social differentiation within peasant communities (Lenin 2004 in Borras Jr and Franco 2012: 40). The pervasiveness of capitalism in agriculture has changed the configuration of the economic relations and deprived farmers of controlling their lands and resources. By only promoting efficiency to address the issue of hunger, the 'productionist' perspective fails to look at the unequal distribution of power shaping the relationships between the different actors among the productive chain. Second, it is pivotal to consider the social relations around the division of labor. As Bernstein stressed:

> For example, those who undertake specialized tasks within units of production; producers making different kinds of things; men and women; and the different classes in agrarian societies and in capitalist societies (Bernstein 2010: 23).

With farmers alienated from their means of production, the forces that organized labor are allocated outside agrarian societies. Before the rise of world agriculture, the social relations of production were organized at a household or communal level. Nowadays, the current restructuring of world agriculture intensifies a global division of agriculture labor (McMichael 2000: 23), where farmers are connected to the market through value chains. This has:

> … altered the land-, labour- and capital-intensity of production, reconfiguring the rural production process in ways that may, or may not, affect processes that expand the commodification of labor and alter the purpose of production from production for use to production for exchange… (Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2008: 317).

Industrial agriculture evidence how the division of labor changes with the commoditization of agriculture. For example, agribusiness enterprises hire labor force of local farmers, who go from managing the entire ecosystem of their small farms to carrying out mechanized work. This not only has effects on the ecological cycles but also on the social and political organization of local communities. Thus, paying attention the social

relations of labor is key to unmask the intrinsic inequalities of the global organization of food and agriculture.

Third, the distribution question concerns the social division of the 'fruits of labor', which not only refers to income, but to other forms of wealth that do not necessarily take the form of money (Bernstein 2010: 23). Dispossessed from their lands and having the social relations of production and reproduction altered, smallholders' families are unlikely to keep the fruits of their labor. They are constrained by the forces of the market and count on fewer resources to be autonomous. For example, the commercial enclosure of the world's seeds (Rifkin 1998: 68) evidence how small farmers do not control their seed stocks anymore, as well as their reproduction. Today, "much of the seed stock has been bought up, engineered, and planted by global companies and kept in the form of intellectual property" (Rifkin 1998: 114). Moreover, I have argued that the existence of hunger is not due to scarcity but to an unequal distribution of food (Clapp 2014: 3). The American food industry exemplifies the paradox of an extremely productive sector that nonetheless is unable to ensure food security for the whole country. Besides the enormous quantity of food being produced, 30 million Americans are still hungry (McMichael 2000: 23). In this sense, with the world agriculture the social division of the 'fruits of labor' is profoundly unequal.

Finally, the fourth question is:

> … about the social relations of consumption, reproduction and accumulation… This final question is about how different social relations of production and reproduction determine the distribution and uses of the social product (Bernstein 2010: 23).

The strategic role of food and agriculture under the neoliberal order facilitates the conditions for capital to reproduce itself (Cammack 2017: 124). The idea of 'bringing agriculture to the market' follows the capitalist imperative of accumulation and pressures small farmers to be productive and competitive. The centrality of the market in the global organization of food and agriculture perpetuates current patterns of accumulation by letting a small group of corporations control the decisions surrounding consumption, production and distribution of food. Endorsed by a regulatory framework of multilateral agreements and protected by the state, they monopolize the global organization of food and shape the local food environments (McMichael 2000: 26). Thus, this institutional dimension of the world market shields a globalized food system that prioritizes the flow of capital before

ensuring food security (Greenfield 1999 in McMichael 2000: 26).

In short, these four dimensions provide an overview of how the advance of capitalism in agriculture, promoted by NIE "productionist" ideas, resulted in the consolidation of an inherently unequal global food system that has caused a profound transformation in farming. The commoditization of land, people and food as a central element of agricultural development has profoundly affected the social relations of production, reproduction, as well as the relations with the environment. The agriculture for development agenda and the search for efficiency has not only failed to solve the problem of hunger but also generated more breaches in rural societies. In this respect, the NIE approach neglects looking at the power structures and social relations that constrain farmers. Addressing the problem of hunger by only considering the productive side omits the power relations that compel smallholders and undermine other important aspects that go beyond the issues of production and efficiency.

Conclusion

The modernization of agriculture endorsed by the institutional reforms of the 1970s and continued with the neoliberal globalization ended up deepening the "commodification and specialization of agricultural commodity production" (Bernstein 2010: 85) and transforming small-scale farming. Hence, the NIE responses to hunger must be examined through a Marxist political economy lens, where questions of power are key to understand the process of neoliberal development. The four key questions of agrarian political economy, particularly in relation to food and agriculture, display that the ongoing process of commoditization keeps generating hunger and alienating farmers from their means of production, causing a rift in the relations to the environment and contributing to the fetishization of food.

The question of hunger is related to the global structure and world formation. As Holt-Giménez and Shattuck mentioned in a footnote:

> The inability of capitalist agriculture to provide livelihoods for the 1.5 billion peasants that manage to produce half the world's food on marginal lands means that poverty and hunger will continue to increase, as will agrarian struggles for land and resources (Holt-Giménez and Shattuck 2011: 112).

While the global economic formation continues to oppress smallholder farmers and

overwhelm the environment in favor of the forces of capital, the official responses to hunger will keep creating other forms of inequalities, since the distribution of power is not being contested. The input of the Marxist political economy approach to the NIE mainstream response exhibits the need to call for a reconfiguration of the global organization of food and agriculture. Otherwise, the responses will continue to be addressed through the institutional framework – in alliance with the state and corporate power – that protects capital within the current global economic governance (Clapp 2014: 2, 10). The official responses to global hunger call for more of the same neoliberal processes that fostered the crisis in the first place (Holt-Giménez and Shattuck 2011: 113, 126).

Understanding the processes of agrarian change by incorporating a power perspective is essential to propose down-to-earth initiatives that contribute to achieving a common goal: to end hunger. Interventions imposed from above do not consider the transformations that rural and agrarian societies have experienced because of the penetration of capitalism in agriculture and the consolidation of world agriculture. The emphasis on productivity and efficiency leaves aside other aspects that go beyond production. Food and agriculture must be understood in its integral dimension, critically recognizing the power dynamics that shape its global consolidation. Only then the problem of hunger will be recognized for what it is: a political issue.

Finally, the cultural, political, social and ecological aspects that characterize the act of harvesting, sowing and feeding must also be considered. Fervently promoting productivity and efficiency in agriculture alienates us from the fundamental essence of the process of preserving life: farming. As McMichael has concluded:

> … for the majority of the world's population, food is not just an item of consumption, it's actually a way of life. It has deep material and symbolic power… it embodies the links between nature, human survival and health, culture and livelihood… (McMichael 2000: 31-32).

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Testing Claims about Large Land Deals in Africa: Findings from a Multi-Country Study

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Research design

This study is designed to test common perceptions on large-scale land deals, such as whether large-scale land acquisitions threaten developing countries, the geographic concentration of foreign investors, and so on. Testing existing theories refers to a sceptical moment and requires methodological reflections (Gerring 2007: 39) to examine a claim. The research has clarified the units of analysis consisting of scale, geographical distribution within the country, and drivers (crops and target markets).

Data was collected from two primary sources: (1) empirical evidence (semi-structured interviews with officials, company representatives, development agencies and researchers), and (2) secondary data (earlier research, systematic data collection from government/regional authorities). Empirical data is to complement findings from the systematic inventories. They conducted 50 interviews in Ethiopia, 37 interviews and several focus group discussions with 48 people in Ghana. No empirical data was gathered in Tanzania. The research team calls it limited fieldwork because this kind of data supplements available data due to limited data for Ethiopia and Ghana to some detailed analysis units. Data availability from three national inventories is a significant obstacle. In addition, they realize the selection of bias and the limitation of qualitative data through interviews and focus groups (Cotula et al. 2014: 905).

To verify the scale of land deals, they use systematic national inventories and Land Matrix Data. The database accessed by the authors is the total number of land deals for each country based on a memorandum of understanding (MOU), letter of intent, and convention of the establishment. Apart from land size, planned and actual investments were also considered as indicators of scale. Ethiopia's inventory is regarded as the most complete out of the chosen countries. Their findings show that even though "there are remarkable differences in the average size of land deals… all these deals are on average quite large" (Cotula et al. 2014: 908), but lower than the previous estimation from other studies. The

range of investment plans spans broadly. The largest deal was up to US$2 billion. Despite the increasing demand for large-scale land deals, the aggregate scale associated with suitable land is not big and has little influence on a national agrarian structure (Cotula et al. 2014: 910).

For the second unit of analysis – geographical distribution within the country, the authors consider three patterns: trends and prospects, land acquirers, and drivers (crops and target markets). Trends in land allocation have been searched through inventory data from the time range between 2006 to 2010. The food crisis in 2007 to 2008 involved giving impetus to land requests partly. Findings: high spatial concentration shows acceleration in the three countries. Acquirers are not homogenous in the three countries. While the percentage of domestic ownership in Ethiopia accounts for 80%, the proportion of foreign investors is more dominant than in Ghana and Tanzania[10].

To drivers of land deals, findings illustrate that biofuels were a significant driver in Ghana and Tanzania but not Ethiopia. In general, "demand for energy and consumer goods has been a leading driver of land acquisition in the three countries" (Cotula et al. 2014: 914). These items show export orientation's preference, which is more profitable. Target markets do not have a focus point, but a transition from time to time resulting from actual production realities, the switch of demand from international markets, and unprofitable/unviable reasons.

The article found that land lease predominates rather than purchases in all three countries associated with the governments' role in making land deals (Cotula et al. 2014: 915). However, it is a bit different in Ghana, where the customary chiefdom (extended family) owns a large amount of land beside the Government. In terms of socioeconomic impacts, this paper suggests that it is critical to clearly define different types of implications at various stages of a project as the full impacts "only become apparent a long time after full-scale implementation begins" (Cotula et al. 2014: 919). Specifically, high failure rates and low implementation rates are the core causes leading to negative socioeconomic impacts.

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[10] Only 32 out of 64 recorded deals have been traced.

Evidence related to the degree of implementation in three countries is provided. Meanwhile, investors' commitments (and/or the State) to create jobs are unrealistic because of the agriculture context. As a result, conflicts, dispossessions, and other social transformations at stake occur in reality.

Assessment of the design, collected data and possible improvements

Assessment of the design

This study employs the most similar case (Gerring 2007), which often tests theories. These three countries were selected based on similar aspects: experienced much investors and public interest in land deals, available secondary data/sources on the significance and implications of the deals. In my opinion, this is the right choice as their purpose is to test common claims of land deals in poor countries in certain areas (Africa). The comparative method was selected based on collected data that is suitable and feasible. The purpose and methods of the study require a careful and skillful analysis of a significant and legitimate source of data. The scope of the proposition is deep and focused, and the availability of data is concentrated.

Based on basic types of designs for case studies (Yin 2018: 46), I believe this study employs holistic multiple-case design. While the operational measures of this study are relatively good, the internal validity is just above average. In terms of external validity, Yin (2018: 43) illustrates data should be generalizable beyond the case study. In this paper, the author group explains that "it is hard to generalize from the data collected in the three countries"; however, they managed to some extent to generalize findings to demonstrate a causal relationship. The results prove that the transition from small- to large-scale farming in Africa is accurate and rapid, and some homogenous features have been found: (1) land relations tend to be more influenced by long-term changes in population and socioeconomic situation; (2) the size and geographical concentration of transnational deals seem to be similar; (3) refutes a popular assumption that land acquirers mostly come from China and the Middle East, in fact, from Europe and the US; (4) proves governments take various and complex stances in making land deals, which is misunderstood from the earlier research.

Evaluation of data collection

There are two problems with data collected from governmental records. Firstly, the size of land deals is often changed (increase or decrease) compared to the records from the original MOU. The second is the amount of data collected between countries is unbalanced, as noted above (data from Ghana and Tanzania is limited). The essential angles of various land deals are challenged by the collection of data, which can lead to poor judgments, despite a strong research team. This shows that the lack of empirical data is a significant vulnerability that quickly leads to bias, especially for a case study.

However, the authors pay special attention to data authenticity, so they provide incredibly detailed information about gaps in data and the type of data they can access. For example, data on Land Matrix, their team had limited access to agriculture investments from 2005 to 2012; and restricted their analysis to land deals from Land Matrix over 1000 hectares only. It makes the genuinity of the data in the study high. This research not only accessories inventories but always cross-checked for accuracy through third-party sources (Cotula et al. 2014: 906, 908) for each component of the collected data set.

Possible improvements

(1) In some operational measures, the research team selected either national inventories or Land Matrix sources for comparison, which is not enough. For example, in terms of trends and prospects, only inventory data was collected and used to analyze and compare the archive data from Land Matrix from earlier studies. Therefore, my recommendation is to gather and aggregate data from Land Matrix to verify deviations.

(2) To learn about drivers of land deals, the author team focused on two units, crops and target markets. Nevertheless, the authors have not yet explained why they chose these two aspects regardings the drivers of land deals. Adding reasons for choosing crops and target markets to evaluate drivers in three countries would increase transparency and persuasion of operational measures.

(3) Although the article mentions that limited empirical fieldwork has been done to complement government data, this kind of data seems to be embedded in their analysis. The qualitative data needs to be presented in a more visible way and clearly explain how this data has been used and support which part of their findings.

In general, this is a good quality paper in order to test common claims about land deals in the academic field and widely used international datasets. The study shows considerable attempts by the authors to be able to provide general findings based on the lack of data sources due to the insufficient systematic data of these countries. Research results show that most of the current assumptions about land deals are flawed and need to be reviewed critically.

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A Critical Degrowth Reflection on the Neoclassical/New Institutional Economics Stance on Food Systems Transformation

By Stefan Schüller, AFES, Germany

Introduction

Food and agriculture are at the heart of many of the sustainability challenges the world is currently facing. From climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation to rising inequality and the persistence of different forms of malnutrition, the origins can largely be traced back to the way we produce, consume and distribute our food in an increasingly globalised fashion (IAASTD, 2008; IPES-Food, 2016; IPBES, 2018; IPCC, 2019). Albeit known for a long time, the externalities of our consumption patterns have long been ignored, with the economic mantra of the time suggesting that markets would eventually solve the shortcomings of prevailing systems. Whilst in no way only a problem of food and agricultural systems, they were mostly at the heart of the discussions on sustainability that eventually culminated in the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an action plan for humanity to tackle the multitude of crises unfolding. Whilst international institutions like the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) stress the importance of transforming food and agriculture to ensure attainability of the SDGs (FAO, 2018), they simultaneously also address the central role of food and agriculture in being able to 'transform the world' (FAO, 2019). Almost paradoxical, food and agriculture are considered one of the main causes and solutions to challenges of humanity.

Increasingly relevant in addressing that role has been the concept of food systems, which, albeit being already several decades old, has only recently gained ground among policymakers, scholars, civil society actors and practitioners active in the food and agricultural domain (Béné et al., 2018). Explanations can be found in the realisation that precedent approaches focused merely on production increases or value-chain interventions have proven to be nowhere near enough to face the challenges of the 21st century (ibid.). With a more holistic vision on food systems and their role for sustainable development in mind, recent international responses have thereupon called for radical food systems transformation. The urgency and relevance have been affirmed by the UN, with world leaders and others planning to come together for a Food Systems Summit in New York later

this year. This Summit is meant to 'launch bold new actions to transform the way the world produces and consumes food, delivering progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals' (UN, 2021). Whilst the call for transformation has been echoed by a wide range of actors, from the World Economic Forum (WEF) (2020) and the World Trade Organization (2020) to grassroots movements like La Via Campensina (2020), there have been fierce debates about what this transformation is supposed to entail. Therefore, more than 500 civil society organizations expressed their concerns about the kind of transformation the Summit is aiming to achieve. They are stressing that the incremental steps proposed by corporate actors capturing the preparatory process and the concomitant non-inclusion of small-scale food producers and civil society actors are not bringing about the sort of transformation needed to address all prevailing issues (IPC, 2020).

To learn more about mainstream responses to food systems transformation, this essay aims to dive deeper into the solutions that are being proposed by proponents of the neoliberal paradigm currently dominating food and agriculture. More specifically, it will look at the theoretical underpinning of the institutions advocating for agricultural growth and market- based solutions as means to achieve sustainable development and transform contemporary food systems. It will then apply a degrowth lens to critically assess the sustainability of adjustments proposed by followers of the neo-classical/new-institutional economics (NIE) schools of thought before finalizing with the important contributions a degrowth perspective can make when taking sustainable development and 'systems transformation' in food and agriculture 'seriously'.

Food Systems Transformation and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the associated SDGs, adopted by the UN in 2015 as a successor of the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015), presents a universal and integrated plan of action for the future of humanity that aims to address the 'three P's' (people, planet, prosperity) while ensuring to 'leave no one behind' (UN, 2015: 1). Unlike its predecessor, the SDGs stress that many socio-economic issues are of universal concern, affecting both countries in the Global South and Global North. As such, they show that in a globalized world, issues of sustainable development are interconnected between peoples, sectors and continents. Central to the achievement of all SDGs is the intention to

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have sustained economic growth, elaborated explicitly in SDG 8 as 'fostering sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all' (UN, 2015: 19). In this ambition, the structural changes applied to the world economy over the last decades and the financial institutions having accompanied this process continue to play an important role, with neoliberal thinking and business-friendly policies also having made it into many of the SDG-specific sub-targets and associated indicators. SDG target 8.1. For example, centers around GDP growth as the prime measure for 'sustainable' economic growth, whilst under SDG 2 multiple targets and indicators stress productivity and efficiency increase, market liberalization and persistent technological innovation as necessities for the elimination of hunger (UN, 2015). Whilst I will turn to the conceptual and practical weaknesses of those foci later, I will first elaborate on the origin of and proposed solution approaches to the neo-liberal formulation embedded in the SDGs. I will do so by explaining how first the neoclassical and later new institutional economics (NIE) school of thought have shaped the way sustainable development and the subsequent call for food systems transformation are being addressed at the level of different UN institutions meant to systemically address humanity's challenges.

Neoclassical economics is without a doubt the most applied school of economic thought, having undergone a wealth of intellectual analysis and application throughout the last century (Finlayson et al., 2005; Morgan, 2015). Its main canon is threefold: (i) the importance of free market and consequent competition that if perfect, will result in efficient allocation of resources based on an equilibrium of supply and demand, (ii) a strong emphasis put on rationality and utility maximization as the means to assess it, and (iii) the neglect of uncertainty as a disturbing factor in the behavior of economic actors (Dequech, 2007: 280; Morgan, 2015: 5-6). Underlying this canon is what Adam Smith described as an 'invisible hand', which supposedly 'aggregates individual decisions driven by rational self-interest into socially optimal outcomes' (Finlayson et al., 2005: 515). The NIE school followed up on this line of thought, subscribing to most basic neoclassical assumptions. What the school did challenge though was the idea of full availability of information for firms and individuals, their ability to process it and the hypothesis that human behavior is easily predictable (North, 1990; Coase; 1998). Rather than objecting it, the NIE school has thus aimed to extent neoclassical thought by stressing the importance of institutions and the

notion of bounded rationality (as opposed to instrumental rationality) to determine the cost of transaction (North, 1990). For North, institutions are 'the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interaction', consisting of 'both informal constraints [...] and formal rules' (North, 1990: 3).

Coeval with North, Coase concludes that 'the costs of exchange depend on the institutions of a country: its legal system, its political system, its social system, its educational system, its culture' (1998: 73). For him, it is those institutions that govern the performance of an economy and that therefore give NIE its relevance (ibid.).

While neoclassical thinking dominated the most development institutions up to the mid- 1990s – e.g. organizations like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund following what came later to be known as the 'Washington Consensus' (ten policy instruments shaping economic reforms at the time) – shortly before the turn of the millennium these organizations realized the important role that states played in the development process and that 'institutions' actually mattered (Burki & Perry, 1998: 1). The NIE school of thought manifested itself in international development institutions, resulting in the establishment of state institutions that would foster neoliberal thinking across the globe. As Burki & Perry, two senior World Bank officials concluded, 'good macro [economic] policy is not enough; good institutions are critical for macroeconomic stability in today's world of global financial integration' (1998: 3). For the bank, the turn of the millennium constituted a discursive shift away from a merely economic focus towards one with governance at its core. The previously mentioned Millennium Development Goals and subsequent SDGs have reiterated the emphasis on institutions, with SDG 16 specifically calling for 'effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels' (UN, 2015: 14). Sustainable development through economic growth and strong institutions is subsequentially intended to benefit the 'three P's', meaning that society, the environment and the economy are all meant to prosper. Looking at the theoretical underpinning of environmental sustainability specifically, and considering the environmental economics thought associated with neoclassical ideas, it has historically been argued that sustainability depends on the maintenance of the capital stock (manufactured, human, social and natural) and that, if necessary, human capital can substitute the depletion of natural capital (Solow, 1974; Stiglitz, 1979). For NIE proponents, negative externalities stemming from

unsustainable behavior are often a result of lacking institutions (e.g. under- defined property rights), which in turn suggests the establishment of regulations that can cure the 'market failures' that have led to environmental harm (North, 1990).

Looking at the call for food systems transformation with the goal of sustainable development and its historical underpinning in mind, present-day responses continue to include many of the theoretical concepts previously presented. The private sector remains in a central role to foster investments and innovation at different levels, often in a blended form with public finance through public-private partnerships. In those, risk-return trade-offs for institutional investors are intended to be backed by public finance (WEF, 2020: 13). Together, public and private investments are expected to spur large-scale interventions, e.g. boosting the productivity of millions of smallholder farmers across Africa through flagship projects like the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa and NEPAD, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Lipton, 2012; Sanchez, Denning & Nziguheba, 2009). Sustainable intensification is considered a guiding principle with not only productivity, but also greater production efficiency as a desired outcome (Béné et al., 2018; Godfrey & Garnett, 2014). Responding to the increasingly urgent need to integrate climate change into the agricultural planning, also the concept of climate-smart agriculture has recently gained ground, adding a specific focus on climate change adaptation and mitigation to the sustainable intensification approach (Campbell et al., 2014). Developed as an apolitical approach to address food security while simultaneously tackling climate change, climate-smart agriculture has already established a large base of support among corporate actors, unified in platforms like the Global Alliance on Climate-Smart Agriculture and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development's (WBCSD) Low Carbon Technology Partnerships initiative including some of the world's biggest agri-food corporations (WBCSD, 2018). For those actors and the transformation, they envision, also digitalization plays a crucial role, helping to reduce transaction cost and uncertainty by providing large amounts of data (WEF, 2020; Schroeder, Lampietti & Elabed, 2021). Tackling the lack of market information will help transform decision making, providing investors with the assurance necessary to invest in food systems. In addition to that, digital technology will help provide transparency, improve production and processing efficiency, and reduce both waste as well as environmental externalities. If those externalities due

occur, innovative initiatives like carbon markets can help, not only incentivizing investors and corporate actors to improve the sustainability of their investments/supply-chains, but also help farmers benefit from their environmentally sustainable practices (WEF, 2020: 23). To ensure this 'win-win' situation can be realized, farmers need to be ensured formal property rights, a necessity international institution like the World Bank have been promoting for a long time (Deininger, 2003; Lipton, 2009). Calls for formal property rights show that the NIE leitmotif of institutions continues to be echoed, stressing that the risk-reducing effect of such mechanisms can help stimulate the investments urgently needed for food systems transformations.

Food, agriculture and the planetary boundaries

Having elaborated on the interlinkage between food systems transformation and sustainable development by reflecting on both contemporary approaches as well as their evolution through the application of different economic theories (neoclassical and new-institutional economics) in time, one could assume that the solutions proposed seem appropriate and attainable. Likewise, also the reflections of their opponents on the current state of food systems seems legitimate and aptly named. As Hanneke Faber, President of Food & Refreshment at Unilever, puts it (WEF, 2020: 4):

> 'Delivering sustainable, healthy diets to 9 billion people within planetary boundaries is one of the greatest challenges of our time. We need fundamental change to entire food systems and this means pressing 'reset' on some of the current incentive systems that too often drive unwanted outcomes – and moving to subsidizing healthy foods or production methods that are better for the health of the planet.'

Interestingly though, the 'how', or, to put it in Faber's words, the ways to 'pressing reset' is something that remains contested. A variety of critics have pointed out that neither the SDGs on which present-day responses to food systems transformation are based upon, nor the actual solutions proposed are profound enough to stay within the planetary boundaries and realize well-being for everyone (Arsel, 2020; Hajer et al. 2015; Hickel, 2019; Randers et al. 2019). Central to most of that critic is the obsession with economic growth as a necessity to advance human wellbeing and achieve sustainability. Looking at resource use and greenhouse gas emissions as key ecological indicators to measure the SDG's feasibility, Hickel concludes that 'the growth Goal – as presently formulated – is

not compatible with the sustainability objectives of the SDGs' (2019: 874). As previously pointed out, economic growth is not only at the heart of sustainable development, and hence the SDGs, it is also considered fundamental to process of transformation, particular that of food systems. Already in 1972, the 'The Limits to Growth' report pointed out that 'pressing reset', or eliminating the negative outcomes of our economic activity, would require a divorce with the growth paradigm (Meadows et al., 1972). Rockström et al. more recently showed that current economic activities are seriously threatening the earth's carrying capacity, with three boundaries (rate of biodiversity loss, climate change and human interference with the nitrogen cycle) having already been exceeded (2009).

Looking at the economy from an ecosystem perspective – seeing the economy as a subsystem of the Earth's biosphere – is nothing new, with prominent ecological economists like Georgescu-Roegen (1971) and Daly (1991) having shaped responses to more neoclassical thinkers like Solow and Stiglitz cited earlier. Another ecological economist, Martinez Alier, contributed to the translation of ecological economics theory into practice, providing empirical details on the ways present-day economics in general, and the corporately controlled food system are having adverse consequences for the environment and those at the bottom of globalized (agri-)value chains (2002). The Environmental Justice Atlas has aimed to map those conflicts, to date showing almost 500 conflicts around the world on Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock Management (2021). Current food systems are thus not only failing to address environmental concerns, but they are also contributing to a great number of conflicts around the world. Proposed solutions by neo-liberal institutions to 'green' certain economic activities – e.g. through climate-smart agriculture or the establishment of carbon offsetting/trading schemes (for example REDD+) – have serious social justice implications (Borras & Franco, 2018; Fairhead, Leach & Scoones, 2012). Equally, also the obsession with making formal (and most of the time individual) property rights a universal norm in an almost blueprint fashion has only been successful to a limited extent, often facilitating large-scale land grabbing of lands previously under communal and/or customary land tenure arrangements (Fairhead, Leach & Scoones, 2012). What is evident for proponents of radical alternatives is that the approaches having created many environmental and socio-economic problems in the first place are not the ones now being able to deliver the sort of transformation needed to tackle

humanity's challenges. Many of them constitute 'petty reforms', meaning that they can only be considered incremental steps towards (weaker forms of) sustainability, often circumventing deep changes that question the very (capitalist) system they are based upon. If the term transformation is taken serious, new ideas need to be thought   of that go from incrementalism towards deep societal change.

Food Systems Transformation through Degrowth instead of Green Growth

Despite the ideas behind degrowth not being new, and the French version of the term ('*décroissance*') already being in use since the 1970s, the English translation has only recently gained prominence among activists and scholars (D'Alisa, Demaria & Kallis, 2014; Schneider, Kallis & Martinez-Alier, 2010). Whilst building on the ideas of ecological economics having criticized the social metabolism of mainstream economic development and its incompatibility with the carrying capacity of the earth (Georgescu-Roegen, 1971), the emphasis of degrowth advocates is not only on *less*, but also on *different* (D'Alisa, Demaria & Kallis, 2014: 4). As D'Alisa, Demaria & Kallis put it, 'the objective is not to make an elephant leaner, but to turn an elephant into a snail' (ibid.). Next to a downscaling in both production and consumption of resources to adhere to biophysical limits, degrowth thus also includes 'a project with the ambition of getting closer to ecological sustainability and socio- environmental justice worldwide' (Schneider, Kallis & Martinez-Alier, 2010: 511). With the idea of justice in mind, it is important to state that most degrowth proponents suggests that degrowth should first and foremost be pursued in the North, t0 'liberate conceptual space' and provide countries in the Global South the opportunities to define their own trajectories for defining and eventually pursuing well-being for everyone (D'Alisa, Demaria & Kallis, 2014: 5). Looking at the development discourse, the degrowth idea fundamentally opposes the economic growth entailed in the solutions proposed to tackle global challenges, stressing that there is no-evidence that decoupling (the idea that an economy can continue growing without simultaneous increases in environmental pressure) can work (Hickel & Kallis, 2019). 'Green' or sustainable growth as suggested by the SDGs, is thus highly unlikely to help adhere to climate change targets set by SDG 13 and subsequent Paris Agreement (ibid.). This contradiction between the calls for humanity to achieve 'harmony with nature' whilst at the same time proclaiming that that growth is a

necessity for human development and the eradication of poverty and hunger is problematic (Hickel, 2019: 874), leading economic anthropologists like Latouche to suggest that the whole idea of sustainable development is an 'oxymoron' (D'Alisa, Demaria & Kallis, 2014: 2).

Having shown that the idea of degrowth fundamentally opposes the very foundation underpinning contemporary calls for food systems transformation, it becomes apparent that before initiating grand calls for actions like that for the Food Systems Summit, one should question what transformation those actions are meant to achieve and whether proposed solutions are actually feasible in delivering on the required outcomes. When taking transformation seriously, one should not only make an honest analysis of what the current state of affairs entails (including a historical analysis of how those problems came to exist in the first place), but also offer solutions that go beyond petty reformism, away from capitalism towards deep societal change. Elementary in this thinking is the work of Wright, who in his book 'Envisioning Real Utopias' presents three logics of transformation: (i) ruptural, implying a sharp confrontation or break with existing institutions and social structures, (ii) interstitial, highlighting the need of building new forms of social empowerment from the bottom-up and (iii) symbiotic, aiming to work with existing institutional forms (e.g. the state), further deepening social empowerment within the system as to ultimately transform it (2010). Whilst not necessarily an outspoken degrowth proponent himself, Wright's theory offers 'a complex strategic canvas that degrowthers can relate to' (Chertkovskaya, 2020). For them, the interstitial logic of transformation has been the most central one, with a vast number of grassroots initiatives and ideas emerging in recent years, many of them related to the production, distribution and consumption of food. Whilst it is out of the scope of this essay to mention all of them in detail, it is important to stress that they all intend to go beyond incremental changes, radically challenging the social, environmental and economic shortcomings of current responses in achieving sustainability in the food system (D'Alisa, Demaria & Kallis, 2014; Kothari et al., 2018; Nelson & Edwards, 2021). From 'agroecological cooperativism' and 'digital platforms for community supported agriculture' to 'eco- communities', the selection of proposals for interstitial transformation is diverse (ibid.). At the same time, Chertkovskaya stresses that also the symbiotic logic of transformation is of importance for

degrowth proponents, pointing out the necessity of expending political and economic space to let alternatives flourish (2020). At the same time, she is also concerned with the danger of cooptation that the balance between taming and dismantling capitalism entails, something that seems to increasingly happen with degrowth affiliated approaches to food production like agroecology (Alonso-Fradejas et al., 2020). Attempts to sketch alternative pathways for realizing human development objectives in a more symbiotic (yet degrowth-loyal) way however are on the rise, with Kate Raworth's 'A Safe and Just Space for Humanity: Can we live within the doughnut?' (2012) and Tim Jackson's 'Prosperity without growth: Foundations for the Economy of Tomorrow' (2017) being the most prominent examples.

Conclusion

This essay has aimed to explain mainstream approaches to food systems transformation by elaborating on their theoretical underpinning in neoclassical and new-institutional economics on the one hand and contemporary proposition of solutions on the other. It has then conducted a critical degrowth analysis of the shortcomings of both mainstream theory *and* practice, before demonstrating what profound transformation looks like according to proponents of degrowth. Whilst most food systems actors seem to have understood the relevance and urgency of transformation, in most instances proposed solutions have been incremental at best. They are failing to address the structural contradictions underlying the capitalist logic they are continuing to perpetuate, resulting in the 'safe operating space for humanity' getting persistently narrower (Rockström et al., 2009). Likewise, also societal challenges related to globalized food systems like raising inequality, food insecurity, obesity and conflict continue to persist, with no notable signs of improvement in sight (FAO, 2018).

Degrowth offers a strong analytical tool in to foreground the weaknesses of global capitalist logic whilst offering grounded solutions that more profoundly address socio-economic transformation in an interstitial logic. In that way, degrowth dares to envision futures less interested about the size of an economy (and the food systems entrenched in it), but rather its quality, especially for those having been negatively affected by contemporary models for much too long. Simultaneously, there's an increasing attempt to also use symbiotic attempts to foster transformation through

degrowth. What remains to be seen however is to which extent those proposals (both from the ground as well as for policy and economic reforms) can gain traction among policymakers on the one hand, and the wider public on the other. As Buch- Hansen concludes 'prospects for a degrowth paradigm shift remain bleak: unlike political projects that became hegemonic in the past, degrowth has neither support from a comprehensive coalition of social forces nor any consent to its agenda among the broader population' (2018: 157). To become a serious consideration in the discourse on food systems transformation, degrowth proponents thus need to step up their game to generate support amongst the public, demanding radical changes in the way we produce, distribute and consume our food. Eventually, only public support will help dismantle capitalism and transform food systems for human and planetary well-being.

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The Rationale of Social Impact Funds and the Institutionalization of their Investment Thesis in Latin America

By Ernesto Daza Lacouture., ECD, Colombia

Social entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurship had always existed, with different names and through different spaces. The entrepreneurial spirit in society had informed much of the social interactions we experience today, from the mom-and-pop neighborhood shops in Latin American, the fruit sellers in every traffic light stop, to the high-tech delivery apps that match restaurants with customers. However, as a field and as an explorational concept, social entrepreneurship had gained momentum within NGOs' agendas, multilateral organizations, national governments, and investors recently as an opportunity that could potentially help reduce inequalities and poverty in the developing world. Several social impact funds (SIF) had landed in Latin American countries as the new capitalism support. This short essay will first step the stage on the exponential growth of investment diverted to social entrepreneurs in Latin America through the study conducted by the Association for private capital investment Latin America (LAVCA) impact report. Using their conclusions, I will debate how agency and institutions are embedded within social entrepreneurs' targeting done by social impact investors (SII). I will showcase how the latter has helped to (dis) inform and narrow the spectrum of social entrepreneurship, how supposedly a social entrepreneur should look and which characteristics their ventures should portray, focusing on rent/financial returns seeking.

Furthermore, I will highlight how SIF are continuously trying to institutionalize the investment thesis rationale through sustainable high growth / high scale Vs. Social impact. I will use personal historical data of my previous work in Colombia as an example of how the social impact entrepreneurs' sourcing reinforces institutionalization and neglects other types of entrepreneurships. I will conclude that SII are also shaping social businesses' institutions across the developing world, problematizing the conceptual framework of who is entitled or not to be a social entrepreneur and excluding them/other types of entrepreneurships in practice.

Context – Latin America impact investment ecosystem

Latin America is one of the regions where most of the social impact funds are deployed.

According to the Association for private capital investment Latin America (LAVCA) in their report: The impact investing landscape in Latin America (The Association for private capital investment in Latin America, 2018), the amount of funds allocated by SII into the region was USD 4.7 billion in assets under management (AUM) in 2017. Furthermore, 1.4 billion capital was deployed only in the year 2017 to social impact businesses. These numbers are not to be taken lightly since they represented an increase of 49% in the numbers of social entrepreneurs invested and a 96% increase in the amount allocated compared with the year 2016. At the same time, at the moment of the report, 64 % of impact investors surveyed mentioned that they intended to increase their participation in the market by at least USD 2 Billion for the potential capital allocated in social impact investments in the years to come.

Furthermore, to increase the momentum of investments in social entrepreneurship, LAVCA recommended in their conclusions that "developing case studies to illustrate the financial potential of impact investing to more financially-oriented investors, ensuring the availability of capital right along the risk-return spectrum" (The Association for private capital investment in Latin America, 2018). In other words, they were targeting entrepreneurial venture investments along with financial returns alone that can be of appetite for potential investors.

Simultaneously, when considering the requirements of SII in Latin America to invest, the surveyors were clear when they analyzed challenges to deploying capital for social entrepreneurs. Their survey (The Association for private capital investment in Latin America, 2018) found that 54% of investors believed that developing the ecosystem and finding investment opportunities are two of the ten most significant challenges for investing. However, when looking at their expectations on their investments' net annual returns, 60 % SIF expects more than 11% ROI, not a depictable number.

Institutionalization of investment thesis rationales

Following these results, the positionality of the social impact investors in Latin America signals them to a particular entrepreneur who seeks high returns. An entrepreneur that is already an early adopter of a small, connected ecosystem and has a substantial network with the investor world. By default, the entrepreneur narrowed by the social impact funds is not

consistent with the subsistence or survivals entrepreneurs' definitions, the ones in the mom-and-pop shops or the traffic lights. These entrepreneurs usually don't fit the 11 % and above ROI box. Even if they create such returns, those are re-invested in their capabilities; this is food, diversification of income, everyday life survival, and savings to continue working. Social investors are targeting social entrepreneurship, and by practice, they are defining and institutionalizing the meaning of which social entrepreneurship should receive investments.

The institutionalization of social entrepreneurship discourses doesn't fall in a vacuum and is part of a broader system. Social investors are mostly donors funded that execute accountability on what and where their grantees should invest. SIF should then follow specific rules while maintaining their operations for receiving even larger capitals. Depending on the type of donor, either philanthropic or multilateral development institutions, some SIF are categorized in the ecosystem, such as financial-returns-first or impact-first, and some range in the middle. However, all al of them are called or called themselves social impact investors. In this typology, one might assume that most investments are included in such a vast category. In this imaginary, almost every investor in the world could potentially be an impact investor.

The sector of social impact investments is now economically instituted and embedded within society. According to (Polanyi, 1957) "a study of how economies are instituted should start from the way in which the economy acquires unity and stability (…) this is achieved through a combination of a very few patterns (…) empirically, we find the main patterns to be reciprocity, redistribution, and exchange". In this context, the pressure of institutionalizing the investment thesis, social entrepreneurs shifted from an altruistic perspective of solving social problems and received capital; they had to change their ways of doing and change their processes and pursue more economic goals (Grouping/reciprocity). Social businesses started to commercialize their impact by showcasing impactees vulnerability to collect more funds, take advantage of X dollar X person impacted types of indexes (Redistribution). Social business founder's agency has been informed by the institutions that supposedly would help them expand their impact. Consequently, social business institutions' rules and norms had also changed to receive investments (Exchange).

In this sense, since establishing the reciprocity rules mentioned above, social entrepreneurship's financial/economic goal had perdured over time, and it had come from both sides. The institutions' and agents' embeddedness created for both the SIF and the entrepreneurs' reliability upon maintaining such rules. Therefore, the institutionalization of the social impact investment economic outputs through time. On the opposite corner, the other type of entrepreneurs: the survival and subsistence ones, are doom to continue to be excluded from the capital deployment of SIF. For this institutional framework, either they are too small to look in singularity or do not have the ROI that validates them as investable. In that sense, their entrepreneurial spirit for survival will have to be accompanied by other types of institutions that support their social interactions and generate different protectionist strategies to thrive.

Social Entrepreneurship generalization and its implications for social impact funds interventions' and entrepreneurs.

The exclusion of survival entrepreneurship had been reinforced and spread by the media. For example, in well-known TV shows like Shark Tank. As with other interventions such as microcredit, SIF positions themselves and social impact entrepreneurs as the silver bullet – another one- for alleviating poverty and inequalities. That is what (Berner, Gomez, and Knorringa, 2012) refer to as the "missing ingredient assumption: By providing this ingredient, entrepreneurs can start climbing the ladder." However, these entrepreneurs climbing the ladder are no more than a small portion of the entrepreneurial sample.

After more than a decade of investments in the Social Impact Fund investments in Latin America, and after investing in the sector for three years, one can segregate entrepreneurs according to SII rationales.

In essence, social entrepreneurial targeting involves the deterministic values of financial risk and social impact. In the table, entrepreneurs are considered flops if their social impact is low and their financial risk is high. By financial risk, it means that the entrepreneur had not achieved an economic break-even. Dreamers, in this case, refer to substantial social impact, but financially not yet sustainable. Also, it starts by signaling a 50 jobs creation minimum threshold. Creating an arbitrary starting point does not situate the entrepreneurial spirit of survival or subsistence entrepreneurs, thus generating social

exclusion within even analyzing local development initiatives and the diverse entrepreneurial spirit of local communities. SIF would not typically invest in this type of business.

On the contrary, capital and interventions are only directed to the top part of the quadrant. Safe Bets refers to low impact high returns, and Game-changers -considered the holy grail of impact funds managers- are scarce.

In my experience, in the past three years working in the social investment sector, I interviewed approximately 200 entrepreneurs. These entrepreneurs came from a different type of industries, sectors, and regions:

Timespan (incl. start/end month) Select months		Total time span database	Total n of database
Start month	**Sep-17**	Sep-17	200
End month	**Oct-19**	Oct-19	

Table 1. Timespan of investments.

Source: By Author

Between September 2017 and October 2019, I closed four investments, and three entrepreneurs were pending for Investment Committee (IC). As the tables below point out, only 2 % of the sample were investable.

Investment Funnel	Number	Conversion rate
Total	200	
(IC0/ pre-selection disc.)	39	20%
IC1	7	18%
IC2	4	57%
IC3	4	100%ee
Closed	4	100%
Sourcing conversion rate (closed/total)		2%

Table 2. Amount of Investments.

Source: By Author
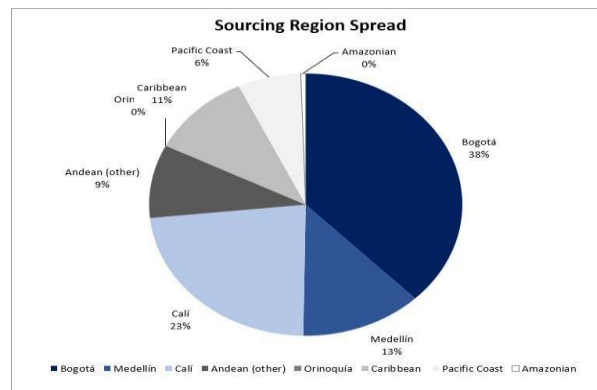
Figure 1. Area of sourcing.

Source: By Author

As seen in the tables, a conversion rate is too low to sustain financial operations without funding and other investors. More importantly, the above historical data reflects that high-growth social entrepreneurs are rare instead of a commonality. It is essential to search and find them since they are propulsors of job creation and innovation and are willing to take advantageous risks, but at the same, it comes with the cost of segregation and oblivion of the 98% of the rest. The historical data invites us to analyze that, at least in Colombia's case, entrepreneurial activity as searched by SIF is in its majority only found in cities or regions where less vulnerable populations reside, such as Bogota, Cali, and Medellin.

Conclusion

This paper tried to analyze how the social impact funds and social investors operate concerning the population they try to serve. The intention was to understand the systems that provide the norms and rules and how they are replicated through the agency of social entrepreneurs, their organizations, and the economic rules portrait by SIF institutions. More importantly, how in time, these institutions had informed agents and vice-versa. One can argue that if entrepreneurs are defined and segregated based on their differences, either high growth entrepreneurs or subsistence or survival entrepreneurs, the poverty reduction interventions used by the social impact funds can also be segregated. In this sense, it might be argued that high-growth social businesses are a type of intermediary for SIF goals. Without such models that focus on high growth and potentially high impact, the SIF

intervention schemes could not be institutionalized, or at least not through this type of investment model. Following (Polanyi, 1957) "the human economy, then, is embedded and enmeshed in institutions, economic and noneconomic (…) The study of the shifting place occupied by the economy in society is, therefore, no other than the study of the manner in which the economic process is instituted at different time and places". In this case, also through different actors, the social entrepreneurs.

What could these deterministic segregations and quantification tell us about local development in the places where funds had been allocated? What can they tell us in the areas where no social impact investment has been made to local social entrepreneurs? The data measured for sourcing entrepreneurs are deterministic, arbitrary, and contextual, giving no room to understand the quality of jobs created or which demography of customer is reached? Are the customers reached a part of a vulnerable population, and if so, are the products and services serving their social needs? While our economic system is still pushing on the rationality of its subjects, it does not seem rational that if the end goal is to support poverty alleviation, the majority of SIF still entrust their time in one typology of entrepreneurs. When founded and funded, the high growth entrepreneurship had provided to be fundamental to labor mobility and increased opportunities for thousands. However, their appearance still seems to be of depictable odds. Instead, the proposition is to shift the (i) rationality of SIF models. Hence, learn from the survival entrepreneurs by not putting all the eggs in one basket. Therefore, to put effort into understanding their social distinctions, needs, and what can be done to improve their local communities and make their lives less survivalist and more joyful. The latter if the real intention of the SIF is to alleviate poverty truly.

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Reflection on the process of BOA ME social enterprise

By Loan Nguyen, ECD, Vietnam

Introduction

From the practical experience in the planning process of setting up a social enterprise and the theoretical knowledge from the classroom, our team tends to establish a social enterprise model to build ideas to solve problems related to society. However, during the operation, the biggest problem we encountered was the model's unclear concept and the heterogeneity in opinion. This is not a very new issue in the teamwork process, but it is a compassionate issue in a group where each member has a different culture. Because of that, if we cannot find a common goal as well as a general solution to the problem facing the group, this is a bad problem and directly affects the group's process and results. According to Ansell (2011: 11–12), three general conditions for evolutionary learning include a problem-driven perspective, reflexivity, and deliberation. Problem-driven perspectives are described as problems that remove and break existing perspectives to find new things that drive creativity. In a group activity process, it means that the perceptual change of the problem's nature following a group interaction. Meanwhile, the problems affected reflexivity by promoting seriousness and self-awareness during reflection (Ansell 2011: 11–12). It can be understood that team interaction has promoted the self-consideration of one's thoughts as well as the challenge and development of those thoughts. Deliberation, in simple terms, is mutual challenges and questions when disagreements appear. By the way, this also means consideration and prudence in coming up with solutions (Ansell 2011: 11–12). Based on these conditions, this reflection will focus on analysing the agreements, disagreements between myself and the team, as well as how we deal with issues from the perspective of the community relations manager. This reflection's goal is to show how the group and myself matured overtime to reach the final agreement in our business model.

From idea to practice

Social enterprises are organizations whose activities align with the community's interests; most of their profits will be used for reinvestment to achieve the destiny they set out (Burkett

2013: 4). However, when it comes to reality, the concept of "social enterprises" is separated by us into two separate issues and is not connected. Some group members focus and care about the "social" part; we expect our organization to create significant benefits for the community and affect society more. Meanwhile, the rest of the members take care more about the concept of "enterprises"; they were more interested in generating revenue and profit. In the first group meeting, many ideas came up; most of us agreed that the target audience for the group is sensitive members of society such as migrant workers, unemployed people, homeless people, orphans. My ideas were related to how to help homeless people get stable jobs to generate income for them and how to have a stable place to live. I suggest a model that will set up a center for homeless people, teach them how to make handicrafts, and sell them to tourists, locals, or NGOs to make revenue. It is evident that this opinion has faced challenges from other members, who focus on the business side over the community. I convinced them of the benefits that the organization will bring to the community, such as this model can create jobs for the homeless and create accommodation for them. In addition, the results that it directly brings are the reduction in the proportion of homeless and unemployed people in the area, reducing the rate of potential crime caused by unemployment. In general, this project will contribute to improving the quality of life in the area. However, more complicated questions have been raised: investment costs in factories, machinery to produce handicraft products, costs to create accommodation for the homeless. These are enormous expenses that we are not sure the revenue can cover. Also, in the case that the homeless are immigrants, how can they be legalized? This is a problem not only related to the enterprise but also the local government and the law; the cost of completing these procedures is also a big issue to be addressed. From these questions, I realized that we had missed a vital step, which is defining what a social enterprise is for a social enterprise, social objective, and business objective to be balanced (Burkett 2013: 8). Therefore, in addition to concentrating on the community, issues related to costs, revenue, profit, and customers also need to give attention and analyze. Finally, the solution that I proposed for the meeting is that we must learn more about the ideas we would like to reach, considering both the economy and the community perspective in the model. Then each person will present their ideas to the group, and we will vote to choose the final idea.

Learning from lessons

Absorbing the lessons of the first meeting, the ideas in the second meeting were complete in terms of both social and economic aspects. There are two outstanding ideas; the first one is my idea of starting a social enterprise that specializes in purchasing products made from orphanage villages, where to acquire and nurture orphan children, homeless children. The reason I focus on this target group is because this is the group with the least defense ability and creates less value in society. According to practical experience in Vietnam, orphanage villages often operate mainly on funding from non-profit organizations, sponsors, and charity fundraisers; therefore, their source of income is not stable. From this fact, I want to set up a business that can buy their products and sell them to the market. From a social perspective, this is an opportunity to help orphan villages create a stable and long-term income source. From an economic perspective, we will not have to worry about factory investment costs, accommodation costs for workers. However, the difficulty we encountered is that we cannot determine whether the children here are overused for production participation. This is really a big issue regarding children's rights. The second idea comes from an economically inclined member who proposes to create an online shopping app where art students can sell their products for extra income to cover living expenses. Some of the profits from the app business will be used to raise funds for the homeless. Economically, the operation is quite simple and low cost because its primary business is the online application that we create. Socially, this project is aimed at both students and groups of students and homeless groups. However, the problem here is, is the student group the target group that needs help, and how can we improve the homeless's lives? From the weaknesses of both ideas, I have suggested combining the two. We have picked out the strengths of ideas to put them together. In specific, we will create an online shopping application to trade art and craft products created from homeless people, unemployed. Profits will be retained in part for the re-business, and the remainder will be distributed to producers, the homeless to help them improve their lives.

Debate and reflect

Discussing and asking questions has really challenged the depth of my thinking as well as the team members. We constantly have to ask questions one after another; for example, when defining key partners, we have to continue to look at their contribution to the models, costs, benefits, and even the disadvantages they bring, whether we need them in the model. A series of questions have been asked when any idea is given. This is a conditional reflection built up

from the teamwork process, whereby we have formulated the fundamental and extended questions for starting a social enterprise, such as the goal towards, the social influence, the economic perspective of the project. A multi-dimensional view on issues surrounding "social enterprise" has been shaped and grown in each member's mind; this has promoted openness and mutual trust among members. The issues have been dissected in many aspects to consider before choosing. Debates are always exciting; however, we bring a spirit of respect, listening, and learning at the beginning of the project. Therefore, although many debates occurred before a final decision was reached, personal feelings are something that we have not brought up in debates. Finally, we chose Accra, Ghana, to carry out the project because of the feasibility and suitability that this place offers. According to statistics from the African Research Institute, in 2016, more than 5.5 million the urban Ghanaian population lived in the slums, the proportion of homeless and unemployed grew up, mainly women and young people. Besides, urban development also created pressures and difficulties for the government to provide essential infrastructure and create jobs (Africa Research Institute 2016). In addition, according to a member from Accra in the group, handicrafts and handicrafts are a feature of Accra's culture, and visitors and residents often buy them as gifts or use them. These features are quite consistent with our business model. On the social front, the group's project will create jobs and vocational training for the homeless and unemployed in Accra, providing them with stable incomes and improved quality of life. In addition, the project also contributes to reducing the potential crime rate in the area caused by unemployment and poverty. In economic terms, the business will create a reputable brand for tourists and those who love Accra handicraft products to feel secure to shop; Besides, creating a healthy business environment with guaranteed prices and quality, towards the goal of sustainable development in the future.

What we learn

In general, the team had a project that could not be too successful but a typical project for future reference. Besides, there are five most prominent lessons I have learned from doing this project. The first is mutual respect, which is essential in any teamwork, but even more so for a multi-ethnic group. Each country will have its unique characteristics and culture; respect and listening are the prerequisites for determining a group's unity and success. The second is creativity in thinking and work. Not only should the problem be confined to the

proposed theories, thinking out of the box helps us to achieve more creativity and optimal solutions. The third is that the sense of development. Questions, challenges, and debates need to take place; the purpose is not to personally attack but to analyze and develop the problem, find defects and alternative solutions. The fourth is to close the problem, and this requires tactful negotiation. The problem will not be resolved without consensus or too many solutions, so selecting and voting for ideas and solutions needs to be done to close a problem. Finally, there is a look at the multi-dimensional problem. Running a project cannot just look at economic benefits or social goals. The success of the project comes from the combination of all objectives and elements. Therefore, a multi-dimensional, holistic view of the benefits and effects of the project as well as the initiative and passivity is indispensable.

Some facts for BOA ME

BOA ME is known as "Help me" in the language of Ghana. The slogan of BOA ME is "Boa Me Na Me Mmoa Wo", and the meaning of this slogan is that "Help me and let me help you". In both the company's name and the slogan, we can easily recognize this as a social enterprise. In line with "Boa Me" – "Help me", we hope we can attract the attention of skilled people or unemployed to come to us. And then, with "Na Me Mmoa Wo" – "and let me help you", we expect our project can contribute to the social enterprise network and create an ecosystem for skilled people or unemployed in Ghana. In general, it is such an invitation to everyone that needs support. Let's come to us and help us make products, and let us bring those to customers and generate a stable job for you.

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A Summary and Critical analysis: "Gender and the Dynamics of Economics Seminars."

By Nicole Salazar, ECD, Ecuador

Introduction

An emerging literature raises that women economists are treated differently than men economists in similar contexts. "Gender and the Dynamics of Economics Seminars" by Pascaline Dupas, Alicia Sasser Modestino, Muriel Niederle, Justin Wolfers, and the Seminar Dynamic Collective is one such study that aims to analyse the culture of economics seminars. Ultimately, this study assesses the extent to which women economic presenters are treated differently than men when they present their research findings. This paper will first give a summary of the data collection process of the article. Second, it will be shown a critical analysis, where it will be highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of the methods selected. The following section will present the sources of bias of the paper and possible mitigation strategies. Then it will be given a complementary approach. In the end, it will be concluded that this paper used an appropriate method to address the research paper. However, it can be improved with some complementary strategies.

Summary

Data Collection and Summary Statistics: Seminar Sample

The data was collected between January 9, 2019, and May 15, 2019. The sample selected was from 83 economic seminars across 32 universities. The presenters were 43 women and 223 men. In addition, the sample includes 176 job market talks with 80 job applicants (31 women and 49 men) from 26 universities. The data collection was focused on leading economic departments; it is 20 of the top 30 economics departments.

Ethical and regulatory issues

The data was collected in real-time during seminars, coding each interaction. The authors obtained permission for all their research in advance from the university Institutional Review Board. Under the IRB guidelines, the data collected in the study are considered "exempt" as there is no expectation of privacy. However, the authors were committed to a set of privacy

protections. They did not record the identity of audience members; they did not reveal the identities of individual departments or programs when reporting the results.

Furthermore, they did not reveal the identity of the coders, even within them. This to reduce retaliation and to protect their anonymity. The personally identifiable information that the authors used was the presenter's name and the title of their talk. Those were also information of public access.

Coder recruitment

The data was collected by a group of collaborators denominated as the Seminar Dynamics Collective to protect their anonymity. 77 coders formed the team; 73 percent were female. The high fraction of women in their group of the collector was a concern of bias that the authors addressed with Harvard Implicit Assumptions Test for Gender Career Stereotypes which showed the great majority of them were implicitly biased against career women.

They also conducted robustness checks to assess inter-coder reliability and the scope potential bias, finding high reliability and little evidence of bias. Finally, the authors controlled for coder fixed effects and explicitly test and reject the null hypothesis that female coders systematically assess differently than male coders.

Data collection instrument and sample characteristics

The researchers developed an online tool in Qualtrics to collect the data on seminar interactions. The software platform used to collect survey data is an available software for tablets or laptops. The coders recorded some information related to the seminar title, title of the paper being presented, presenter characteristics (name, gender, home institution). Also, seminar characteristics (duration, whether it was a job market talk, number of women and men in the audience, and any rules that governed asking questions) before the seminar began.

During each seminar, the coders used online survey data to record data in real-time about every interaction between the presenter and their audience. They used objective measures as the start and end of each interaction, the number of exchanges, who asked the

question (male, female, professor, student), whether the question was answered, deferred, ignored, or interrupted.

In addition, they collected subjective evaluations such as type of question, which they classified as comment, criticism, suggestion, clarification, follow-up. Moreover, the coders assessed the tone of the question. They could code the interaction with more than one tone, which options were supportive, patronizing, disruptive, demeaning, and hostile. Although, they had the option to leave this without an answer.

Final observation

Coders also used a Likert scale to assess the degree to which the overall questions were unfair and if the presenter was confident. They also evaluated the degree to which attendance was lower or higher than usual for that seminar series. Finally, if there was any disruptive member in the audience and their gender, it was also coded.

Complementary data

The authors complemented the data with mid-term outcomes data for the job market candidates. For example, they checked the web pages of all market candidates. They show that controlling for these measures does not affect qualitatively, but it increases the gender differentials they observe. The authors also complement the data with citation seminar speakers' data through google scholar profiles of all the speakers.

Critical analysis

The direct observation and survey (indirect, as the coders collect most of the data through a type of survey) that the authors used to collect the data is an appropriate approach to evaluate and analyze interactions like the one that the authors were assessing, seminars interactions.

Some key points that can be highlighted as pros from the research data collection process are that first, the authors consider the ethical concerns. The coders took the Harvard

Implicit Assumption Test for Gender Career Stereotype that, according to the results, the authors show that the team is implicitly biased against career women. Second, the decision not to reveal the identity of the coders is good for free comments and sincere coding, something that enhances reliability. Third, they considered the Hawthorne effects, so they tried to make as little notice as possible for the audience and the presenter of their coding. It was collected by tablet or laptop, like a regular attendance taking notes. Fourth, they collected information from the top economic faculties; this allows the researchers to control the difference in academic backgrounds. Fifth, they collected complementary data on webpages data set, also the google scholar profiles of all the speakers. This data does not suffer from bias; it is a fact, the number of citations.

Advantages

The coders had the same tool and surveyed to evaluate in general terms the presenters and audience. It allowed the researchers to first assess the possible bias from coders. For example, in 84 seminars, two coders were present. In this case, they could compare the responses. The authors made a robustness check and concluded that coders do not interfere with bias in collecting data. Second, as they recorded on time and on survey forms, it allowed them to avoid possible memory bias and objectively document the data.

The researchers had coders and a program that facilitated recording the interactions in real-time. It allowed the researchers to collect more data and avoid low response concerns as the coders filled it in every seminar. It is because of the design of the survey that the coders had. It is something that with a study to the audience or to the presenters would not be possible to be sure of the rate of replies that the researchers would have.

Disadvantages

It is an expensive approach. The researchers paid the entrance per each coder to the seminars, limiting the number of seminars that can be included in the sample. In addition, it is required a high budget to analyze this one. Therefore, replicating a paper like this to representativeness might not be feasible for universities or institutions with a limited budget. Consequently,

there would be low probabilities to compare with seminars operated in different cultural and educational backgrounds.

Sources of bias

1. Tone: errors of interpretation

The tone of the question is a subjective approach that can bring bias to the results because there might be errors of interpretation. For example, in a seminar with participants of different economics departments, there might be an intercultural environment. Within this context, even how loudly or quietly the question is hired may bring an error of interpretation. For instance, in Latin America, people from a coastal area express their ideas different than people from the highlands. Even if the intention is the same. For example, a supportive intervention, might sound patronizing if it is raised from a person that grew up in a coastal area. Or a highland person can be less loudly but can use irony to say the same supportive idea. There is a culture behind that needs to be acknowledged when there is a process of assessment. Even though the authors tried to be as objective as possible, categorizing this tone as supportive, patronizing, disruptive, demeaning, or hostile. In a multicultural audience, these expressions might be interpreted differently than what was intended.

Mitigation strategy

A possible mitigation strategy is bringing awareness of the different cultural backgrounds that participants have. It can also be added a survey to be completed by the presenters and the audience. As Hueso and Cascant in Murillo (2020: 6) state, it is also possible to collect subjective information through a survey. Even though it might be biased as the participants are replying, the intention of the questions would be more accurate to address as it is the objective of this part of the research.

2. Sample

The sample can represent a source of bias because of the size and the selection process regarding the seminars attended. First, the size, as it just considers top universities, thus the results are not representative in the general level of economic seminars. Second, the selection process, in this case, can represent a coverage error as not all the economics conferences were included in the sample. Thus, it might be an under-coverage error. They did not explain the sample selection process. They focused on the top economics departments, but they do not specify how they select the specific seminars that the coders attended.

Mitigation strategy

The size of the sample might be connected to the budget. If this is the case, a mitigation strategy could either be to use a different approach like a survey or narrow the objective to analyze the culture seminar of top universities' economic departments.

3. Supplementary data set NBER Summer Institute

At the end of the paper, it is specified the use of a supplementary dataset. The additional data set from the National Bureau of Economics (NBER) Summer Institute is a source of bias for two reasons. First, because of the constraints of the Institute, the interaction was coded only if it had a positive effect (collegial, constructive, or valuable). Second, this sample may suffer from Hawthorne effects because the audience and the presenters were informed before and sometimes during the seminar that coders collected this type of information. Although it was found gender differences, the results are not entirely reliable, as we cannot know if these interactions were affected by acknowledging a coder in the audience.

Mitigation strategy

Even though the objective was to collect data within a more structural seminar, as the participants already acknowledged from the presence of the coders, it might be a complementary strategy to have a survey filled by the participants and presenters.

Suggestions for improvement

To improve this study, a few modifications are required. For starters, it would be interesting to let open the option to analyze if there is a different treatment just because of gender or if

it has other sources of discrimination like, for instance, racism. This might be a possible behavior that can arise through interactions in seminars. Also, the Likert scale that the coders from the interaction filled can also be asked to be supplied by the presenters and audience to compare the perspectives. This would also bring a particular bias for the response, but as the objective is to assess the culture and if a female is treated distinctively than male, then it will be helpful to have the perspective from the actual participants.

Complementary strategy

There are different cultural backgrounds in a seminar. Therefore, information and perspective from the presenters and audience would complement the approach to this research question. In this way, we can use a vignette to analyze h*ow women economic presenters are treated differently from men when presenting their research findings*.

The vignette is a technique that consists of a brief story that describes a hypothetical scenario where the respondents can judge the situation or decide on the case (Yáñez et al. 2012: 10). It can be designed to be fulfilled by presenters, and the audience, after each seminar. With the data collected through the observations, we can collect two or three cases that can be hypothetical cases to use in the vignettes. Cultural background differences can be collected as well. The results can be analyzed and compared with the results that were collected through observations. It will help bring awareness of bias from presenters and the audience as it assesses this behavior, which complements the understanding of the culture. It also measures social interactions. It would be a complementary approach, as vignettes sometimes may not reflect what people will do. In this way, with these two methods, there might be a vast opportunity to collect data.

Conclusion
In conclusion, this study accomplished its original goal to analyze economic seminars' culture by exploring how women economic presenters are treated differently from men. While this study provides a solid support for the data collecting methods and process, a few modifications and complement research might be essential to further support the findings in the study.

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Degrowing the North, Growing the South?

By Irene Margetousaki, GDP, Greece

Introduction

Degrowth is a theory within the academic area of post-growth that envisions a different type of development for the economies and societies of the future. It is a rather radical idea that argues the abandonment of the orthodox conception of development as GDP growth and proposes its redefinition, with human wellbeing, conviviality, and environmental sensitivity at the centre. We are addicted to economic growth, and we must go to rehab. More specifically, a broad definition of the degrowth agenda would be "a planned reduction of energy and resource use designed to bring the economy back into balance with the living world in a way that reduces inequality and improves human well-being" (Hickel, 2020, p.1105). The ideas of degrowth have been developing rapidly within interdisciplinary academia (ecological economics, social ecology, economic anthropology) as well as grassroots activist movements (Martínez-Alier *et al,* 2010, p.1745), with the ambition of exploring alternative futures and making policy propositions for rebooting the economy, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this short essay we will attempt to look at the theory of degrowth in relation to its implications for the global South. This essay is an initial engagement with the literature and a reflection on whether degrowing the global North would support the development of the global South. The proponents of degrowth theory argue that this will indeed be the case. The reduction of consumerism and material use in absolute terms in the North, will potentially relax the pressures on the global South to provide cheap materials and labour, thus giving countries the space to focus on other developmental activities. To examine this idea, we investigated the specifics of the degrowth proposition as well as the current political and trade dependencies between North and South.

Our analysis led to the conclusion that degrowth in the North -on its own- would not necessarily lead to more independent economic development in the South. Dismantling the deeply rooted dependency relations originating from colonial times is not as easy as reducing raw material demand for western consumption. Moreover, the potential reactions and interactions of the national and international private sectors to a degrowth project in the North

remains unexplored and thus, unpredictable. There are significant arguments to be made showing that regardless of a potential reduction in material demand, there will be resistance to the abandonment of western interests in the global South. The obstruction of independent development and industrialisation of the South will most probably continue, unless very drastic and coordinated measures are taken, to an extent that seems unrealistic at this moment in time.

An Introduction to Degrowth

Degrowth calls for a "voluntary and equitable downscaling of the economy towards a sustainable, just, and participatory steady-state society" (Weiss & Cattaneo, 2017, p.220) and it is supported by a few bold ideas.

Firstly, degrowth is deeply rooted in the idea that there cannot be infinite economic growth on a planet with finite material resources. André Gorz, Karl William Kapp, Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, Herman Daly and Dennis Meadows were some of the pioneers of the degrowth ideas as they explored the impact of the capitalist system of production and consumption on the planetary system, in relation to its resource reserves, its ability to absorb waste and other environmental parameters (Padini & Rocheleau, 2019, p. 466).

These thinkers began a strand of thought with the common understanding that there must be some limits to how much material use we can get out of our planet before humanity starts severely undermining the sole ecosystem on which it depends on for its survival. Thus, ideas of degrowth, no-growth, or a steady state economy were born. They were developed in the 60s and 70s within academia and the environmental movement but were subsequently side-lined during the 80s, with the domination of neoliberalism. Since then, permanent GDP growth has been at the centre of the orthodox development model and the aspiration of all countries.

However, as climate change and environmental degradation around the world have intensified in recent years, the idea of environmental limits to economic growth has resurfaced dynamically. Academic work in the area is flourishing and the idea of degrowth is slowly steeping into policy. Ideas of degrowth are being reflected within the term "planetary boundaries" (Ontgroei, 2021), a principle used increasingly often as the foundation of dominant policy projects, like the doughnut economics city planning model

implemented today in Amsterdam.

The second foundational idea of Degrowth is the critique of the modern Sustainable Development movement. Essentially, the Sustainable Development Goals are labelled as greenwashing of the existing corporatist, capitalist, profit and GDP growth driven economic system. Academics in support of degrowth theory are convinced that "Green Growth" is an oxymoron, fundamentally impossible to obtain, as GDP growth cannot be decoupled from resource use (Van den Bergh, 2011, p.884). Specifically, degrowth theorists criticize the green growth movement because of its reliance on technology and innovation to carry out this decoupling. Sustainable growth is based on the hope that new technologies will allow for more efficient use, reuse and recycling of resources already existing within the economy, therefore significantly reducing the need for further extraction of virgin materials. These are also the basic principles of the circular economy agenda, aiming at the dematerialization of economic growth.

In response, degrowth theory counters this argument by bringing forward the Jevons Paradox that describes the phenomenon where "a more efficient use of resources leads to more, not less resource use" (Kallis, 2017, p.3). Kallis adds, "A simple economic explanation is that a resource used more efficiently costs less as a result. The demand for it and consumption increase (rebound), compensating for the savings from the more efficient use.". Economist Stanley Jevons brings the example of the steam engine, where a given quantity of coal became much more productive through the new steam technology, and as a result coal use increased dramatically (Kallis, 2017, p.3).

Interestingly, to further examine this dematerialisation hypothesis of green growth, a more recent study looks at the relation of economic growth and environmental quality within the European Union. The analysis looks at material inputs, emissions, and GDP growth, finding that indeed "economic growth increased the carbon dioxide emissions and generated an increasing domestic material consumption" (Andreoni, 2013, p.194). Andreoni adds that increased material and technological efficiency in combination with rising incomes have created more material demand. There seems to be legitimacy in the degrowth argument that material efficiency will not necessarily lead to less consumption of resources and green growth.

Finally, the degrowth project entails a large component of value re-orientation and

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behavioural changes within society. Gerber and Raina describe them as a "civilizational change" towards a society with a smaller metabolism where material accumulation is no longer a leading social value. Sharing, simplicity, conviviality, care and the commons are central features of such a society (Gerber & Raina, 2018, p.353). This will mean the dethronement of GDP as the major measure of development and success. There are other interesting indicators proposed by the degrowth movement that better capture the complex nature of development, by focusing on quality of life, human development, well-being and others (Latouche, 2010, p. 521).

Degrowth for Whom?

But who is degrowth suitable for as an alternative socioeconomic system? Where would the adoption of this agenda bear the most positive effects? Degrowth academics -for the most part- argue for this agenda to be applied first in the global North. The excess consumption of developed countries is primarily driving the environmental degradation and the severe extractivism that disproportionately affect the South (Hickel, 2020, p.1109). Latouche elaborates:

> "In the South, degrowth of the ecological footprint (even of the GDP) is neither necessary nor desirable, but we do not have to conclude it is necessary to build a society of growth or to not leave it, if one has already entered there. Let us be clear. Degrowth of the ecological footprint in the North (and thus of the GDP) is a necessity..." (Latouche, 2010, p. 521).

There seems to be a recognition that developing countries may well need to increase their GDP to meet human needs, develop their infrastructure, economies and increase their standards of living.

Global South, A Beneficiary of Degrowth in the North?

Jason Hickel makes a very interesting argument about the potential effect that a successful degrowth project in the global North would have on the global South. First, he connects western overconsumption and the "plunder of Southern ecosystems" with colonial legacies and the accompanying dependency relations that come from unequal exchanges between the North and the South (Hickel, 2020, p.1109). Then he makes the argument that degrowing the West would reduce the pressures of foreign companies and governments on the global South to provide cheap raw materials and labour (Hickel, 2020, p.1109). Hickel theorises that this

reduced material demand will lead to the gradual dismantling of the unequal trade relations and eventually lead to the further decolonisation of the South. As a result, developing countries would gain more freedom and space to use their resources and focus more on meaningful developmental reforms and the building of a self-sufficient economy. He notes that this was indeed the direction these economies were heading towards during the first post-colonial decades, at least "before the imposition of neoliberal structural adjustment from the 1980s onward." He adds, "Structural adjustment sought to dismantle developmentalist reforms across the South in order to create new frontiers for Northern accumulation," (Hickel, 2020, p.1110).

Based on this argument, degrowth in the Western world is presented as an agenda that will promote economic and human development in the global South. Indeed, this proposition sounds particularly convincing and reasonable at first. However, it also raises many questions. With the purpose of further testing out this idea, it would be meaningful for us to reflect on the assumptions it is based on. Within the scenario of a degrowing North, will the countries of the global South be able to radically reform their economies to adapt to decreasing demand for their products? On the other hand, will decreasing material demand in the North motivate western governments and international companies to willingly loosen their grip on cheap Southern material and labour? The answers to those questions are not straightforward.

The first assumption of Hickel's argument is that several developing countries will be able to modernise, reform their economies, and develop infrastructure in a short period of time to counter the effects of decreasing international trade. How plausible this is, at such a large scale, should be further discussed within the degrowth discourse. We argue here that degrowing the North would not automatically lead to positive effects for the global South. Rather, the pace and method of degrowth would determine positive or negative effects.

We need to remember that many countries in the global South have been influenced by the neoclassical ideas of economic organisation, leading to structuring their economies around specialisation, liberalisation, and exports. These economies are very dependent on western material demand, as their industrial sectors have been left significantly underdeveloped and their internal markets cannot absorb the materials produced for export, in the case that external demand diminishes significantly. The adjustment of their economies

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was guided mostly by the West, which within a degrowth scenario would be now announcing the gradual phasing out of those vital trade relations.

This is not an argument for the maintenance of the current status quo. It is rather a justification of why the pace and manner of degrowing the West would matter. The detangling of economic relations of this magnitude between nations, corporations and producers is an extremely challenging and complex process that entails high risks of failure, distortions, and possible economic catastrophe for the weakest actors. Many countries will have to rearrange the structure of their entire economy in order to start adjusting to the new conditions in the short term. Unfortunately, countries with weaker institutional and industrial base would find it more difficult to navigate through such drastic change as the sudden loss of foreign income, possibly leading to recessions, political and societal destabilisation.

In view of these complexities and dependencies, "degrowing the North" should not be seen just as a project of reducing material demand in the West. It should be seen as a project of intensive strategic coordination between the North and South to navigate the transition-detangling period, that also includes meaningful exchange of modern technology and technical know-how. One could say that these exact requirements of deep reform, coordination, and utmost caution from both sides during this process makes the probability of a smooth transition rather bleak.

The above scenario is an optimistic one, where big corporations and western governments willingly agree to cooperate through this process, withdraw from their interests in the global South and loosen their grip on local and national politics. This is the second assumption of Hickel's argument, connecting degrowth in the North with the relaxation of western influence in the South, leading to newfound freedom for developing countries. However, there are valid reasons not to assume that reduced material demand in the North would lead necessarily to the withdrawal of Western involvement from the South.

Will profit oriented international corporations and companies along the global value chains voluntarily accept to downscale their production, withdraw their activities out of countries or quit the idea of profit altogether, in order to adjust to lower product and material demand in the West? While the reaction of the business world to a Degrowth trajectory in the West is rather unpredictable, we could not avoid thinking of a scenario where western actors maintain their influence in the South and redirect their business interest to non-western

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countries, entering new markets. One can more easily picture this scenario due to the nature of the current profit and growth driven business models that companies run on. Developing countries are hosts of vast markets that today rely heavily on trade not only with the West, but also between themselves. Assuming that most of them will not be able to join the degrowth project of the North, they will be open to infiltration by powerful western companies in search of new markets. Those companies and supporting governments will most likely seek to keep their posts and control over resources of the global South. In this case, degrowth in the North would just mean the redirection of business interest elsewhere and will not automatically result in the further decolonisation of the global South.

Business and the business models on which they operate will largely determine the success or failure of the degrowth project in the North and surely its impact on the South. They are so important due to their contribution to GDP. Lowering production and consumption will unavoidably go through businesses, national and international, as they will ultimately need to adapt to the goals and philosophy of the degrowth model to continue being operational and continue being a medium of expression for human creativity and entrepreneurship. However, how does a business look like within a degrowth system? Currently, we do not have business models sufficiently developed to be well suited for the context of a degrowth economy. Typical business activity and operation strategies have been somewhat overlooked within the degrowth discourse that mostly focuses on politics, public policy and activities within non-market, non-profit and non-monetised sectors (Khmara & Kronenberg, 2017, p.722). Ultimately, it is critical to pay more attention to the adaptation of the business world into any proposed paradigm change, including the degrowth economy.

More importantly, in the context of the North-South relations, international corporations and governments are key actors as they are the main channels of (unequal) exchange. Without deep changes in the business philosophy, models, and operations of international corporations, they will continue seeking profits and business as usual to satisfy shareholders. Therefore, how can we confidently link the reduction of Northern material demand to Southern decolonisation and independent development? These are all areas that should be further examined.

Conclusions

In conclusion, we believe that the implementation of degrowth policies in the global North

will not necessarily lead to economic and human development in the global South- on its own. In theory, there is indeed justification to support that the reduction of material demand from the west will alleviate some of the demand for cheap labour and resources. However, the reaction of the private sector to a degrowth project is highly unpredictable, especially since there has not been any substantial conceptualisation of how business would be transformed within the degrowth model. Our view is that, for the degrowth project to be directly beneficial for the global South, strong consensus will be needed amongst the political and business communities of North and South to coordinate the disentanglement of the global economy. A proposition that, now, sounds more than challenging. These would be initial thoughts about the effect of degrowth on North and South relations, with the understanding that the idea itself is much deeper, broader and potentially transformative. It will be very interesting to follow the future discourse on the topic as it develops and refines itself in conversation with the mainstream sustainable development and business discourse.

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Let's Talk Trash: A case study in Colombia

By Sandra Tuor, GDP, Ghana

Introduction

Human Societies are confronted with several development problems as global population increase and people continue to live together and interact in various ways. The ability of development practitioners to identify and prescribe the appropriate interventions for these problems is crucial to development and improved livelihoods.

One of the many ways to solve these development problems is through creating a social enterprise which is an ''organisation that have an economic, social, cultural or environmental mission aligned to public or community benefit'' (Burkett 2013: 4). This implies that a social enterprise must have three elements 'social', 'economic' and 'environmental mission' such that these elements work together to solve a 'wicked problem' and promote sustainable livelihoods. To further explain this, it means that the social enterprise must solve a social problem such as bettering the lives of waste pickers, have a financial stream such that the enterprise can kick start its operations by owning a warehouse and registering waste pickers to work with and at the same time be environmentally sustainable such as we are promoting waste management through recycling while we use waste pickers.

The focus of this essay is to reflect and discuss the 'imaginary' social enterprise which was created at a group level. Firstly, the essay will explain why the problem selected is a wicked problem. Secondly, based on the 'pragmatist philosophy' approach on 'evolutionary learning', the concepts of 'problem-driven perspective', 'reflexivity' and deliberation' will be engaged to highlight on how the team journeyed through the process and came up with 'let's talk trash' and then how my role as a social impact leader helped us to interact as a team to reach our goal of the social enterprise. Theories and concepts to be engaged with will include Wicked Problems, Networks and Institutions, the Business Model Canvas (BMC) among others, challenges then conclusion.

The social enterprise addressed a wicked problem(s)

'Let's talk trash' was the name of our social enterprise which basically had everything to do

with waste management through recycling while the main aim was to improve living conditions of waste pickers in Colombia. Waste pickers in Colombia are those found at the 'bottom of the pyramid' (BOP) that is they are found among the very poor is society and yet are the ones who help in waste collection. Their work helps in waste management which is a global issue and has burdened many governments' budgets, yet the problem lingers on. Waste management is an environmental issue which has remained difficult to manage over decades. Any social problem which is difficult to manage is a wicked problem because these kinds of problems are ''those that are complex, intractable, open-ended, unpredictable-seem to be proliferating'' (Alford and Head 2017:397) and they do not respond to routine interventions to solve them.

'Let's talk trash' identified this area and tried to come up with a local solution to help to manage waste by using waste pickers who do most of the dirty work. The social enterprise realized that if waste is not properly managed, it can lead to other problems such as environmental pollution, outbreak of communicable diseases such as Cholera and Bilharzia. Communicable diseases can leave an entire generation sick which will lead to low production and poor economic performance because of a sick 'human capital'. And if waste pickers did not have better living standards, waste management would be poorly managed at the local level.

As such, we needed to start from somewhere to move away from the normal ways governments have managed waste without considering the living conditions of waste pickers who do the dirty job. By engaging them through our enterprise, we hoped to better their lives, support in waste management and as well solve some unemployment problems among these people. The enterprise tackled 'two' wicked problems, waste management and unemployment. Since human societies cannot stop generating waste, it would continue to be a problem and without proper local management, communities cannot develop. 'Let's talk trash' therefore put the waste pickers as the core target groups to help in the recycling process of non-organic waste such as plastics to help reduce the number of plastics in the environment.

Pragmatist approach on 'Evolutionary Learning' the guide to choosing the problem

In relation to the choice of the wicked problem, it was evident that the process of selecting the problem by the group went through a 'pragmatist approach' of 'evolutionary learning' to agree and disagree based on our diversity in thoughts and experiences from different countries. Being pragmatic meant that we had to be realistic and more practical in our thinking to not just assume the problem and but also 'assume' that these interventions would work. A field survey was carried out which eventually made us realize that the actual problem on the ground was more complex than what was thought. Therefore, a radical approach and working with evidence rather than 'reports'

Similarly, engaging with the 'evolutionary learning' the group realized that as human beings evolve and as communities emerge, they grow bigger because populations increase with increasing demands. People then begin to interact with each other based on their values and norms to form habits which lead to patterned ways of life which again produce most of the development problems we are confronted with. Engaging with the 'evolutionary learning' in our social enterprise process, three conditions were followed namely the ''problem driven perspective, reflexivity and deliberation'' (Ansell 2011:11).

Problem driven perspective

Making sense of the wicked problem selected, there was the need to come to a unanimous agreement on what exactly was to be tackled. It was wise to get a problem that we could easily relate with, identify the causes, effects on people and the consequences of our actions to be taken. Brainstorming the problem first led us to a bigger idea which could help solve a social problem alright but then it looked unachievable. We then decided not to be too broad and over ambitious of our problem at least for the start. We had to keep it simple but quite technical with our different expertise while we ensure that the enterprise impact social lives positively.

My role here was that of a social impact leader. I had to convince the team to understand the main objective of the enterprise was to solve a social problem before any other interventions came in to play and if we fail to get the problem right, then our social enterprise will lack focus and not achieve its aim. We had identified the target population to work with and they were the waste pickers. They had to be explained to so they understand our vision and trust us to work with us. We had to get to the field to interact with these people to know what exactly their problems were to avoid any assumptions and bias of problems and

solutions.

Inspired by experiences from different countries and different backgrounds in knowledge in our interactions each person discussed wicked problems pertaining to their fields of work. But we had to appreciate the diversity in our thinking and choose a problem that was a cross-cutting and a common struggle across countries. Cross-cutting problem in the sense that human interactions were the same everywhere and our agency power interacting with social structure and institutions make people form habits to produce same or similar kinds of problems such as waste generation and its management by people who were waste pickers as in the case of Colombia. As such ''social phenomena should be explained in terms of individuals and social structures'' (Hodgson 2007:99). Colombia was chosen because even though our choice of problem was a cross-cutting among countries, that aspect of recycling was not known.

Adding to this, the team as a network, needed to understand the diversity of target population. Their gender, age, their status in society and difficulty in their line of duty among others. As a social impact leader, I had to explain the team that even though we knew our target population, we had to deal with the issue of their diversity. It was important to know which gender was more involved in waste picking, whether it was the young people of the elderly who were involved in the process and their level of income, size of family and if they had any social security. Fusing our expertise together was required to achieve this. For instance, the financial leader had to come in to work out their incomes for us to know exactly how much they earned and how we could support. The team as the first network and pool of divergent knowledge resources had to be solid before dealing with the waste pickers, recycle industry and other partners. This can sum up by the concept of 'social capital' which ''refers to the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively'' (Woolcock and Narayan 2000:226) to achieve a social impact. Again, our different views and ideologies would make the enterprise sustainable, so we needed ''divergence of viewpoints'' (Alford and Head 2017:410) to solve this wicked problem. Similarly, our different expertise was to help us tackle the 'variations and complexity' of our problem such that different experts tackle different aspects of the problem (Alford and Head 2017: 410).

Reflexivity

Similarly, being reflexive about our problem was also key. How we thought and felt about

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the problem mattered a lot since this included the pains and gains of the waste pickers and how we identified with their predicament. Being the social impact leader once again, made me feel at a point that the entire problem was for me alone to solve because I looked at the social enterprise through a social impact lens. However, working in a team made me realized it was not entirely my duty to solve the problem alone and this lessoned the burden. As my thinking was challenged on the field and interacting with other team members, it was necessary for effective collaboration because the social enterprise was to be a long-term initiative starting with about 20 people and later add on to the number. Learning from each other facilitated the process.

Furthermore, the financial leader came in with financial analysis on how much was needed to start the enterprise with and when we were going to break even, make some profits, reinvest and when to start earning from the enterprise as team members. A budget was prepared and presented to the team. The innovation leader had to also give the team new ideas as to how to promote our enterprise. He made us understand that we could have competitors so we had to do something different from what our competitors are doing; this could be routine interventions, but we were to diversify because routine interventions do not solve wicked problems. The Business Model Canvas helped us a lot at this stage. It gave us the framework to solve the issues using our expertise.

Deliberation

Adding to social enterprise journey of the team, effective communication was identified as a major ingredient for successful teamwork. Team members out of their comfort zones had to constantly deliberate about matters of the enterprise because nothing succeeds without constantly communicating and engaging with other team members. We had to respect views of everyone and learn to communicate our ideas even if we do not agree with other diverse ideas. As I presented the social impact aspect to the group, it was scrutinized with colleagues who added their views about what they thought. We simply understood each other.

The Business Model canvas (BMC)

Like the concepts of the 'evolutionary learning' as discussed above, the BMC simplified the task. It provided us with a step-by-step guidance to set up the social enterprise highlighting exactly what was needed to be done at each stage. So, engaging with these 'evolutionary learning' concepts of the pragmatists system, we were able to connect well with the BMC by

providing answers for what our social enterprise was set to achieve. For instance, in getting the target population and their diversity, the BMC presented it as 'customer fragmentation' meaning we will be dealing with different kinds of people at different levels. The financial aspect also made us understand that a social enterprise needed to be financially sustainable otherwise it would fail.

Furthermore, innovation made us understand that we needed to constantly diversify by adding new ideas into running the enterprise since we were to face a diverse group of waste pickers. Needs of each person were to be met by their expectations. All of these clearly made us to understand that setting up a social enterprise was all about networking to solve the wicked problem because ''Networks are understood to demonstrate several desirable characteristics for accomplishing complex tasks'' (Weber and Khademain 2008:334) and need collaborative effort among the team and our partners who would serve as stakeholders (Alford and Head 2017:400) especially the waste pickers.

Challenge

Working as a team can be very challenging. Our initial challenge was how to meet to start working on our social enterprise. We never had adequate time to meet at the proposed time we had pre decided. We kept shifting times because knowing how group dynamics work, we had to tolerate each other so we get to meet as a team.

However, we managed through the process without having any serious challenges to deal with. We understood each other and respected views of all members in the group. Our communication dynamics were good.

Conclusion

To sum up, this reflective essay has discussed about the social enterprise and engaged with the 'pragmatist approach' in dealing with social problems. The essay delves deeper again into the three concepts of 'evolutionary learning' which are the problem-driven perspective, reflexivity and deliberation as necessary in solving social problems by setting up a social enterprise. These concepts coming from the pragmatist view, helps development practitioners appreciate that fact finding on the field make them realists and action oriented rather than

believing what is put in books. These resolve assumptions of problems and assumed solutions.

Again, this essay presented that in solving social problems, divergent expertise is required because wicked problems require diverse interventions and different experts to tackle different aspects of the problem. So even in policy design, policy makers must have the actual information on the field and also have diversity in policy designers who will in tend design policies that will address specifics of wicked problems.

It is always better to start from the roots, and there is no need to start thinking very 'big' but start with a part and continue with other parts and then to the whole community. Wicked problems will always be with us because evolution of human societies will keep happening and populations would keep increasing. Worth knowing is also that every intervention set to solve a social problem needs sustainable financial stream to be effective. No intervention would survive without innovation because new ideas promote diversity.

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Is This Peace? A Critical Media Campaign on the Representation of a 'Peacefully-militarized' Society

By Xander Creed, GMD, United States of America

What does it mean for a society to be peaceful? Do they lack weapons and technologies used for waging war? Do they lack soldiers, manpower, or perpetrators? Or rather, are there no victims, no recordings of trauma and bloodshed? Is This Peace? raises these questions and delivers the somber answer - peace does not originate from removing certain variables of war, yet this concealment occurs through both artistic and social-political practices to construct the illusion of peace. In other words, peace should not be understood as merely the absence of war, but rather connected with processes of "militarism" which exert "an all-embracing" influence on society, from the mundane to elite strata (Khalid 2015: 634). The variations of the photocollage campaign created through the variation in censored aspects represent the traditional "negative photojournalistic approaches" for depicting peace as identified by Möller (2019: 14-15), namely: 1) through "showing its absence", 2) gruesomely "showing violence as realistically… as possible", and 3) intentionally displaying images "to make others intervene" to escalate the management of the situation. Undoubtedly, the aim of representing violence for the sake of peace can be seen in the stimulating of "a kind of penance" in the viewer (Tulloch & Warwick Blood 2012: 31). In tandem, artistic practices can be seen mirrored by the social-political practice of information manipulation, redaction and censorship (Seo 2014). The campaign centers on acts of artistic and political censorship, concealment, aversion, withholding, and sanitization of violence for the sake of materializing peace.

Image 1. Is This Peace? Unredacted version. (Source: Author's own creation).

Image 2. Is This Peace? Victims Redacted. (Source: Author's own creation).

Image 3. Is This Peace? Weapons Redacted. (Source: Author's own creation).

Image 4: Is This Peace? Combatants Redacted. (Source: Author's own creation).

Visual Description & Methodology

In its current form, Is This Peace? consists of four photo collages, containing historic and contemporary photographs associated with military and war. The contained images have been cut from the original image, repeated, rotated, and placed throughout the collage. The first collage serves as the 'foundation' of the campaign (see: Image 1). Visually, photographs have been placed on top of a backdrop of government documents which have had information redacted. Most images are in black and white, the life vests of asylum-seeking children and purple trash bags of asylum- seekers stand out the most. From left to right, top to bottom:

- A fighter jet fires both a boat of migrants and a missile (or is it, a missile at the boat?), behind the cockpit a boy is crying in agony. The boy comes from the background of The Napalm Girl (Ut 1972).
- The words "IS THIS PEACE(?)" appear throughout, written in the margins of the redacted documents.
- Rows of armed troops sit with rifles ready, facing the other side of the collage. Armed troops charge forward, intermingled in their ranks are plastic army men - children's toys.
- The same boy from the jet plane cries out in the middle, asylum-seeking children in life-vests form a star around him. A hand with a grenade protrudes from the limbs of the star - is it the boy's arm, or an arm ready to strike?
- The 'caravan' of migrants with rows of troops. The migrants are both larger and smaller than the troops - seeming to be marching after the soldiers, as well as under their instruction.
- The famous sailor and stranger from V-J Day in Times Square (Eisenstaedt 1945) kiss, surrounded by the plastic army men, a member of the Hitler Youth, the boy in agony, and a child in Sarajevo playing with an old bazooka (Voeten 1993).
- Members of the Hitler Youth and the Sarajevo boy stand on top of an aircraft carrier, ready for take-off. Below them, the legs of concentration camp survivors carry the ship (or, are they crushed by it?).

The subsequent collages overlay the redaction bars over certain images with a thematic focus. First, the victims of war are removed - suffering and agony are omitted entirely (see: Image 2). The slogan, "War is peace" is scrawled over the child-star, with the

question "A victimless peace… at all costs?" written over the migrants and legs of Holocaust survivors. Second, the technologies and weapons of war are removed (see: Image 3). A bazooka is covered with the word "Armistice" with a call to "laydown your weapons" over the aircraft carrier. All of the soldiers - human and plastic - are missing their weapons. Third, the soldiers are missing entirely, a forgiving redaction of the humans responsible (see: Image 4). The words "Somebody has to do it" is scratched on one side, with "God bless our troops" written over the kissing sailor. As such, each redaction removes certain facets of militarism.

Practically, the campaign is designed to raise awareness about the current state of peace keeping and making. This means that the collages are intended for public display. However, due   to the sensitive nature of the included photos, not all public spaces are suitable (e.g. a graveyard) in accordance with the interpretation that would follow from the context. Despite this, the campaign is designed with the appropriate 'shock value' with corresponding meaning, so the display in public squares, on billboards and so on is desirable. Consequently, the campaign can be delivered to students as a means for education with the appropriate contextualization, or to artists to challenge their artistic

practices. Viewers should feel encouraged to create their own collages and work towards a visualization of peace (Möller 2019).

Interpretation & Objectives

With the original collage intentionally being deeply open to interpretation, the redacted versions point to the depicted reliance of peace on violence to become articulated.

Provocative, exposing the violence and suffering from militarism, the original does not appear to work towards depictions of peace - only the words "is this peace" prompt the viewer to think beyond the depictions of the uniformed, armed men. However, the subsequent renderings of the collage begin to lead the viewer more - addressing the audience through white writing over the black redaction bars, hinting at the parts of the collage which have been removed. In this way, the campaign guides viewers towards challenging justifications for exuberant military budgets and overseas deployment. The rotation between the removal of manpower, technology, and suffering forces the audience to come to terms with the fact that the avoidance of one aspect of militarism does not suddenly result in peace. Despite concealing weapons, a militarized world will still have suffering inflicted upon certain populations. Despite hiding the troops, the means for war are still very real. The redaction of

the troops within the collage is reminiscent of the American government's redaction of the "names of the officers" high in the chain of command and responsible for overseeing the soldiers guilty of torture at Abu Ghraib (The National Security Archive 2004). In this way, the campaign highlights challenges of accountability and transparency. In other words, peace does not come through violence. The interpretation of the redacted collages may still be quite diverse, yet the campaign works towards consolidating the audience's interpretation towards conceiving of peace outside of the military-industrial complex and acts of violence. This becomes most concrete when the images of suffering are redacted - when we are left with weapons and soldiers, even if we cannot see the victims, we are unlikely to enjoy peace.

The goal is to invert the three practices identified by Möller (2019), to highlight their shortcomings, and to motivate the audience to intervene and contest representations of and narratives around peace which legitimize violence as a necessity for guarding peace. The purpose can be seen as two-fold. On one hand, viewers are motivated to reflect and challenge their conception of what peace is and how to achieve it. This encourages the viewer to see the interconnected, multidimensional aspects of militarism (Khalid 2015) - the concealment of weapons or victims is meaningless so long as a populace remains ready for and neutral towards combat. Moreover, the viewer's understanding of historic and contemporary peace is challenged. While militarism is complex and multidimensional, the exact same can be said for peace, which is born from "a variety of social interactions that do not explicitly aim at peace but result in peace all the same" (Möller 2019: 57). Have any military interventions resulted in peace? If so, Möller (2019: 49) leads us to change "the referent object of peace" and ask, "whose peace?" (emphasis added). The conversation extends beyond viewers, but also producers of art using a collage containing pictures produced by someone else.

On the other hand, artists and other media actors engaged in displaying peace are challenged to depict peace in its plurality and diverge from state or military centric imagery; for example, Melucci and Avritzer (2000: 509) locate the role of "social movements" in "bridging the gap between complexity and democracy… the most adequate answer to the challenge of cultural pluralism" through sublimating representation with association and participation. Does depicting men in uniform contribute to a worldview and understanding of peace, or does it further legitimize the presence of state-controlled means of violence? In this way, Möller (2019: 50) guides artists to embrace the "multiple forms of visual

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representation of multiple forms of social interaction… [that] are regarded as 'peace'" as it is experienced "individually and collectively". In other words, there is no monolithic 'peace' which can be captured by the media and disseminated *en masse*. Rather, the visualization of peace requires creativity, attention to detail and overarching themes (Möller 2019), as well as collaboration (Melucci & Avritzer 2000). The campaign invites artists to create their own collages, and work towards depicting a visualization of peace not dependent on violence. In turn, a third purpose can be seen, namely, to encourage change beyond artistic practices.

The campaign goes beyond education and awareness raising, but rather serves as a call to action. Here, the goal is highly political - to demand more transparent (state) practices regarding war and peace. While information about casualties, (covert) military operations and intelligence are strategically redacted for the sake of public relations and appearing more peaceful (Seo 2014), the trauma experienced and violence inflicted is still very real. The call is then to recognize the extent of militarism and detach the existence of peace(s) from the accompanying military- industrial complex. In this way, the campaign calls for placing peace within different "regimes of visibility [which] organize spaces of publicity" (Chouliaraki & Stolic 2017: 1171). Crucially, under current regimes of visibility peace becomes mobilized within "key spaces of moralization that produce and regulate the public disposition" in favor of militarism (Chouliaraki & Stolic 2017: 1172). Viewers are encouraged to think about what peace means to them - is peace something which can only be experienced thanks to the deployment of troops overseas, and the accruing of weapons of mass destruction? Assuming the answer is no, the campaign seeks to arouse viewers in calling for alternative methods of peacemaking and peacekeeping.

In practice, this campaign is targeted towards Western audiences. The reach and meaning of the campaign are certainly applicable beyond Western audiences but become limited through the interpretation process guided by a culturally shaped conceptual mind map (Hall 1997). The collage contains numerous iconic photographs that are familiar - for instance, the legs of survivors from concentration camps, the kissing sailor and woman, Hitler youth and other World War I and World War II combatants. However, there are also photographs which depict non-Westerners, such as the migrants from the 2016 'migrant crisis' in Europe juxtaposed to be marching behind and with armed troops, and the boy in the background of the infamous war photography 'Napalm Girl' (Ut 1972) depicting the agony

of childhood Phan Thi Kim Phuc. In this way, the collage presents perpetrators and victims (as well as technologies of war) as "represented participants" yet offers the chance that viewers as "interactive participants" have a historic relationship with certain images which influences "what may be 'said' with images" (Kress & van Leeuwen 2005: 362). Consequently, the proximity of these images (e.g. the legs of Holocaust survivors underneath a warship with a child combatant and Hitler Youth on top) intentionally aims to disrupt the dominant interpretation and script with which Western audiences are equipped. This is done not out of insensitivity, but with the hopes of stimulating critical contemplation, refreshing and re-contextualizing historic pains with contemporary ones (e.g. the 'migrant crisis'). In other words, victims and perpetrators do not exist discreetly but live interconnectedly, part and parcel of a system based upon violence as the guarantor of peace.

The campaign positions artistic practices of depicting conflict in line with state dissemination, legitimation and recognition of violence, or rather the lack of it as illustrated by the censored government documents; Zarkov (2011: 108-109) remarks that American media "has had a total blackout of images of dead or injured American soldiers… and shies away from showing images of casualties caused by US forces". In turn, this resonates with the findings of Papacharissi and De Fatima Oliveira (2008: 71) by which the "media agenda" of prominent American outlets "excludes coverage of military alternatives" in response to terrorism.

Conclusively, mainstream practices mobilize certain militarized imageries to position peace as an outcome reliant on the military. Peace becomes guaranteed by the military; this inhibits interpretations of peace as being disrupted by the military. The practice of censoring or redacting classified and incriminating information becomes likened to photography which mobilizes the absence of violence, whereas leaving the images uncensored falls in line with gratuitous depictions of carnage, legitimating intervention depending on who is being violent. With this campaign, the aim is to engage the viewer in critically assessing representations and understandings of peace. In turn, all of this reflects Möller's (2019: 15) conclusion that the "standard approaches to [photographing] peace is dependent on violence", with the viewers likely coming to the same conclusion despite the artistic medium. To illustrate this claim, Is This Peace? shows how complex contemporary systems of violent peacekeeping are - meaningful disarmament of militaries must be combined with a similar

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de-militarization of the culture, a recognition of the victims deserving justice.

Concurrently, Is This Peace? seeks to challenge narrow interpretations of peace and bring to light oftentimes overlooked aspects of violence which obscure peace. The campaign presents samples of the dominant, oftentimes government-led, framing of peace. For instance, when the U.S. government purports the American soldiers to be dignified, respectable and peaceful (for example visualized through the slogan 'God Bless Our Troops' or 'Somebody must do it'), the outcome is the "rejection of alternative understandings" of the U.S. armed forces which include aspects of violence, war crimes, and the censored information about military campaigns (Karatzogianni 2012: 8). From this view, Möller (2019: 13) is right when sketching out the possibility of photographic depictions of peace, "we have to be explicit about what we mean by peace". The outcome of a campaign like Is This Peace? is then simple - to engage the viewer with thinking about what constitutes peace for themselves, as well as both the near-and-dear and far-and-foreign 'others'.

Reflection

In closing, the process of creating the campaign requires critical reflection. First and foremost, the campaign touches upon highly sensitive topics, especially regarding victims of violence. In this way, great attention was given to ensure that images were not used for 'shock value' or gratuitously, but rather the collage was put together with great intention to generate a deep (theoretical) meaning which calls for justice and peace. However, that was undoubtedly a challenge. For instance, in line with David MacDougall's notion of 'excess meaning', Möller (2013: 32) reflects that within imagery there is always "a multitude of meanings which is hard to control" how the viewer interprets the campaign. Originally, the idea was to overlay censor bars over various parts of the collage, to show what is and is not. Although to overcome this excess meaning, words were added to help guide the viewer's interpretation and further solidify the focus on peace rather than violence, to show what should be. In turn, this addresses the concerns of "[f]ree play" for interpretation as raised by Möller (2013: 31), which can be "dangerous because it cannot be controlled; its results may be undesired" and lead to an incorrect or unintended conclusion of the campaign. The production of this campaign attempted to overcome these challenges of (mis)interpretation by directly addressing the viewer with emotive imagery and pleading words.

The last critical reflection for the process of forming this campaign can be found in

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the fluidity of the possible audience, the collage places perpetrators and victims' side by side. Similarly, when displayed publicly, the campaign is likely to have an audience with varying relations to different sides of historic conflicts (i.e. aligning with traditional 'perpetrator' narratives, or traditional 'victim' narratives). In response to this, the advice of Chouliaraki and Stolic (2017: 1174) regarding substantive responsibility was taken, wherein "it is important that we turn these relationships into a site of struggle, where the norms of humanity, agency, and responsibility are constantly at stake". For the creation process, this meant finding ways to stress these aspects in both victims and perpetrators, to invoke the capacity for change and demonstrate the continually constructed and reinforced disruption of peace. Through focusing on the inability to 'hide', Is This Peace? invites the viewer to an honest and transparent conversation concerning peace, in which all sides are interconnected. Hence, the process of creating the collage required mindfulness towards the proximity and juxtapositioning of images and finding ways to energize rather than paralyze.

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Barriers to Social Transformation – Exploring Tensions Between Khawaja Sira Culture and Trans Rights in Pakistan, and the Possibility of a Critical and Interpretive Approach

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In Pakistan, one often finds tension between the *khawaja sira* or third gender discourse and the transgender/trans rights discourse. The former has prevailed in the country since centuries while the latter has gained popularity only recently, among the trans youth. This essay discusses the *khawaja sira* culture and the trans rights framework as practiced in the cities of Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and Rawalpindi in Pakistan. Through the work of Tamale (2008: 47), it examines the tension between 'culture' and 'rights' and explores the possibility to develop a "critical and interpretive approach" which can integrate aspects from both the discourses in order to build a framework of understanding that represents the plurality of *khawaja sira* and trans experiences present in Pakistan. Such an approach can play a crucial role in transforming society towards acceptance and empowerment for the *khawaja sira* and trans community in the country.

Introduction – Who are the Khawaja Sira?

The term *khawaja sira* in Pakistan is generally perceived as an umbrella term which refers to persons with gender ambiguous identities (Khan 2014: 63). These can include intersex persons locally known as *khunas*, and *zenana*s – persons with a feminine soul irrespective of their physical bodies (Khan 2014: 65). The word *zenana* commonly translates to of or relating to women and also refers to women only places (Shroff 2021: 264). Within the umbrella term, there are also *hijras* who were understood as castrated men or eunuchs by British colonisers in the Indian Subcontinent. (Shroff 2021: 264). However, scholars assert this to be a reductive understanding of *hijras* which reflected "colonial anxieties around sexualities" (Shroff 2021: 264). In reality, the *hijra* identity comprised of multiple gender non-conforming identities in South Asia, similar to the *khawaja sira* identity (Shroff 2021: 263-264).

From the Islamic angle, *hijra* refers to migration and *hijr* symbolises the first holy migration from Mecca to Madina by the Muslims (Shroff 2020: 263). In this context, *hijras*

are understood as 'migrating' from biological sex to gender expression, hence transcend the gender binary (Chavez 2013; Cotten 2012 in Shroff 2021: 264). Most *khawaja sira*s also understand themselves in the same way, as "neither men nor women but khawaja sira" (Nanda 1999 in Khan 2014: 60). However, *hijra* identity has been more strongly linked to Hinduism and India while *khawaja sira* identity has been linked to Islam and Pakistan (Shroff 2021: 266). Currently, in Pakistan the word *hijra* possesses a negative connotation of failed masculinity which can be traced back to its colonial perceptions (Shroff 2021: 264; Khan 2014: 62) Overall, the identities of *khunsa*, *zenan*a and *hijra* are seen as three broad subcategories of *khawaja siras* in Pakistan (Khan 2014: 63).

The emergence of the word *khawaja sira* can be traced back to the histories of Mughals and Islamic spirituality in South Asia (Shroff 2021: 264). Khawaja – a Persian word used as a title for teachers and mentors, particularly Muslim Sufi saints, was adopted by the Urdu language to mean "protector", "honorable", and "master" (Shroff 2021: 265). Consequently, the word khwaja sira means the "master of secrets" and the "guardian of women" (Shroff 2021: 265). The first meaning relates to the honourable positions held by the *khawaja sira*s during the pre-colonial Delhi Sultanate and Mughal eras as military commanders, political advisors, guardians of harems and famous Muslim tombs, while the second meaning relates to their ability to navigate through female spaces (Hambly 1974; Marmon 1995; Redding 2018 in Shroff 2021: 265). Although historically, most of the *khawaja sira*s belonged to the working class and fulfilled the role of servants for elite households, some were rewarded these prestigious positions in the pre-colonial empires (Shroff 2021: 265).

Culturally, the *khawaja sira*s were also believed to possess the power to bless and curse people (Khan 2014: 167). Therefore, even presently they are often invited to ceremonies celebrating the birth of a child or a marriage (Khan 2020: 114). Given their ability to enact a variety of gendered roles, gender and sexual ambiguity and their perceived special powers, *khawaja siras* and *hijras* have always been viewed as "figures of reverence and revulsion, desire and deviance..." (Shroff 2021: 265).

However, based on the honourable status held by *khawaja sira*s in society in the past, third gender activists in Pakistan reclaimed the term *khawaja sira* in their campaigning for rights in the 2000s (Khan 2014: 62). *Khawaja sira* became the preferred term for third gender

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persons (Khan 2014: 62). So far, I have primarily discussed the *khawaja sira* identity in relation to gender and sexual identity, but *khawaja siras* and *hijras* are a lot more than just identities. They are cultural and familial systems in South Asia (Shroff 2021: 263). They reflect "…complex gendered practices, ritual systems, induction practices, and cultural histories." (Shroff 2021: 266), some of which will be discussed in the next section.
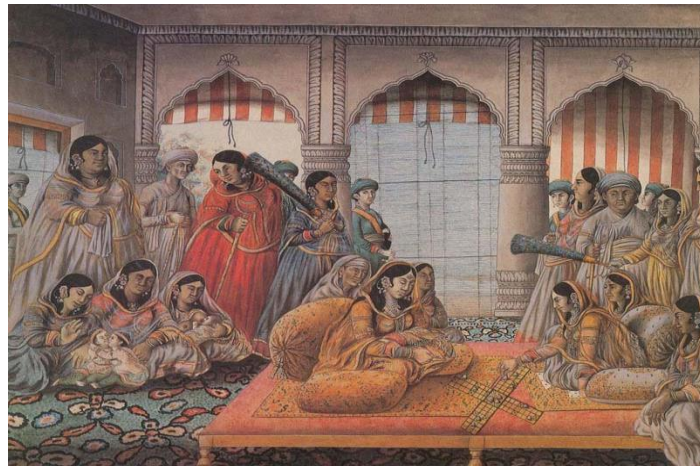

Figure 1. Senior wives playing chaupar (Lucknow, c. 1790)

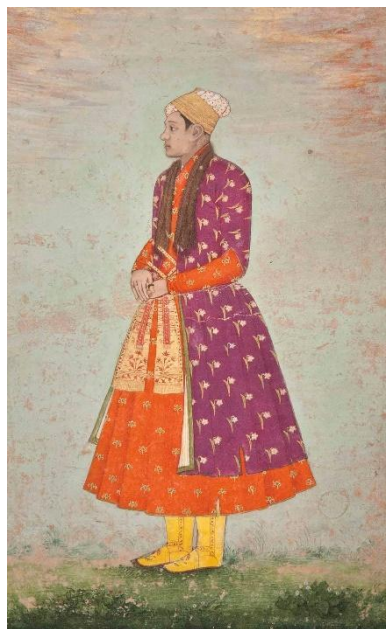Source:http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00routesdata/1800_1899/women/zananah/zananah.html

Figure 2. Khawas Khan, The Eunuch Of Bahadur Shah

Khwaja Sira Culture in Pakistan

The *khawaja sira* beliefs and practices have been preserved and passed down from generations (Khan 2020: 106). One of the major elements of *khawaja sira* culture is the '*farsi kalam*' which translates to Persian language but is unique to the *khawaja sira* community with its own terminology (Khan 2020: 106, 124). There are also several rules that govern the *khawaja sira* way of life and that are passed down to the new generations (Khan 2020: 106). These rules help the newly initiated *khawaja sira*s to navigate themselves within the community and help manage the shared space of living which they refer to as '*dera*' meaning "new home" as most of them are expelled from their families or run away to escape the discrimination or violence inflicted upon them (Khan 2020: 106-107). The *khawaja sira*s find a new sense of belonging in their *dera* (Khan 2020: 107). Some of the rules that living in the *dera* entails include respecting elders, keeping peace and harmony and dividing the house chores (Khan 2020: 107).

The *guru-chela* relationship can be considered the foundation upon which the *khawaja sira* culture is built (Khan 2020: 103). *Guru* and *chela* are Sanskrit words and their origins are found in Hinduism (Gould 1969 in Khan 2014: 90). They can be translated to mean mentor and student (Gould 1969 in Khan 2014: 90). Interestingly, they are quite similar to the central relation between *pirs* (masters) and *murids* (disciples) in Sufi Islam (Hassan 1987 in Khan 2014: 90). In fact, according to some myths, Ganga Ram – the *chela* of Amir Khusro (1253-1325 CE), the famous Indo-Persian Sufi poet and scholar, was the one who established the third gender community in Sindh, Pakistan (Junejo 2004 in Shah et al. 2021: 61).

Within the *khawaja sira* context, a *guru* is viewed as not only a mentor but also the head of the *dera* and the family residing within it (Khan 2020: 112). They act as the father and mother to their *chelas* who are considered to be like their own children as well as students and disciples (Khan 2020: 112). In this way the *guru-chela* relationship plays a key role in forming families and the larger kinship system within the *khawaja sira*s (Khan 2020: 113). *Guru*s are usually the elders of the community who have a lot of experience within the *khawaja sira* culture (Khan 2020: 113). If a *khawaja sira* has no *guru*, they are looked down

upon within the community and are also left at a more vulnerable position (Khan 2020: 113). The *guru-chela* relationship is founded on mutual consent and trust (Khan 2020: 107, 113). A new *khawaja sira* voluntarily joins the community through an initiation ceremony called *chittai*, wherein the novice pledges an oath on the hand of their *guru* and pays 125 rupees to become part of the new family and community (Khan 2020: 113). The novices are expected to deeply respect and obey their *guru*s who re-socialize them to navigate as *khawaja siras* in this heteronormative world (Khan 2020: 113, 118).

Figure 3. Anjali and Arzoo in their *guru's* room.
Source: https://herald.dawn.com/news/1398823

Apart from the sociocultural dimension, there is also an economic dimension to the *guru-chela* relationship (Khan 2020: 114). The *chelas* are given the responsibility to earn income for their households while the *guru* is given the task to manage the affairs of the home (Khan 2020: 114). The most common ways for *khawaja sira*s to earn income is through performing at events like weddings or the religious initiations of newborn children where they are given *badhai* (donations for their well wishes and celebratory spirit), begging or sex work (Khan 2020: 114; Shah et al. 2021: 67). All the money earned by the *chelas* is given to the *guru* who decides how to spend it to pay household expenses and manage the home (Khan 2020: 115). The *chelas* also help in carrying out house chores as instructed by their *guru*s (Khan 2020: 114). There is dependency on both ends for survival within the relationship, economic dependency for the *guru* and social dependency through the provision of a home, family and social capital for the *chelas* (Khan 2020: 114-116).

Trans Rights in Pakistan

The emergence of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) rights occurred fairly recently in the 1990s (Alam et al. 2018: 321). LGBT is used as an umbrella term to represent the diverse gender and sexuality identities that do not correspond with heteronormativity (Alam et al. 2018: 321). In Pakistan, the LGBT movement began to receive some attention during the mid-2000s (Khan 2014: 217). However, even a decade after, the movement was not very visible and organisations working on LGBT rights, maintained a low profile to avoid media attention and government scrutiny (Khan 2014: 217). The word transgender started to gain popularity in Pakistan from 2011 onwards among middle class gender activists and gender ambiguous people living in the metropolitan city of Karachi, Sindh (Khan 2014: 69). Fluency in the English language, accessibility to Internet and exposure to campaigns from non-government organisations (NGOs) enabled this segment of the population to self-identify as transgenders (Khan 2014: 69-70).

Figure 4. Transwomen dressed for a function
Source: https://herald.dawn.com/news/1398823

'Shemale' was another word that became popular, even more so than transgender since it was easily understood and pronounced by the larger lower class *khawaja sira* community in Karachi who were not fluent in English (Khan 2014: 71). The word began to

gain traction with the foundation of the Shemale Coalition of Pakistan by Noor Vicky, a celebrity *khawaja sira* activist (Khan 2014: 71). Unlike in the United States where the word originated as a transphobic slur, in Pakistan it was appropriated as a synonym for *khawaja sira*s (Khan 2014: 71). Another well-known organisation is the Shemale Association for Fundamental Rights founded by Nadeem Kashish, a transgender/*khawaja sira* activist (Khan 2020: 123).

Interestingly, some transgender/*khawaja sira* organisations and activists have incorporated certain aspects of trans rights from the West. These include organisations like Sathi Foundation, an NGO working for transgender rights which was founded by Jannat Ali (Sahqani et al. 2019). Inspired by the pride marches held in cities abroad, Jannat Ali's organisation arranged the first ever trans pride march in the city of Lahore in Pakistan (Sahqani et al. 2019). The idea was for the *khawaja sira*s to celebrate their own birth and existence for a change as opposed to celebrating joyous occasions for the heteronormative majority (Sahqani et al. 2019).

It is also important to point out that there is a segment of transgender persons from the middle class that do not identify themselves with the *khawaja sira* community and culture. One example of such persons is of the transgender activist Kami Sid, Pakistan's first transgender model (Azhar 2017). Kami Sid identifies as a transgender woman and not a *khawaja sira* (Azhar 2017). The *khawaja sira* identity and culture is alien to her, perhaps because she had the privilege of being supported by her family (Azhar 2017). Growing up in a middle-class household and being educated in English also meant Kami Sid had access to learn about transgender and LGBT rights more easily (Azhar 2017). The model actively promotes LGBT rights in Pakistan, for instance, through campaigning and celebrating occasions like 'trans visibility day' in colleges (Azhar 2017).

Owing to the efforts of *khawaja sira* and transgender activists over the past decade, a major milestone was achieved by the passing of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act (TPA) in 2018 by the National Assembly (Hashim 2018). The TPA affirms the provision of various rights to *khawaja sira*s and transgenders such as the right to register on official documents via 'self-identification' as men, women, both or neither, right to employment, education, healthcare, inheritance, etc., as well as protection from any kind of discrimination (Hashim 2018). The TPA also discusses concepts such as gender identity and

gender expression, terms that seem to be borrowed from the West. The success behind the passing of the TPA was also attributed to Pakistan's newly elected government and the Minister of Human Rights, Shireen Mazari who had emphasised on the transnational slogan "*trans rights are human rights*" (Shroff 2021: 261).

Figure 5. Trans pride celebrations in Lahore

Source: https://herald.dawn.com/news/1398823

Figure 6. Kami Sid

Source: https://images.dawn.com/news/1182283

Tensions – The *khawaja sira* Culture v. Trans Rights

The trans rights framework is often ciriticised by the traditional *khawaja sira* culture. It is a part of the human rights framework which is informed by Western neo-colonialism (Gichki 2020: 31). This criticism does not only stem from the *khawaja sira* community. The human

rights discourse has been criticised extensively around the world for its hegemonic and Eurocentric nature which centers around the Western white, middle class and heterosexual man (Tamale 2008: 50). While the trans rights and LGBT rights have challenged some of these aspects, they remain disconnected from the local experiences and realities of many *khawaja sira*s in Pakistan. Some *khawaja sira* also actively problematise the identity label of 'trans man' or 'trans woman' because it ends up conforming to the gender binary (Khan 2014: 70). Those who belong to the *khawaja sira* community, embrace their distinct *khawaja sira* identity (Khan 2014: 70). Moreover, for many the Western trans identity is seen as a threat to the *khawaja sira* culture and is looked at as a foreign and unacceptable concept (Azhar 2017).

However, the *khawaja sira* culture itself, especially the *guru-chela* relationship, has been the subject of immense criticism by some of the transgender activists. The relationship has been exposed to be quite a controversial one, wherein, the *guru*s possess immense power and hegemony over their *chela*s (Khan 2020). Some *chela*s have complained that they are coerced into obeying their *guru*s and since they are already at such a vulnerable position in society, they have no choice but to obey their *guru*s to survive (Khan 2020: 118-120).

There have been cases of physical, psychological and economic exploitation and abuse experienced by some of the *chela*s from their *guru*s (Khan 2020). The *chela*s have felt helpless when threatened by the power and influence of their *guru*s (Khan 2020: 121). At times, some of them were coerced into joining sex work or undergoing castration despite their refusal (Khan 2020: 121). If they refuse, they fear violence and rejection from their *guru* and the larger *khawaja sira* community (Khan 2020: 121). What makes the situation particularly unbearable for some *chela*s is the fact that they cannot escape from the power of their *guru* in their homes nor outside them (Khan 2020: 121).

The level of economic exploitation can also be intense. Strict rules govern the *guru-chela* relationship and if any of these are broken, then a penalty known as *dand* has to be paid by the *chelas* (Khan 2020: 115). The aim of the penalty is for the *chelas* to learn from their mistake, but the penalty can be quite exploitative (Khan 2020: 115). It has been used by the *guru*s to reinforce their power and hegemony (Khan 2020: 115). The penalty amounts have varied from 10,000 rupees to 100,000 rupees, which are hefty sums (Khan 2020: 115). Inability to pay can even lead to ostracization for the *chela*s (Khan 2020: 115).

Moreover, while the *chela*s have the responsibility for earning for their families and homes, they have no say in how the money is spent (Khan 2020: 115). They also have to pay a seniority allowance to the *guru*s given their elderly position and role in taking care of the *chela*s (Khan 2020: 116). The amount or timing to pay the allowance is not fixed but it goes on to show the difference in financial power between the *guru*s and the *chela*s (Khan 2020: 116). Apart from these aspects, the practice of transferring or selling *chela*s among *guru*s also occurs (Khan 2020: 116). If the transfer is initiated by the *chela* to change their *guru*, then it involves the payment of a transfer fee, called *pesha*, by the *chela* (Khan 2020: 116). This practice has been criticised for its treatment of human beings as investments and property (Khan 2020: 116).

Lastly, as a word of caution, it is important to note that many *khawaja sira*s refer to themselves both as transgenders and *khawaja sira*s, therefore it is not always the case that the two terms are placed in opposition to each other (Khan 2014: 70). There are some activists and organisations which incorporate aspects from both the discourses. Similarly, it is also important to mention that not all transgenders who do not associate with being *khawaja sira*s, associate with the trans women or trans men label either. There are those who identify themselves as simply trans, fluid, queer or gender nonconforming. These persons usually belong to the middle class and are familiar with these Western expressions of gender identities (Azhar 2017).

The Possibility of a Critical and Interpretive Approach

There are aspects which are problematic in both the *khawaja sira* cultural discourse and the trans rights discourse in Pakistan. However, placing them as polar opposites is neither productive nor necessary. It only restricts the capability to transform societies and challenge structures of oppression (Tamale 2008: 47). Tamale (2008: 27) argues what is needed, instead, is an approach that is both critical and interpretive which can establish a common ground among the discourses and create a collaborative effort towards transforming society. Other scholars also point towards focusing on a "common context of struggle" when confronted with different understandings of gender and sexuality in societies (Mohanty 1997 in Budhiraja et al. 2010: 132).

In her article, Tamale (2008: 48) stresses on the need to look at culture as a dynamic

set of values and practices, which are constantly interacting with the political, social and economic factors in societies and reflect the power structures within them (Schech and Haggis 2000; Stewart 1998 in Tamale 2008: 48). Thus, it becomes necessary to "…(re)interpret the underlying values within… culture with the changing socioeconomic circumstances" (Tamale 2008: 65). Tamale (2008: 49) also discusses how all cultures have positive as well as oppressive elements within them but placing culture only in a negative context is far more counterproductive in transforming those very oppressive elements and completely overlooks the positive aspects as well as the potential within cultures to empower its communities.

The idea of an internal cultural transformation model as proposed by An-Na'im and Hammond (2002) (in Tamale 2008: 55-56), is argued to be the most appropriate means of protecting communities. Tamale (2008: 60-64) gives examples of cases in Africa where cultural factors were not taken into account and as a result, efforts in reforming the society failed. She also discusses examples of the Zapatista women in Mexico and the Baganda women in Uganda who effectively challenged and transformed oppressive structures and practices in their societies from within (Tamale 2008: 57-61). The cultural transformation model shows the effectiveness of "bottom-up approaches" in overcoming oppression and exploitation (Butegwa 2002 in Tamale 2008: 64). This is not to say that a top-down legal approach is not important in protecting communities from injustices, but to emphasize the need to work in collaboration with the cultural transformation model, given its power to initiate change from within (Tamale 2008: 64). It also means to recognise the flaws and limitations of advocating a rights framework that is disconnected from the cultural context of societies (Tamale 2008: 59). Thus, a critical and interpretive approach is not just about reshaping or transforming culture, but also recognising the flaws and limits of the human rights approach.

Conclusion

Pakistan's *hawaja sira* culture is something that is unique to its geographical and cultural context and ought to be preserved. However, given the dynamic nature of cultures, transforming, reshaping or recreating certain aspects within cultures becomes necessary with time. In the case of the *guru-chela* relationship, addressing systems of exploitation and abuse

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becomes vital. It is also important to keep in mind that the *guru-chela* relation is not entirely oppressive. There are *guru*s who nurture and love their *chela*s and genuinely help them survive and thrive (Khan 2020: 118). *Khawaja sira* Bindiya Rana does not take any money from her *chela*s because she recalls that her *guru* did not take any money from her (Azhar 2017). She explains that the financial aspect is there only to support the family and manage the running of the home, just like anyone would financially support their aging parents (Azhar 2017). It is also a huge responsibility on the part of the *guru*s to open their homes to strangers and treat them as their own children and students and look after them (Khan 2020: 119).

Thus, what is needed is to ensure that the *guru-chela* relationship does not become hegemonic, is far less hierarchical and more reciprocal, with shared power and responsibilities so that the *chela*s are able to exercise a degree of freedom, autonomy and agency, and feel safe from exploitation and abuse. If the existing rules, regulations and practices can be reformed to reflect the abovementioned changes, and mechanisms can be put in place to report their violations, then, I believe a cultural transformation can take place. Here the involvement of the state becomes necessary to enforce these measures and offer protection. Unfortunately, the TPA does not mention the *guru-chela* relationship at all. The TPA is a classic example of the state's ignorance of local beliefs and practices, which inform the lives of *khawaja siras*, and require intervention. Instead, the laws borrow their understanding of the third gender and their issues largely from the Western trans rights discourse. A cultural transformation can only occur when there is collaboration between a bottom-up approach and a top-down legal one as stressed upon by Tamale (2008: 64).

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Reflections on the 'Right to Health': A Closer Look at the Indigenous Peoples of Southern Palawan, Philippines

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Introduction

This paper discusses, in part, why malaria endemicity amongst the indigenous peoples in Southern Palawan, Philippines is a form of health inequality that must be confronted as it continues to infringe on the indigenous peoples' right to health as enshrined, foremost, in Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1966 and entered into force a decade thereafter, which states at the beginning: "1. The State Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health…" (ICESCR 1996).

Apart from the ICESCR, there are other relevant international, regional and national legal instruments that are involved, or affected, with the non-realization of, at least, Article 12 of the aforesaid Covenant. This paper has four sections following this introduction. The first section introduces the developmental background, setting and research questions. The second section presents the methodology and framing of the problem. The third section puts across the discussion and analysis of the information gathered through a review of related documents. The fourth and final section offers conclusions and, hopefully, some useful recommendations.

Background, setting and research questions

Culmination of the MDG Era

In 2015, the historic and ground-breaking Millennium Development Goals (MDG) was concluded. Adopted through the UNGA Resolution A/RES/55/2 in 2000, it brought together more than 180 countries behind one global vision of ending poverty, improving peoples' lives and ensuring environmental sustainability through global, regional, national and local partnerships (UN 2015; SDGF 2014). The MDG had eight goals and Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases (UN 2015: 6) is relevant because it was aimed at

combating infectious and other diseases specifically targeting malaria, through a package of prevention, testing, treatment and control strategies (WHO 2014). Towards the end of 2015:

> Over 6.2 million malaria deaths have been averted… global malaria incidence rate has fallen by an estimated 37 per cent and mortality rate by 58 per cent (UN 2015: 6).

However, despite the remarkable progress made in malaria and many of the MDG targets, significant gaps remained within and between countries and regions, with millions of people affected, especially the neediest and the most vulnerable due to their age, gender, economic status, ethnicity, disability or geography (UN 2015: 8). More are needed to be done so "that no one will be left behind" (UNGA 2015: 1).

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

'Leave no one behind' was the collective vision that gave birth to a more inclusive, more comprehensive and more ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). A product of extensive global consultation that started at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+ 20 in 2012 (SDGF 2014) and adopted through UNGA Resolution A/RES/70/1 three years thereafter, the SDG laid down the global development agenda for another 15 years and was considered a historic turning point for indigenous peoples around the world because of their participation in the consultation processes and consequential visibility in future development agenda (OHCHR 2017; UNDESA 2017). The SDG has 17 goals and two are highly relevant to the realization of the indigenous peoples' right to health:

- "Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;" and "Target 3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria… and other communicable diseases" (UNGA 2015: 16); and
- "Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries;" and "Target 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status" (UNGA 2015: 21).

Exclusion of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples Continues

Both the MDG and SDG have consistently placed human rights at the very heart of the development agenda, promising to respect, promote and protect the human rights of all peoples (UNGA 2015; UNGA 2000) as they strive to pursue a humane, just and democratic

society. However, the continued exclusion of the indigenous peoples and minorities persists up to this day. The plight of the world's indigenous peoples had been continuously characterized by the non-recognition of their right to self-determination, including the right to their ancestral domains (UNDESA 2019: 7). Lack of recognition deprives them of certain access to economic and social services, including access to health care services that results to higher infection and death rates, lower life expectancy rates and extreme poverty (UNDESA 2019:7). The indigenous peoples of Southern Palawan in the Philippines are not spared from this form of exclusion.

Who are the Indigenous Peoples?

There is no agreed common, international definition of 'indigenous peoples', however, in the last 50 years, a broader, more inclusive definition has emerged (Dykes 2019). Philippines, moreover, had lawfully defined what 'indigenous peoples' meant through Section 3h, Chapter II of Republic Act 8371, also known as "The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997" (IPRA):

> h) Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples - refer to a group of people or homogenous societies identified by self-ascription and ascription by others, who have continuously lived as organized community on communally bounded and defined territory, and who have, under claims of ownership since time immemorial, occupied, possessed and utilized such territories, sharing common bonds of language, customs, traditions and other distinctive cultural traits, or who have, through resistance to political, social and cultural inroads of colonization, non-indigenous religions and cultures, became historically differentiated from the majority of Filipinos. ICCs/IPs shall likewise include peoples who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, at the time of conquest or colonization, or at the time of inroads of non-indigenous religions and cultures, or the establishment of present state boundaries, who retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, but who may have been displaced from their traditional domains or who may have resettled outside their ancestral domains (IPRA 1997).

This definition has clearly established the collective identity of indigenous peoples in the country. But more than that, the law has obligated the state to recognize, respect, promote, protect and fulfill all their rights as enshrined in the 1987 Constitution of the

Republic of the Philippines and as defined under the IPRA law, both of which should guarantee the realization of their civil and political rights and the attainment of their economic, social and cultural well-being (IPRA 1997).

The Palaw'an and Tao't Bato Tribes of Southern Palawan and Malaria

Through the IPRA, the Palaw'an and Tao't Bato tribes in Southern Palawan has now been legally recognized as one of the indigenous peoples (or indigenous cultural communities) in the Philippines. They are also the subject of this mini-research because of the peculiarity of their health situation, in relation to malaria, when compared to the rest of the Philippines – i.e., as the whole country moves toward pre-elimination / elimination phase to a malaria-free status, in conformity with the SDG Target 3.3, by 2030, the indigenous tribes could be left behind because of the persistence of malaria infections amongst them (Schapira et al. 2019: 80-86).

After more than a decade of progress in malaria control and elimination in the country, an upsurge of malaria cases occurred towards the end of 2015 and the situation persisted at least until 2019 (Schapira et al. 2019: 82) and is expected to continue in the next two years. What was obviously concerning was the concentration of malaria cases in the four municipalities of Rizal, Bataraza, Brooke's Point and Balabac; especially in Rizal, which had the majority of cases amongst the indigenous peoples (Schapira et al. 2019: 82). In 2018, for example, 93% of the more than 3,000 malaria cases reported in Rizal were amongst the Palaw'an tribe and about a fourth were amongst children who were less than five years old (Schapira et al. 2019: 84), which implied an active exposure to mosquito bites. However, malaria deaths, nationally, have remained very low, with a total of 18 malaria deaths recorded between 2016 and 2019 (Schapira et al. 2019: 77).

Malaria Endemicity as a Form of Health Inequality

The control and elimination of malaria remains a national health priority of the Philippine government through the long-standing National Malaria Control and Elimination Program (NMCEP) of the Department of Health (DOH) (DOH 2021). The program had been institutionalized for many decades now. Over the years, a progressive decline in the number of malaria cases could be observed nationally, from 2008 to 2019, however, this decline

was consistent in all the provinces, except in Palawan, as presented in Figure 13 below (Schapira et al. 2019: 77). Despite the tremendous resources and efforts placed in the control and elimination of malaria, it appears that malaria has become endemic in Palawan for the last five years, especially in the southern part where the towns of Rizal, Bataraza, Brooke's Point and Balabac are located and where the indigenous peoples have settled themselves in.

Figure 13. Confirmed Malaria Cases (Indigenous and Imported), Palawan and the Rest of the Philippines, 2008-2019.
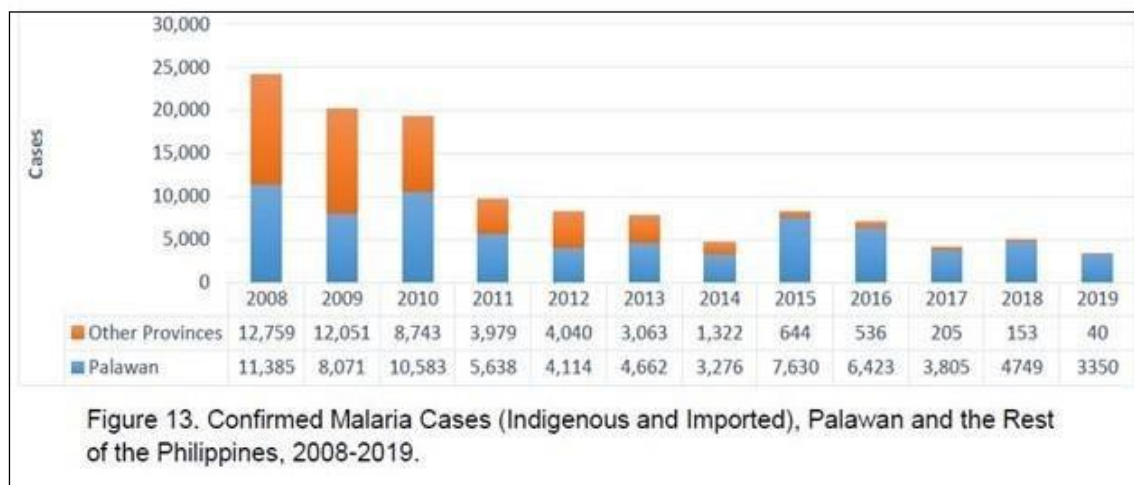
Figure SEQ Figure |* ARABIC 1 Source: Schapira et al. 2019: 77

The malaria situation in Southern Palawan could be considered as a form of health inequality and it satisfies several conditions:

- While most of the provinces in the Philippines are moving towards malaria pre-elimination / elimination phase, Palawan is being left behind which is avoidable, unnecessary, unfair and unjust; thus, requires a political action (Krieger 2001 in McCartney et al. 2019: 27; WHO 1990); and

- It is also observable that malaria has become persistent (malaria endemicity) amongst the indigenous peoples in Southern Palawan for many years now as shown in Figure 13 above, while the 'non-indigenous population', or the 'population outside of Palawan' had been spared of high malaria infections given the public health interventions provided by the national program. This satisfies WHO's argument that "differences [or health inequality] can be observed between categorical social groups… can include ethnicity, sex or nationality…" (WHO 1990 in McCartney et al. 2019: 27).

This mini-research attempted to answer the following questions:

(1) What are the traditional beliefs and health practices of the indigenous peoples in Southern Palawan in relation to malaria?

(2) Do the traditional beliefs and health practices of the indigenous peoples in Southern Palawan affect their access to health care services?

(3) How is the indigenous peoples' right to health impacted by:

    a. Their representation / participation in health governance?

    b. The standardization of malaria interventions by DOH – NMCEP?

Methodology and Framing of the Problem

This mini-research was qualitative, mainly utilized a desk review as the method for gathering data and information from carefully selected international treaties, technical reports, scientific articles and websites deemed to be relevant given the topic. It has the following limitations:

(1) The mandatory word count has narrowed the focus of the paper on a particular social group (e.g., ethnic group) in a certain locality in the Philippines (Southern Palawan) and some key issues surrounding their right to health; and

(2) No interviews of key informants, focused group discussions or field research were conducted given the constraints in time to develop a full research proposal, prepare a field work plan and coordinate research tasks locally.

The progressive realization, or non-realization, of the right to health for indigenous peoples in Southern Palawan could be framed based on some key international 'right to health' principles (Lennox and Stephens 2013: 5-6):

    (a) The right to protection of identity;

    (b) The right to participate; and

    (c) The right to non-discrimination.

The 'right to protection of identity' indicates the right of indigenous peoples to freely practice and enjoy their own culture or traditions, including their traditional beliefs about health, their healing practices and their use of traditional medicines (Lennox and Stephens 2013: 5-6). This right is recognized in Article 2 of UNGA Resolution A/RES/47/135, a.k.a. the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (UNDM) (UNGA 1993: 4) and Article 24 of

UNGA Resolution A/RES/61/295, a.k.a. the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted in 2007 (UNDRIP) (UNGA 2007: 7). The 'right to participate' means the indigenous peoples' active involvement at the national and local levels, where appropriate, in the development and decision-making processes that affect their health and well-being, which is protected under Article 23 of UNDRIP (UNGA 2007: 7) and Article 2 of UNDM (UNGA 1993: 4). The 'right to non-discrimination' implies non-discrimination in access to health facilities, health goods and health services, including access to living essentials like food, water, sanitation, shelter, etc. (Lennox and Stephens 2013: 4-5).

Discussion and Analysis

Traditional Health Care System, Beliefs and Practices

Based on recent local ethnographic studies conducted by HealthDev Institute (2020: 26) and Vidal et al. (2019: 9), traditional health systems amongst the indigenous peoples in Southern Palawan (and parts of Mindanao) still exist, which allow them to embrace their own traditional health beliefs, use traditional forms of medicines and seek help from traditional healers, like the balyan (tribe doctor) or the tungkol (more powerful healer). These traditional health systems, however, do not restrict them from seeking health care elsewhere when a traditional healer is unable to provide relief or when an alternative form of health care is available and accessible. However, non-restriction in the system does not automatically translate into availability and accessibility of the other.

There actually exists some form of health seeking practice amongst the indigenous peoples in Southern Palawan when they experience tulpok, sawan or salagad (i.e., different forms of fever characterized by various symptoms, which is relevant for the diagnosis of malaria) or other kinds of health infirmity (HealthDev Institute 2020: 15-22). Normally, the practice looks like this (HealthDev Institute 2020: 22):

(1) Health intervention starts at home with the use of traditional herbs and rituals, which usually lasts for a maximum of three days;

(2) When there is no improvement on the condition of a febrile person, the family seeks the intervention of a balyan who may impose a maximum of four days of treatment; and

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(3) When there is no cure yet, the family goes to a community volunteer (a.k.a. 'RDT volunteer') who usually administers a rapid diagnostic test (RDT) for malaria and administers the treatment when the febrile person is found to be 'positive' from the RDT.

This scenario reveals that the indigenous peoples' 'right to protection of identity', particularly that of the Palaw'an and Tao't Bato tribes in Southern Palawan, have not been infringed. They can continue exercising this right even up to the present day. However, their health seeking behaviour, which is shaped by their culture and tradition, may not be necessarily beneficial in the context of malaria control and elimination since the current health seeking practice extends to more than 24 hours, while the diagnostic and treatment window should be immediately upon clinical presentation of fever (in malaria-endemic settings) to enable the prompt administration of treatment and break further transmission (WHO 2009: 18-19).

As concluded by HealthDev Institute (2020: 3), the current health seeking practice delays the management of a febrile case suspected to have been infected with malaria. If this practice does not change, malaria transmission may persist, which may further lead to increased malaria morbidity and mortality. The indigenous communities must be made aware of this health risk so they are well-informed and can make the necessary decision to address such form of health inequality.

Politics, Representation and Health Seeking Behaviour

Three political structures are operating within the indigenous communities in Southern Palawan: the local government unit (LGU) with the barangay kapitan as its immediate chief; the traditional leadership led by the Panglima and his or her council of elders; and the head of the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADT) committee appointed by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) (HealthDev Institute 2020: 22). Each of these structures has its own responsibilities, set of rules, leadership style and operational processes, which could overlap or conflict with each other (HealthDev Institute 2020).

These political structures are highly influential and could shape how the indigenous peoples behave in their communities. Given this situation, when these structures are not in agreement with each other or when there is no clarity in their roles and responsibilities, they

could either confuse the indigenous peoples about good health seeking practices or hinder the promotion of certain health activities or programs, including the malaria control and elimination activities of the LGU (HealthDev Institute 2020: 22).

Although the indigenous peoples in Southern Palawan, and of the Philippines in general, are permanently represented at the Philippine Country Coordinating Mechanism (PCCM) at the national level, through the Samahang Molbog na Nagkakaisa para sa Kalikasan (SAMONAKA) (PCCM 2018), this representation may not be sufficient to actually address the issue of health inequality. Representation itself is not enough to conclude that a certain structure or process is democratic and beneficial. The fact that malaria endemicity in Southern Palawan, which is concentrated amongst its indigenous communities, has continued for at least five consecutive years, despite the increase in program efforts and influx of resources, means there is something structurally wrong. However, the limited information gathered in this mini-research may not be compelling to clearly establish that. It is also fundamental that the socioeconomic conditions of the indigenous communities in Southern Palawan be assessed as potential determinants of health. This is something that requires further formal investigation.

Standard Package of Interventions VS Differentiated Approach to Malaria Endemicity in Southern Palawan

The NMCEP, over the years, has standardized a comprehensive package of interventions for the control and elimination of malaria: (a) program management; (b) vector control and entomology; (c) diagnostic services and case management; (d) surveillance, monitoring and evaluation; (e) communication and social mobilization; and (f) research (Schapira et al. 2019: 6-10). All these interventions are vital to control and eliminate malaria especially the following:

- Trained and capable health workers
- Effective and long-lasting insecticide nets (LLINs)
- Safe indoor residual spray (IRS)
- Quality-assured anti-malarial drugs
- Strong surveillance and monitoring systems
- An informed community

- Sustainable financing

These interventions are available through the national program; however, availability is not enough because these interventions need to reach the indigenous communities. They need to be accessible and appropriate given the geographical and cultural challenges that exist in Southern Palawan. Access does not only mean that indigenous peoples must go where the health facilities and services are located; it also means, bringing the services to the people when they do not have the means to access them, or when they face challenges that constrain them from accessing such services. As reported by HealthDev Institute (2020: 21-22), the indigenous peoples in Southern Palawan live in physically challenging environments (e.g., mountainous and forested areas) that are very remote from the center where the health facilities are located. This alone already impacts on their health and health seeking behaviours:

- The physical condition discourages them from seeking immediate care;
- They lack access even to basic services such as clean, potable water;
- They are usually unaware when health campaigns or activities happen in the area;
- It is difficult for health workers to actually visit them in their communities;
- Their isolation reinforces their lack of knowledge about malaria: its causes, transmission, prevention, treatment, etc.; and
- They are mostly poor who survive through subsistence farming.

However, given the malaria endemicity situation in Southern Palawan, the national program and its technical partners have seen the need for additional interventions for Southern Palawan with the aim of reducing the malaria burden in the area, especially in the four affected towns (DOH 2020: 21-22). This is definitely a good first step in ensuring that the right to health of the indigenous peoples are equitably and appropriately addressed. These supplemental interventions include improvements in the IRS, use of customized LLINs for forest-goers and at public spaces, expansion of RDT volunteers and services, use of personal protective devices, LLIN delivery to households for increase preventive and curative coverage and enhanced health care education (DOH 2020: 22). Moreover, the DOH (2020: 22) also acknowledged that social and economic development in the affected localities could help improve the situation of the indigenous communities, especially in the

areas of job creation, education and health infrastructure.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the preceding sections, the following conclusions are made clear:

(1) The right to health is a protected right of all peoples regardless of their age, sex, gender, social and economic status, ethnicity and race. It is an inherent and indivisible right that is enshrined in numerous international, regional and national instruments. Its realization is essential for all peoples of all ages to achieve their full development potential.

(2) The malaria endemicity situation amongst the indigenous peoples in Southern Palawan is a case of health inequality in the context of the SDG (i.e., achieving malaria elimination by 2030), when the situation is both avoidable and unjust. There are already proven and existing strategies and interventions that could reduce malaria transmission and finding the suitable solutions for Southern Palawan is not impossible. However, the traditional health beliefs and health seeking practices of the indigenous tribes contribute to the persistence of malaria infections (and deaths) in the communities, which could be addressed through a productive dialogue with the LGU and NMCEP.

(3) The indigenous peoples' 'right to protection of identity', 'right to participate' and 'right to non- discrimination' may not have been intentionally violated; however, the non-realization of these rights, for economic, social, cultural and political reasons, may be considered as a form of infringement that requires a political action.

The following recommendations are made, with the hope that they would contribute in part to the realization of the indigenous peoples' right to health:

(1) The NMCEP and LGU concerned should hold a dialogue together with the indigenous communities, bringing together their traditional council of elders (e.g., Panglima) and the CADT committee to discuss and develop a common health agenda with the aim of improving their health situation.

(2) Health information, education and campaign activities are essential to address

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the knowledge gap but should be done using the tribal language or dialect to ensure that there is information and knowledge transfer from the program to the indigenous communities.

(3) Integrate the traditional healers (e.g., balyans) and community leaders into the existing health care system as health educators and, if culturally appropriate, RDT volunteers. This integration could bridge the gap between traditional health and biomedicine (i.e., NMCEP). This would require some form of unfreezing and refreezing to reconcile traditional beliefs with modern science, training and program support in the long run.

(4) An example of a specific differentiated intervention to reduce malaria endemicity is the provision, not only of LLINs, but also of insecticide floor mats to ensure that vector mosquito bites are avoided. This intervention would complement the plan to provide customized and communal bed nets.

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"Hunger is deadlier than Covid-19"[11]

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As ironic as it sounds, the international development discourse remains focused on national and local levels' one-way interventions. For instance, national GDP guiding local governments' decision-making or development programs coming from the global North to the global South, imposing solutions for 'development' and bringing 'expert knowledge' to tackle diverse issues. As Oldekop *et al.* (2020: 1-3) argue, when looking at the interconnectedness of contemporary capitalism, climate change challenges and global inequality, it becomes implicit to bring up a global development paradigm, which "involves multi-scalar analyses, rather than prioritising the global, and downplaying the national and local, scale(s)" (Oldekop et al 2020:3). The COVID-19 pandemic has ruthlessly exposed policy and structural failures worldwide, demystifying the notion that the global North possesses the absolute truth and solutions vis-à-vis the global South (Oldekop *et al.* 2020: 2). On the contrary, the imposition of extreme measures in the global North and its unquestioned replication in the global South has affected billions of people, leaving societies on the edge of collapse with augmented poverty, debt, hunger and misery (Caduff 2020: 468). Considering the current situation, Caduff (2020: 483) makes an important call: "Never has it been more important to insist that another politics of life is possible".

At this point, rethinking development and moving towards human and planetary wellbeing becomes priority, considering this pandemic is not the only, or even the major concern globally. For this purpose, questioning global North's expertise and its historical processes, exploring multi-directional learning and thinking on pluriversality, practicing a "radically different set of ethics and values, which promote life-affirming principles" (Harcourt 2019: 247), will be the main driving factors. In this essay, I intend to address how these topics can contribute towards rethinking development through economic, political and cultural processes and what questions arise on the path. Finally, I will present social movements as an example of this transformation, inspired by their crucial social and political role during the pandemic.

First, placing ourselves in the current pandemic context, it is pertinent to consider the

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[11] Quoted by Kassir (in Pleyers 2020: 4)

significant strengths of the global North's expertise; medicine, technology, communications and global value chains. These strengths and the billions invested in epidemics' prevention and protocols should have ensured a good management of a pandemic such as the coronavirus. However, the global North remains highly affected by the virus, shedding light on the weaknesses of its development project. The fragility of the health systems (Caduff 2020), including medicinal products and equipment shortage worldwide due to global supply and demand co-dependencies, which undermine regional and domestic value chains (Oldekop *et al.* 2020); digital exclusion and inequity, digital surveillance problematics, disease modelling flaws leading misplaced decision-making, and the nervous misinformation of media reporting, driving social panic (Caduff 2020) are some of the components disclosing failures in the economic, political and cultural structure, not to mention the catastrophic social consequences resulting from them. Oldekop *et al.* (2020: 2) insist that the global North would have benefited from global South countries' experience dealing with lethal epidemics such as Ebola. Questions remain open regarding the vaccine, its effectiveness, its application (who receives it first?) and its reach (how to bring it everywhere? And should it even be mandatory? Is this what communities need the most now?).

On the other hand, we have the global South, its resistance and historically silenced knowledge and voices. Caduff (2020) criticizes the lack of a differentiated strategy while confronting this pandemic, which resonates with Mosse's (2013) anthropological approach to development as a category of practice. This aspires to comprehend connections and disconnections of social and power relations through observing the way people understand reality one by one, and relevant for this case, how they define their individual needs. One of the main struggles for development to transition to multi-directional learning is knowledge and language hegemony. The development discourse is linked to a particular political economy of knowledge, where historical shifts and continuities inform knowledge generation, distribution and consumption inequality (Icaza 2020), thus, "[becoming] part of a globalized technology of knowledge and power" (Kothari 2006: 18). Therefore, there is an urgent need to de-silence knowledge and multiply its production centers (multi- directional) to "break the dominant narratives" and make other stories be heard in the foreground (Harcourt and Icaza 2020).

This is what pluriversality is about, and precisely, the pillar of post-development field

of studies is "an awareness that reality can be redefined in terms other than those of development and that, consequently, people and social groups can act otherwise on the basis of those different definitions" (Escobar 2007: 21). Several authors agree on relying less on 'expert knowledge', and instead, constructing a more humane, culturally and ecologically sustainable world by listening to ordinary people. In other words, those who have been objects of development can now be subjects of their own lives and rights (ibid.). Rutazibwa (2019: 170) calls attention to shifting the term 'knowledge production' to 'knowledge cultivation' because the former refers to a process of accumulation while the latter allows for the understanding of knowledges as already there to be revealed by anyone for innumerable reasons.

Following these ideas, Escobar (2007: 20-21) draws attention to the importance of social movements and grassroot mobilizations as we move towards a post-development scenario, either by focusing on the "resistance that local peoples effect in relation to development interventions (…) [and/ or] by highlighting the alternative strategies produced by social movements as they encounter development projects". Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, Escobar's words become even more relevant, as popular movements, grassroots organizations and citizens got involved in decentralized solidarity and mutual support reactions to a global event affecting billions, providing basic needs to their communities and those forgotten or abandoned by the state (Della Porta 2020 in Pleyers 2020: 1-5). There are several examples of this phenomena, such as the Chicago truck drivers' union, who contributed 2 million dollars from their strike fund to pay health benefits to laid-off employees during the pandemic (Pleyers 2020: 5). Another example is that of thousands of volunteers worldwide on the frontline of the outbreak crisis, opening centers for homeless people, organizing food distribution for migrants. Furthermore, there were feminist movements condemning the rise of domestic violence and providing solidarity housing for victims (Cassilde 2020; Woods 2020 in Pleyers 2020: 5). We also observed in all continents, community solidarity and mutual aid; not just helping neighbours with limitations to do groceries, but also to cope with loneliness and self-isolation. Even in the global North, popular movements stood out, therefore, today we can identify more than 4.000 COVID-19 mutual aid groups operating only in the UK (Pleyers 2020: 6).

One of the most poignant examples is in the favelas of Brazil; Paraisópolis, Sao

Paulo's second largest favela, and Alemão, the largest favela in Rio de Janeiro, among others. Amidst a government whose president did not believe in the COVID-19 pandemic, and hence, did not care to protect its citizens – favelas were not included in national public policies or in coronavirus contagion statistics – these communities were left extremely vulnerable to this global hazard. Local mutual aid groups, social movement organizations, popular media activists, community and collaboration groups organized themselves through local leaders or citizens councils to trace and track residents with COVID-19 symptoms or in need of medical attention (Pleyer 2020: 6). Some groups set up ambulance systems and even hired healthcare professionals (ibid.) They also identified low-income families and organized daily production and distribution of meals, and sanitary and protection products (ibid.). Furthermore, social movements played an essential role in information dissemination, communications and awareness-raising to avoid the spread of the virus, or of false information that could generate social panic, as well as in scrtuinizing the allocation of public budgets and reclaiming favelas' public programs (Pleyers 2020: 6- 8).

These examples are not single isolated cases emerging from a global health crisis. Escobar (quoted in Pleyers 2020: 6) affirms that over the last thirty years, "small farmers and indigenous movements in the Global South have shown that communities, local solidarity and popular pedagogies may be the pillars of collective emancipation and of resistance to global capitalism". This resonates with degrowth ideas, which emphasize on social values (conviviality, collaboration, care, commons and simplicity) as central for democratic, equitable and environmentally sustainable economies (Gerber and Raina 2018: 353). This way, social movements generate a sense of community and contribute to the re-building of social fabric, allowing societies to transform themselves more consciously (Pleyers 2020 and Touraine quoted in Pleyers 2020). They question mainstream expertise and knowledge and invite societies to move towards multi-directional transformation and community learning, which at the same time, adds to the endeavour of re-thinking development.

Finally, some questions remain open: Would social movements be enough to transform society into a pluriversal one under the global development paradigm? What else is missing for that transition to take place and how much time do we have left, considering the current climate crisis and biodiversity destruction that leave us vulnerable to more upcoming viruses? Working on a transnational social field as a social space comprised of

social relations (the same ones comprising solidarity) and cultural production of plurinational persons (Huijsmans 2020) is fundamental to understanding our wholeness as community and as planet earth, and thus, to act in favour of it. COVID-19 has roughly revealed, and will continue revealing, the unequal social, political and economic reality we live in where some lives are more important than others, but it also shows the importance and urgency of moving towards "a world in which many worlds are possible" (Rutazibwa 2019: 162). For the moment, activists will keep claiming an undeniable truth; "hunger is deadlier than COVID-19" (Kassir 2020 in Pleyers 2020: 4).

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What is the Story of my RP? My Experience with Imposter Syndrome during the Research Process

By Esther Kallon SJP, Sierra Leone

Introduction: *What does Academia mean to me?*

Up until my current age of twenty-six, most of my joys, accomplishments, worries and stressors, to mention only a few, have all been associated with academics and academic institutions. Rubrics removed the responsibility of figuring out school on my own and how to succeed in school on my own. All I had to do was work to achieve the document's standards, with traditional hard work, dedication, and commitment. It all gave me something to be proud of myself for, especially when I was acknowledged for my over-achievements. On the contrary, a small portion of my confidence was triggered, making me believe I was, in some way, undeserving of praise. In hindsight, I now realize how that has become problematic in answering the question: what is the story of my research paper (RP)?

Education was the centre of my upbringing as a vehicle for my success and, more often than not, where my worth was measured. Attending a prestigious four-year university for my bachelor's degree and then unto a prestigious master's program was the most natural and common-sense path for me to take. I have benefited tremendously from the high-quality education and educational resources I received and continue to receive. It permitted me to follow my passions and interests with a solid foundation to do so. I was and still am very vocal about my interests throughout my schooling. My passions and interests informed the impetus behind my educational choices and the topics I had chosen to write or research. Being passionate about my education is why I have been as successful as I am in my education thus far. It was not until I started the master's RP process at ISS that I immensely felt the pressure to do well.

I was bombarded with the freedom to research the topics that I am very passionate about but not with the idea of the immense importance one research paper must determine my postgraduate success. Enormous pressure arose to produce a solid research design and an exceptional research paper and break away from my comfort zone – to be told what to do and how to do it, just like a rubric. Although it was liberating to have the freedom to choose and

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to push myself outside of my comfort zone, it was a choice that held an immense weight not only in determining my educational outcome at this institution but that the outcome was ultimately determined by other highly intellectual individuals with far more experience in academic research. Research became daunting because I wanted to complete it correctly and for the right purposes. The story of my RP is my experience with imposter Syndrome during the RP process. Simply put, I lacked confidence in myself, the research subject and particularly the research process.

Imposter Syndrome: *How Intense was/is my experience with Impostor Syndrome?*

According to Feenstra et al. (2020: 2), impostor syndrome, or more commonly referred to as impostor phenomenon, describes individuals who feel "as if they ended up in esteemed roles and positions, not because of their competencies, but because of some oversight or stroke of luck". This leads to the difficulty for said individuals to "[internalize] their achievements and accomplishments and worry that they may be uncovered as frauds" (Feenstra et al. 2020: 2). During this research preparation process thus far, I have experienced this phenomenon on the societal level, the institutional level and the interpersonal level as outlined by Feenstra et al. (2020). Researching how individuals lived and supported their livelihoods during the COVID-19 pandemic is a sensitive subject as its ongoing outcome has impacted everyone. However, researching female sex work in a country where sex work is illegal and where gender disparities and inequalities exist requires a greater degree of sensitivity because "the commitment to engaged pedagogy is an expression of activism and therefore "taxing to the spirit" (Hook, 1994: 202-203). Being a student-researcher, a lot of my research anxiety is generated by the "internalized, negative perceptions of the self [that] are borne out of the environment and social interactions that question [my] abilities and worth" (Feenstra et al., 2020: 2). Questioning whether I was producing my best work at the standards required of me as well as producing research that was the most authentic to myself, my positionality and the research outcome ignited a cycle of doubt in subject specificity, my abilities/competencies and later, my entire worth as an upper middle class, educated, Black women from continental Africa with experiences living all over the world.

The Societal-Level

On the societal level, research on imposter syndrome,

"… suggests that an individual's position in the social hierarchy can play an important role in shaping his or her [or their] imposter feelings, including how the specific challenges and stressors that accompany a lower societal positional can make one feel like an imposter" (Feenstra et al., 2020: 3).

There was and still is a lot of pressure to excel in my academics, leading to periods of writer's block, procrastination, confusion, burn-out, and fatigue. This led to doubting my ability to produce quality work. As the resources and support systems are readily available and I have the intellectual capacity to be successful, as done previously, I still felt like a fraud. This feeling is like the pop-culture phrase, fake it until I make it[12].

The Institutional-Level:

On the institutional level, research on imposter syndrome "[…] suggests that features[13] within the more immediate institutional context (e.g., within corporate organizations, educational or government institutions) play an important role in shaping imposter feelings as well" (Feenstra et al., 2020: 3). This leads to individuals "question[ing] their 'place' within certain institutions (traditionally occupied by white men), thereby increasing their susceptibility to feeling like 'imposters' when in those institutions" (Feenstra et al. 2020, p. 3).

Most of my peers came directly from their home countries and are researching issues and problems in their home countries that they are in close proximity to or directly related to. This was a bit different for me. I am a Sierra Leonean born in Islamabad, Pakistan, researching violence against female sex workers in Nigeria – a country I have only lived and worked in for only two years. I needed to approach the research process subjectively by confronting and clearly stating my positionality directly without shame. This isn't easy. According to Harney and Moten (2013: 28), subjectivity is "a radical passion and passivity such that one becomes unfit for subjection because one does not possess the kind of agency that can hold the regulatory forces of subjecthood". I am not a sex worker or close to female

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[12] Refers to tricking yourself into self-confidence outside of just appearances.

[13] Such as the ethnic or gender balance in a corporate office or academic staff at an educational institution.

sex work struggles, and I am not conducting research in the country where I am from. Strangely, it made me feel like an imposter, but it was my passion for women, gender equality, sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and ending gender-based violence (GBV) which provided me with a form of care I needed to overcome a portion of this feeling.

The Interpersonal-Level: Mental Health Matters in the Research Process!

The interpersonal level produced the most impactful outcome of experiencing imposter syndrome during the research process. At this level, an "individuals' everyday interactions are laced with important social evaluative cues, conveying whether others see them as a person of value and worth" (Feenstra et al. 2020: 3). This was clearly an issue of self-confidence. Being a self-funded student, this was my first time when my education was solely provided by my own hard work and dedication to the issues that matter the most to me. Having to transition my whole life to a new city was daunting and scary, leaving feelings of loneliness mixed intrinsically with high levels of anxiety. As days and months passed, these feelings increased leaving an isolating feeling that I was not like my other fellow students who were perhaps experiencing similar challenges with the research process and a teaching staff who are also dealing with the impact of COVID-19 themselves. I was reluctant to hold on to our commonalities as a source of comfort. Instead, I internalized a feeling of *fundamental* difference from other student-researchers therefore, I felt like a fraud under the impression that others were simply on track with their research design and process.

My Research Actions: *How I began overcoming the Imposter Syndrome?*

How I changed my subject from Nigerian women in general to Nigerian female sex workers

One of the greatest lessons I learned during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic is that proximity to an issue profoundly impacts our course of action and can determine the level of attention and, precisely, the care to address the issue. Having travelled around the world most of my childhood and adulthood, I immersed myself in very diverse cultures, environments, people and languages. Hardly was I frightened about the adjustment period that accompanied any significant move. However, at times, I was anxious about not knowing what to expect

from a new environment. What would address this fear was locating things about my new environment similar to my previous environment. One of these similarities was seeing women on the street. The different women that I saw on the street, from vegetables and fruit vendors to street female sex workers, always stood out to me because I saw many qualities in them that I saw in myself but, most importantly, my mother. My mother wore many hats, from businesswoman to health service provider.

Working in the development sector exposed me to how development aid works. Programmes and initiatives to support female sex workers in Nigeria in my gender and humanitarian work were not blatantly discussed. At the time, the work consisted of reframing the term "female prostitute" or "female sex worker" in ways that would allow for donor agencies and organizations to provide the aide (usually money) to specific programs without going against their mandates and the cultural/religious attitudes in Nigeria regarding sex work and gender. In every country that I lived in, there are particular names for female street sex workers with very similar negative attitudes towards sex work. As I am interested in SRHR, I am also very invested in female sex work in the African context. However, I was scared to write about sex workers because, in my professional and personal experience, it was taboo to talk about female sex workers unless it was reframed differently or hidden diligently in the umbrella of violence against women with little to no overt specificity towards female sex workers in Nigeria. I knew that the moment I left Nigeria for The Netherlands, I could comfortably research a subject I am now deeply passionate about and that I hardly discussed outside my close friends, family, fellow advocates, and activists. Thus, I decided that my context remains Nigeria during COVID-19, but the subjects are female sex workers in Nigeria during COVID-19. The imposter syndrome still lingered upon this change because I was not focusing on the violence that female sex workers experience during COVID in Nigeria (famous among my fellow peers) but on how interventions pertaining to the safety and wellbeing of female sex workers have been impacted due to the pandemic itself and the government-mandated lockdowns and regulations.

Studying and learning about transitions and transitioning during the course, Transitions for Social Justice Lab (ISS – 4354), was paramount in gradually addressing the researcher imposter syndrome problem I was deeply experiencing and, at times, embodied

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completely. As clearly stated in an excerpt in the syllabus of the course,

"… transitions and transitioning are mainly understood as knowledge practices by institutions, organizations, but also collectivities and coalitions that are clearly related to the socio-historical and eco-historical conditions in which we are living" (Icaza Garza and Vazquez 2018: 120).

Through transitioning, the aim is to, "cultivate a return to action in language and to encourage critical reflexivity around the everyday instead of detachment via disembodied abstractions" (Icaza Garza 2020: 3). With being more than halfway into the academic year and research preparation, as the current focus, I was already experiencing detachment via disembodied abstractions. According to Code (2015: 4),

"care is often what makes knowledge possible because in certain situations or circumstances, caring (for research subjects as much as about the outcome of research) may be a requirement for the production, validation and circulation of knowledge".

Sensing and Refusing

Refusing taught me that the "conditions of radical openness exist… where [I]… celebrate [my] abilities to think critically, to engage in pedagogical praxis" (Hook, 1994: 202). It is a flow of consciousness that permits the acceptance of knowledge as connected to everything and anything. It is embodied in not just the outcome but also the process. Therefore, although the research process at times is isolating as a student, I am not the only student embarking on this journey and that I can locate comfort and confidence in the knowledges that brought me to this point, what I have learnt from others around me along the way and what I can offer to it after. It is difficult to not detach myself from the formalities and boundaries of academia and the current development zeitgeist without being shrouded by feelings of self-doubt.

Caring and Healing

What caring and healing taught me is that the personal knowledge of the self[14] can be seen in everything, and my research should be about honouring the connections around us that have always been there. Therefore, the research process outside of the subject has been a

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[14] For example: Beauty, health, etc.

spiritual journey where humility and humbleness come to light and where bodily autonomy is crucial towards healing as a researcher.

Conclusion

My struggle with research block, research fatigue, low self-confidence and detachment highlighted that the research process for the student-researcher is as important as the research outcome, from deciding on a research subject and questions to conducting the research itself and finally typing the last word of the final 17,000 word paper. It is thus crucial to be critically self-reflexive to allow myself to sense, refuse, care and heal, during the research process for not only the subjects of the research that could be impacted by the research outcome but also the student-researcher. Through these action verbs, I gained growing confidence in my research and significantly growing confidence in myself, my worth, and abilities as a student-researcher outside of a crafted academic rubric indicating what is right and wrong.

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Playing a Role in Peacebuilding: A Reflection

By Selma Theofany, S., SJP, Indonesia

Every stakeholder can contribute to the debate on peacebuilding initiative. It reflected on the dynamic of Parliament of Minorities and Indigenous People in Great Lakes and East Africa simulation. This reflection discusses the pre-plenary and plenary conference process that deliberates the researcher's contribution – a role I played – in this initiative. It also reviews the understanding of indigenous people's context in Great Lakes and East Africa to build the parliament's strategy to sustain peace. Hence, the reflection mainly on the individual agency as a researcher to build the peace narratives through the parliament's establishment.

Individual Agent in Peace Narratives: Concept

Heilinger (2020: 2) draws the individual agent's role in social justice amidst national and international structures' failure to address justice. Individuals can utilise their position and roles in society, such as the figure who serve a particular role in the structure. The officiates individual can drive an institution or organisation more just (ibid: 3-4). This role actuation builds upon a morality standard - cosmopolitan responsibility (ibid: 2). It means that the individual has a responsibility to bring justice globally (Ibid).

Furthermore, this responsibility corresponds to the individual's role in peace to some extent. However, Autesserre (2012: 203) warns the agents in peace to consider the consequence of their actions in building peace. According to the Congo case, the disorientation can backlash in attaining peace and bring negative consequences (Ibid). The disoriented agents simultaneously build the simplistic narratives of conflict and peace as a short-cut (Ibid, p. 208). It leads to their failure to comprehensively understand the conflict and address the accurate solution (Ibid: 209). The lesson from this case can be the basis of reflection on the researcher role in peacebuilding by developing the proposed parliament.

Researcher's Role

In the debate of establishing the parliament within Great Lakes and East Africa context, positioned as a foreign researcher both in role-play and factual is challenging. A researcher

has a particular standpoint which influences her work. Limited knowledge of Great Lakes and Africa's field context and individual bias could be an obstacle to address a comprehensive situation of the subject study even if researcher took ethnography study as if the role I played (Theofany: 2020). However, cosmopolitan responsibility can guide a researcher to go beyond hese limitations. A researcher shares a responsibility to pursue justice or peace to address the injustice to put more work efforts even on people from a different place.

The role in producing knowledge can mediate this responsibility. An initiative - such as this proposed parliament - needs a strong and clear conceptual framework in its operation that can be produced by a researcher. In this work, a researcher should address just knowledge that acts as the foundation of the initiative, such as identifying the beneficiary's status justly. In the scoping study, I adopt the factual knowledge product from the figure that I play, reflecting a researcher contribution to justice enforcement. Anna Kamanzi tries to use the term for the subject justly, such as referring The Twa as an autochthon instead of indigenous that simplified their actual position due to historical marginalization and colonization in her work (Kamanzi, 2016: 15-26). This concept adoption aims to draw the actual narrative of the problem used in developing a solution for the beneficiary.

Moreover, a researcher can generate their knowledge production by putting herself as a hub among the actors while aware of each actor's standpoint as the role I play in the simulation reflected. The media and researcher interaction comprises information exchange which can build knowledge and narrative. In this scheme, the researcher also approaches minority representatives, non-government organizations, international organizations, and donors to produce knowledge that can advocate for marginalized voices. However, communication with the government is limited due to the distrust to the government. This act reflects that the role as a hub did not work well and an antagonizing relation among stakeholders can obstruct the peacebuilding initiative that practically a collective action.

Addressing Comprehensive Narrative

The researcher's scoping study in the simulation reflects a product of knowledge that shapes the narrative in proposing the parliament—the scoping study's development based on understanding the problem's landscape. According to the Rwandan Twa reflection, the

scoping study's strategies considers the complexity of violence toward the autochthon group and each actor's contribution to current peacebuilding's failure.

I propose the parliament's strategy to uplift the problem of a limited political platform for marginalized people who historically excluded (Ibid: 76). However, the strategy's development tries to treat voiceless people's problem not merely on the surface. It addresses the experience of autochthonous people on multilayered oppressions. The autochthonous and indigenous groups experience precarity due to mistreatment of their distinctiveness. In the Rwandan Twa context, state development eliminates ethnicity from public discourse to prevent discrimination (Ibid: 82). However, this action also denies the cultural identity and tradition (Ibid: 82-83), which constraints their right of self- determination. The system fails to address discrimination merely to simplify it to the ethnic label while the discrimination lasts because the idea of backwardness and dirty labels on them (Ibid, p. 10) related to welfare issue. Their poor livelihood traps them into the stigma instead of merely their ethnicity.

Furthermore, the autochthonous and indigenous groups encounter negligence as the rightful citizen. Amidst the battle of rights claim in the public sphere, they tend to be marginalized. Nationality laws in this region have a gap in recognizing these groups as citizens (Manby, 2018: 4). Hence, in state development, the system does not address the welfare issue for them justly. It also makes them find the struggle in fulfilling their fundamental rights (Kamanzi, 2016: 46).

On the other hand, the scoping study's development relates to the actors' contributions to current failure reasonably within these complex problems. It unveils the failure of addressing the blame solely to the government. Whereas the beneficiary also can contribute to the failure of peacebuilding effort. For instance, the Twa community disorganization and distrustful contribute to mismanagement in post-genocide development programs (Ibid, pp. 79-80). Therefore, comprehensive peacebuilding should take community disentanglement before moving on to the next stage, such as addressing imbalance power relation, which causes disorganization and distrust in the community.

One means to tide over these problems is establishing a parliament to contest their political power. It enables the autochthonous, indigenous groups, and their allies' collective

power to elevate their bargaining power. As is stated in the scoping study, "This parliament aims to ensure the autochthonous communities' economics and political rights fulfilment along with the state development. The parliament's process should be inclusive, and it represents the communities' voices" (Theofany, 2020). It shows the parliament's urge to fulfil the aims representatively by providing equal opportunity for diverse representatives – comprises gender, age, and living-space diversity – to bring their voices.

Regarding this narrative of autochthonous and indigenous groups' context in Great Lakes and East Africa, the strategy in the scoping study for the proposed parliament is developed as follows, "First, the OSI and the NGOs should provide political education and skill, such as a lecturer on the regional political system, negotiation, and lobby for the representatives. Second, each national government should ensure the representatives' citizenship legality to facilitate their role in the parliament. Third, the representatives should conduct the recess to gather the grassroots' voices. Fourth, the parliament produces inclusive legislation through internal and multi-stakeholders' forums with the exact focal point that binds the state members. Last, the NGOs facilitates the beneficiaries (communities) periodical evaluation toward the parliament's performance. The funding from the OSI will support these strategies," (Ibid). These strategies boost the performance of the proposed parliament by fulfilling the current gap in peacebuilding narrative accurately.

Conclusion

The simulation on proposing the Parliament of Minorities and Indigenous People in Great Lakes and East Africa reflects the agent's production of knowledge on conflict and peace narratives. The comprehensive understanding of the problems can lead to a nearly accurate and just peacebuilding. It needs the role of the agent to develop this understanding. In this case, the role of a researcher who holds moral responsibility to bring justice to mediate the production of a just understanding in establishing the parliament.

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The Impact of Digital Transformation on Legal (dis)Empowerment of "Vulnerabilised" Women in Northern Uganda

By Robert Okello SJP, Uganda

What the research is about?

The report on *Justice needs in Uganda* conducted by HiiL (2016) estimates that over 90% of Ugandans face justice problems and can't solve their justice needs. As this is attributed to several factors, the justice system is complex to navigate, expensive, and has a very limited number of legal professionals available to handle the legal needs of all Ugandans (HiiL 2016). Hence there has been an overwhelming increase in reported unresolved disputes, high flagrant absence of justice, and growing gender inequalities, and to some extent the use of mob justice to resolve conflicts, which condemns those that are innocent and making perpetrators go unpunished (Ibid: 5).

Consequently, in recent years, different Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and government agencies have started to consider alternative ways that can help facilitate access to legal aids and justice for the disadvantaged communities. Some legal innovators and NGOs have come up with innovative projects by deploying digital tools such as apps in an effort to make access to justice possible to these disadvantaged communities (Smith 2018; Kane 2020).

This research provides a critical reflection on the contemporary discourse on the advancement of disruptive digital technology in promoting access to justice and legal empowerment of women. It focuses on the experience of "vulnerabilised" women in Northern Uganda who are legally (dis)empowered through the deployment of digital innovations by social legal innovators. I argue that legal innovators should learn conviviality to "build technologies that create institutions which serves personal, creative and autonomous interactions and the emergence of values which cannot only be substantially controlled by technocrat" (Illich 1984: 2). This allows development of a more people centred designs that

shall improve the ability of communities to interact with these legal technologies to resolve their legal needs.

The research opens about my own experience in working with the social legal innovation and justice sector in Uganda. I was working for the fast paced, growing social legal innovations start up called Barefootlaw Uganda before joining the Master's program. Barefootlaw is an NGO leveraging on technologies to provide free legal information and support to people who can't afford their legal needs. The research largely developed from my personal encounter witnessing my mother's struggles to resolve family land dispute with relatives who believed that she is not entitled to inherit my late father's property just because she is a woman. This was after her benefiting from our project and equipping herself with the legal digital platforms we provided.

Like many women in Northern Uganda engaged in small retail businesses, access to institution of justice is quite complex and expensive for low-income earners such as my mum because of high demand for legal fees, long straining court cases, low trust in the institution and court's geography. My organization is set-up to benefit exactly my mum's category. Within my roles included organizing legal trainings and sensitisations for the communities of project implementations. Specifically, I worked under the Legal Empowerment of Women Using Innovation and Technology and Innovation project (LEWUTI) — a project that mobilizes digital tools to equip rural women with the law so that they can use it to protect themselves and property. We had the opportunity to train over 7000 women in Northern Uganda on their rights and how to access legal support through the deployed innovative platforms such as Law voice — utilizes interactive voice response system; Law Text — facilitates exchange of legal text; Law online — ask a lawyer on online user interfaces (websites and social medias); Law Radio — legal educations on radios. These systems are designed to reinforce access to legal information and facilitate access to justice and legal empowerment for these "vulnerabilised" women. However, personally, it has been a challenge to determine whether the tools I have been part of deploying in the legal fields have been providing access to justice and getting legally empowered.

This compelled me to question why my mum and many other women who direct beneficiaries of our project are were still struggling to resolve their justice needs despite the

organization's effort in providing free legal information and assistance. In unravelling the dynamics of digital technologies within the justice sector, the paper will try to reach an answer from the following questions: What are the effects of using digital technologies for the legal (dis)empowerment of rural women in Uganda?

Guided by the following sub-questions:

1. In what ways does digital technology legally (dis)empower rural women in Uganda?
2. What are the factors that hinder the digital transformation in the justice sector in Uganda?
3. What are the beneficiaries' positive and negative experiences in using digital platforms for access to the justice?

Importantly, this research aims to draw conversation beyond digital legal transformation by centring the disadvantaged women's ability to access legal institutions through other means, understanding their ways of resolving legal disputes and how they reach outcomes. It would also refuse the labelling of beneficiaries of these digital tools as "vulnerable women" — the term often used to report stories and pain of beneficiaries by social legal start-ups seeking for external funding (Tuck & Yang 2018: 26).

Likewise, it seeks to foster dialogue between the women who utilize the digital tools and the social legal innovators to open opportunity for learning by digital developers to avoid what Illich defined as reproducing "executive truth", where technology in turn increases the power of the privileged in the society and does not improve the life of the users (Illich 1982: 62).

Consequently, it will resist the idea that access to legal innovation tools, providing legal information, trainings and sensitisation of women on the law amounts to access to justice and legal empowerment for these women as reported by most legal innovations. By providing a deep comparative analysis between legal empowerment and access to justice at the intersection of digital technologies largely informed by feedback from the women.

This research calls for the *enthusiast of technologies* in the justice sector to shift from the present technological practice that surrounds industrial bureaucracy of knowledge to a future of postindustrial conviviality where intension of actions prevails over production

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(Illich 1982:64) Through this, communities will relate with the technologies that are being developed because it resonates with their expectations.

Where am I speaking from?

There is a growing enthusiasm within development field about the far-reaching potential of digital transformation in improving service delivery and promoting the well-being of disadvantaged communities. For instances, the United Nation emphasises that need to adopt technologies to leverage the transformative 2030 agenda of sustainable development goals (UN 2018: iii).

There are a number of funding that has come up in support for these social innovations that are built to resolve societal problems. Consequently, so many digital innovations have emerged in the justice sector using creative methods to close these justice gaps. For instance, one of the projects that have gain traction is Epoq Legal in South Africa, providing low-cost online legal documents to SMEs in partnership with a UK-based legal IT company (Hamzah 2018). Baobab is also an innovation in South Africa where lawyers create interesting tutorial-style video-based tutorials to empower people to resolve many of their legal worries (Smith 2018). In Benin Republic, "HeLawyer" is a mobile app specialising in legal advice. It offers citizens legal advice and information 24 daily throughout the week, while Wakili Mkononi is a social enterprise in Kenya that offers legal aid and networking services on a digital platform. Lawpadi is a Nigerian online platform where people can get pro-bono legal assistance and free legal advice (Smith 2018). In Uganda, Justice Bot allows users to be connected with a legal expert via the Messenger chat on Facebook (Kane 2020), while Tunga Innovations Ltd. is an app that informs users about their employment rights, eg. leave days, both annual and maternity, overtime rates, and notice before resigning or being terminated (ibid, Okello 2021 RP design submission).

However, these digital legal innovators are blindsided on the development, deployment, and increasing reach of these legal digital technologies rather than understand the consequential impact and the experience whether the beneficiaries are becoming legally (dis)empowered. This is coupled by pressure from donor funders who interpret the impact of

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successful innovations with high user interactions, huge online followings, and the ability to replicate these innovations in different locations. No one seems to question concretely the amount of justice needs resolved or how many cases before the courts have reached an amicable outcome. This phenomenon relates with the argument made by Ivan Illich in *Descbooling Society* (Illich 1982: 59). In his interpretation of the transfer of modern technologies to poor countries he intimated that these technologies only work to further the interest of the privileged (donors in this case), and that there is a sense of "false public utility" that comes with it. Legal innovators in Uganda should be conscious to not be (re)producing digital tools that widen market for tech giants in the west but rather developing local legal solutions that resolves legal challenges of women in an easy and efficient way.

In context, my mum couldn't resolve her legal issues because of the complexities involved in the justice system in Uganda. For instance, she needed to hire service of lawyer to represent her before court, this in addition to the cost of legal fees, transportation to the court located in Gulu centre. Therefore, access to digital tools alone doesn't resolve legal challenges, there are other factors that digital innovators need to address collaboratively with the government's justice institutions for instance, making access to justice affordable to everyone, building more courts within the rural areas, the building back trust in the institutions of justice so that people hold it with high regard,

Further, there are far more deeper challenges related to access to these digital technologies. For instance, women in the rural areas with poor IT infrastructures, lack IT skills, limited experience in operating these tools, and exposure to the internet and ICT. Yet these are the target beneficiaries of the various digital technology interventions in the country. The ITU *Measuring digital development* 2019 conducted between 2013 and 2019 estimates that 19% of the world's offline population lives LDC. This is compounded by the fact that the internet user penetration is at 23% for women compared to 23% for men in Africa (ITU 2019) the gender digital divide is still huge. However, it's important to look beyond the physical availability of computer and the internet but rather people's ability to make use of those technologies to engage in meaningful social practice (Warschauer 2003).

In conclusion, this research will open dialogue between women in rural areas in Northern Uganda who have encountered these digital innovations to get legal support and

the social legal innovators deploying digital tools. This is intended to understand the interpretation of what amounts to access to justice and being legally empowered while unearthing the underlying role that digital technology actually plays. The research shall examine the challenges they are facing with using these digital platforms. It will identify the obstacles to digital transformation within the Justice sector. It appeals to digital innovators to open to learn conviviality as they interact with the beneficiaries of their tools to build a more people centered designs that can be used by communities because digital innovators run a risk of developing platforms that do not achieve the intended goals or what Illich termed as "false public utilities" (Illich 1982: 60).

The research will inform recommendations to the digital innovators deploying digital tools, the Government which has recently adopted digital courts during the lockdown. The study is also intended to inform other stakeholders in the justice sector, including local NGOs, legal entrepreneurs and international organizations using digital means to contribute towards access to justice.

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Violence and Liberal Peace in the Netherlands

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Introduction

Racism is a problem in the Netherlands, as in many other Western countries, yet it is denied over and over again. Although many examples of racial discrimination can be found in the Dutch news daily, public recognition of the problem is still very limited (Ghorashi 2020). This essay argues that structural racism in the Netherlands should be viewed as a conflict, which is overlooked by the current dominant peace framework: liberal peace (Doyle 2005). In short, it is important to view structural racism in the Netherlands as a conflict so that it can be addressed from within the field of peace and conflict, as well as to do justice to the lived experience of people of colour in the Netherlands. To tackle this conflict, this essay will draw upon Lederach's (2005) framework that focuses on the 'moral imagination' and different views of time. The liberal peace and moral imagination framework will be contrasted through the case of systemic racism in the Netherlands. In the upcoming sections, liberal peace, and the context for systemic racism in the Netherlands will be explained. Then, it will be argued how this issue can be seen as a conflict through a reading of Galtung (1990) and Bourdieu (1991). Following this, Lederach's (2005) framework will be explored considering the case study, and its strengths and deficits will be discussed in relation to liberal peace. To conclude, Lederach's (2005) framework of the moral imagination can most certainly add a new dimension and work *within* the three pillars of liberal peace in order to combat the conflict of structural racism in the Netherlands.

Liberal Peace and the Three Pillars

Within the current Western hegemonic world structure, liberal peace is regarded as the dominant model of conflict resolution and management (Mac Ginty 2008; Newman, Paris and Richmond 2009). In general, liberal or Western peace can be defined as "the promotion of democracy market-based economic reforms and a range of other institutions associated with 'modern' states as a driving force for building peace" (Newman Paris and Richmond 2009: 3). More specifically, Doyle (2005: 463) conceptualized three pillars of liberal peace: "Republican representation, an ideological commitment to human rights, and transnational

interdependence" (economically speaking). These institutional, ideological and economic aspects work together as causal mechanisms to ensure sustainable liberal peace (Doyle 2009: 465). Moreover, each aspect emphasizes the core attributes of the liberal republic (Doyle 2009: 464). In sum, liberal peace requires democracy, a commitment to (Western) human rights and economic independence. The hypothesis of liberal peace also conveys that democracies do not go to war with each other (Mac Ginty 2008).

This conception of liberal peace can be found in many countries in the Western, 'developed', 'modern' world, including the Netherlands, and constitutes "empirical evidence" that liberal peace works (Doyle 2005: 466). Yet, over the years, the notion of liberal peace has been contested. Hegre (2004: 130) argues that evidence shows that liberal peace works best in relations between developed countries and that transnational interdependence mostly works in dyadic relationships, i.e. a "double democracy". Moreover, Hegre (2004) shows that democracies are not less prone to domestic conflict than non-democracies, which is important in relation to the Dutch case study. Another challenge is applying liberal peace in non-Western contexts (Salih 2008), where the social, political and economic conditions are vastly different.

Related to this, another important critique is that the hegemony of liberal peace "effectively minimizes the space available for indigenous and traditional approaches to peace-making" (Mac Ginty 2008: 140). Moreover, liberal peace is also highly neoliberal, "in its promotion of marketization, austerity programmes and the notion that the market will provide the motive force for peace and reconstruction" (Mac Ginty 2008: 144).

Structural Racism in the Netherlands

Since the rise of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in the United States, debates on the framing of race, racism and discrimination in the Netherlands have become prominent again (Ghorashi 2020). However, this topic is not new; over the years, many researchers have written on the specific attitude of the Dutch society towards race (see Essed 1991; Essed & Hoving 2014; Weiner 2014; Weiner & Báez 2018; Wekker 2016). These authors concur that certain historical, cultural, political developments and societal structures shape a specific *type* of racism, which is unique to the Netherlands. The overarching assertion is that through its framing of colonialism and ideas on multiculturalism, the Dutch dominant narrative conveys

tolerance, non-racism and even colour-blindness. In fact, according to the Dutch, except for a few minor incidents, racism does not exist in the Netherlands (Ghorashi 2020; Weiner 2014; Wekker 2016). However, lived experiences show that racism is in fact very much pervasive and widespread in the Netherlands. This paradox of 'passionate denial' of racism and the colonial past alongside 'aggressive racism' and xenophobia in the Netherlands is explained as Dutch racial exceptionalism enforced by 'white innocence' (Wekker 2016). This innocence is formed through the 'colonial cultural archive', which shapes perceptions of 'the self' and 'the other', and in turn, are normalized and reproduced on every level of Dutch society. Likewise, Essed (1991) introduced the idea of 'everyday racism' to explain structural racism in the Netherlands, thereby challenging the idea of Dutch tolerance. The Dutch denial of race, i.e., anti-racialism, can also be explained through the idea of 'racial neoliberalism' (Weiner 2014). At the same time, racism exists on many levels; discursive racism and derogatory terms, the idea of cultural incompatibility of the democratic Dutch and ethnic minorities, racial images, such as *Zwarte Piet*, institutional racism, and specific minority-related policies (Weiner 2014).

Over the past few years, explicit expressions of racism have increased in the Dutch public sphere (Ghorashi 2020; Spiering 2018). In 2020, the Dutch Tax Authorities confessed that they made use of 'ethnic' profiling by checking people with dual nationality for income tax (Kleinnijenhuis 2020). Here, the preferred use of the term 'ethnic' over 'race' is very telling, since it hints rather to cultural nuances, euphemizing structural racism (Weiner 2014: 731). Annual (sometimes violent) clashes between pro- and anti-Black Pete activists have also increased (Rodenberg & Wagenaar 2016). Recently, the Dutch police force in Rotterdam has also been in the news repeatedly for racist actions and speech (Haenen 2020, 2021). Furthermore, people of colour may face prejudice, stereotyping and microaggressions daily (van Gelder 2020). Due to the pervasive denial and atomization of the overarching structure of racism and discrimination in the Netherlands, it remains very difficult to address these issues (Essed 1991; Ghorashi 2020; Weiner 2014; Wekker 2016). In other words, to address the issue of systemic racism in the Netherlands it might be useful to frame it as a conflict, so that the issue can be addressed within the peace and conflict field. In the next section, it will be elaborated how systemic racism and discrimination can be understood as a conflict and how this is missed by the liberal peace framework.

Cultural violence and Tolerance

Following Galtung (1990: 291), the system of racism and discrimination can be understood as a conflict under "cultural violence", which highlights the ways in which cultural dimensions legitimize and underpin acts of 'structural' and 'direct' violence. Direct violence refers to a singular act or event, such as an assault, whereas structural violence points to a long-term 'process', such as a repeated cycle of discrimination, and furthermore, these types of violence are violations of the four basic human needs (Galtung 1990: 292) as outlined in Table 1 (below).

	Survival Needs	Well-being Needs	Identity Needs	Freedom Needs
Direct Violence	Killing	Maiming Siege, Sanctions Misery	Desocialization Resocialization Secondary Citizen	Repression Detention Expulsion
Structural Violence	Exploitation A	Exploitation B	Penetration Segmentation	Marginalization Fragmentation

Table 1. Typology of Violence

Source: Galtung 1990: 291

Literature shows that sustained racism results in exclusion, violence, humiliations, marginalization, isolation, and limited citizenship (among others consequences) (Essed *et al*. 2019). Moreover, although race is a *constructed fiction*, "it is as real as the door that keeps postcolonial migrants and their offspring from entering a nightclub and as intrusive as being stopped and searched by a police officer" (Çankaya & Mepschen 2020: 628). In other words, through a specific culture that embodies both racism and denial, people of colour are positioned as second-class citizens (Ghorashi 2020). Moreover, "minorities are, at best tolerated, and at worst marginalized, they are seldom included as full-fledged members of Dutch society who are valued for their contributions" (Ghorashi 2020: 4). In sum, systemic racism and the explicit *denial* of it in the Netherlands can be categorized as cultural violence where the notion of race as constructed fiction and the culture of anti-racialism and white innocence are foregrounded in a manner that ultimately allows for legitimization of expressions of racism on a daily basis. What follows is a basic human needs deprivation for people of colour through structural and direct violence. This can also be linked to the idea of

'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu 1991), which legitimizes and naturalizes the status quo of a dominant class and a subordinated group. Such a form of domination is often taken for granted, since it feels natural (Bourdieu in Demmers 2017).

The cultural ideology of the Netherlands, based on denial, innocence, and misrepresentation of historical events, establishes what constitutes a conflict, but is not considered by the liberal peace framework. It could be argued that especially the denial of structural discrimination and violence is upheld by the (neo-)liberal ideology. Generally, liberal political discourse frames racism as an individual failing (Çankaya and Mepschen 2020), which coincides with the culture of denial of race and racism. The notion of "liberal periphelisation of race" (Cankaya and Mepschen 2020: 626) explains a discursive practice that pushes racism to the outskirts and 'lower classes' of society. Furthermore, the Dutch national identity and culture are built on Eurocentric ideologies and early modernity, and are based on colonialism, which obscures Europe's position "within the modern capitalist global economy" (Weiner 2014: 738), taking on neoliberal dimensions. In other words, even though the Netherlands knows liberal peace in the sense that it adheres to the three pillars (Doyle 2005), this form of liberal peace overlooks the racial conflict present in the Netherlands. Even more so, by not framing systemic racism as a conflict, it can be argued that liberal peace is used as a tool to ignore systemic racism and discrimination. To tackle systemic racism, new frameworks to peace should be investigated.

The Moral Imagination

With respect to the Dutch case, to combat this conflict, it is important to take into account the specific history through decolonization. As Weiner (2014: 738) argues, the "inability to recognise historical wrongdoing of the colonial past impacts contemporary conceptions of national history, identity, and reconciliation of historic oppression with contemporary inequalities". Ghorashi (2020: 4) claims that the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States as well as different European countries, and the growing calls against institutional racism have created a momentum to "embrace a transformation of its 'innocence' into critical self-reflection". Moreover, Essed *et al*. (2019: XIV) contend that

tackling racism includes "creating spaces of belonging for all members of society, spaces that dismantle racial hierarchies". Lederach's mode of peacebuilding explained in *The Moral Imagination* (2005) could provide a new perspective. Lederach (2005) believes that by employing the moral imagination in conflict situations, violence can be avoided altogether. The moral imagination

> requires the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies; the ability to sustain a paradoxical curiosity that embraces complexity with our reliance on dualistic polarity; the fundamental belief in and pursuit of the creative act; and the acceptance of the inherent risk of stepping into the mystery of the unknown that lies beyond the far too familiar landscape of violence (Lederach 2005: 5).

More specifically, in his chapter 'On Time', Lederach (2005: 141) presents a framework that integrates the imagination of time as a holistic understanding of cycles of violent conflict. Lederach's matrix envisions different circles that expand towards the past (see Image 1, below):
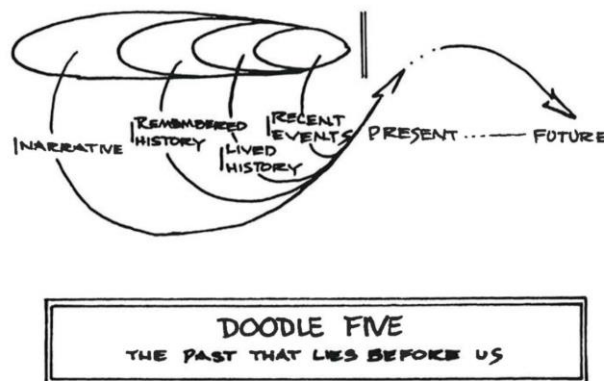
Figure 1. Lederach's matrix for understanding time and violent conflict
Source: Lederach 2005: 141

In short, the respective circles are 'recent events', relating the most to the current conflict, the 'lived history' is the history that has been seen, touched and tasted by the people involved, the 'remembered history' is the history that has been kept alive; and finally, the 'narrative' is the formative story of who we are as people and as a place. These circles come

together and shape how conflict is formed in the present and how it will move into the future. In addition, Lederach (2005: 143) suggests that the rise of, for example, truth commissions, is a practical element of the moral imagination of time through the social and political acknowledgement of "what happened, who suffered, who was responsible, and how they are accountable".

When applied to the Dutch case study, it becomes apparent that Lederach's (2005) conceptualization of time and conflict provides a framework for tackling the structural and direct violence of systemic racism. The acknowledgement, and in turn, decolonization of the Dutch history would change the *narrative* of who the Dutch are as people, as well as change the remembered history. Moreover, it would acknowledge that the *lived history* and the lived experiences of people of colour are deeply rooted in this system. By changing the 'colonial cultural archive', there is no place left for 'white innocence' in the Netherlands (Wekker 2016). Indeed, it would be an interesting thought experiment to imagine a truth commission that would discuss the Dutch colonial past. Many discussions on the decolonization of Dutch museums, education and collective memory have surfaced already. One concrete example is the quest to make Keti Koti, the celebration of the abolishment of slavery in Suriname and the Dutch Antilles, a national holiday (Couzy 2020).

The value of this framework over that of liberal peace is that it is much more holistic and less focused on a one-size-fits-all formula of peace. Different contexts, pasts and patterns should be recognized in order to imagine a new future, which is overlooked by the liberal peace framework that does not include the notion of time in its pillars. As shown above, the liberal peace framework does not recognize cultural or symbolic violence, and thus conveys a narrow view of conflict. Lederach's (2005) framework can be shaped to address many different types of violence and conflicts, and thus escapes this narrow definition. Yet, in doing so, this framework can also become too abstract and difficult to put into practice. In addition, the liberal peace framework has proven itself already to work in Western countries (Doyle 2005). Moreover, as the literature shows, the denial of Dutch racism is very pervasive in society and realizing change by acknowledging the past is not happening overnight, but will take a very long time and more conflict. It is my belief that the three pillars of liberal peace provide a base wherein (violent) conflict is excluded to a certain extent. Lederach's

(2005) framework of time and moral imagination can work within the three pillars and can tackle different types of conflict.

Thus, although Lederach's framework of the moral imagination and time cannot necessarily replace the liberal peace framework in the Netherlands, it can most certainly add a new dimension and work *within* the three pillars of liberal peace in order to combat the conflict of structural racism in the country.

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Republic of Armenia Education Provision System

By: Giulia Bisogni, SPD, Italy

Introduction

This mapping exercise presents the current situation of the education provision system of the Republic of Armenia. Like other post-Soviet countries, Armenia is in a period of transition that involves all spheres of the state. Education is particularly important in this transition because it is a social reproduction and national identity building tool. The education system has undergone a number of meaningful reforms and it has significantly changed through the years, though not necessarily in a 'successful' or 'better' way. The path initiated is an interesting one which does not completely abandon the ties with the Russian Federation and at the same time embraces the European Union. Currently, there is a high number of interventions in the field of Armenian education, but for the purpose of this exercise and due to word limit, I will focus on exemplary cases which, though probably not exhaustive, enclose the main characteristics of the education trajectory undertaken by the country.

Methodology and Focal Points:

Analytical framework:

The analytical framework I employ is the transnational/geopolitical one. I chose it to follow the concepts expressed by Yeates (2014) in terms of the growing importance of transnational actors in the development of policies, as well as Lendvai and Stubbs (2009) when they argue that in a context like Southeast Europe, one should consider also scales different from the national ones. External interventions from foreign countries (e.g. EU, Russia) in the field of education in Armenia take various forms: direct funding, scholarships for students and teachers, training and partnerships; these cannot be looked at separately from the underlying political implications they bring forward. The Soviet past, though undeniably important, will be considered only when functional to the understanding of the current situation.

Time frame:

The time frame focus are the years from the 2000 onwards. Armenia became independent in 1991 and before the year 2000 there had been relatively little changes in the general asset of education, especially higher education and it is with the Law on Education of 1999 that private actors enter the education arena in Armenia (Karakhanyan 2018: 79). 2005 is the year when Armenia joined the Bologna process.

The Bologna process:

The Bologna Process is a European Union voluntary affiliation process launched in 1999 that defines the European Higher Education Area. The aim is to harmonize the education systems of the member states (49 so far) to facilitate the academic mobility of students and staff and employability in the area (European Higher Education Area n.d.). In 2015 Yerevan hosted the fourth Bologna Policy Forum.

Level of education:

The analysis is going to focus predominantly on secondary, specifically vocational, and tertiary education. The reason is that these are the levels where, within the chosen time frame, more changes occurred, and they are also the ones directly affected by the affiliation to the Bologna process.

Background:

Chronological overview of Armenia's education history
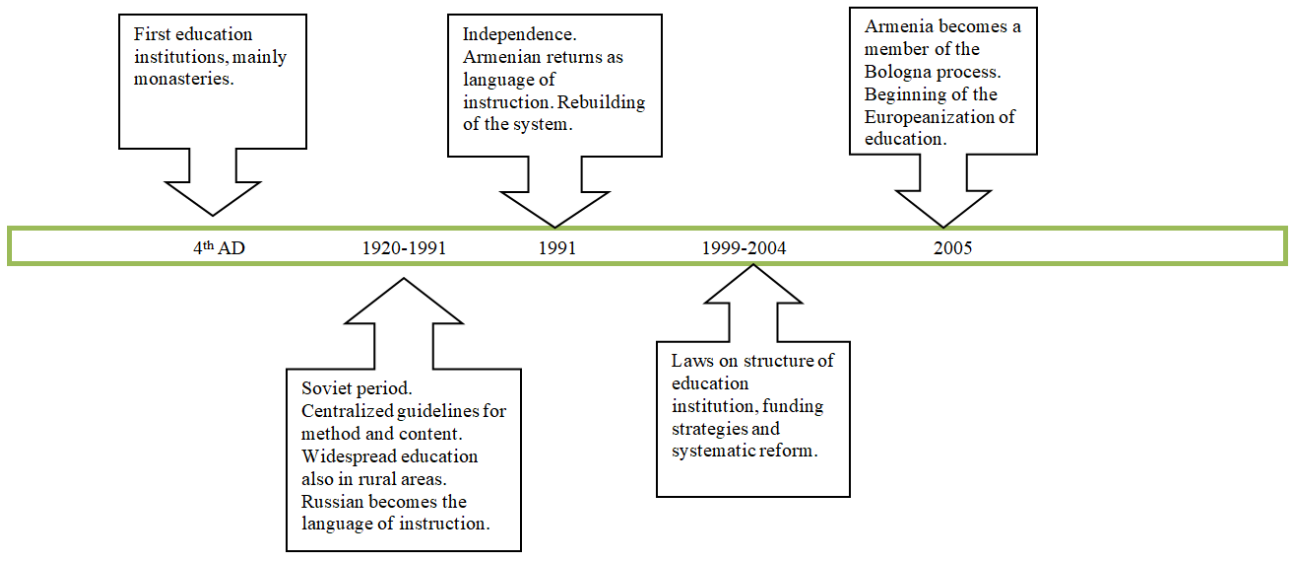
Figure 1. Author's visualization of Armenia's education history in chronological view

Source: Bandau & Ganjalyan (2015), Budaghyan et al. (2015)

Education system general overview and characteristics:

According to the innovation plan launched in 2006-2007, education in Armenia is compulsory for 12 years starting from 6 years of age; this range comprises elementary school (4 years [grades 1-4]), middle school (5 years [grades 5-9]) and high school (3 years [grades 10-12]). To comply with the 12 years compulsory school cycle, general secondary education and primary vocational (handicraft) or secondary vocational education are compulsory (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports 2021).

I follow the school cycles classification used by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (2021) on its institutional website, please note that different classifications can be found elsewhere. Pre-school education is not considered in this exercise due to not being compulsory and not leading to any certification of attendance or results.[15]

School grade	Year	Data[16]	Year	Data

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[15] For reference, the total population of Armenia is 3,018,854 (Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia 2011).

[16] Absolute data

Pupils enrolled in general education	2018	382378.0	2010	370892.0
Students in middle vocational schools	2018	23228.0	2010	29575.0
Students in higher education	2018	80477.0	2010	121347.0

Figure 2. Enrolment data per school cycle trend

Source: Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia (2018)

School grade	Year	Data	Year	Data
Primary completion rate	2018	89.879%	2010	90.752%
Secondary[17] completion rate	2018	93.292%	2010	96.92%

Figure 3. School completion rates[18] trends

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2021a, 2021b)

These data show that in a span of about ten years enrolment in post-general education lowered and completion rates dropped in general. Though other factors cannot be excluded, there is a well-known absenteeism and dropout issue as a UNICEF commissioned study about this topic shows (Hua 2008).

Intergenerational gap:

Connected to the previous paragraph is the perception from the side of families of the scarce usefulness of education:

"[P]arents do not see the practical value of education for their children any more. Some consider that the educational gains from schooling are irrelevant or minimal in comparison to alternative work opportunities. You can become quite rich without schooling today. In the old days, schooling was the

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[17] Groups all types of secondary education

[18] In relation to enrolment

path to a bright future. Today, who knows?" (Hua 2008: 17).

It is possible that parents educated during the Soviet period do not recognize the value of the new system, especially its ability to lead to employment, and therefore do not intervene when their children leave school.

Public/private presence:

The Ministry of Education oversees making any kind of policy implementation or update at a national level; this happens despite the fact that since the 1990's there has been a formal decentralization of responsibilities. The state finances schools according to enrolment numbers and high enrolment numbers are often dependent on the political connections of the head teacher. Private schools are an option only for those families who can afford it and they might be single classes inside a state school building (Bandau & Ganjalyan 2015: 30). Private tutoring is a widespread option for students and teachers.

Private education provision is more relevant at tertiary level: in 2011 there were 26 state universities, of which 4 were internationally managed (United States, Russia, France, the EU) and 42 private institutions of higher education of which 33 are accredited (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia 2020). Higher education is free only for a small number of students now and universities heavily rely on fees from students.
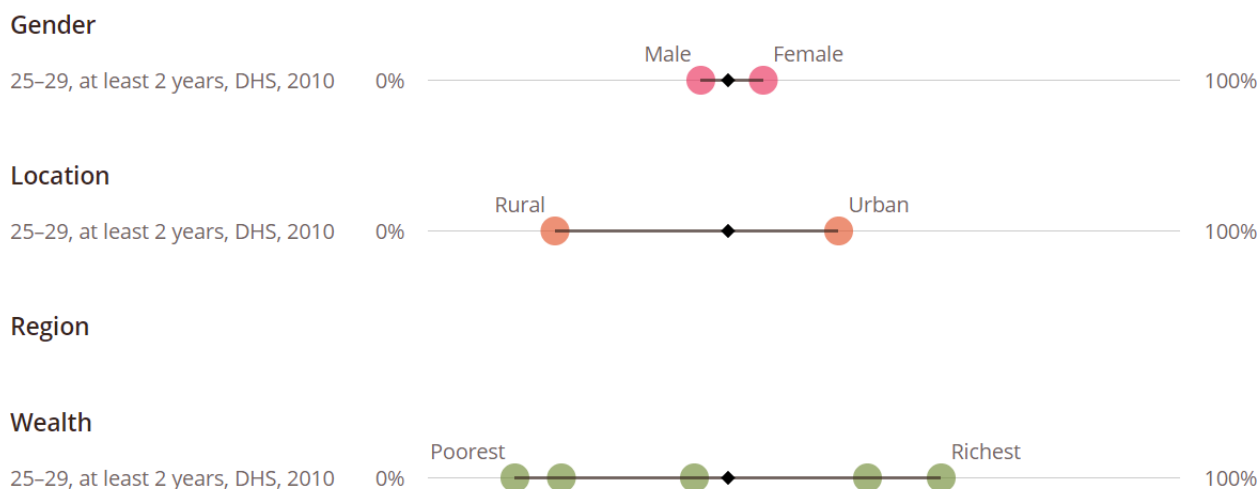
Education for whom?

Though free compulsory education for all is a constitutional right (Article 38) some students are de facto discriminated on an ethnic, religious and linguistic base. According to a Council of Europe field study of 2014, ethnic minorities of Yezidi and Molokans are strongly affected in the field of education because, living in rural areas, schools often do not have Kurmanji[19] or Russian speaking teachers or textbooks making learning difficult for students. Those who do not follow the Armenian Apostolic Church (the official state church, see: Constitution Article 18) also face discrimination in school from both peers and teachers; the low quality of primary education attainment makes it more difficult for them to move to the next level.

Gender, location and family wealth are still relevant indicators of completion success

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[19] Language spoken by Yezidi in Armenia.

in tertiary education and were so during the USSR (Gerber & Hout 1995: 611), showing that there is also a Soviet heritage in inequality terms.

Gender

25–29, at least 2 years, DHS, 2010   0%   Male   Female   100%

Location

25–29, at least 2 years, DHS, 2010   0%   Rural   Urban   100%

Region

Wealth

25–29, at least 2 years, DHS, 2010   0%   Poorest   Richest   100%

Figure 4. Education Inequalities - Armenia tertiary education completion rate data
Source: UNESCO (n.d.)

External influences on secondary vocational and tertiary education:

The push towards an improvement in education as the driving force of society is important also in the light of unemployment data: in 2018 Armenia had 21% of unemployment among youth with higher education (International Labour Organization 2021), 33.6% of youth unemployment rate and a 31.1% of NEET (International Labour Organization n.d.). The European Union, through the Eastern Partnership has spent in the area 120 million of euros, 15.2 million for Vocational Training Education, and 23 million for STEM programmes (Eastern Partnership Youth 2019), in addition to all the programmes embedded in the Bologna process. The Russian Federation, on the other hand, exercises its influence through economy (i.e. energy supplies), military protection, and language. Germany and France are also present. The following are examples of these interventions at different education levels.

Vocational education:

Vocational training was a relevant part of the soviet education system and *technicum* schools trained future technical workers to be directly employed on the field or in the teaching of the

subject they were trained into. Due to the planned nature of the Soviet economy, the passage from school to work was smooth and a vocational education led to good jobs that people valued. After the shift to a market economy, Armenia vocational training schools lost prestige (Bandau & Ganjalyan 2015: 32) and enrolment numbers decreased because training did not match the market demand. This phenomenon is not to be understood as related to actual vocational training, but rather connected to specifically to the Armenian situation. In other countries like Laos or Cambodia, for example, vocational training is a valued education option considered useful to move upwards the social ladder and reach a desirable social status (Chea & Huijsmans 2018).

In 2017, the Ministry piloted a Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET). TVET is work-based learning that grants both basic education knowledge and practical skills that allow a smooth transition to the job market. TVET requires a strong public-private cooperation for both financing and content. Four colleges across the country and 41 private sector actors participated in the pilot. The Private Sector Development and Technical Vocational Education and Training in South Caucasus (PSD TVET) Programme has been implemented by the GIZ (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), a German government agency that designs sustainable economic development programmes in countries all over the world.

Significantly the results of the pilot are disseminated on the GIZ webpage, and there we learn that the action was successful and small businesses operating in tourism have been able to access financing, for this reason the dual system is now part of the 2019-2024 minister programme. Thanks to the EU co-funding about 10,000 small and medium enterprises have received training and subsidies; 56 companies have generated 6.7 million of capital and 600 female entrepreneurs have joined associations (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit-GIZ n.d.).

A multi-partner cooperation: the EU-TUMO convergence centre in Yerevan:
This is an interesting case of multi-partner cooperation among the TUMO Centre for Creative Technologies, a centre where students of different ages can learn STEM subjects in hands-on workshops and projects, the EU and the French University of Armenia. The Convergence Centre was planned to be built in Yerevan in the spring of 2020 and will contribute to what

is already named "the Silicon Valley of the Caucasus" (Armen Press 2019). The Convergence Centre has also the aim to enhance the international visibility of Armenia, create a European oriented tech centre in the Caucasus, competing with neighbour countries and more specifically Russia.

Tertiary education:

All tertiary level education institutions were founded during the Soviet period, but soon after 1991 foreign universities were established in the country: American University of Armenia (1991), Armenian-Russian State University (1997), French University in Armenia (2000), and the European Regional Educational Academy (2001) (MFA 2020 website). Today, the EU plays a major role in the trajectory of tertiary education.

Since 2017 the EU and Armenia collaborate under the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA), allocating to Armenia 65 million euros in grants destined to support the development of different areas of society, including education. Part of this collaboration leads to faster and cheaper application procedures for Schengen visas, circulation of student and teacher supported by the Erasmus+ and eTwinning online cooperation programme (Eastern Partnership 2021). In higher education the adjustments required by the Bologna process translated into a different management of the universities as institutions. The study by Balasanyan (2018) shows how the pressure to adhere to the new standards and benchmarks set by the EU has emphasised the importance of managerial roles inside universities. Education management is a label that entered faculties and established itself as a synonym for modernity and quality. In 2012 an education management department was established at the state Pedagogical University in Yerevan thanks to TEMPUS programme funding. In the same study, it is underlined how the prospective to join faculties with a managerial approach to education has become more and more alluring to students than the traditional education curriculum which is seen as backwards and not leading to well-paid jobs (Balasanyan 2018). Faculties or departments who are involved in EU funded projects are more likely to have high enrolment numbers. These considerations already make it clear that the attractive power of everything European is becoming strong in higher education. One of the outcomes of this market-oriented way of considering education, much more focused

on securing funding and getting quality certifications[20] is that teaching and *the way* subjects are taught is slowly being neglected. Education staff is trapped in an 'imitator' role where they comply and adapt to the new parameters without questioning any cultural identity issue and tend to leave behind also the positive aspects of the Soviet past (e.g. staff expertise). Moreover, the continual search for accreditation does not bring actual enhancement in education but leads to a disengagement of the teaching staff from their main mission, teaching (Balasanyan 2018).

The Russian Federation maintains intense economic and political relationships with Armenia: Russia is the first energy provider of Armenia, there is an agreement between the two countries for Russia to patrol the border with Azerbaijan till 2044 and Armenia is part of the Eurasian Economic Union (EUAU) promoted by Russia. EUAU membership represents a hindrance to further participation in European economic agreements (Hovhannisyan 2019: 84). Russia promoted the Intergovernmental Foundation for Cooperation in Education, Science and Culture (IFESCCO) and from it was born the Network University of the CIS joined by Yerevan State University in 2010; the offer of the Network is comparable with the Erasmus programme in Europe (Mkhoyan 2017: 694). The Russian-Armenian University is the main in situ oldest operative arm of the Russian federation in Armenian higher education. It is operated jointly by the Russian and Armenian governments, awards double degrees, offers the opportunity to pursue further studies in Russia with scholarships available both ways after a bilateral agreement, and major Russian universities have opened branches in the country (Mkhoyan 2017: 699). Russian is still the most frequent language of instruction after Armenian in most universities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia 2020) while English is less widespread. The Russian-Armenian offers also free education to the Russian ethnic minority of the country, Molokans; this way they can pursue tertiary education bypassing the difficulty of Armenian language, which they often do not master, and getting significant economic benefits like scholarships or fee reductions or, in case they decided to pursue their education in Russia, they can easily pass the selection based on a Russian language test and also can also benefit from favourable economic conditions (Hovhannisyan et al. 2014).

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[20] Via the ANQA, National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation, member of the ENQA, European Association for Quality Assurance in Education.

Conclusion:

I begin my conclusion with the words of Garoian (1994: 85) when he states that Armenians are "in a paradoxical state of mind -- one where they possess the first-world sensibility of their immediate past on one hand and their current third-world predicament on the other" - these characteristics are present in education too. Both independency and dependency forces pull the country from two opposite sides. Armenia is partly cleverly seizing the opportunities offered by Europe and, to a certain extent Russia, and partly is dependent on them. From this view, Europe is the future, but Russia is the cumbersome historic neighbour that cannot be ignored, and it is difficult for the countries to define their contemporary relationship.

Education in the Republic of Armenia is certainly living an interesting moment characterised by an increased awareness of the importance of this field in contributing to the role the country will play in the future. The data reported in this exercise show a positive outlook in terms of new possibilities for students and teachers but dawning on the horizon is the chance of a crisis where the Armenian identity is left in the background. The coming years will show if the delicate equilibrium Armenia is building will give positive results and will strengthen its role in the Caucasus and keep its cultural independence; what is certain is that Armenia's evolution is fast paced and interesting.

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(Understanding welfare

Social Provisioning System of Ageing Population in the Republic of Moldova*:* Mapping Out the Elderly Welfare

Cristina Buza SPD Moldova

Introduction: setting the case for elderly social provisioning

Old age is considered one of the social risks that every person inevitably faces while approaching the end of her life cycle. These risks are often associated with sickness, loneliness and poverty that can overlap with physical incapacity to participate in the labour market and secure a decent living. There is a strong dependency between the latter two, and when old age disrupts this dependency, the state intervenes to protect its citizens from these risks. However, this essay raises the question *What if the state interventions are insufficient in securing old age-associated risks?*


Figure 1: Why is elderly social provisioning critical in the Republic of Moldova?
Source: Caricature by Rusu, V, 2018. Retrieved from sputnik.md and translated (speak bubbles) from Rumanian by the Author. Available at
https://sputnik.md/caricature/20180706/20359230/batrani-moldova-pensii-supravietuiasca.html

Moldova is a small lower-middle-income country with a GDP per capita of 3,395$ (PPP) in 2020 and 3,5 million people (World Bank 2021). In 2014, the minimum age-limit (social) pension was about 57$ a month, while the average age-limit (insured) pension – 80$, which accounted for 48% and 66% respectively of the subsistence minimum (120$) for this year (Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection 2014). Therefore, many elderlies depend on monetary and in-kind support from their children and the community. The caricature from Figure 1 reveals the social reality of older people from Moldova.

There are a few primary concerns that fuel the uncertainties regarding elderly wellbeing in Moldova. Firstly, the population of Moldova is ageing and shrinking at a fast pace because of low fertility and high emigration rates. It is estimated that the number of people will decrease by 1,2 million, and the share of older people will rise to 30% by 2060 (World Bank 2017). Secondly, the working-age population's emigration places a considerable strain on the public system, especially on the social protection of current and future generations (Figure 2).
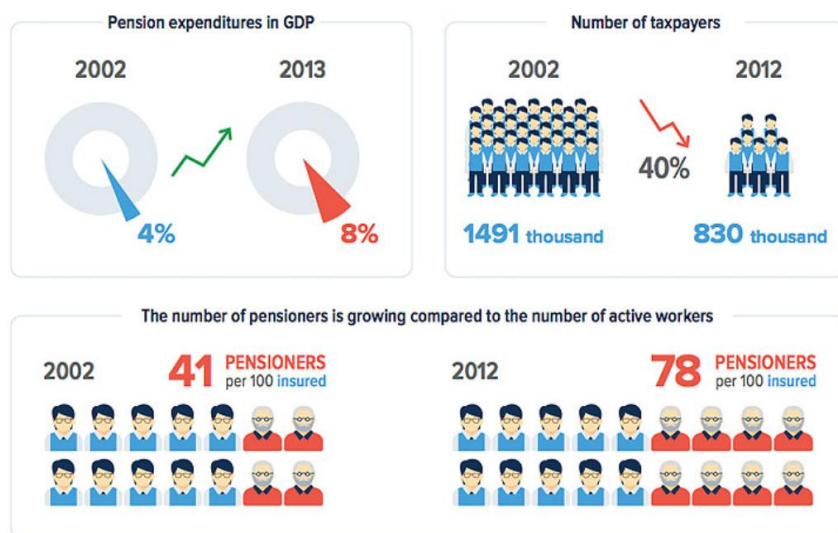

Figure 2: Pension system trends

Source*: Retrieved from World Bank Infographic, 2016. Available at*
https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/infographic/2016/05/23/pension-system-reform-current-situation-in-moldova

Also, the large scale of women emigration concerns elderly wellbeing because "the female-kin often provides both regular and instrumental care to elderly individuals" (Grant

et al. 2009). Besides, in Moldova, there is limited availability of appropriate markets or public institutions to provide elder care without intergenerational care (Waidler et al. 2016). Therefore mapping out the Moldovan elderly provisioning system provides a good case study to analyse social institutions' implications in providing welfare outcomes for this vulnerable population. In the first part of this exercise, we will describe the types of social institutions (Figure 3) that contribute to protecting the elderly[21] against old age-associated risks, following the idea that social protection is "an assemblage of informal and formal elements" (Bilecen and Barglowski 2015: 204).
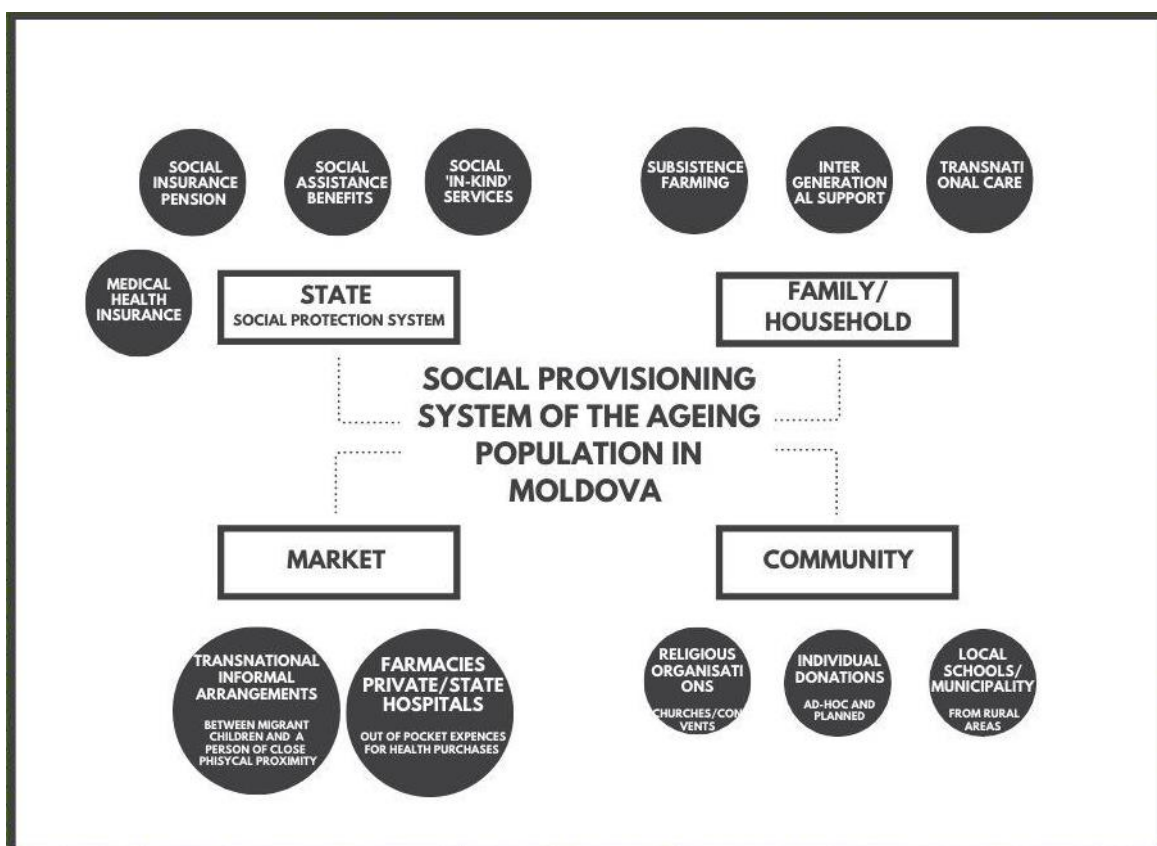
Figure 3: The elderly social provisioning system map.

Source: *Author following welfare regime approach*

Secondly, we will try to conceptualise the social provisioning system of the elderly from Moldova through applying the welfare regime approach of Gosta Esping-Anderson (1990) and its further adaptations (Gough and Wood 2006). However, we must acknowledge

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[21] Although an elderly person's definition is associated with retirement age (57 for women, 62 for men in Moldova 2014-2020), the data presented in this exercise relies on the UN concept of elderly – any person 60+.

that this analysis aims neither to identify the type of the welfare state regime of Moldova nor to make a comparative analysis of different welfare policies. Instead, based on the information presented in the first part, we will look at how the social provisioning system actors contribute to the elderly wellbeing in Moldova.

## Part I: Describing sources of the social provisioning system of the elderly Moldovan population

Public social protection for old age population

Moldova provides a vast range of social protection for the elderly classified into three categories (Figure 4). This exercise will provide data that refers to the old age population's social protection. It is worth mentioning that it is a part of the general social protection system. It is provided and guaranteed by the same governmental structures, mainly by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection (MHLSP) responsible for social security policy and the National Office of Social Insurance, which administers the program, as well as the same laws, and other normative acts, such as "Law no.489-XIV of 08.07.1999 regarding the public system of social insurance, Law no.156-XIV of 14.10.1998 on pensions of state social insurance, Law on State Social Insurance Budget" (MHLSP).

Social insurance for the elderly: public pensions

The public Pensions System's main objective is to provide an income to the insured population who cannot economically secure themselves due to unemployment, sickness, parenthood, disability, and old age. The functioning of the public pensions system is based on *social solidarity between generations*, which means that working-age people pay monthly social security contributions to the state and contribute to the current pension allocations. In return, they expect that future generations would do the same and would secure their pension payments after their retirement.
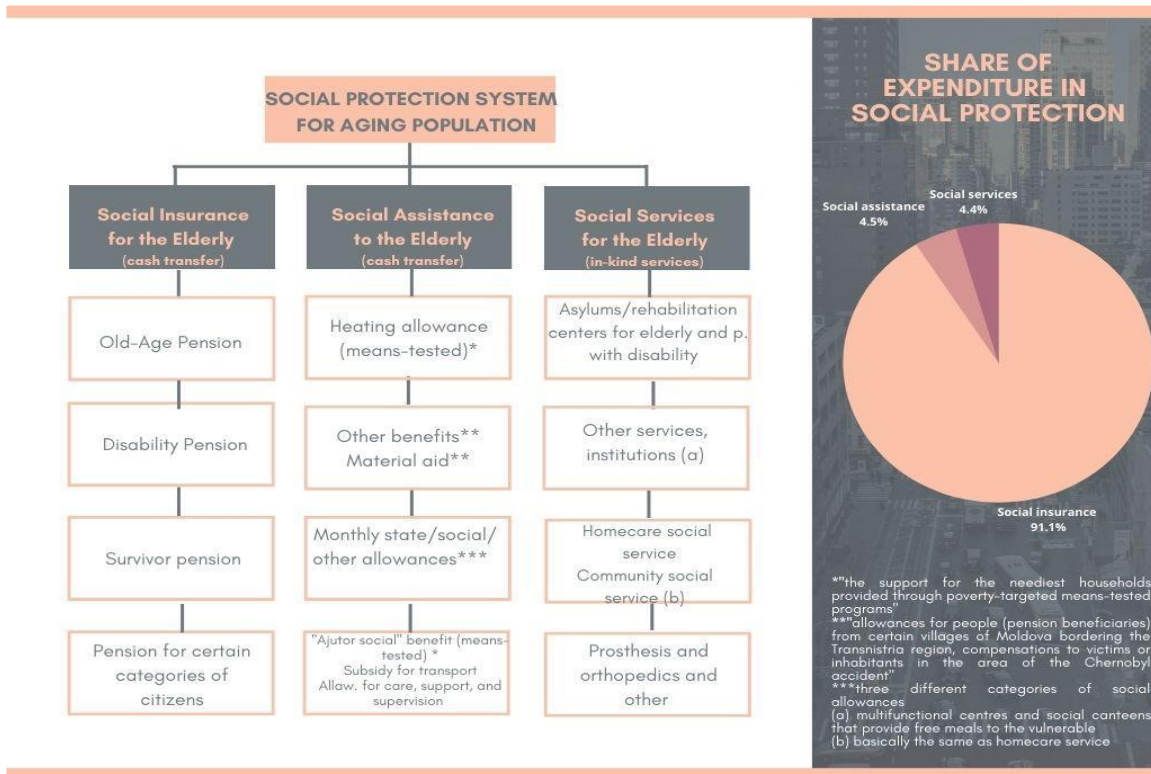
Figure 4: Social Protection System for the Elderly and the shares of expenditure, 2014

Source: Author, based on information from MHLSP Report 2014

Who benefits from social insurance pensions in Moldova, and how it is financed?

The public pension system provides numerous types of pensions. The striking majority consists of privileged allowances allocated based on beneficiaries' social merits (Figure 5). In 2012, select beneficiaries accounted for 11,4%, composed of 13% of the related pension expenditure. As a result, an average pension of a civil servant was two times higher than the regular average pension (the World Bank infographic 2012).

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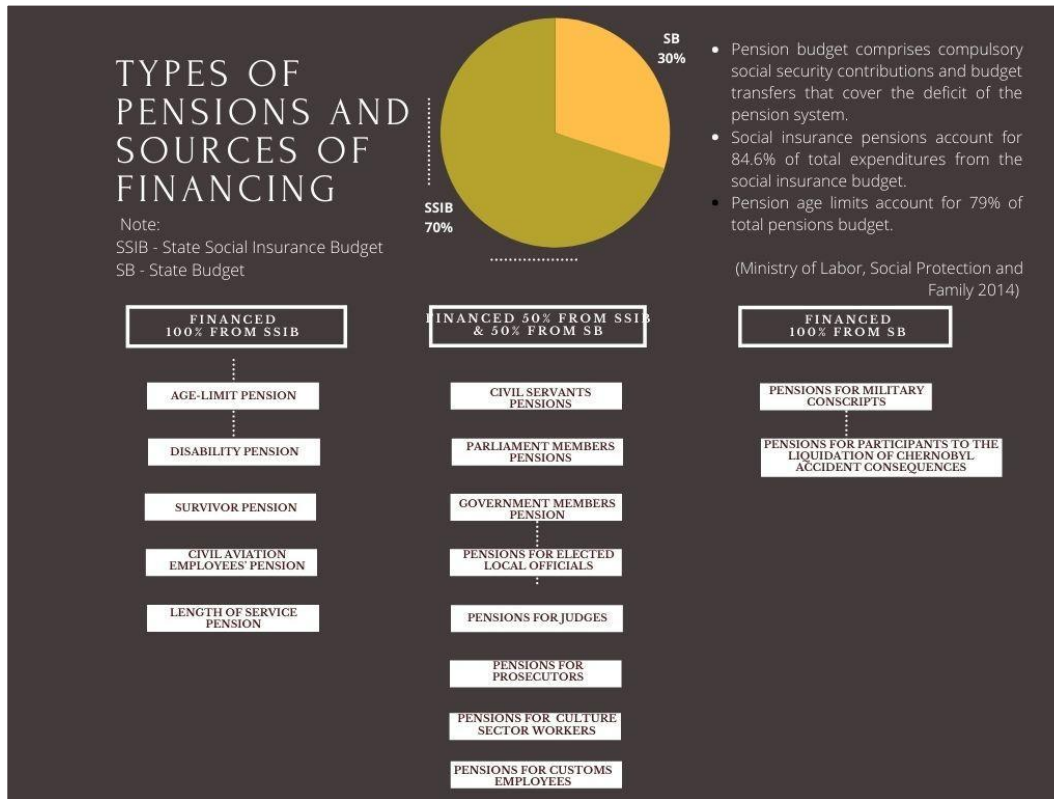
Figure 5: Pension beneficiaries and budget formation

Source: Author, based on Annual Report for 2014 of Ministry

In the table below, you can see who pays and how much for the social insurance system.

Category of contributor	Contribution size, 2014
Employer/employee's contribution for persons with individual labour contract	23% + 6%
Employer/state/employee's contribution for persons employed in the agricultural sector	16%+6%+6%

Contribution of self-employed persons/annual	410$
Contribution of self-employed persons in the agriculture sector (voluntary insurance)/annual	102$
Individuals not included in any of the categories (voluntary insurance)/annual	410$

Table 1: Social insurance contribution

Source: Author, based on information from MHLSP Report 2014

Qualifying conditions for old-age pension (Insured and social)

The social pension system provides social entitlements for old-age insured people and those at pensionable age but are not qualified for insured old-age pension. People who cumulatively meet the following conditions are eligible for receiving old age insured pension:

- *For women, the legal retirement age* is 57 years. For men – 62 years.
- *The minimum contribution* period for men and women is 15 years.
- *The general length of service* for women constitutes 30 years, and for men – 32 years. Length of service includes:

    Contributory periods – including employed years when making social insurance payments.

    Non-contributory periods – formal childcare periods, military service, formal unemployment.

Also, the Moldovan social insurance system offers preferential terms to determine the retirement age limit for the following situations:

- "To women who gave birth and educated up to the age of 8 years five and more children".

-   "To persons employed in jobs with harmful and difficult conditions" (Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family of the Republic of Moldova 2014).

Social assistance cash transfers

Social assistance cash transfers are based on entitlements provided through two means-tested poverty programs, but the coverage is deficient. Others are granted to a specific category of the population (Figure 4).

Social in-kind services

Social in-kind services include care and support provided by the state and local municipalities through homecare and community centres, mobile teams, and "personal assistance offered to people with disabilities and older people to support independent living" (World Bank 2017). Many of them are childless or abandoned, unable bodied older people[22].

Health insurance

According to the National Medical Insurance Company (1998), old-age pensioners benefit from medical insurance financed by the Government, regardless of their insurance status. However, even though it includes primary care and emergency treatment, it covers only a limited number of services and medicine. Therefore, many elderly support out-of-pocket expenses. According to a survey carried out by the National Bureau of Statistics, the elderly spends 5% to 9% of their monthly income on health (Cotidianul 2020).

Family and household contribution

Subsistence framing

Most of the population from Moldova lives in rural areas where limited economic activities and lack of job opportunities led to the increase in the dependence of many households'

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[22] More (visual) information at https://moldova.europalibera.org/a/lumea-din-jur-batrini-singuri-moldova/28493661.html

incomes on subsistence farming, including the elderly population[23]. Some sell a part of their production at the local markets or to the neighbours. Even though these households are considered poor and at-risk because of drought episodes (World Bank 2016), subsistence farming is the only way to provide food for many families.

Intergenerational care and the contribution of migrant children

Moldova is no exception in practising the traditional intergenerational care arrangements. Because of an insufficient formal social protection system, many elderly persons rely on kin-based social support by sharing the same household with their adult children or living close to them.

Further, adult children's migration contributes to their parents' wellbeing by providing support through remittances and emotional help. Below you can see that the Moldovan economy is highly dependent on remittances and is one of the most remittance-dependent countries in the region. Also, the significant share of remittances in the household income, especially in rural areas, contributed to lifting many households out of poverty (World Bank 2016).

A significant part of remittances is received by the elderly or households with elderly and children (World Bank 2016), where migrant children contribute to the social provisioning of their aged parents and children while receiving childcare from them. In addition, some studies showed that the elderly who shared their households with younger family members reported more monetary remittances than those who left without (Bohme et al. 2014: 213).

It is noteworthy that neither Figures 6 nor 7 can fully reflect all the transnational provisioning. Non-monetary remittances in food, clothing, medicine and medical apparatus significantly contribute to the elderly health (Waidler et al. 2016). Other studies have found (Baldassar and Baldock 2000; King and Vullnetari 2006) that emotional support provided through phone calls, presents, "long-distance participation in decisions about health wellbeing" are also an essential "[care] from [the] distance" (Baldassar and Baldock 2000: 63).
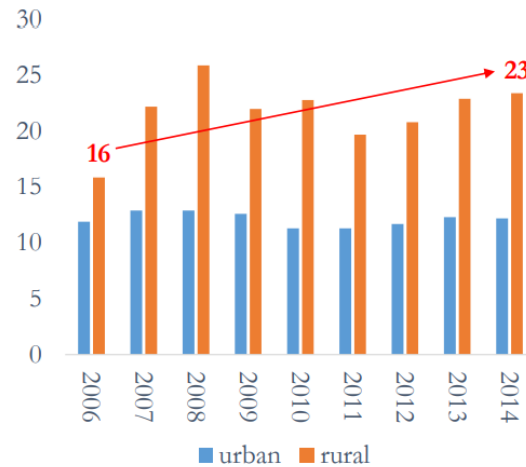
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[23] Because of the country's legacy, the share of the elderly who own their homes and land is high. Most of them use the land for subsistence farming.

Remittances as a share of GDP, 2014
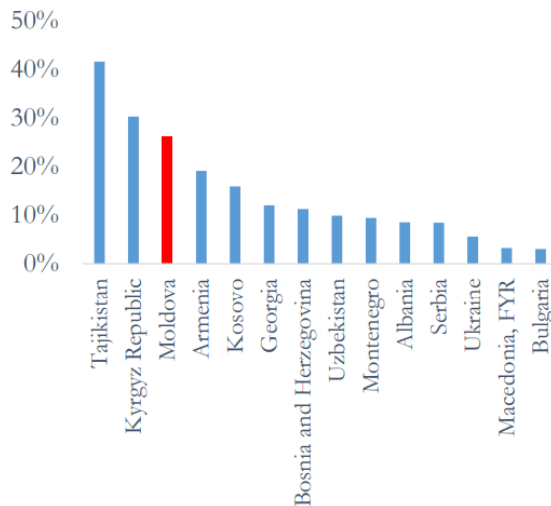
Remittances as a share of household disposable income, %

Figure 6: The role of remittances for economy and households' incomes

Source: Retrieved from Moldova Poverty assessment 2016, WB Report

Market: Informal transnational arrangements and out-of-pocket spending[4]

In Moldova, there is limited availability of market-based structures of elder care. However, due to high emigration levels, such support is practised as part of transnational intergenerational care, where migrant children hire a person (usually a younger older woman) nearby of their aged parents to provide physical and moral support in their absence. In this way, elderly provisioning is supplied in two directions: old-age support for elder parents of a migrant child, on the one side, and a source of income for the hired caregiver, on the other side.

Community provisioning system for the elderly

Another essential contributor to the social provisioning of old-aged people is the community. Its contribution is vital for a specific group of elderly persons, such as lonely and poor persons (usually childless or abandoned) when the previous social provisioning sources fail to provide social protection.

Charity social programs planned and ad-hoc: urban social provisioning of elderly wellbeing

In big cities of Moldova, many people contribute to the elderly well-being through personal donations. Commonly, people identify old-aged persons in need at the supermarket (struggling to pay their bills), on the streets (selling personal belongings) or knowing them from their neighbourhoods. In many cases, in the supermarket, the contributor approaches the old-aged person and offers to pay his bill, usually by adding more food in the basket, buying food her(him)self, and following the old-age person out of the shop and donating it outside.

A more organised way of helping old-aged persons is practised in Moldova through a charity program run by an independent organisation called *caritate.md*. In the last few years, this organisation has been running a project intitled "**Bătrânețea fără griji"** (worry-free old age), where everyone is encouraged to contribute to the elderly wellbeing. This year, at least 50 more aged people will receive help in various regular and monthly contributions. Spontaneous and organised donations happen more often during the winter when electricity and heating bills are more expensive.

The Church, Local municipalities, and schools: Rural social provisioning of elderly wellbeing

The elderly from rural areas of Moldova can receive social care from their local communities. In addition, religious organisations, such as churches and convents/monasteries, are present in most rural villages, and some old-aged people seek care asylum there. While being still able-bodied but already too old to live alone, they perform domestic work and gardening for these institutions and, in exchange, receive housing, food, socialisation and the guarantee to be looked after when they are too old.

Local municipalities and schools are other valuable resources to the elderly well-being in rural communities. Even though they are governmental organisations, these care and protection have an informal status because social provisioning is offered at the mayors, community workers, or teachers' initiatives. For instance, one such initiative provides easy home tasks (gardening in the spring and autumn, house maintenance, cleaning) by the oldest

children from schools as part of their "home science" class.

Part II: Theoretical analysis of the elderly social provisioning by applying welfare regime approach

Welfare (State) Regime

According to Esping-Anderson (1990), the welfare state regime is an (1) ensemble of welfare outcomes provided by social institutions, such as the state, the market and the family, to protect their citizens from different social risks. He suggested that for understanding the nature of a welfare state regime, one must look at (2) the level of the contribution of each of these institutions and their effectiveness to provide welfare, (3) what is the degree of (de)commodification "of the status of individuals vis-à-vis the market", as well as (4) to what extent "one's status as a citizen will compete with, or even replace, one's class position" (Esping-Anderson 2008: 20).

Some scholars noticed limitations of this analytical approach, emphasising that many countries in the world have undergone "different sets of societal conditions", and, therefore, some must consider a "wider range of institutions" as well as "region-specific political settlements" to "provide a more sustainable and flexible framework for enhancing human wellbeing" (Gough and Wood 2006: 1697). Therefore, they adapted the previous framework by adding a new informal system of social provisioning – community, that could be analysed by applying the concept of (de)clientelistic. This concept is characterised by the idea that social provisioning can also be found "in the informal domains of social relationships and cultural expectations" either in some organised way (churches, planned charities) or "more personalised in a range of clientelist and reciprocal […] arrangements" (Gough and Wood 2006: 1698).[24]

Firstly, the first principle of the welfare state approach – the existence of a "welfare mix"– can be easily recognised in the elderly provisioning system in Moldova (Figure 3). Secondly, we can see that the elderly income comprises welfare institutions' contributions (Figure 7). It is noteworthy that the pension's level is relatively low, but it is significant for

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[24] To see the applicability of this concept in Part I "community provisioning system of the elderly"

elderly wellbeing. The substantial contribution to their income comes from subsistence farming (applicable only for rural areas). Interestingly, remittances contribute to the elderly revenue by a significantly lower proportion than non-elderly individuals. On the other hand, their contribution to non-poor and rural households is much higher than poor ones (Figure 8).
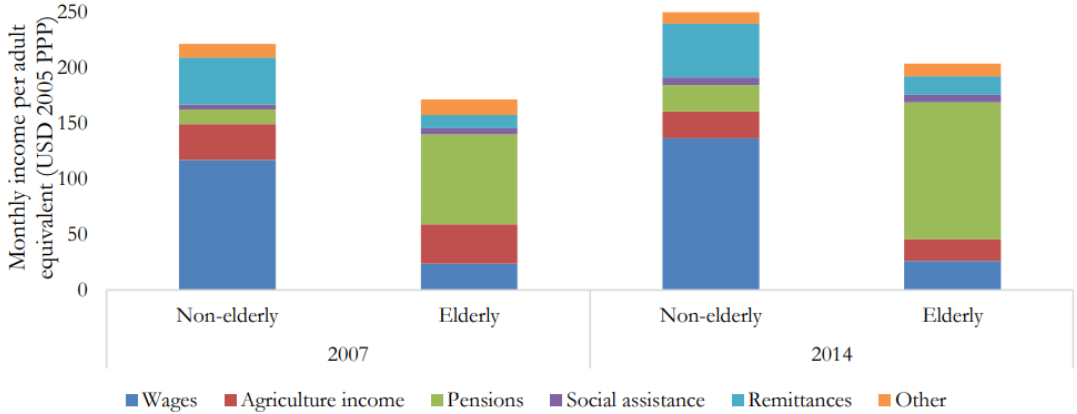
Figure 7: Income structure of the elderly (ages 65+) and non-elderly

***Source:** Retrieved from WB 2017 Calculations based on the Household Budget Survey*

Thirdly, the concept of de-commodification is one of the critical principles of the welfare regime approach that describes how many rights citizens can benefit from without having to pay for them. According to Esping-Anderson (2008: 22), the de-commodification of labour is the situation where "citizens can freely, and without potential losses of job, income or general welfare, opt-out of work under conditions when they, themselves, consider it necessary for reasons of health, family, age or even educational self-improvement". Social policies that include unemployment protection and assure a secured income after retirement contributes to a certain degree to the de-commodification of labour. However, looking at the pension's low coverage of subsistence limit and insufficient public medical insurance, we could conclude that the social protection of elderly persons (both insured and uninsured) does not secure the old age risks after retirement.

Finally, because the state is a "mechanism that intervenes in, and possibly corrects, the structure of inequality; it is [actually] a system of stratification" (Esping-Anderson 2008: 22), to analyse the stratification effects of the elderly protection system, we need to look at

which groups of pensioners benefit from social entitlements and how it induces or maintains social inequality. Looking at figure 8, you can see that almost 80% of the poor live in rural areas and that around 20% of the poor are pensioners.

Figure 8: Geographic and age composition of poor/non-poor populations
Source: Retrieved from "MOLDOVA POVERTY AND SHARED PROSPERITY UPDATE",
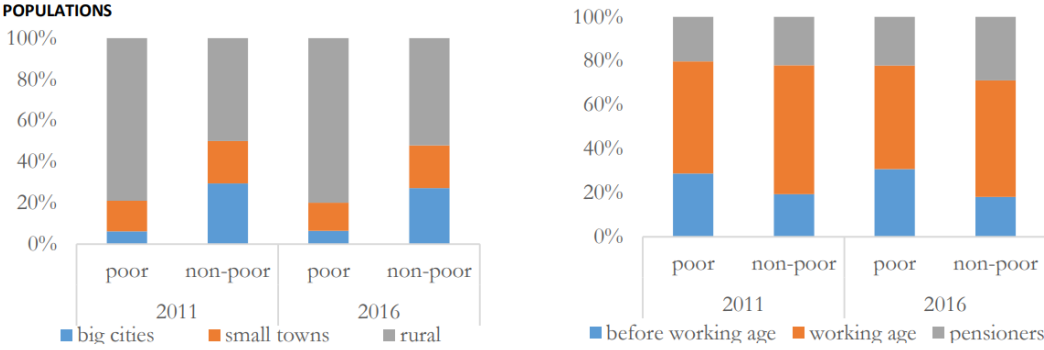
the WB 2018

The poor's income structure (Figure 9) reveals that means-tested social assistance is targeted but very low in coverage. As you have seen in figure 4, social assistance and service programmes for the elderly are numerous (many of them overlap), consuming a relatively small proportion of the social budget (they are many but tiny).
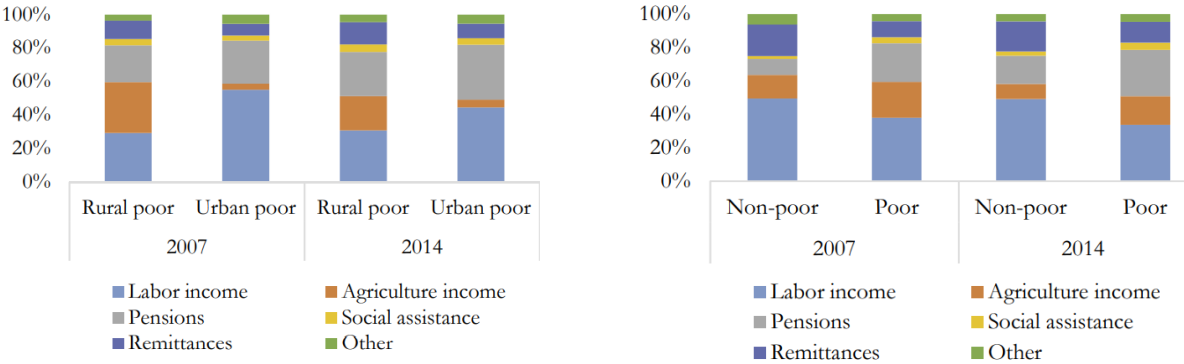
Figure 9: Income structure of the poor by area
Source: Retrieved from Moldova Poverty assessment 2016, WB Report

These social allowances, even though they are means-tested, only two of them are

poverty targeting programmes, that is, "Ajutor-social" benefit and heating allowance, where only the latter is considered in coverage (16% of elderly are eligible to receive it) and the amount (consuming 22% of social assistance budget) (World Bank 2017).

Conclusion

In Moldova, due to low coverage of the subsistence minimum limit by average and minimum pensions, many elderlies rely on their income (working pensioners), subsistence farming, and intergenerational care, including transnational support. In most precarious individual situations, community organisations step in and provide eldercare in the form of some "reciprocal arrangements" or charities. Yet, the state pension contributions account for a significant part of older people's welfare but not enough to live neither financially nor physically independently. Because most social assistance transfers are category oriented (eligibility is considered according to social merits) and weak poverty alleviation transfers, we can conclude that the social protection system is targeted inefficiently and fuels social inequality.

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Mobilizing LGBT Rights in Indonesia: From Local Culture to International Pressure

By Firmansyah Sarbini, SPD, Indonesia

It was a bright hot night in August. Decorations of red and white, happy and excited children, and a cheap, well-functioning portable stage, which was rented using the villagers' money, all of which made the night livelier. That August, just like any other August, was a special month for Indonesians because it is during this period, we celebrate our Independence Day. Festivals, local competitions, and gatherings are part of the celebration. Amidst the celebrations, there was a 6-year-old boy who was busy remembering every move of his *Koi Mil Gaya* dance – a Bollywood song that was popular in the late 1990s and early 2000s. He would perform at the neighbourhood's performance night to show his family and friends his dancing abilities without fear of being judged for his 'feminine' dance moves. He performed, the audience clapped, he felt great, and everyone was happy.

After almost twenty years, society has changed a lot. Conservatism, coated by 'moral values' and as delivered by politicians, has changed Indonesian culture to become more intolerant. From religious intolerance to anti-American sentiments to efforts for criminalization of the LGBT community (Hamayotsu 2013; Lim 2005; Sarbini and Has 2020), Indonesia is not a safe space for minority groups. The same boy who liked to dance on the tunes of *Koi Mil Gaya* twenty years ago is now trying so hard to hide his femininity, his gender expression. People around him only accept certain categories, heterosexual, cisgender, masculine male, and feminine female. People who have traits other than these 'accepted categories' are seen as abnormal, immoral, even criminals. While homosexuality itself is not nationally criminalized, anti-LGBT sentiment has been widespread throughout the country, from urban to rural areas, from peasants to state actors, from illiterate people to PhD holders.

This essay is more than just a story about a 'feminine' boy who finds himself trapped in a homophobic and patriarchal society that values masculinity over femininity. This essay will share various stories about the struggles of Indonesia's early and current LGBT movements and will also show how efforts to criminalize the LGBT community has unfolded in Indonesia. Furthermore, the essay explores how human rights activists and

organizations mobilize LGBT rights; from localizing Western LGBT-related terms to making alliances with other grassroots movements by applying an intersectional approach. The essay will suggest ideas regarding how local cultures can be used as a tool for mobilizing rights. The final section will elaborate on how academia and the international society can put pressure on relevant bodies to uphold LGBT rights in Indonesia.

LGBT Movement in Indonesia: Now and Then

Early LGBT Movement in Indonesia

In the 1960s, the then-Jakarta governor, Ali Sadikin, tried to change the derogatory term '*bencong*' (effeminate men) to something more 'appropriate'. So, he then suggested the word '*wadam*' (female Adam); a local translation for transgender women. Moreover, as an ally of the transgender community, he also established Himpunan Wadam Djakarta (HIWAD, Jakarta Transgender Community) in 1969 (Humanmag 2020).

Lambda Indonesia is the oldest public Indonesian LGBT organization, established in Surakarta, Central Java on 1 March 1982. Lambda Indonesia discontinued its operation in 1986 (*The Jakarta Post* 2015). Its successor, GAYa Nusantara was established a year after Lambda's closure and is now the oldest LGBT organization still operating today.

Ali Sadikin and Lambda Indonesia both used localized versions of LGBT advocacy. Ali Sadikin's introduction of a native term for transgender women led to more acceptance from the locals. With its magazine called *Jaka*, Lambda Indonesia published many articles covering daily gay activities, and introducing the public to how 'normal' gay life is. These strategies are also in line with the critical commentary by Mutua (2001); instead of replicating a society based on the Global North, international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) need to hear local perspectives and include local actors in strategy-making processes. Native translation of foreign terms, especially anglicized ones, can help local human rights defenders to advocate for equality and fairness by using approaches that incorporate local values. It also ticks one box; it fulfils the trend of anti-America and anti-foreign 'infiltrations' sentiment since the early 2000s in Indonesia (Lim 2005).

Current LGBT Rights Situation in Indonesia

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2014 published an initiative called

'Being LGBT in Asia', a research project conducted in eight Asian countries that "aims to understand the legal, political and social challenges faced by LGBT people, relevant laws and policies, and their access to justice and health services" (UNDP 2014: 3). Since one of the reports was named 'Being LGBT in Asia: Indonesia Country Report', Indonesian officials asked several questions. They complained about the title. They were afraid that the title would suggest that LGBT people can 'exist' in Indonesia, and so, they asked the research team to change the title. However, since the project was funded by INGOs, and conducted in Indonesia and several other Asia Pacific countries, the organization could not (or did not want to) change the title. Again, Mutua was right; "No one should be expected to believe that the scheme of rights promoted by INGOs does not seek to replicate a vision of society based on the industrial democracies of the North" (Mutua 2001: 159).

In the current LGBT movement, Arus Pelangi, one of Indonesia's most prominent LGBT organizations, introduced the term '*transpria*' for transmen and '*transpuan*' for transwomen. GAYa Nusantara's strategy during its early establishment was advocating from the health perspective. They promoted the awareness of HIV/AIDS (human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) and STI (sexually transmitted infections). Arus Pelangi and GAYa Nusantara realized that it would be hard for them to advocate using Western terms, such as 'queer' or 'LGBT', and Western narratives such as 'freedom of expression' or even 'human rights'.

Both early and current LGBT movements have the same characteristics in mobilizing rights. They prefer to use a sociological institutionalist perspective instead of going to the courts. Hamayotsu (2013) states that such case may happen when a country lacks existing relevant laws and it costs a significant amount to mobilize the law.

LGBT Criminalization Effort

Nongovernmental organizations that focus on the rights of LGBT people tend to avoid legal mobilization because Indonesia lacks existing laws supporting the LGBT community. Furthermore, several attempts to criminalize the LGBT community have been conducted by the opponents. In 2016, for example, a conservative group that bases its thinking on traditional family values tried to outlaw homosexuality by creating a petition and doing a judicial review (Satrio 2020).

LGBT issues are also very vulnerable to being politicized. In the last two presidential elections, several false news outlets attacked one of the presidential candidates who allegedly supported the LGBT community. In 2014, Musdah Mulia, a liberal Muslim scholar, who has a good understanding of gender and sexual rights and is LGBT-friendly, was chosen as an expert team member of now President Joko Widodo. Nahi Munkar (2014), a far-right news website, published an article saying that Indonesia might acknowledge the rights of the LGBT people if Joko Widodo was elected as president because his expert advisory team includes Musdah Mulia. LGBT is a hot issue in every election round because politicians use the LGBT community to gain popular votes. As Islam is the majority religion in the country, and conservatism has grown since the early 2000s (Lim 2005), politicians against the LGBT community are likely to get more votes than those who fight for LGBT rights.

Another such example can be found in the last election of 2019. The Indonesian Solidarity Party was the victim of a black campaign when a billboard with the face of its party chair, Grace Natalie, and general secretary, Raja Juli Antoni, with a message supporting the LGBT community, appeared. The party had reported the black campaign to the General Election Supervisory Agency. However, what is more saddening is that almost all, if not all, political parties in Indonesia do not want to be associated with the LGBT community because they are afraid to lose votes. In addition, some people use the LGBT community for black campaigns and fight against LGBT rights for their political gain, if not for entertainment only.

One of the most effective ways to fight for LGBT rights is by joining the system and changing the system from the inside. However, this is not the case in Indonesia for LGBT-rights supporters. Access to political positions has been blocked systematically for LGBT allies, let alone for members of the LGBT community themselves. Legal mobilization for the rights of LGBT people is still distant. Thus, a more realistic way to mobilize rights is through sociological perspectives, for example, through intersectional, cultural, academic, and international approaches.

LGBT Visibility, Body Politics, and Intersectionality

In early 2016, the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission banned all television and radio

channels from promoting LGBT-related programs, including airing men with feminine behaviour and mannerisms (*CNN Indonesia* 2016). Five years after the initial censorship, the same institution reissued a letter banning all LGBT-related content on television and radio channels since March 2021 (Taher 2021).

The effort to silence the LGBT movement did not only come from the entertainment industry. The state also supported the ban through its ministers. In 2016, the Minister of Higher Education and Minister of Defence published controversial statements regarding the LGBT community. The then Minister of Higher Education stated that he has banned all LGBT students from entering Indonesian universities because they do not follow decent values (Mariani and Sampeliling 2016). In a different setting, the then Minister of Defence told the national press that LGBT groups are part of a proxy war and are more dangerous than the nuclear war (*Tempo* 2016). Since then, many organizations, including educational institutions, published discriminatory regulations banning all LGBT people from entering their institutions (SGRC 2019).

Figure 1: Pictures of several demonstration events in Indonesia. From left to right (the same column indicates the same event, which are International Labour Day, Women's March, HIV/AIDS Conference**.**

Source: Author 2018, 2020

The LGBT community has been facing constant struggles due to the oppression and alienization that they receive from society and state actors. However, to reclaim public space, the LGBT community has been working with other social movement organizations, such as labour unions, feminist groups, and public health organizations. The above collection of pictures shows that the LGBT community attended different demonstration events to remind the society that LGBT people exist. The LGBT community and labour rights organizations work closely to demand for the rights of the marginalized groups.

For at least the last five years, labour unions have provided a safe space for the

LGBT community to voice their thoughts during May Day. The intersectional solidarity within the marginalized groups is a powerful tool for social movements to mobilize their rights. While collaboration with labour rights organization has been successfully developed lately, the relationship between the LGBT movement and feminist groups has grown organically. Many common goals glue both groups together. Freedom of expression, bodily integrity, reproductive freedom, and body politics are rights that both the LGBT community and feminist groups are still fighting for. Thus, because both groups face the same oppressor and share the same struggles, it is easier for them to mobilize their rights side by side.

In the health sector, the LGBT community is very vulnerable when it comes to accessible health services. The stigma and discrimination they receive make them reluctant to make health appointments (Whitehead, Shaver, and Stephenson 2016). Thus, a collaboration with health rights organizations is urgently needed to achieve the same goal; equal access to health for all without stigma and discrimination.

Unity in Diversity: Indonesia's LGBT-Friendly Culture

Indonesia has more than 17,000 islands and 1,300 ethnic groups (Yuniarni 2016). These numbers make Indonesia the second most culturally diverse country globally, just after Papua New Guinea, its neighbour. These more-than-a-thousand ethnic groups have different rituals and traditional systems, including how they see gender roles and sexual diversity.

Several Indonesian local cultures are well-known for their LGBT-friendly traditions. The Bugis society in South Sulawesi, for example, has five genders. Other than male and female, they recognize *calalai*, *calabai*, and *bissu* as other genders. Respectively, they are masculine women, feminine men, and non-binary people who are also religious leaders (Ismoyo 2020). In Ponorogo, East Java, same-sex relationships are common in the Gemblak-Warok cultural heritage. In Banyumas, Central Java, men called Lengger Lanang, who dance with feminine gestures and mannerisms, are popular among locals. These traditions are not utilized enough to mobilize LGBT rights. Indonesian people, in general, do not know that these traditions exist. These local approaches can be used to counter the opponents of LGBT rights when they argue that LGBT is a Western product.

Bring the Discussion to the Academic Table

One of the strategies that the opponents of LGBT rights use is that they claim LGBT to be a mental illness. Even though the current version of Pedoman Penggolongan dan Diagnostik Gangguan Jiwa (Indonesia's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual on Mental Disorders, or DSM) excludes homosexuality and bisexuality as mental disorders, hatred against the LGBT community has permeated into what can be considered scientific areas/domains of knowledge.

In 2016, the Indonesian Psychiatric Association (PDSKJI) published a statement claiming that LGBT is a mental disorder and can be cured (*Coconuts Jakarta* 2016). This statement, of course, does not align with international practice. Not long after the initial release of the statement, the American Psychiatric Association sent a letter to PDSKJI stating that there is no rational or scientific basis behind the claim of LGBT being a mental disorder, and that LGBT people do not need to be cured (*Coconuts Jakarta* 2016).

Bringing the discussion about LGBT issues to academia can also make space for a more productive debate and create a protection net for LGBT scientists and academicians when they talk for the LGBT community. With solid scientific arguments, it is less likely for them to receive hateful and aggressive comments. However, the main problem with bringing LGBT issues to the scientific field is that the government does not support it. It is difficult for research centres that use government funding, such as public universities, to research LGBT issues. Such resistance was faced by the Support Group and Resource Center on Sexuality Studies; a research centre for gender and sexuality issues that was established at the University of Indonesia. Even though the research centre did not use government funds, the organization was forced to close or be independent and change their name if they still wanted to have sexuality-related research outputs (Rappler 2016).

International Pressure Does Matter

The aforementioned letter from the American Psychiatric Association is an excellent example of how international exposure can accelerate local movements. Other international organizations and individuals can also play a part in putting pressure to stop the violation

of rights of the LGBT community. In 2020, an OHCHR report titled *Independent Expert on Protection Against Violence and Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity* about conversion therapy mentioned Indonesia as a state that is still practising conversion therapy. The report also found that in a province of Indonesia, officials called for policies that target LGBT people and would detain them in a rehabilitation centre.

In the last Indonesian session of the universal periodic review (UPR), several countries also raised concerns about the LGBT rights situation in Indonesia. Out of the 14 UPR recommendations regarding LGBT rights, only two requests are supported by the Indonesian government (OHCHR 2017). Even though Indonesia is still resistant to acknowledging human rights violations against the LGBT community within its territory, international exposure like the UPR can force the Indonesian government to at least realize that there is a problem regarding their treatment of LGBT Indonesians. Together with human rights violations against Papuans, this pressure is also affecting the Indonesian government's international movement, especially when Indonesia is also a member of the Human Rights Council.

Conclusion

Mobilizing rights can be done in several ways. For example, legal mobilization may be apt in several countries where the system encourages groups or organizations to use legal tools to challenge policies or regulations (Hamayotsu 2013). However, in many other parts of the world, taking legal action to mobilize LGBT rights may cost a lot and may not be more beneficial than using sociological approaches. Indonesia is the latter type. LGBT groups try to avoid legal battles because the system does not support them. They use other methods, such as embracing local cultures, localizing foreign LGBT-related terms, bringing the conversation about LGBT issues to the academic field, and collaborating with other grassroots movements. All these efforts will hopefully make progress for a better life for LGBT people in Indonesia, including the boy who loves to dance, so he will not be afraid to show his feminine side again.

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Poverty Approaches to Address Race and Racism: Channeling Race and Class Solidarity to Achieve Economic and Racial Justice in the United States

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Introduction

Race, as a social construct, but with both material and psycho-social manifestations in the real world, continues to be a major fault line across different societies and contexts, both in the Global North and South. But nowhere has race consistently been a mainstay of public, political, policy, and academic discourse as it has been in the United States — historically and contemporarily. It is no surprise, then, that race also features as an important modality in discourse on poverty and inequality in the American context. Overall poverty rates in the country, disaggregated by race/ethnicity, are often used to convey and reflect upon the historical socio-economic disadvantages that have been experienced by different racial and ethnic groups in America (primarily by Black Americans), compared to White Americans, owing to centuries of institutionalised racism and racist policies. In fact, as Ta-Nehisi Coates described it in his seminal article on reparations in The Atlantic in 2014, "the concentration of poverty [in America] has been paired with a concentration of melanin." (Coates 2014), thereby drawing upon the race/poverty nexus, whereby "plunder in the past made plunder in the present efficient" (Coates 2014), having led to Black people being overrepresented in poor population compared to their representation in the overall population (Creamer 2020).

However, while I agree with Coates' argument regarding the posited correlation between race and poverty, and there are ample data that reflect the existing and persistent racial disparities across income and wealth (and other socio-economic factors like health and education) in America today, I disagree with the approach he utilises in his essay, which is advocating for reparations for Black Americans to address Black poverty and for achieving racial justice. Targeted approaches, such as reparations or even affirmative action policies, which are primarily race-oriented, may not only end up reinforcing and strengthening the racial antagonism and divide between different (minority) racial groups (Johnson 2016, Freed 2020-b), as was visible a few years ago in the case of Harvard University's affirmative action policy that was accused of being discriminatory by Asian-American applicants on the claim

that Harvard was more likely to accept a Black or Latino student applicant than an Asian student applicant of equal merit (Millhiser 2021), but they also obfuscate the differential class-based realities that exist within the Black community (Johnson 2016, Freed 2020-a), (and within other racial groups), at the risk of representing it as a monolithic entity rather than a complex amalgamation of different lived experiences, realities, desires and aspirations, while at the same time also invisibilising the similarities that may exist between sub-groups, such as the poor or working classes, across different racial categories (Johnson 2016, Freed 2020-b, Wilson 2003). Moreover, race-based poverty alleviation solutions also disregard the broader market and capitalist forces at play that, over the last few decades, have dramatically changed the structure of the labour market in the U.S., owing to hyper-industrialisation, large-scale automation, and trade and labour policies that favour corporations rather than workers (Wilson 2003 and Johnson 2016), thereby deepening the economic divide between the managerial and the working class, regardless of their racial group (Wilson 2003), and also limiting the upward economic mobility of poor and working class people across all racial categories (Wilson 2003 and Johnson 2016).

These limitations of race-based poverty solutions, therefore, convey their inability to actually address the problem of race and racism itself. Now one might argue that these solutions, even if circumscribed in their goals, are necessary to right the historical wrongs committed towards Black Americans and other minority groups by White Americans, especially for the country's "spiritual renewal" (Coates 2014) and "healing of the American psyche" (Coates 2014) as is advocated by Coates and other anti-racist activists and politicians, it does beg the question whether the means used to achieve these ends do more harm than good to address the problem of structural racism in America. This is especially deserving of attention because as opposed to race-based targeted approaches, there are other poverty approaches and measures that can serve as more useful tools for tackling, yet not limiting the analysis, only to race. In this essay, I further this argument using examples in the context of three poverty measures — namely, universalism, social exclusion, and participatory approaches. I believe that applying these poverty approaches can help overcome the challenges posed by the targeted (race-based) poverty reduction policies, and help advance the mutual and interconnected goals of class solidarity, economic justice, and racial justice.

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Universalistic approaches — building class solidarity to achieve racial justice:

One of the key critiques of Coates' call for race-based targeted solutions to address Black poverty is rooted in the idea that such a demand fails to account for the relationship between racial inequity and broader political economy (Freed 2020-b), which, if factored in, could help provide a more nuanced and enriching analysis of reasons for the concentration of poverty among communities of colour. As opposed to pinning the blame simply on systemic racism, Black scholars and activists on the Left posit that race must be examined within the context of evolving "historical and political economic relations" (Freed 2015), thereby drawing upon both race and class exploitation as the fundamental axis along which capitalism has always operated (Johnson 2016), whereby race has historically been used as a tool to divide working class people against each other (Johnson 2016). From this Left perspective, therefore, racism and class aren't understood as two distinct entities, but rather located as connected manifestations on the spectrum of exploitation that need to be addressed in relation to each other (Freed 2020-b, Virdee 2017).

This is where a universalistic approach for addressing the class divide, and thereby inequality and racism, can prove to be helpful. A universalistic approach aims to reduce inequality, and thus poverty, by providing a broad range of services, be it education, healthcare, economic security, etc., using a common provisioning system, funded primarily by the public sector (Fischer 2018: 229). To be sure, this idea of universalism is not the same as espoused by the World Bank, which refers to a patchwork of different provisioning systems, sometimes spread across both public and private sectors, as long as everyone is able to access their basic needs (Fischer 2018: 223). On the contrary, the form of universalistic approach to poverty reduction that can also help address racial inequities and disparities is one that centres on promoting and facilitating the social integration of classes (Fischer 2018: 226), underpinned by the principles of egalitarianism and equity (Fischer 2018: 225). Such an approach is also instrumental for reducing inequalities across social groups and classes (Mkandawire 2005) because of its widespread redistribution effect, thereby addressing poverty and economic inequality (Fischer 2018: 230), along with ensuring distribution of and

access to public goods (Fischer 2018: 228), and promotion of class integration and solidarity. Targeting approaches, on the contrary, lead to "othering" of a whole population group (the poor or low-income groups for instance) and further deepen the divide between the have and the have-nots (Fischer 2018: 226).

In addition, the success of a universalist approach can be understood in terms of a) the outcomes it generates, such as coverage, generosity, and equity as outlined by Martinez and Sanchez-Ancochea (Fischer 2018: 243) and, b) the means used to achieve these ends, as posited by Fischer, in terms of the provisional modalities (including access and coverage), costing/pricing, and financing (Fischer 2018: 243-244). One might debate between the two criteria to determine the extent to which an approach is universalistic, but I would contend that when applied in the context of race/poverty interaction, both the means used, as well as the ends accomplished, are important to advance the twin goals of class and racial solidarity. This, for instance, would mean that when we think of healthcare or education, there is not only an institutional framework and mandate that guides and regulates the overall quantity and quality of delivery and access to these services for all, across both public and private sectors (Fischer 2018: 245), but will also advocate for and be implemented with the intentionality and goal to reduce income and other socio-economic inequalities. In this sense, then, a universalistic approach is fundamentally a political project, with the vision to not just alleviate poverty, but instead challenge, re-imagine, and re-order the way we structure our societies and ascertain the inherent value of individuals and communities (Fischer 2018: 252).

These principles that underpin a universalistic approach are precisely what motivate those on the Left of the political spectrum in America today, including Bernie Sanders, to call for universalistic approaches for reducing poverty, closing the widening income inequality gap, and achieving racial justice (Johnson 2016, Freed 2015). The overarching idea is that the current "market liberalism" (Johnson 2016) paradigm is the problem itself, and use of race-based approaches to address poverty is akin to putting a "band-aid on a bullet wound". Instead, a common call for policies that can ensure universal access to healthcare, housing, education, basic income security, etc. are believed to be more effective drivers for uniting the working classes across racial groups (Johnson 2016, Freed 2020-a), resulting in the formation of multiracial movements, that have historically done more to achieve racial

solidarity and justice rather than employing race-oriented solutions at the risk of engendering and reinforcing class-divisions across racial lines (Freed 2015, Johnson 2016, Freed 2020-b). Moreover, a universalistic approach, through its redistribution function would, in fact, disproportionately benefit low income Black and Latinx communities, who are currently overrepresented in the low-income/poor population cohort in the U.S. In the long-term, therefore, a universalistic approach would not only reconcile the divide between the middle- and the working classes, across all racial groups, but also reduce race-based inequities that are often used as tools to foment ideologies of white supremacy and racism.

This, some might say, is a lofty goal that is worth aspiring for as a society. However, why have universalistic approaches, then, not gained more traction compared to demands for reparations or continued affirmative action policies as solutions to address race and racism in America? One of the critiques of universalistic approaches from those who support more race-oriented solutions to address poverty and racism is regarding its apparent failure to account for the disproportionate injustice that minority groups, and Black Americans in particular, have suffered at the hands of the majority White American population over the centuries — ranging from slavery and Jim Crow laws, to contemporary issues of police brutality and mass incarceration of Black boys and men at unjustifiable levels. The call to explicitly use race as a plank to address systemic racism, instead of using a "class reductionist" lens (Freed 2015, Freed 2020-a), as those advocating for a more universalistic approach to address poverty and race are accused of doing, is also associated with the idea that race needs to be talked about in the public and political discourse as a moral obligation (Coates 2014), and that a universalistic approach deflects from this aspect, and could lead to an erosion of anti-discrimination policies altogether (Freed 2015).

However, this critique is both misguided and limiting in its imagination. First, a universalistic approach is itself a political moral project, underpinned by the vision of a world where "everyone is treated the same" (Fischer 2018: 241), and where inequalities and power imbalances of all forms are understood to be interconnected , and hence cannot be addressed without fostering solidarity amongst those who are always the first to bear the brunt of widening inequalities (of all forms) in any society, i.e. the poor and working class people across all racial groups (Freed 2015, Freed 2020-b). Second, while no doubt this vision can be challenging to be put into practice in the real world, more for lack of political will and the

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broader functionings of the political economy, rather than because of lack of funding or resources (Mkandawire 2005), a universalistic approach can, in fact, also address the disproportionate injustices suffered by the Black community and other non-white racial groups, by using a "targeting within universalism" approach, which allows for addressing the needs and disadvantages of a particular group/community, particularly in health and education, while also ensuring that universalistic principles are not compromised (Fischer 2018: 231), and that the starting point remains welfare for all, rather than welfare for a few.

This form of a targeting approach, that is embedded in a universalistic framework, is not only more likely to reduce poverty and inequality (Fischer 2018: 231) compared to targeting approaches devoid of this universalistic base (Mkandawire 2005), but is also more likely to consolidate broader political support and solidarity (Fischer 2018: 232) across racial, gender, and other social categories because of the lack of "segmentation and segregation in provisioning systems" (Fischer 2018: 232) that tend to be an outcome of purely targeting-based approaches. Moreover, in the case of the U.S., target-based approached also run the risk of fuelling a racialised identity politics that manifests itself in increased alienation of groups, and entrenchment of racist and populist rhetoric and policies, as was the case with the election and presidency of Donald Trump. A universalistic approach, thus, not only presents a convincing case to advance economic justice, but can also challenge the normative neoliberal understanding of race and class by positing a path forward to both re-imagine and transform the politics of race and class in America in the 21st century.

Social exclusion approach — building a more nuanced understanding of the poverty/race dynamic:

Another poverty approach that can help nuance the lens we apply to address race and racism, in the context of the United States, is social exclusion. The principle of social exclusion aims to bring into focus the socio-economic discrimination and disadvantages experienced by an individual/group as another dimension of poverty, which impacts one's ability to not only make choices, but also exercise those choices in order to fulfil one's basic needs and lead a life of dignity (Fischer 2018: 143). When applied as a lens to understand poverty and deprivation from the perspective of race, social exclusion can provide not only important

insights on how an imbalance in social power relations (Fischer 2018: 146), that as a dynamic process which occurs across time (Fischer 2018: 152) and within and across different social groups, impacts the access to rights and resources for people and communities of colour, but can also help us to understand the intricacies of exclusion/inclusion processes (Fischer 2018: 152) that occur within a racial group itself. Moreover, I do not view social exclusion as fundamentally separate from universalism, for reasons that will become clear below, but instead as more of a subset approach within the framework of universalism, that can further strengthen the 'targeting within universalism' approach to addressing race and racism in the American context.

Social inclusion can also help identify the attributes of both the causal and positional relativity with respect to exclusion/inclusion processes as they operate in the U.S. context (Fischer 2018: 145). With respect to the causal processes of exclusion, which refers to the idea that an individual might experience both inclusionary and exclusionary processes at the same time (Fischer 2018: 145), one can look at two recent examples concerning Black employees, from different organisational tiers, at Amazon. In the first case, Black corporate employees reported recurring discriminatory behaviour, including racial bias and demotions, experienced by them at Amazon (Rey 2021). In this case, while exclusion might be identified along the lines of racial identity and group, the simultaneous inclusionary process at play is the inclusion of Black labour into the capitalist market, in the form of their employment in management positions at Amazon, thus also facilitating their inclusion into the middle- and upper-middle class strata in the American society, an aspect that Black communities have been designed to be excluded from historically. In the second case, which is related to the recent campaign led by Amazon warehouse workers in Bessemer, Alabama, for unionising to demand and fight for better wages and working conditions (Corkery and Weise 2021), their inclusion in the working class has simultaneously also meant their exclusion from enjoying the benefits of the fruits of capitalism (Ghosh 2021), which instead have been accrued primarily by the wealthiest and the richest in America, thus deepening the levels of income inequality to unsustainable levels, whereby, according to the latest estimates available from 2019, the top 0.1 percent of Americans owned nearly 20 percent of the nation's wealth (Sanders 2021).

Moreover, it is also important to note here that in the second example outlined above,

the vast majority of the warehouse workers in Amazon's Bessemer facility are Black, thereby bringing back into focus the race/class paradigm discussed in the context of universalistic approach, indicative of the exclusionary processes at play both in terms of wages(class) as well as race. But as the Bessemer example illustrates, regardless of race or gender, Amazon warehouse workers are not benefiting equally, and some might say not at all, from the very system that they are contributing their labour towards. These two examples are also helpful to illuminate the positional relativity attribute, whereby a person may be both an excluder and an excludee, both objectively and based on self-perception (Fischer 2018: 145). For instance, the Black corporate employees at Amazon face exclusion along racial lines, but they can also be viewed as an excludee, who hold some amount of power, by partaking in Amazon management practices and policies that alienate and keep warehouse workers, including fellow Black workers in the lower organisational tiers, trapped in poverty or near poverty, and unsafe working conditions. This example illustrates the point that if inclusion has to be achieved in this case, it has to centre on both race and class together (Freed 2020-b, Virdee 2017), and not as separate entities, thus also reinforcing the point discussed above in the context of universalistic approach to race/poverty. This, indeed, also corroborates the intersectionality framework (Fischer 2018: 146), which posits that an individual can experience exclusion along more than one axis of oppression (gender, race, regionality, religion, etc.), leading to experience(s) of oppression both in terms of identity and group/system dynamics. A social exclusion approach can thus help formulate more relevant policy solutions to advance meaningful and cohesive inclusion in practice that challenges, much like a universalistic approach, not just racial biases and norms, but broader underpinnings of the current political economy, along which exclusion/inclusion occurs.

One of the key critiques of social exclusion as an approach, however, is that exclusion and poverty can't be used interchangeably since not all forms of social exclusion lead to poverty (as is evident in the example of Black corporate employees at Amazon) (Fischer 2018: 165-167), although they usually do lead to inequalities, such as income and racial inequality in the examples discussed above. As a result, some advocate for looking at these processes as two distinct entities so as to not limit the use of this analytical tool only to understand poverty (Fischer 2018: 166), but also to go beyond it to understand the broader processes of exclusion and inclusion that are at play in the society at a particular point in

time. I believe this is indeed a valid critique, especially when also applied within an intersectionality paradigm, where exclusion along an individual/group identity, and systemic oppression, may or may not lead to poverty. In fact, as discussed in the two examples above, we see that while exclusion in the case of Black warehouse workers is associated with poverty, exclusion experienced by the Black corporate employees is associated with inequality, but not poverty. This more nuanced understanding of how poverty and inequality can manifest differently within the same racial group, would not have been possible if we opted simply for a money-metric or even multidimensional poverty approach (Fischer 2018: 182). Consequently, learning about how exclusion/inclusion operates, both objectively and subjectively in the upper strata of the society, even when it doesn't lead to poverty, is profoundly telling of the broader institutional and structural dynamics at play (Fischer 2018: 182), which, indirectly, also impact, the poor and marginalised people/communities placed on the lower end of the socio-economic hierarchy. This more intricate understanding of exclusion beyond the purview of poverty can offer radically different policy solutions to address the race/poverty dynamic, instead of limiting ourselves to race-based targeting approaches as the only feasible solution. For instance, not only a universalistic framework can help address the exclusion experienced at the higher end of the social hierarchy (owing to redistributive measures and greater social integration of classes), but also policy solutions that are situated within the universalistic framework, and take into account the complexities of exclusion/inclusion processes, would contribute to more nuanced and contextual 'targeting within universalism' approaches to achieve racial and economic justice as compared to policy solutions that fail to factor in these complex dynamics of exclusion/inclusion.

Participatory approaches — re-centring voices of working-class blacks and whites:

The third and the last poverty approach I would like to discuss with reference to addressing race and racism is the participatory approach, which emerged in the 1980s with the intention to centre "people" in the discourse on poverty and development, who would, ultimately, be the key beneficiaries of the development processes that might be undertaken (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 5). The approach is predicated on the belief that people who are expected to

benefit most from development must have a say, a seat at the decision-making table, and control regarding choices and decisions being made around development policies and programs that have the potential to profoundly impact and shape their life trajectories and future (Chambers 1994, Cooke and Kothari 2001:5). Moreover, this approach was also motivated with the intention to shift the power and control away from donor agencies and international development organisations, to people and communities themselves, who are also repositories of diverse lived experiences, beliefs, skills and perspectives (Chambers 1994, Cooke and Kothari 2001:5) that can be channelled into relevant policy and program solutions, rather than being reliant on a managerial and technocratic class to "provide" solutions (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 5).

While this approach has a set of extremely valid critiques, which I discuss later in the paper, I also believe this approach can help further nuance the understanding of race through a poverty lens on the condition that it is in the pursuit of engendering universalistic policies, and deepening an understanding of the exclusion/inclusion processes to facilitate the achievement of economic and racial justice. To begin with, in the context of poverty/race, this approach can help bring to the fore voices and experiences of working class and poor people, both White and people of colour, who are often left out of the public and policy discourse on poverty and inequality. As pointed out by the historian and writer Keri Leigh Merritt, in specific reference to narratives of the working-class Whites -

> "Poor whites in the South have been written out of history for a very political reason: the idea of a "solid white South," wherein all classes of whites vote the same way and have the same interests, allows the propagation of the Confederate "Lost Cause" narrative, as well as the incorrect (but persistent) notion that all whites are elevated by racism" (Merritt 2019).

Moreover, as Merritt argues, even narratives of "political co-operation between poorer whites and blacks" (Merritt 2019) have been discarded from discourses on poverty and inequality that tend to focus primarily on race as an axis of oppression, leaving out the analysis of how race connects with class, and how both are underpinned by the broader political economy in the American context (Freed 2015). A participatory approach, therefore, can be an important avenue for rendering visible these forgotten narratives and articulations of class and racial solidarity. In fact, one can question, if and whether, mainstream liberal Black intellectuals in American today engage enough with the lived experiences of poor and working-class Blacks,

for whom having decent and safe working conditions, earning a liveable wage, having affordable housing might be as, if not more important, than being not discriminated based on their skin colour. Therefore, just as participatory approaches have been used in poverty and development studies, with certain caveats, to understand conceptions of poverty by the poor people/communities themselves across different dimensions and contexts (Narayan et al. 2000), participatory approaches can be utilised to uncover and understand the contemporary and evolving conceptions and articulations of poverty and inequality as experienced by poor and working-class Whites, Blacks and other racial groups in contemporary America— narratives which can then facilitate advancing and mobilising of support for universalistic approaches to achieve both class and racial justice, led by working-class people themselves from across different racial groups.

One interesting example to which participatory approach can be applied is to deepen our understanding of how people across class and racial groups understand the relationship(s) between class, race, and wealth, as reflected in their own day-to-day lived experiences, along with enabling space for them to share relevant solutions that they perceive would help them thrive, and not just survive. As activist and socialist Hadas Thier outlined in her recent article for Jacobin, reflections and conversations on these interrelationships can play a critical role in not only dismantling existing myths and misconceptions that permeate the American society about the flawed class/wealth binary (Thier 2020), whereby an understanding of class tends to be associated primarily with one's paycheque, educational qualifications, and cultural traits rather than a Marxist understanding of class, which is based on who exercises control over means of production (Thier 2020), but also facilitating "class consciousness" (Thier 2020), leading to a more nuanced understanding and articulation of a "class for itself" (Thier 2020), that is united, and also factors in race (and other forms of social exclusion processes), to advance the goals of economic and racial justice using universalistic frameworks of social policy. In this sense, then, participatory approaches can be subverted to not just "empower" through participation the poor and working classes across racial groups (which is, in fact, not done enough), but also to enable people across other class groups, primarily the middle class, to "voice" their articulations of race and class with the aim of fostering solidarity across different groups.

As mentioned earlier, the participatory approach has been critiqued, and rightly so,

for various different reasons, including the methodological challenges that accompany this approach in practice. However, while it is beyond the scope of this paper to dive into all of these critiques, one of the major critiques of this approach, as outlined by Cooke and Kothari in their book is regarding the politics of the discourse on participatory approach (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 7) — "with what participatory development does as much as it does not do" (Henkel and Stirrat, quoted in Cooke and Kothari 2001: 7). Related to this is the aspect of power, as discussed in relation to how it operates in the context of participatory approaches (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 11-12), whereby Taylor and Hailey argue that participatory approaches employ a "dichotomous" (Taylor and Hailey, in Cooke and Kothari 2001: 11) understanding of power, meaning that some people have power and some don't, versus a Foucauldian understanding of power that implies that power is everywhere, instead of being simply dichotomous and hierarchical (Taylor and Hailey, in Cooke and Kothari 2001: 11). Consequently, the authors outline that given this dichotomous understanding of power, participatory approaches fail to reveal the complex power structures that are embedded within communities, because these power imbalances are often experienced in day-to-day interpersonal relationships (Taylor and Hailey, in Cooke and Kothari 2001: 12), and because of the public nature of a participatory approach (Taylor and Hailey, in Cooke and Kothari 2001: 12), and the positionality of the community as a subject of (outsider) examination (Taylor and Hailey, in Cooke and Kothari 2001: 12), these power dynamics are rarely revealed, and if even if revealed, are often invisibilised owing to the "clean up" (Taylor and Hailey, in Cooke and Kothari 2001: 12) of the data that are gathered and organised before external dissemination, especially if they appear to be "challenging the status-quo, or is messy or unmanageable" (Taylor and Hailey, in Cooke and Kothari 2001: 12).

This is a serious and valid critique of the approach, which questions the fundamental basis of a participatory approach itself. However, it also does posit the interesting question of whether this can offer an opportunity to rethink how and who funds these participatory approaches, who conducts these discussions and how they are trained, and who ultimately is the audience for the findings of this approach. Especially when considered in the context of examining a particular community's beliefs, perspectives, and proposed solutions regarding the race/poverty dynamic, these questions become even more pertinent, because the objective is precisely to build a nuanced understanding of the complexity of power dynamics and

imbalances within and across communities, as manifested in their day-to-day lived experiences, with the conscious intention to challenge the existing power structures, and reorder them to foster solidarity across race and class groups. Therefore, fundamentally, data gathered from a participatory approach, in this context, becomes an important step of a larger moral political project, rather than just being a means to end to merely serve the interests of donors or development agencies. Hence, my proposition to use participatory approaches to poverty as a lens to address race (and class) is issued with the important caveat that this approach be really viewed upon as a tool to genuinely understand and enable the "voices" of the community (particularly poor and working class Blacks and Whites in this case), which entails rethinking or reconsidering the intentionalities, processes, and methodologies to accurately understand and be transparent about the power structures embedded within and across different social relations that play out within and across a community. Having said this, I would still contend the usefulness of a participatory approach to understand and address race and racism in the U.S. context, and though the critiques, as important and constructive as they are, do not necessarily warrant eliminating the use of this approach entirely.

Conclusion:

As discussed throughout this essay, a poverty lens, when situated within three poverty approaches in particular — namely, universalism, social exclusion, and participatory approaches — can be a useful lens to address race and racism in the context of the United States. These approaches, when utilised in tandem, not only help to provide more nuanced analysis and pathways to deconstruct and address the relationship between poverty, inequality, and race, but also offer a more radical and comprehensive way to situate race within the broader processes of class and labour relations, political economy, and power. In doing so, they take us away from the more limiting and narrow goals and solutions, such as reparations or affirmative action policies do by focusing primarily on race, and instead towards potential interventions that are not only invested in addressing race-based inequalities, but also in challenging the status-quo of how labour and class-based inequalities originate, and are organised within a neoliberal market framework that pits race against class.

Moreover, these approaches are fundamentally reflective not just of their conceptual and methodological relevance to address the problem of race, but also of the politics that imbues them — to reimagine, rethink and restructure our societies in ways that are emblematic of the inherent value and dignity of every person, underpinned by principles of social integration and solidarity to realise, in both vision and practice, the goals of economic and racial justice.

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Policy Brief: Male Employment in Italian Childcare Services

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This policy brief was prepared for the Minister for Equal Opportunities and Families of Italy and advocates for government intervention to incentivise male employment in Early Childhood Education (ECE) Services.

Background

One of the most salient features of the Italian welfare state is the persistence of the kinship solidarity model. In such a model, the state has residual responsibility towards family affairs and women's care work is at the core of the family's well-being (Bimbi 1999: 73). Italy has been ranked in the European Gender Equality Index amongst the European countries with the lowest gender equality (Rosselli 2014). It is exemplary that Italy's female school enrolment is around the European average, but female employment is well below it (respectively, 60% and 75.4%). Women generally resign from work after childbirth and such rates alarmingly increase every year. In 2011, it was 17.175 the number of women's resignations due to incompatibilities between work schedules and family duties, in 2015 it rose to 25.620 and in 2019 to 37.611 (Di Cesare 2020). The resilience of the male breadwinner model is behind such phenomenon, according to which men are the primary income earner and women are fully responsible for the family. Such paradigm questions women's rights, economically harms the country and holds Italy back from development. There have been several attempts to change this model, which have mainly focused on reforming parental leaves and providing allowances to families with dependent children.

The newest attempt is the 'Family Act', approved in June 2020. It traces the traditional path: it has extended compulsory paternal leaves from 7 to 10 days and replaced the already existing family bonuses under a single allowance, which grants a maximum of 400 euros (depending on the family's income) for each dependent child (Di Cesare 2020). Despite its good intentions, it is doubtful that this reform will achieve what the past ones failed and reverse the male breadwinner model. Allowances for dependent children may increase female labour force rates, but there is a limit to what they can achieve if underlying gender norms go unchallenged (Thébaud and Pedulla 2016: 594). The 'Family Act' provides

women new tools to balance their work-life with care-work but it does not call into question that family is women's duty in the first place. Concerning the extension of 'daddy days', not only is a ridiculously marginal increase, but it also does not guarantee the involvement of men in family care-work. The case of Sweden is indicative in this regard: it was the first country to implement a shared paternal leave in 1974, yet even today women vastly outweigh men in taking up parental leave (Meeussen et al. 2020: 309). As long as the gender norms underpinning the Italian family paradigm are not targeted, it is doubtful that a substantial change will take place. This policy brief proposes an unconventional to address such gender norms: incentivising male employment in early childhood education (ECE) services.

Reason for intervention

ECE represents a crucial site of the production and reproduction of gender differences and inequalities. In ECE, gender acts as the organising principle in ways that are closely aligned with the society's order (Sergent 2005: 257). It is exemplary that the percentage of Italian ECE male teachers is 1.1% and that until 1991 the official name of childcare institutions was 'maternal school' (OECD 2018: 29). In ECE, conceived as an extension of home, women are the natural incumbents: the assumption is that these occupations perfectly suit the communal traits expected to be inherent in womanhood, while they are not suited to men, who are rather characterised by agential traits such as strength and boldness (Cameron 2001: 441). By promoting male employment in ECE, it is possible to target such ideologies, particularly the stereotypical views of masculinity, at their very core. This intervention may benefit men, women, children, and society as a whole.

Benefits for men

While women seem to acquire their womanhood simply because of biology, men must 'earn their gender' throughout their entire life, by socially displaying masculine roles and behaviours. Masculinity is seen as something difficult to obtain, that can be easily lost and that needs to be regularly validated through other men's approval (Meeussen et al. 2020: 303; Thébaud and Pedulla 2016: 593). Because of the precariousness of manhood, gender norms are more narrowly defined for men than for women and gender-deviant behaviours are more

costly to men than women (Koch and Farquhar 2015: 381). For instance, men that manifest traits that are stereotypically feminine (i.e. being emotional or caring), will likely be ridiculed and may be beaten up. Such a backlash plays an important role in preventing men from engaging in communal roles and it ultimately deprives them of their right to choose (Meeussen et al. 2020: 304). Studies have shown that gender norms are more likely to change when institutions are targeted, rather than individuals (as in the case of 'daddy days') (Meeussen et al. 2020: 317). By incentivising male employment in ECE at an institutional level, the government will take part in re-shaping the social expectations of what manhood is. This will broaden men's right to choose free of gender codes and reduce their social costs of backlash.

Benefits for women

Male- and female-gender norms are two sides of the same coin: one cannot advance without the other (Thébaud and Pedulla 2016: 591). So far, Italian policies aimed at targeting the family paradigm by tackling women's stereotypes and incentivising their workforce, through public subsidies and flexible scheduling. However, such policies advance women's equality only to a certain extent, after which they hit a glass ceiling (Thébaud and Pedulla 2016: 592). Women cannot fully achieve workplace equality if household inequality keeps constraining them. To remove such ceiling, it is crucial to tackle the norm that communal tasks, as children's upbringing, are a prerogative of women. Incentivising male employment in ECE can advance women equality as it promotes men in communal roles.

Benefits for children

Early childhood is a critical time for gender identity development (Cole et al. 2019). Having a balanced staff composition in childhood services can enable children to view gender not as biologically determined but rather as socially constructed and continually negotiated (Sumsion 2005: 115). Over the long run, this provides both boys and girls with the opportunity to think about their future outside of social gendered expectations, explore agentic and communal interests alike and not settle for the option that is most consistent with their gender stereotype.

Benefits for society

It has been found that men that experience masculinity backlash, are more likely to engage in partner violence, sexual harassment, and collective beatings (Meeussen et al. 2020: 304). By broadening the idea of masculinity at an institutional level, the root causes of such violence may be put to rest. Moreover, since male employment in ECE can prompt more men to take part in care-work in their household, fewer women may resign, and this can ultimately improve Italy's GDP. Finally, because gender ideologies are targeted so early in children's lives, men in ECE may serve as a catalyst of cultural change that breaks the vicious cycle of gender norms that have been passed through generations.

Outline of intervention

To obtain such benefits, it is crucial to make the ECE profession more appealing to men and specify their role as male teachers. This means:

1. Increase the salary of ECE workers
ECE professions are amongst the lowest paid in Italy (ECE's monthly salary is around 1,250 euros, while the monthly average wage is 1.729 euros) (OECD 2018). Such inadequate wage makes this profession a hard sell for anyone (Cameron 2001: 434; Cole et al. 2019; Meeussen et al. 2020: 310). It can especially discourage men, given the social expectation of being the family's income provider. It is crucial to increase ECE wages to make this career more appealing to any gender.

2. Promote a positive image of men in ECE
Addressing compensation levels is an important measure, but it is not enough (Meeussen et al. 2020: 310). The few material rewards of ECE are only part of the explanation behind the lack of male employees: the root cause lays in masculine norms, in the idea that real men should not engage in communal occupations (Koch and Farquhar 2015: 381). It is not possible to directly target those norms (as they have been internalised through an entire lifetime), but it is possible to address the contextual factor that reflects them (Thébaud and

Pedulla 2016: 611). For instance, until now recruitment posters and public service announcements have been dominated by images of women. They could be replaced with others where men are the ones teaching children. Moreover, campaigns can highlight the agentic traits needed for this occupation, such as dedication and assertiveness as key qualities to shape the leaders of next generations. Once more men start working in ECE services, it may become a self-reinforcing process given that masculinity depends on other men's expectations.

3. Redefine the role of male teacher

Once male employment increases, it is crucial to redefine the role they will be playing. The presence of male teachers is praised by administrators and parents as long as it provides boys with a model they can identify with: someone who can help them develop their interests in a masculine-consistent way (Cole et al. 2019; Cameron 2001: 435). If female teachers are conceived as 'surrogate mothers', men play the role of 'father-teacher', teaching boys how to be men as compensation for an absent father at home (Sumsion 2005: 113). The few men already involved in ECE generally give in to this pressure to keep their job. However, if men are expected to act in gender-stereotyped ways, none of the expected benefits will be obtained. Staff and managers alike must undergo training that informs them of the importance of dismantling such gender codes and creating a third way alongside the binary mother-teacher and father-teacher. It may be difficult to think outside of the gender-box and come up with new strategies to manage gender expectations, thus group activities could be monthly organised, involving role plays and brainstorming sessions (Cole et al. 2019).

Assessment of feasibility

The prospect of men in early childhood services is generally resisted for two reasons: the possibility that it recreates gender norms instead of challenging them; parents themselves may not feel comfortable with male teachers. Specifically, it is argued that ECE would not be immune to the structural process typical of every occupation: men may rise more rapidly to highly paid administrative positions compared to women, penalising the latter (Meeussen et al. 2020: 315; Sargent 2005: 257; Sumsion 2005: 111). While women who enter male-

dominated occupations are harassed or ridiculed, men who do traditionally female-jobs, do well both financially and in terms of work opportunities (Cameron 2001: 439). There are several reasons for this. The first one is the idea of 'straight through careers': men may be preferred for work promotion because it is unlikely they will ever take a break or seek part-time opportunities for family duties (Cameron 2001: 439). A second reason is that everyone, even men who engage in typically female-jobs, internalises gendered expectations to a certain extent. Administrators may prefer men in positions of power because of the gendered assumption they are predisposed to leadership and authority, men may fight for those positions to exhibit masculine traits that the job itself has deprived them of (Kalemba 2006: 660). However, such distortions could be solved via stricter promotion's criteria (i.e. more years of experience with children, peer evaluations). Moreover, maintaining ECE as a gender-segregated occupation harms women. The reason why men do not engage in ECE services (despite the many advantages of non-traditional careers), is the gendered construction of care work itself and this is currently more detrimental to women than having a few men in senior positions.

Maintaining ECE as a female-dominated workforce further strengthens the division between agentic and communal roles, lowering the status (and income) of the latter. Another factor that limits the feasibility of this intervention is parents' disapproval. They may feel uncomfortable giving their children to a man because of the social construction that if he is interested in childhood, he must have perverse sexual orientations (Koch and Farquhar 2015: 387; Cameron 2001: 444). This double standard (women equal love, men constitute danger) can cost men their whole career: if female teachers hug children it is considered to be an integral part of their teaching; if a man does it, he may be accused of sexual abuse (Sargent 2005: 254). However, it is not by removing male employees that the possibility of sexual abuse disappears: women workers are most responsible for such abuses in Italy. The question should not be whether or not to have male employees, but rather how to maximise children's safety. This could be done by extending the monitoring system, conducting better recruitment checks and pre-school training. If parents would still consider suspicious male presence, a touch policy could be designed. Excluding psychical touch at all would be unrealistic given its importance for young children, but explicit guidance about what is allowed and what is not may be useful (Loewenberg 2017). Moreover, campaigns advocating for the importance

of having a balanced staff composition, focusing on the benefits of male involvement, may bring parents on board with such initiative.

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