

**COMMUNITY INTER-CHANGES: CREATING AN INCLUSIVE MONEYLESS
ECONOMY IN SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS, CHIAPAS, MEXICO**

by © Erin Araujo (Dissertation) submitted
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Abstract

This dissertation examines the theory and praxis of creating a decolonial anarchist moneyless economy in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico. El Cambalache (The Swap in English) is a community economies research project that explores what kinds of socio-technical networks arise through the use of consensus decision-making as a method and non-hierarchical relationships as a methodology for generative justice. The project has created its own practices of exchange value called ‘inter-change value’ in which anything that might be exchanged is deemed to be of equivalent value, either because it would normally be discarded or because it constitutes something someone wishes to share. What is exchanged via inter-change may include things one no longer needs or would normally discard (used clothing, cookware, laptops) and/or knowledge (workshops on skills such as herbal medicine or parenting), abilities (consultations with doctors and lawyers) or mutual aid (collective gardening, construction, or candle making) that people would like to share. El Cambalache is a project that focuses on participants as being resource-full though they might not have much access to money. The project strives to embrace non-capitalist economic relationships that support the well-being of the community that participates in it. This dissertation includes a collection of three published manuscripts. These manuscripts are accompanied by a literature review, historical context and the theory of inter-change value which are included in order to situate the published works.

Dedication

A las Cambalacheras.

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List of Abbreviations

ABCD- Asset Based Community Development

DEF- Diverse Economies Framework

EZLN- Zapatista National Liberation Army

MDG- Millennium Development Goals

NAFTA- North American Free Trade Agreement

PROCEDE- Programa de Certificación de Derechos Ejidales y Titulación de Solares

UNSDA2030- United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda 2030

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Thesis Text

Part I: Background of the Research

1.1 Overview of the Dissertation

The children were slow to begin breakdancing. They had been slotted between 6 - 8 p.m. About one hundred people were looking on, trying to decide whether to stay or go. Then an 8-year-old Tzotzil girl jumped into the middle of the patio and started dancing to the music. The crowd cheered, clapped and looked on. Now Tzotzil boys and girls of all ages between 2-18 years old were anxious to dance. One after another came out spinning, jumping, and gliding through the air in time to the hip hop music driving them forward. The crowd, the community, was ecstatic-cheering and shouting to encourage the children on. A two-year-old baby came out and gave a spin on her back. Then her father, the organizer of the dancers came out swooped her up and did some moves with her in his arms. Later in the evening we shared dinner and juice with all of the dancers, thanking them for their participation in our anniversary party. The closeness and affection felt over dinner, the constant flow of people passing by the children to congratulate them, the thrill of being recognized by others for doing something fantastic lit up the kids faces. It makes me think that there are no limits to what can be exchanged in this micro-economy we are all trying to make together. Somehow, because everyone that participates in the project desires it, we are making it work.

(Field Notes, June 5, 2017, El, Cambalache, San Cristobal de las Casas)

The excerpt above was taken from my field notes on El Cambalache's second anniversary party. We were celebrating our community. The party, like the micro-economy, brings together seemingly contradictory but, in actuality, complementary aspects of our moneyless, decolonial, anarcha-feminist exchanges. There are many exchanges taking place that are not necessarily valued in a capitalist economy. In a thin, strictly material reading of the event, children and adults exchanged their abilities for dinner and juice or beer. However, the most valuable, enduring exchanges manifest as

support, joy, memory, networks and building a community. After the party the breakdance 'crew' continued to developing allies, friends and other forms of support/mutual aid. This support helps them pull kids away from drug use and/or other risk situations and into dance. These indigenous Tzotzil children reclaim pride in their language and culture through rapping in Tzotzil to hip hop beats and connecting with their bodies through breakdance. In a thin reading of mixing indigenous youth with hip hop one would say that the process is not decolonial because the style of music is originally from the United States of America. However, in a thick reading, these practices, these lyrics, call out to other young people about loving oneself and one's culture instead of being ashamed of being an indigenous person. The dancers and rappers create a contagious joy. They also create a different kind of economic value for themselves and others, one that might be understood as non-capitalist because what they exchanged were abilities (dance), experience (music), emotion (joy), food, and drink rather than labor power and money.

This dissertation reflects on mobilizing existing and newly developed non-capitalist value through the creation of El Cambalache, a moneyless micro-economy in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico. This value grows out of exchanging such things as objects (e.g., radios, shoes, books and tools), knowledge (e.g., workshops and talks on collective economics or indigenous herbal medicine), abilities (e.g., acro-yoga, guitar lessons, or language lessons), or mutual aid (e.g., construction or house painting) that, within a capitalist economy, might otherwise be discarded, regarded as value-less or marginal at best.

The work presented in this dissertation is the product of collective research in El Cambalache. The project began as an action-research project in decolonial, anarcho-feminist, heterodox economic geography in partial completion of the requirements for my PhD. The overarching goal of the project is to transform non-capitalist economic practices and concepts of value by increasing resource access to residents of the city in a non-capitalist economic space while decreasing their dependence on money. The resources in question include people's daily needs for healthcare, education, material objects, information, food, legal counselling, electronics and anything else that can be exchanged. Many of the things in the aforementioned list have value in a capitalist economy however they are not readily available to people that are socially marginalized through coloniality. For El Cambalache, a different kind of economic value is created when we create ways for marginalized people to have access to a wide variety of resources normally inaccessible in a capitalist economy while connecting knowledge and items that are considered valueless or marginal with people that might otherwise not ascribe an economic value to them. This goal is being realized on a daily basis through moneyless exchanges of goods and services in El Cambalache.

This concept of value is part of El Cambalache's creation of a new theory of exchange value the collective calls 'inter-change value'. This form of value was developed through the use of consensus decision-making as research. As I discuss elsewhere in the thesis, the consensus decision-making process can create novel approaches to producing knowledge, interacting economically and consistently creating research that supports the community where it is done. Within this project, co-researchers

and I have worked to create research that not only values the needs of the community where we work but also engages in a process of continual growth within the project that is by and for the community that creates it. For El Cambalache, this growth has been through the continuous incorporation of more people participating in inter-changes, expanding the use of inter-change value and increasing access to more inter-changeable resources. The scope of this dissertation is to understand how consensus decision-making, when incorporated into the formation of non-capitalist economic projects, can produce new economic knowledge while meeting people's needs for resource access by creating networks of care. Consensus decision-making as a research method is explored in sections of Chapter 2 and Chapter 4. The theory of inter-change value is presented in section 2.4, while an explanation of what and how non-capitalist economic projects and networks of care function are incorporated into each of the individual manuscripts of the thesis.

This investigation is situated within several bodies of knowledge. These are community economies and the Diverse Economies Framework (DEF); the decoloniality of thought; anarchist geographies, and generative justice. These concepts are elaborated in Chapter 2. The concepts are put to work in an investigation consisting of performative economic research executed by a diverse group of six women. Performative research or action research recognizes that doing research is always a transformative political action because the intervention of the investigator changes the worlds that are investigated. In this way research also creates worlds (St. Martin, Roelvink and Gibson-Graham, 2013).

This particular research project does not exploit or oppress the co-researchers, it

celebrates them; bringing to the forefront their knowledge of non-capitalist economic practices. Within a decolonial perspective, this research is a recognition of the wealth of knowledge embodied in each person that has been part of the economy. This space began within the anarchist theoretical foundation that each voice of the collective is of equal importance. This is known as a non-oppressive research methodology because it privileges the growth of a collective voice of six women creating a feminist economy. That is, we work to create an economy that is based on meeting women's needs drawn from their life experiences in non-capitalist economic practices.

Furthermore, the research is a practice in generative justice which as defined by Eglash (2016:382) as, "The universal right to generate unalienated value and directly participate in its benefits; the rights of value generators to create their own conditions of production; and the rights of communities of value generation to nurture self-sustaining paths for its circulation." The research enacts forms of generative justice because the community that participates in El Cambalache contributes to the generation of its exchange value and creates the quotidian economic interactions that are the project itself. These issues of research in generative justice are elaborated in the methods section of chapter 2 and explored further in the three manuscripts presented as chapters 3 through 5 of the dissertation.

An essential part of making heterodox economic projects viable is ensuring that the results of this research are shared with both the academic and non-academic communities. The non-academic community that is part of the project is constantly informed of the progress, success and difficulties the project faces through daily

conversations, the creation of our documentary (this is touched on in chapter 4) and other grassroots educational materials, public presentations, events and weekly meetings. Reaching non-academic audiences through such outreach activities is an important and ongoing part of the El Cambalache process achieved via the activities just mentioned. However, I do not deal with these activities in detail in my thesis given that I chose to focus on other aspects of the project which are reflected in the chapters that follow.

1.1.1 A Note on the Style of this Thesis

This manuscript style dissertation is an important part of informing academic communities of the project's empirical results and theoretical proposals. The manuscript style dissertation is a compilation of published articles and academic book chapters that allows for the dissemination of knowledge to a larger public than a traditional style manuscript. It allows for the timely participation in scholarly debates that is facilitated by publishing in academic journals and books. Furthermore, now more than ever, it is important for early-career academics to be publishing scholarly work as much as possible. The increasing demand for publications by early career academics has become an essential part of being a competitive candidate for academic employment following completion of the doctorate. By pursuing the manuscript style thesis not only have I been able to be published but I have been able to forge connections with critical scholars in my field.

The format of the manuscript style dissertation has specific structural requirements that facilitate the flow and linkage between the ideas within the three articles that make up the body of the thesis. This structure includes an introduction and

overview of the dissertation, the three articles presented as chapters, and a summary.

These sections contribute to the creation of a more unified body of knowledge within the piece as a whole.

Following this short introductory chapter, readers will be presented with an analytical review of relevant literature. As I discuss in depth there, my dissertation research draws on bodies of knowledge that, while not frequently used together, nevertheless bring crucial conceptual and analytical insight when put into conversation with one another. Broadly speaking, these bodies of knowledge comprise research and writing within community economies and the diverse economies framework (DEF); the decoloniality of thought; anarchist geographies, and generative justice. Despite their many differences, these literatures can be put into productive conversation with each other and doing so renders conceptual and analytical insights that alone might be obfuscated. One of the strengths of this thesis is that by building connections between these bodies of knowledge novel ways of doing research have been made possible. This combination has led to the production of uncommon knowledge that arises from non-capitalist economic praxis. As I demonstrate in Chapter 2 all four bodies of knowledge might be said to fall within critical geography. Yet, there is little conversation between each realm of study. Putting these literatures into productive conversation with one another is one of the ways that this dissertation project offers a fresh perspective within the field of economic geography.

It is important to note that due to the structure of the manuscript style thesis readers might feel as though presentation of the project and the research itself occurs late

in the work. However, the structure of the dissertation requires that the information be presented as such and thus I suggest that if one would like to better understand certain aspects of the research initially, a non-linear reading of the dissertation rather than a straight front to back reading of it, might be best.

The overarching goal of this dissertation is to communicate how using what I call a non-hierarchical, non-monetary exchange value creates care-based, inclusive economic relationships. This exchange value, or what the project calls ‘inter-change value’, assumes that all knowledge and objects exchanged have equal value. These exchanges do not depend on money as a mediator. The theory of inter-change value is presented in section 2.4 of the thesis. The terms care-based, inclusive economic relationships refer to the idea that if everything in the economy has the same value and all non-oppressive abilities are valued then everyone has equal access to resources and this access to resources implicitly creates care (I develop these concepts in each of the three chapters which form the published portions of my thesis). A care-based, inclusive economic praxis arises through the provision of goods and services where profit is not sought. Rather, the intent of these economic interactions is to ensure a non-oppressive quality within the interactions, relationships, and the provision of the actual service or good instead of only focusing on its consumption.

The praxis of creating this micro-economy was built out of consensus decision-making. That is to say, our horizontal (non-hierarchical) exchange value came out of a horizontal decision-making process. In the articles presented in Chapter 3 I explain how and what kind of knowledge is produced through consensus decision-making in the

creation of a non-capitalist economy. Consensus decision-making as a research method is under-researched but, as will be explained throughout the thesis, it is a useful, non-oppressive method for the production of knowledge.

Three scholarly papers were created to communicate the process and results of this investigation. Each paper focuses on a different aspect of how consensus decision-making creates experiences, knowledge, and social processes and how inter-change value creates inclusive, just economic relationships. Inter-change value and consensus decision-making are woven together in the articles born within the anarchist principle of non-domination where theory and practice is first held against the metric of whether or not it creates an environment of oppression over any human or more-than-human actor. In this way inter-change value was created out of the belief that if within the project everyone's participation has the same value then in the economic project all exchanges must also have the same value (I elaborate on this set of points in section 2.4 and chapters 3, 4, and 5). Since its creation inter-change value has been used in over one thousand registered exchanges that are El Cambalache. The difference between a moneyless economy in general and inter-change value as embraced by El Cambalache is explained in the diverse economies section of the next chapter.

El Cambalache is also an example of anarchism in theory and practice because it strives to remove hierarchy from relationships and networks. Anarchist economic praxis is one aspect of the DEF. The DEF recognizes that while the dominant, most visible economy on a world scale is capitalism, there is a great range of economic relationships and practices that are part of quotidian activities. The economic activities that are found

in peoples lives involve sharing, giving, caring, volunteering, exchanging, and mutual aid. This is especially common among people that do not meet all of their basic needs through a capitalist system. As performative research within the DEF El Cambalache privileges and formalizes non-capitalist activities that are often undervalued within capitalism. For example, practices such as indigenous herbal medicine, classes in Tzeltal, and caring for probiotic bacteria are valued as important parts of this non-capitalist economy. The three articles presented in the thesis explore how re-valuing abilities and objects in economic interactions transforms social relationships through an internal, personal process of re-valuing one's knowledge and self-worth. Because personal and collective transformation is understood as an integral part of economic relationships one of the focuses of this research became the connections between people that re-value collective and community processes. In the experience of El Cambalache social inclusion can be supported in a non-capitalist economic process that creates rich enduring relationships. Issues and practices of economic knowledge production will be expanded upon in Chapter 2.

When co-researchers decide and guide the development of research in the performance of an economy (Callon, 2007) as equals the construction of the knowledge base becomes a collective process. This process is unusual in the generation of scientific thought because co-researchers may not have been trained in academic styles of objective knowledge production. Rather, the knowledge produced within this non-capitalist economy is derived directly from subjective experiences of oppression by a capitalist economic system. For example, we are creating knowledge about the kinds of

relationships of care that arise from practicing moneyless inter-changes. In this way research becomes a vehicle for non-oppressive social change where the quotidian lessons learned lead to and reify spaces of well-being and even flourishing for investigators, research participants and co-researchers. This is particularly important in the creation of economic knowledge because those who most experience the ravages of capitalism are those in money-poor regions. The process lends itself to an epistemological shift in the generation of academic knowledge. If epistemology studies the nature of knowledge, belief, and its justification, then the nature of knowledge produced in a consensus process normalizes the collective voice as the source of knowledge. In the creation of El Cambalache, the collective voice expressed hails from women that are Mexican, indigenous, single mothers and queers.ⁱ This collective voice is one that is often socially and academically marginalized. The three papers in this thesis bring to the forefront this voice as an epistemic generator.

The first paper is titled, “Consensus decision-making as method: how non-hierarchical research creates generative justice” (Araujo, 2016a). It is published in a special issue on generative justice for the December 2016 edition of *Teknokultura, Journal of Digital Culture and Social Movements*, an online peer-reviewed journal. This article is a praxiography of consensus decision-making as a research method.

ⁱ Politics around identities and subjectivities of the co-researchers will be expanded upon in the Methods section of this chapter.

Praxiography is a term developed by Annemarie Mol (2002) that refers to the study of practices and the realities they create. The paper explores how the use of consensus decision-making creates spaces of generative justice because the economic system created in the process is by and for the people that create it. This article explains how consensus decision-making works when used as a research method and shares the experiences and challenges of co-researchers in the process. The format for this paper satisfies the requirements for Teknokultura.

The second paper is “Collective Exchanges: Reflections from a decolonial feminist moneyless economy in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico” (Araujo, 2016b). It was published in a special issue on Protest and Activism With(out) Organization in the International Journal on Sociology and Social Policy. The article was selected by the journal’s editorial team as the Outstanding Paper in the 2017 Emerald Literati Network Awards for Excellence. The article reflects on the process of creating El Cambalache as a decolonial feminist space that creates an experience of resource-fullness. Resource-fullness refers to the idea that though one might be money-poor, each person is full of resources in the form of knowledge and abilities (Kretzman and McKnight, 1993). The article explains that the experience of being resource-full is the base of the economic project in El Cambalache, derived from consensus decision-making and inter-change value. In this way the project is built on the idea that as individuals we might not have enough but as a community we have all the resources we need. This paper is formatted to meet the style requirements of the International Journal on Sociology and Social Policy.

The third and final paper in the thesis is “Building an alternative economy as decolonial praxis” (Araujo, 2017). It is accepted for publication in the edited book *The Politics of Indigenous Spaces: Forging Indigenous Places in Intertwined Worlds*, to be published by Routledge in August, 2017. This paper explores the under-theorized and under-practiced space of decolonial economic praxis. While a large body of literature has been created around the decoloniality of thought and the decoloniality of power and many authors recommend engaging in decolonial economic praxis, there has been surprisingly little activity in the latter area of research. Decolonial economic praxis is the creation of an economy that does not reproduce coloniality in economic relationships. Coloniality is the extension of the colonial/modernist system of class division and resource appropriation through the constructions of race, ethnicity, gender, ability and sexuality (Maldonado Torres, 2007). Praxis that does not reify coloniality is done by focusing on de-westernizing one's approach to economic relationships and incorporating the ontos and epistemes of the people involved in the creation of the economy. This paper meets the formatting and style requirements for publication with Routledge.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a brief background of the research through a literature review, methods section, an overview of contemporary and historical context relevant to El Cambalache and the place it is located (San Cristobal de las Casas), and a theory of inter-change value. The literature review situates this research in the scholarly literature to demonstrate its relevance and potential impact in economic geography. Because this dissertation is a manuscript style dissertation, where the body is built of two standalone articles and a book chapter, each of those pieces also has a separate literature review in the structure of the chapter. In order to bring the three pieces together I will not repeat the arguments made in each manuscript but rather offer an overview of the contemporary and historic context of research in diverse economies, generative justice, economic decoloniality, discards studies and anarchist geographies. The articles explore integrating decoloniality within the DEF by focusing specifically on how mutual aid and moneyless exchanges expand a sense of ‘we’ or community interdependence. As mentioned previously in Chapter 1, decoloniality and diverse economies are not only congruent research spaces for theorizing and practicing a moneyless economy, but they also rely on an action research methodology which supports just social change. The following sections of the thesis helps to familiarize the reader with the theoretical foundations of the research presented.

2.1.1 The Diverse Economies Framework and Community Economies in the Majority World

The work of JK Gibson-Graham and the Community Economies Research

LABOR	TRANSACTIONS	PROPERTY	ENTERPRISE	FINANCE
Wage	Market	Private	Capitalist	Mainstream Markets
ALTERNATIVE PAID Self-employed Reciprocal labor In-kind Work for welfare	ALTERNATIVE MARKET Fair trade Alternative currencies Underground market Barter	ALTERNATIVE PRIVATE State-managed assets Customary (clan) land Community land trusts Indigenous knowledge (Intellectual Property)	ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST State owned Environmentally responsible Socially responsible Non-profit	ALTERNATIVE MARKET Cooperative Banks Credit unions Community-based financial institutions Micro-finance
UNPAID Housework Volunteer Self-provisioning Slave labor	NON-MARKET Household sharing Gift giving Hunting, fishing, gathering Theft, piracy, poaching	OPEN ACCESS Atmosphere International Waters Open source IP Outer Space	NON-CAPITALIST Worker cooperatives Sole proprietorships Community enterprise Feudal Slave	NON-MARKET Sweat equity Family lending Donations Interest-free loans

Figure 1: The Diverse Economies Framework. From <http://www.communityeconomies.org/Home/Key-Ideas>. Accessed September 4, 2016.

Network has, over the past twenty years, shown that the economy is not a unified capitalist system but rather a varied and textured landscape of highly diverse economic interactions (See Gibson-Graham 1994, 2006; Roelvink, St. Martin and Gibson-Graham, 2013 among others). Working within an anti-essentialist perspective capitalism is shifted from an imaginary where it is composed as a singular unified global economic order to being one of a plethora of parallel and intertwined economic relationships, systems and subjectivities. Within community economies research one of the primary tools used for analyzing the multiple practices and relationships that comprise the economy is the diverse economies framework or DEF (Gibson-Graham, 2006). The framework breaks down different aspects of the economy by examining the economic relationships as expressed through labor, transactions, property, enterprise and finance. In Figure 1 I present an example of the DEF. The relationships that make up the capitalist economy are

displayed in the second row of the diagram. Rows three and four show other kinds of economic relationships present in the economy. The examples of alternative capitalist practices include cooperatives, self employment, fair trade systems, and community supported agriculture. Non-capitalist practices also abound, including gifting, volunteering, sharing, and mutual aid. The DEF demonstrates that when capitalism is de-centered from being the primary, all encompassing economy towards a heterodox economic space, it becomes only one form of economic interaction among many. Diverse economies research weakens the economic hegemony of capitalism and brings to the forefront other economic practices which are then seen as viable projects rather than idealistic fantasies (Healy, 2009).

The diverse economies research agenda explores alternative capitalist and non-capitalist economic systems through performative research methods. Performative research recognizes that when an investigator interacts with a research subject or participant, that person or community is in some way transformed by the presence of the researcher (Gibson-Graham, 2006). As suggested by Judith Butler (1990), performativity refers to how people create identities and realities through performing them in their daily lives. Gibson-Graham applied this concept to research and the production of knowledge (Ibid). Research in all of its theorizations and practices performs myriad networks of power and sociality (Law and Urry, 2004). These networks can change how the world is experienced, decision-making and outcomes in people's daily lives. In reflecting on the performativity of research Gibson-Graham proposed that if research is already performative and never a neutral process, then why not actively per-form the political and

economic struggles necessary for creating social change? In this way performative research has become one of the principal methods assemblages (Law, 2004) used by investigators in heterodox economics.ⁱⁱ

In El Cambalache we develop and practice a performative approach to understanding the economy. As we develop the micro-economy of El Cambalache it is understood that the project embraces one of myriad ways of interacting economically. Rather than create El Cambalache within a revolutionary mindset, offering to participants a solution to economic and



Figure 2: El Cambalache's Logo, Desarmando el Capitalismo, which in English is Dismantling Capitalism. Drawing by Erin Araujo, painted collectively on the walls of El Cambalache.

social oppression writ large, we suggest that we can perform our economy as we choose and that process has the potential to create social connections of care while decreasing our dependence on money. This perspective is visualized in the project's logo in Figure 2. The butterflies in the logo have at least two meanings. First, a variety of women's social movements in Latin America have used butterflies as their symbol, thus El Cambalache's

ⁱⁱ For more information about methods assemblages see Law, 2008 as well as the methods section of this dissertation.

logo signals solidarity with those movements. The second meaning is metaphorical in that while butterflies may seem delicate and fragile, even vulnerable to their environment, when brought together en masse they can change their surroundings. For example, within an ecological perspective butterflies are major pollinators that transform their surroundings by participating in the creation of food for other organisms while eating plants that otherwise might have unbalanced, explosive populations. The screwdriver held by the butterflies is our collective tool for dismantling capitalism understood not as a unified and monolithic whole, but a variegated assemblage with many parts susceptible to disassembly. By dismantling capitalism, we understand that we perform our economies and as such can take them apart, repair them, or create others.

Performative research incorporates the participation of the researcher in the creation of knowledge. This can be contrasted with a more traditional style of ethnography where the researcher is supposedly an outside, objective, “fly on the wall” observing phenomena as they happen. Within performative research the objective observer becomes an impossibility because investigators are never neutral, invisible or able to be in a space without participating in it. The recognition that all investigators create knowledge rather than discover it makes space for the researcher to acknowledge their presence and influence in ethnography. Performative research also recognizes co-researchers as actively engaged in a kind of knowledge production that has the potential to create social change (Gibson-Graham, 2008). This practice is essential for academics

that strive to engage in research that resists the creative destructionⁱⁱⁱ of capitalism because it provides a venue for actively challenging economic practices that are destructive to both humans and the more-than-human. In El Cambalache co-researchers have created knowledge and practices that are essential to this dissertation and provide very real options for resource access to people that have difficulty participating in the capitalist economy because they have little access to money, I detail such options in chapters 2, 3 and 4.

Within research on community economies there are many projects that not only privilege the production of knowledge around non-capitalist activities but also strive to create them. Gibson-Graham (2008:614) writes,

This vision of the performativity of knowledge, its implication in what it purports to describe, its productive power of ‘making’, has placed new responsibility on the shoulders of scholars—to recognize their constitutive role in the worlds that exist, and their power to bring new worlds into being. Not single-handedly, of course, but alongside other world-makers, both inside and outside the academy.

Along the lines suggested by Gibson-Graham (*ibid*), in order to counteract capitalism and the constant work of creative destruction, which is supported by myriad legal structures and very real threats of violence, scholars can struggle against capitalism through the creation of alternative and non-capitalist economic spaces such as El Cambalache.

ⁱⁱⁱ Creative destruction is the process through which the landscape, infrastructure and inhabitants are constantly transformed (either through destruction or creation) in order to open new markets and achieve the constant growth of new markets and new resource access that capitalism requires (Harvey, 2000; Castells, 2000).

El Cambalache builds on the work of the diverse economies research agenda in striving to *bring new worlds into being*. Co-researchers and participants practice inter-changes (*Inter-cambios* in Spanish). One of the co-researchers and project generators, Cinthia said,

Inter-changes are concrete anti-capitalist actions that we can do in the quotidian, [...] without waiting for the great revolution that overthrows the capitalist system. Through inter-cambios we change ourselves and at the same time our individualist, consumer, competitive relationships imposed by capitalism. (Araujo, 2016; Chapter 3 in this thesis).

Following Cinthia, action research can be part of an active shift towards participating in anti-capitalist activities by working to create non-capitalist spaces that are both within and outside the academy. As I explain in Chapter 3, one aspect of performative research in heterodox economic geography is that it creates spaces for knowledge production that can only come into being through collaborative community-scholar projects. El Cambalache has been developing economic knowledge by reincorporating social relationships into economic interactions and working towards establishing increased resource access for the community that participates in the project. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of this thesis further explore the process of social change and knowledge production as an interwoven process.

Marx has written extensively about the social implications of creating value through exchange value and use value in a capitalist economy versus a socialist economy. Marx explains exchange value as the value of goods, services or money given to equate the other part of what is being exchanged (Marx, 1976:126). Inter-change value in El Cambalache has a two-fold focus on first annulling hierarchy in the exchange of goods

and second annulling the ex- in ex-change or the exclusive nature of class and coloniality based capitalist economies. Inter-change value does not focus on use value. Use value, according to Marx, is the value a good or service has to the individual which is separate from exchange value in capitalism (Ibid). El Cambalache assumes that the items and abilities exchanged within the project have a use value for someone which they are free to decide autonomously. The fundamental idea, that the things one owns but no longer uses should not be discarded, rather they should be returned to a cycle of use, is both metaphorical and literal. Goods that can be repaired or already function well and forms of knowledge should not be marginalized or discarded rather they should continue in the through-put of the life of the items or knowledge.

Within a capitalist economic system many forms of knowledge are deemed as having little value. For example, knowledge about childcare is essential for ensuring the well-being of the next generation, however in a capitalist economic system childcare is most often where children go so that their parents can work to acquire money. Other examples of forms of knowledge privileged in El Cambalache are herbal medicine; indigenous languages; documentary film-making from Chiapas and Latin America; composting and other agro-ecological techniques; electronics repair; creating a non-capitalist economy; knowledge held by women and children in general. In El Cambalache we encourage parents to bring their children to spend time in the space and inter-change if they want to.

2.1.1.1 Develop them Away? Diverse Economies at Risk in the Majority World

While the diverse economies literature has provided important theoretical and practical tools for developing El Cambalache's research project, there is an important gap in research and analysis that I have recognized over time. Most diverse economies research projects focus on economies and economic practices that exist alongside very specific versions of capitalism, that is, the expressions of capitalism present in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Europe, though there are exceptions to this broad characterization (e.g. research projects currently underway by Katherine, Gibson, Ann Hill, Lisa Law in Monsoon Asia or the work of Marcela Palomino-Schalscha in Chile).

These versions of capitalism in the developed world are distinct from each other and exert specific pressures or textures of economy on the denizens of each given territory. The nation-states that maintain and augment these market economies (Polanyi, 2001) often coincide with or provide certain social safety nets or arrays of services that decrease levels of vulnerability for citizens through providing access to healthcare, education, infrastructure, transportation, food, and water. A great deal of economic resources have been invested in both the physical and intellectual infrastructure of these services and their provision. In this way the use of one's income is not the only way to gain access to nationalized services. For example, in nation-states that have socialized systems of healthcare and education people do not solely depend on access to money for social reproduction.

In diverse economies research few articles relative to the larger body of literature

have been done in the majority world countries or regions such as Chile (Palomino-Schalscha, 2015); Mexico (Gibson-Graham, 2006); indigenous communities in Canada (Gombay, 2012); Argentina (Daza et al., 2015); and the Philippines (Gibson, Cahill and McKay, 2010; and Mathie, Cameron and Gibson, 2017; Cameron, Gibson and Hill, 2014). In the majority world, the versions of capitalism present across nation-states are in many senses distinct from the capitalisms of the developed world. Capitalisms of the majority world are characterized by a generalized lack of infrastructural economic and intellectual investment for the economically majority world in these nation-states. Low access to quality services and infrastructure leads to higher rates of mortality. This capitalism is extractivist and little access to money is permitted for local populations as will be elaborated in section 2.4.

However, even in those investigations located in the majority world there is a common assumption that the practices characterized as capitalist within the DEF are uniformly capitalist across the globe. That is to say, that in the practice of diversifying the economy and opening up a space for research into all of the other alternative capitalist and non-capitalist practices around the world, the parallel capitalist economy has been assumed to be the same across regions be they in the developed world or the majority world. This has been done in the literature on diverse economies to purposefully decentre capitalism as a monolithic whole and, thus, to demonstrate that even within the most developed of capitalist economies there are other forms of economic relationships. However, notwithstanding the critical insights of the DEF achieved by its move to decentre capitalism as a monolith, a problematic presumption of capitalisms' sameness

arguably still haunts the DEF as a consequence of its uneven attention to capitalisms outside the developed world. In certain important ways, despite its attempts to do otherwise, the DEF has not fully escaped the problem of universalizing, “western parochial” (Pollard et al., 2009, 138) economies.

My purpose in pointing out this discrepancy in the diverse economies literature is to note that some economies are more diverse than others. These more diverse economies are found in the Majority World where there is little access to money for the majority of the denizens of a given region. People have to find ways to meet their needs for social reproduction without the use of money- be that a capitalist use of money or another type of monetary interaction (Korten et al., 2002; Korten, 2006, 2009). When capitalism is not the primary economy in a region other economies are present and they do not often share the same system of valuing as that of a capitalist market. This point is highly relevant to the situation of El Cambalache in San Cristobal. The region is characterized by high levels of money scarcity. For example, 76% of the population in the municipality of San Cristobal de las Casas live in levels of poverty or extreme poverty (CONEVAL, 2014). In the state of Chiapas, only 31% of women in the labor force participate (Ibid). Most people in the region are engaging in non-monetary based economic action to fulfill their basic needs.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) recognizes that many regions around the world do not have the same level of access to the economy, money or markets (and note, contra the insights of the DEF, the UNDP conflates ‘markets’ with capitalism) (UNDP, 2017). Rather, one of the principal goals in UNDP programs is the extension of

capitalism through the multi-faceted process of the creation of capitalist democratic citizens (Mitchell, 2002, 2011). For example, here I present a section of text from the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, *Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all*:

Roughly half the world's population still lives on the equivalent of about US \$2 a day. And in too many places, having a job doesn't guarantee the ability to escape from poverty. This slow and uneven progress requires us to rethink and retool our economic and social policies aimed at eradicating poverty.

A continued lack of decent work opportunities, insufficient investments and under-consumption lead to an erosion of the basic social contract underlying democratic societies: that all must share in progress. The creation of quality jobs will remain a major challenge for almost all economies well beyond 2015.

Sustainable economic growth will require societies to create the conditions that allow people to have quality jobs that stimulate the economy while not harming the environment. Job opportunities and decent working conditions are also required for the whole working age population. (UNDP, 2017)

Goal 8 recognizes that the low paying jobs that come with bringing new people into a capitalist economy do not provide enough money for people to meet all of their needs. However, contrary to the UNDP's vision of 'eradicating' or 'escaping' from poverty by making all resources solely accessible through monetary interactions, many people already meet their needs regularly through a wide variety of economic interactions that are not necessarily monetarily driven. The lack of access to capitalist markets, employment or sources of money in general does not necessarily mean that people are poor (Korten, 2009). The classification of poverty and the creation of poverty lines are a reflection of a capitalist economic definition of being poor which has been written by the

UN. It is a testimony to hegemonic power of the UNDP that for the developed world the term poverty refers to a lack of monetary income in a capitalist economy. However, the term poverty varies in its definition according to the culture and language where it is used (Rahnema, 2010).

When a community is designated poor they are vulnerable to development. Cindy Katz has written about this process among the Howa in *Growing up Global* (2004). She explains that when development came to the village of Howa all other forms of sustenance and resource access were either destroyed or privatized in order to support participation in a globalized capitalist economy. This destruction, done in the name of agricultural development, included limiting or eliminating people's access to agricultural lands, shifting the locations and flows of water while simultaneously incorporating the children into a western form of education that was not in concert with the community's forms of education (Ibid; 1991). Before the development programs arrived in Howa's communities they had others forms of local economy that was both monetary and non-monetary. By 1995 the village was completely transformed beyond Katz's recognition. It was well on its way to being developed (more immersed in capitalism).

Hybrid economies, where there is a diversity of economic activities can often include resource-full human and more-than-human economic interactions (Palomino Schalscha, 2015). These economies have different sociological, ecological, political and cultural characteristics than economies with a high presence of capitalist interactions. Within economies that are located within the developed world there is a great diversity of economic practices that are often obfuscated behind what is often see as a monolithically

capitalist economy (Gibson-Graham, 2006). Building on this idea, within the majority world we can see that many economies are not predominantly capitalist. Rather, these economies exist within geographies that have a low presence of money. These economies are far more diverse than the highly capitalist economies that exist in locations with a presence of capitalist interactions. The increase in the diversity of economic practices and thought is due in large part to the fact that development or the extension of the capitalist economic system has not been very successful in its implementation in these regions.

Chiapas, Mexico is one of these locations where capitalism is making large inroads at a pace that is difficult for us to understand or assimilate. One could, in principle, trace contemporary extensions of capitalism in the region to colonial encounters that began circa 1524 (Aubry, 2008), though it is beyond the scope of my thesis to provide such a detailed geohistorical narrative (for such accounts see Aubry, 2008 and what in other contexts Gregory, 2004 calls the ‘colonial present’). Despite the sedimentation of capitalist economic action in the region over hundreds of years what is remarkable is the persistence, to this day, of non-capitalist, non-moneyed economic practices, thought and relationships especially in women’s economies in the region. These economies are often overlooked because of the marginal spaces that they occupy, those being majority world women’s spaces and in particular indigenous women’s spaces.

In spite of the incredible structural violence done through coloniality on the women in the majority world, diverse, non-capitalist economies continue to flourish. El Cambalache is a celebration of these non-moneyed economies that have been the

sustenance of women and oppressed communities over centuries. Livable worlds, that is worlds that support the flourishing of life, can embrace the economies and other practices that are already in play. In removing the shame from participating in non-moneyed economies, women and men are provided with spaces for economic flourishing. Exchanges occur through El Cambalache as a middle space that connects people across boundaries normally privileged and enforced in systems of oppression such as coloniality. El Cambalache proposes that livable worlds are already happening, that they must be preserved, supported, cared for and built so that non-capitalist economies and the gifts they bring are allowed to flourish.

2.1.2 Economic Decoloniality

Studies in decoloniality de-center western thought from being the only epistemologically and ontologically accepted body of knowledge. Here I will elaborate on the major tenets of the decoloniality of thought and of economy. Later in this chapter I will expand on decolonial economic praxis, or what it means to struggle through commons and dignity, especially within decolonial economic action research.

Similar to research in community economies, decolonial studies are anti-essentialist. While community economies research de-essentializes capitalism from being an all-encompassing economic system, studies in decoloniality de-essentialize occidentalism from being an all-encompassing epistemic and ontic system into part of an incredibly rich ecology of enduring knowledge and lifeworlds located in territories that have suffered colonialism. Economic decoloniality specifically focuses on the persistence

and evolution of non-capitalist, non-western economies in regions that have experienced colonialism. Here I focus on decoloniality rather than post-colonial studies because decoloniality has originated in the Americas making it a geographically appropriate body of literature. There are extensive debates about whether post-colonial or decolonial studies is more correct for analyzing and performing spaces that break the chains of colonialism, however, this is not the focus of this chapter. Rather, I tend to choose scholar's work that speaks directly to my own and as such select from both bodies of knowledge.

Decolonial studies are not well-known in Anglophone literature, however it is increasingly common among Spanish literature and social movements in general and approaches topics specific to the experiences of those of us living and working in Latin America. Arguably, however, the insights provided by research in decoloniality are useful for understanding the continuation of coloniality to this day beyond Latin America in ways not unlike how insights from post-colonial studies with its origins in Asian experiences of coloniality, have been extended to other places beyond those geographies, too.

Foucault (1982) argues that an episteme consists of,

[...] the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, and possibly formalized systems [...] The episteme is not a form of knowledge [connaissance] or type of rationality which, crossing the boundaries of the most varied sciences, manifests the sovereign unity of a subject, a spirit, or a period; it is the totality of relations that can be discovered, for a given period, between the sciences when one analyzes them at the level of discursive regularities.

Foucault eschews the idea of a unity of ideas in favor of a shifting variation of regularities that appear between bodies of knowledge. Episteme, as it is defined by Foucault, is an elegant explanation of a very specific kind of thought, that is to say thought created and situated by the sciences. It is explicative of how an elite knowledge base created by and for academia is able to be recognized as the totality of knowledge in a hierarchized western knowledge. Other bodies of knowledge, integral in the lifeworlds of peoples that (have and continue to) suffer(ed) coloniality, are often referred to as epistemes, however the concept of episteme is incredibly limited in describing how knowledge is created and experienced to a western concept of knowledge. Castro-Gomez (1996) and Escobar (2007) note that discussions of alterity from the modern/colonial concept of episteme are not sufficient for giving equal power and representation to non-western epistemes.

Sousa Santos (2014) in *Epistemologies of the South* also uses the concept of episteme as a tool for exploring the damage that has been done to thought in the practice and persistence of coloniality. Sousa Santos (2014) argues that since the conquest of the Americas there has been constant epistemicide. Epistemicide is the extermination of myriad forms of non-western knowledge decimated by the imposition of euro-centered thought on the indigenous and mestizo populations that survived the genocide of conquest (Ibid). In recognizing that there has been a purposeful elimination of indigenous thought over time we can also appreciate the richness and strength of the cultures that persist. Kuokkan (2007:59) uses the term indigenous episteme in reference to a non-essentialist vision of multiple diverse epistemes among different groups of indigenous

peoples. The concept of indigenous episteme is useful for recognizing the existence of other sources and constructions of knowledge, however it is not sufficient. A great deal more work is necessary in the privileging, respect and acceptance of other worlds of thought that surely have their own concepts to define the entirety and borders of their knowledge.

Decolonial thought engages with forms of knowledge and knowing that exist beyond the borders of Western/modern thought as well as that at the borders of non-western epistemes (Mignolo, 2000). Border thinking refers to a concept initially proposed by Anzaldúa ([1987] 2012) and expanded by Mignolo (2000). Border thinking centers the edges of thought as the starting points for learning and exploring the great diversity and richness of the worlds of knowledge that are not Western. At these border crossings we find non-capitalist, non-western economies and economic practices hybridized with capitalism (Palomino-Schalscha, 2015). Non-capitalist economic practices essential for the social reproduction of indigenous lifeworlds continue alongside capitalist practices while under attack by development policies.

Quintero Weir (2011:96, my translation) writes, “[b]reaking dependence on colonialism supposes a reconstruction of ancient inter-ethnic connections, but also the construction of other new connections in function of the establishment of paths towards one's own autonomous economies that support the reproduction of the existence of those same communities”. Within the process of epistemicide, economic knowledge, like all forms of non-western knowledge, has been and continues to be under constant devaluation. In order to re-value these practices within a western episteme economic

decoloniality places these 'other' or 'non-western' economies on equal footing with capitalism. In non-capitalist decolonial economic praxis, the massive diversity of economic relationships are recognized as viable, enduring systems.

The existence and maintenance of a capitalist economy requires extensive interwoven networks of legal, social and political infrastructure within the creation of nation-states (Polanyi, 2001; Andersen, 2006). Quintero Weir's call for autonomous economies recognizes that decoloniality as a project requires rebuilding important networks and infrastructures in people's lives, otherwise capitalism, the current dominant economic system of coloniality, will continue to encroach upon spaces that are resisting that process. Autonomous economies are economies that grow out of the communities they serve that do not require the presence of a state for their functioning. These economies are networks of relationships of exchange that continue to exist in spite of infrastructures of coloniality. The articles I present in this thesis explore a small example of how research in decolonial economic praxis can be beneficial in creating and reinforcing the production of non-capitalist economic knowledge. El Cambalache is an example of an attempt at creating a decolonial autonomous economy that uses local practices of moneyless exchange to increase access to resources that people wouldn't necessarily have access to otherwise. I elaborate on this point about creating a decolonial autonomous economy in section 2.4.

Decolonial economic praxis is under-researched. However, work has been done in exploring non-western theories of value. Economic anthropology has studied non-western, indigenous economies for over a century (see Leenhardt, 1922; Mauss, [1950]

1990; Strathern, 1988; Graeber 2001 for examples). Similar to arguments that coloniality demands an imaginary where territories that have experienced colonialism were (and are) perceived by colonists as empty spaces to be filled, economic systems were (and are) also present in these regions though the local economy might be interpreted as empty of capitalism. Despite historical and contemporary colonialist discourses that attempt to present indigenous territories as empty spaces awaiting 'development', indigenous economic knowledges and practices resist(ed) such erasures.

In *Towards an Anthropological Theory of Value* Graeber (2001) assembles an analysis of how exchange values among different peoples is deeply integrated into social relationships. For example, writing about Marilyn Strathern's work in Melanesia, Graeber analyses how the value of objects increases when more people have been the previous owners. This is because the object carries with it part of the person who owned it. The social networks involved in exchanging objects in this way are incredibly different than those that exist within capitalist exchanges. Strathern argues that the value of an object is not derived from a single person's labor in all societies, rather value is the outcome of relationships (1988). El Cambalache takes on a similar approach to creating value. As I previously discussed, all objects and abilities exchanged in El Cambalache have the same value. That is to say, anything can be exchanged for anything else. However, the capacity that any good or service has to be exchanged is an outcome of participation in our economic community. This means that each specific object or ability is only valuable because it has been valuable to someone else. This is a collectivist approach to creating value. This kind of value creation is elaborated in chapter 3, section 3.3.

One of the classic works on indigenous non-capitalist economies was written by Marcel Mauss. His essay, *The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*, examines relationships of exchange through gifting and debt among indigenous communities around the world (1990 [1950]). The essay focuses on, "What rule of legality and self-interest, in the societies of a backward or archaic type, compels the gift that has been received to be obligatorily reciprocated? What power resides in the object given that causes its recipient to pay it back?" (Ibid:3). Mauss' research was based on literature from the beginning of the twentieth century through the 1940s. The piece primarily explores how gifting among certain indigenous ethnic groups can create debt.

As Graeber argues, *The Gift* provides a number of examples of cultures that participate in debt-based giving (Graeber, 2011). In many of these examples social status is determined by how much is given and in many cases, the hierarchy is governed by who gives the most leaving all others indebted to the giver. This kind of economic interaction is distinct from that of El Cambalache where there is no hierarchy among participants regardless of how much one provides, everyone will always be the same because what is entered into exchanges is always valued at a ratio of one-to-one. Mauss's essay assumes the classically modernist idea that indigenous communities represent anachronistic glimpses into the past of the modern, capitalist world rather than being expressive of a contemporaneous, but different, worldview.

The kind of debt relationships Mauss emphasized is not representative of the exchange practices in indigenous economies in Chiapas or El Cambalache where we have abolished debt. Furthermore, the essay assumes that because the indigenous economies

under investigation are 'archaic', they present practices of exchange that will disappear on the path towards capitalism. This transformation will supposedly be realized once they are modernized which is their inevitable future. As mentioned in the section on diverse economies, this kind of thinking leads to the disappearance of decolonial economic practices. Despite Mauss' prediction, indigenous, non-capitalist economies continue to persist both in Chiapas and, of course, in a vast array of other regions around the world. When one categorizes capitalism as part of coloniality rather than as part of normalized socio-economic relationships it opens the possibility of living, creating and respecting the plethora of autonomous economies. Economic decoloniality recognizes indigenous economies as being part of a larger ontology that is expressive of the entire indigenous episteme rather than a window into the past that will explain how western economies came into being.

Inter-change value proposes an economy where there is an abundance of resources and those resources are already in the hands of people that can share them but they must be inter-changed for something because everyone has something to offer. In this way inter-change value and its infrastructure, El Cambalache, does not represent a gift economy. El Cambalache does not subscribe to hierarchy nor gifting as such. Because everything in the economy has the same value, it is irrelevant whether one brings five items or one to inter-change because each person decides what a one-to-one inter-change implies. No one person will achieve a higher level of power in the economy through exchanging all things that have the same value.

Mauss's essay presents one aspect of investigation that is useful for understanding

and creating diverse decolonial economies. Mauss, similar to other economic anthropologists (see Graeber, 2001; Strathern, 1988; Clastres, 2010), examined how exchange value and moneyless exchange in particular are profound sociocultural expressions of the structure, morals, and meanings of property, abilities, and mutual aid within a given form of economy. From Mauss (1999), potlatch in Melanesia is one practice that is part of a diverse economy that is both moneyed and non-moneyed. This form of potlatch as practiced in New Caledonia finds the value of objects and certain kinds of foods to increase as more people have owned the objects or consumed the food—a way of generating of value quite distinct from capitalist forms of value premised on, to use Marx’s terms, the alienation of the labor of production from the commodities such labor so produces.

Research in generative justice has also focused on examples of indigenous economies that create unalienated value in the production of goods. Eglash (2016) has researched the production of dyes for creating Adinkra stamps for cloth production in Ghana where the practice is a community or collective process that creates value for a cultural commons. The protection of the trees whose bark is used for the creation of the ink, the Adinkra symbols such as the two crossed crocodiles that share a single stomach, represent a collectivity of valuing where they show “[b]y feeding you, I feed myself” (Ibid:257). This is distinct from Mauss's work where the interpretation would be ‘by feeding you, you are obligated to feed me’. Rather, the concept of Adinkra is that no one person is well unless all are well. As an exploration in economic decoloniality, the production of the cloth with Adinkra symbols is done through commoning that creates

economic well-being for the community through non-capitalist means.

In the same article Eglash also explores how a similar organization of collective work has led to the creation of a multi-million-dollar chocolate cooperative, which he argues is an example of the success of organizing through generative justice. Here I disagree with Eglash's engagement with generative justice. Eglash's example of the chocolate cooperative suggests that they have thrived in a capitalist market and increased their access to resources that were previously unachievable through earning money. It could be construed as positive for members of the cooperative because they achieve well-being within capitalism's hierarchical system of exploitation. However, the social implications for this success are yet unknown and highly unusual for indigenous communities to experience. Eglash supports the creation of an alternative capitalist enterprise as a goal for indigenous communities. However, even if it is an alternative form of capitalism, it is still built on the hierarchical western values of economic homogenization, thus incorporating communities more deeply into the capitalist economy and furthering coloniality. From my perspective, then, participation in a capitalist economy cannot, ultimately, generate justice.

In order to further privilege non-western epistemes and ontos further research into economic decoloniality is necessary. El Cambalache explores how to do this as both research and praxis. While none of the generators of the project could or would claim to live entirely free of the influence of western thought or of capitalism, we work daily to incorporate non-western and non-capitalist forms of value into the economy. These include well being for a subjective 'we' as is common in Tojolobal communities (one of

the indigenous Mayan languages/cultures in Chiapas) (Lenkersdorf, 2004). These values and the practices we use to incorporate them into our micro-economy are explained in section 2.4 and Chapter 3.

2.1.3 Generative Justice

Generative justice is a central concept in El Cambalache's praxis of economic decoloniality. Although I work with the concept of generative justice throughout, in chapter 3 of the published manuscripts of this thesis, defining the term is not the main purpose of that work. Here, I provide some further elaboration of what I mean when I use the notion of generative justice later in the thesis.

Generative justice focuses on performative heterodox economics by seeking to create unalienated value. Alienation refers to forced submission and complacency that accompanies unsatisfying labor conditions where workers are envisioned as a source of profit and their self-expression and connection to other workers is negated so that the only option for realizing oneself is through consumption (Eglash, 2016a; 2016b). Eglash's definition differs slightly from that of Marx where alienation is the disassociation of one's labor practices from self realization and well-being of the land, the goods produced and social reproduction (Marx, 1976:716). In generative justice individuals and communities are supported in both research and practice to create and circulate value in just, non-oppressive interactions. As I explain in Chapter 4, El Cambalache is a research project situated within generative justice. However, it is important to note that El Cambalache does not employ a labor theory of value. Rather, El Cambalache, through its creation of inter-change value, explores economic relationships that have unalienated value because

they have been part of each community member's life experience rather than part of a production process. Unalienated value refers to value created through developing resources that are created in fulfilling activities that strengthen non-oppressive social relationships. In inter-change value everything that is inter-changed has the same value however, this does not negate that value is generated. The items exchanged are what would normally be considered discards and the services exchanged are mutual aid, knowledge and abilities that one wants to share. The value created in the exchanges is similar to use value in that people select items that are highly valuable specifically for them. However, the greater value being generated, highlighted in the introduction to this dissertation in the example of the break-dancers, is the creation of a collectivity or network of people that support each other.

The practice and expression of inter-change value at El Cambalache receives more detailed explanation in the three published manuscript chapters that follow. Briefly, inter-change value arose in the project through consensus decision-making within El Cambalache. Consensus decision-making is a non-hierarchical decision-making process that requires all persons in the decision-making process to agree on proposals (e.g., for particular actions or principles) being made. In Chapter 3.1 I argue that consensus decision-making can be used as a research method for creating generative justice because it is a non-oppressive process that is by and for the community using it. The field of generative justice research is not only an action-based research agenda that demands the right to not be oppressed by alienated capitalist relationships, but also a response to the traditional practices that are involved in capitalist economic research.

The field of economics, in order to ‘test’ the design of economic systems on the ground, has experimented on humans by transforming their economic relationships (Mitchell, 2005, Callon, 2003). The process of creating the political, social and economic infrastructure that develops conditions for economic research is referred to by Çaliskan and Callon (2009) as economization. These investigations are often referred to as a natural experiment or research in the wild (Callon, 2003). However, as Mitchell argues, “[a] 'natural experiment' in economics is not an experiment that takes place in nature. It is an experiment that takes advantage of certain programs, policies or political economic processes that have arranged the socio-technical world in a way that makes experimentation possible” (Mitchell, 2005:318). Mitchell refers to the process of economization where research and experimentation exist in a world full of already existing networks, actors and power relationships. Economic research is not a neutral space of discovering facts and processes. Rather for both Mitchell (2005) and Callon (2007) economic research is done with specific political and profit generating goals. This process has created massive injury to both urban and rural communities (Klein, 2008; Scott, 1998).

In contrast, a generative justice research agenda is a non-capitalist economic response that is created by the communities that experience the ravages of capitalism. Rather than waiting for a justice system created by states that do not have the jurisdiction to prosecute the intellectual authors of capitalist economic experiments, research in generative justice seeks to participate in the creation of non-exploitive collectively created economic systems (Eglash, 2016). In this way justice is a generative process

rather than being a response to harm. It seeks to have just interactions form the economic infrastructure.

One way of creating an economic infrastructure that incorporates generative justice is through commoning. Commoning is the verb for creating a network of relations that embrace caring, sharing, working and creating common resources that are the property of both humans and more-than-human actors (Ristau, 2011). Economic projects that generate justice would do well to work through commoning. De Angelis writes,

“The clash in perspective between a social force that produces enclosures and one that produces commons means this: capital generates itself through enclosures, while subjects in struggle generate themselves through commons. Hence 'revolution' is not struggling for commons, but through commons, not for dignity, but through dignity.” (2007:239).

Struggling through commons and through dignity provokes scholars to re-situate their positioning of capitalism. The struggle through commons refers to building an economy out of what is collective among people that share common resources. The more that resources return to the commons, the more people decrease their dependence on capitalism. Struggling through commons means that we as humans are as much part of the commons as all other resources. Removing enclosures creates space, both physical and analytical.

In the chapters that follow I explain how El Cambalache is an empirical example of the rapid expansion of a commoning micro-economy. After two and a half years of being open to the public over 1,200 participants have engaged in exchanges at El Cambalache in San Cristobal de las Casas. An additional three other Cambalaches opened in other states. Our generator group is made of six women, we work 8-10 hours a

week in the project each, with around half of that time spent in meetings. While we are dedicated to the work we do, the success of the project lies within the struggle through commons and dignity being built into the economic infrastructure. We work in commoning intellectual resources, practical strategies and connection with each other as much as possible. Ethan Miller writes that social change comes in a similar process,

“One does not choose between opposition and creation, but continually articulates sites of organized resistance and non-capitalist livelihood practice in ways that undermine the viability of capital's reproduction in favor of other assemblages. Revolutionary success here will neither be constructed by a singular “party” nor built on the mere proliferation of practices: myriad, autonomous, organized connections of anti-capitalist and post-capitalist practice can serve to render each other increasingly viable, potent, and durable.” (2015:4)

Creative opposition built into undermining capitalism through organized resistance and non-capitalist livelihood practice is important. It pushes people to create economic space opposed to capitalism. It also drives scholar activists to assume responsibility in being active participants in creating economic change. Similar to De Angelis, Miller proposes creating this space through commons. However, there is a common and an enclosure missing from Miller's and De Angelis' perspectives, that is, capitalism is the contemporary economic system of coloniality. Creating social change through commons here takes on a different dimension. Within decolonial thought generative justice is constructed by re-centering communities as the drivers of non-western economic praxis instead of centering the praxis in opposition to capitalism.

2.1.4 Anarchist Geographies

El Cambalache was formed with the specific goal of creating an anarchist space.

For El Cambalache this means that ideally it functions without hierarchy or domination. In Chapter 3, sections 3.2 and 3.3 I explore some of the challenges and benefits we have found in working daily to create a non-oppressive space and economic praxis.

Anarchism, while including many kinds of thought and practices is, generally, the rejection of all forms of rule and domination (Springer, 2012). Though anarchism is oft presented in the mainstream media as chaos, lack of organization and generating random violence, its practitioners actually seek to create egalitarian social relationships (Ibid). This is done through developing organized, non-oppressive structures that give no one person more power than any other. This is referred to as creating horizontality and it allows for non-dominating relationships to exist without the imposition of a hierarchical legal or economic system (Clough and Blumberg, 2012; Springer, 2012). The social structures or processes most often used in anarchist spaces include "autonomy, voluntary association, self-organization, direct democracy and mutual aid" (Graeber, 2009:105). These processes allow participants to have equal access to information, networks of support and the possibility for creating realities that bring about non-oppressive social change. Anarchism in practice is envisioned as a process of constant becoming rather than a set of rules for creating a new society (Sheehan, 2003:155). This is because to impose any one direction on creating the future would deny other possible directions and in that way suppress some voices.

When incorporated into geographic research, anarchism has been gaining more recognition as a viable research trajectory over the past few years (Clough and Blumberg, 2012). Yet, anarchism has a long intellectual tradition in geography. Two of the earliest

anarchist geographers were Piotr Kropotkin and Elisee Reclus. Much of their work spanned the turn of the 20th Century and they each proposed that the natural world was full of examples of cooperation and mutualism among non-human beings. They argued that hierarchy was not necessarily the only *natural* way of organizing society (indeed Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* was a critical response to social Darwinist currents of the time; see also Breitbart, 2009). However, until recently, anarchism has been mostly absent from scholarly geographic research, having more of a presence in social movements (Breitbart, 2012). Over the past ten years anarchist geographic research has exploded with special issues in both *Antipode* and *ACME* in 2012 focused specifically on anarchist geographies. There have also been regular anarchist geographies sessions at the Association for American Geographers conference and numerous books that have come out as well.

Within economic geography anarchism most often appears within research on autonomous economies. Autonomous economies and autonomy itself create space for non-oppressive economic relationships. Autonomy is the creation of spaces of self-governance without the imposition of a state on relationships within groups of people. For Chatterton, autonomy is the desire for freedom, self-organization and mutual aid (2004:545). The process of creating autonomy comes about in the present as a response to current and past struggles (Foran, 2003). Because anarchist research is based in non-domination and eliminating hierarchy, autonomy is seen by many anarchist academics as a necessary part of being able to per-form liberatory political and economic relationships among humans and the more-than-human (Chatterton, 2004). This is because without

autonomy from oppressive, hierarchical systems, the creation of a new system will be constantly reproducing those forms of domination.

In the published pieces, particularly in Chapter 3, I explain how this research project is anarchist. Briefly, El Cambalache and inter-change value are created through practice in horizontality. These kinds of economic relationships are present in many spaces. As White and Williams write,

They exist despite being hidden, neglected, overlooked, and marginalized in a world that tells itself it is 'capitalist'. Such a wonderful range of anarchist modes of organizing – which are underpinned by mutuality, autonomy, solidarity, self-management and self-organization – forms an impressive rebuttal to orthodox economic accounts as what motivates economic organization in society (2014:958).

As a project in non-dominating economics El Cambalache has been able to explore what kinds of relationships are created and what kinds of relationships are reinforced among the people that participate. By creating and exploring mutuality, autonomy, solidarity, self-management and self-organization through action-research anarchist economic geographers can participate in per-forming worlds where the production of knowledge is an egalitarian, non-oppressive practice rather than a hierarchical one.

2.2 Study Area

In this section I will present a brief economic history of the anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, pro-indigenous rights movements in Chiapas from the colonial period through the present in order to situate El Cambalache among the diverse perspectives and economic practices

that abound here. As the reader will note, during the many periods of political turbulence in the state, there were regular attempts at creating and/or employing non-capitalist economies as strategies for resisting both colonialism and colonality. Furthermore, decolonial indigenous economies continue to exist to this day.

San Cristobal de las Casas is currently a small city with a population of 203,387 people of which 33% are indigenous persons (Gobierno del Estado de Chiapas, 2014). The city is located in the highlands region of Chiapas where 68% of the population speak an indigenous language (Hacienda de Chiapas)^{iv}. The state has been one of the poorest in the country over the past century, in that the majority of people living there have had little access to participate in the primary economy (along with Guerrero and Oaxaca) (CONEVAL, 2013). Since the year 2000 this lack of participation in the capitalist economy has brought about the highest level of marginalization in Mexico (Hacienda de Chiapas, ND), where marginalization is defined as a lack of access to adequate housing, education, and monetary income (Ibid). El Cambalache is located in the neighborhood of Cuxtitali which was classified by the National Population Advisory (CONAPO from its Spanish Acronym) as also having a high level of marginalization (CONAPO, 2010).

Chiapas has been both politically and economically isolated from the rest of the Mexico during most of its history. This is in part due to its location in the extreme south

^{iv} Indigeneity in Mexico is measured by how many people speak an indigenous language rather than how many people identify as part of one ethnic group or another.

of the country and because the state was part of the *Reinato de Guatemala* until 1824 (Aubry, 2008; Garcia de Leon, 2002). The relative isolation of Chiapas was in many ways advantageous for politically and economically elite group of landowners that controlled much of the state (Aubry, 2008; Garcia de Leon, 2002). Economically, Chiapas functioned apart from the rest of the country (Garcia de Leon, 2002). Beginning with the *encomienda* system at the time of the conquest, extensive regions of Chiapas were taken by Spaniards and later *Criollos* (persons of Spanish blood born in the Americas) as their own. The indigenous communities living in those territories were considered to be their possessions. The *encomienda* regime, then the tributary system, and later in the 18th Century, the *repartimientos* system obligated indigenous communities to provide large quantities of their harvests, weaving, and hunting to the church and the political administrations of Chiapas (Wasserstrom, 1989). The massive tributes exacted of the indigenous communities over centuries were often catastrophic to their well-being. Later, in the 19th Century with the implementation of the *baldios* system the state was dominated by large plantations or *haciendas* that functioned independently of the rest of Mexico with their own churches, town centers, and housing, that were protected by private security squads who enforced labor practices over centuries. Over this period of time little work was done to implement a public health system or strong transportation and communications infrastructure in the region. Lack of such infrastructure harmed health, and limited the movement of people and information around the state (Ibid).

Cities like San Cristobal de las Casas were originally constructed exclusively for

the non-indigenous population in the state. Certain infrastructures such as a public healthcare, education or roads system were not developed until the 1980s while others were sites of massive investment (cathedrals, jails, cobbled streets within the city, etc.) (Garcia de Leon, 2002). Such differential investment is characteristic of uneven development (Harvey, 2006; Roberts & Emel 1992; Smith, 1984). San Cristobal de las Casas was designed with spaces or neighborhoods of heavy economic investment in infrastructure in order to maintain the presence of a ruling class (Harvey, 2005). For example, the churches and cathedrals in the city have floors of marble that was imported from Italy, the houses of the landowning class had water piping and after the 1910s, electricity (Fenner and Perez, 1992:15). Gold, massive amounts of woven fabrics, candles and luxurious foods were regularly delivered in tribute to the bishops and pastors from indigenous communities. The cathedrals, churches and roads were built and maintained by indigenous persons under forced labor (Aubry, 2008). Until the 1960s indigenous people were not allowed to walk the streets of the city after dark (Favre and Cumisky, 1985) and they were not allowed to walk on the sidewalks until after 1994. In fact, much of the urban planning of the city was done with the goal of controlling access to the center as well as the behavior of indigenous populations (Aubry, 2008).

San Cristobal de las Casas was the third city built in Mexico during the conquest circa 1528. It was created with a new technique that was called the wall-less fortress (Aubry, 2008). The city was built within the limits of two major rivers on the valley floor with churches constructed at the limits of that space in each of the four cardinal directions. The newly arrived Spaniards and their descendants lived in the center between

the two rivers while the indigenous slaves and workers lived on the other sides of the rivers (Ibid). Access to the city for indigenous slaves and workers was controlled by a canoe system rather than bridges until the nineteenth century (Ibid).

Slavery, forced labor and indebted servitude of the indigenous population was met with major resistance movements. Indeed, one can interpret the history of such movements in the region being one of punctuated, but ongoing occurrence since conquest of San Cristobal de las Casas in 1528 and well into the late 20th and early 21st Century (Garcia de Leon, 2002). Some parts of the state, in particular, the Lacandon/Montes Azules region, were not conquered until 1697, resisting conquest for 173 years (De Vos, 1980; Aubry, 2005). The dense rainforest and lack of infrastructure to connect it to other regions provided space for many organized resistance movements to grow and prosper during both colonial and recent times (Aubry, 2005).

The 1712 indigenous rebellion in Cancuc is demonstrative of the desire to form autonomous governments and economies. Viqueira's version of the rebellion is the most cited and will be related here (1997, 2004). The uprising began when Maria de la Candelaria saw the Virgin Guadalupe while working in the corn fields. Later a man from Chenalho, Sebastian Gomez, had a similar vision. The town built an altar for the virgin and began to worship it. Soon ecclesiastic authorities in San Cristobal de las Casas were alerted and travelled to Cancuc to stop the hybrid indigenous-Christianity that was spreading. Word travelled quickly in the indigenous communities. Regional communication was facilitated by the great distances many of the residents of Cancuc

regularly travelled by foot to the cocoa farms where they worked in indebted service. The workers would stay the night in intermediary communities and share information.

According to Viquera's (*ibid*) version of events, the Virgin began to give orders and incite the residents of Cancuc and the surrounding area to form an army. Maria de la Candelaria was arrested and whipped by authorities in San Cristobal de las Casas. Meanwhile, in Cancuc and neighboring towns the movement grew. The Virgin instructed the inhabitants of Cancuc to take land from the Spanish, kill the hacienda owners and create their own government and economy, which they began to do. The 40,000 rebels freed the area of the land owners while maintaining their initial attempts at creating a new government and economy for three months before troops were sent in from Guatemala and northern cities in Mexico to kill anyone involved in the resistance.

A similar story occurred in 1867-1869 in the highlands region of Chiapas in San Juan Chamula which neighbors San Cristobal de las Casas. After a religious vision and communication with the Virgin, Pedro Diaz Cuscat, an inhabitant of the town, ordered a child be crucified so that they may have their own Jesus Christ. After a major uprising that inspired the War of the Castes in the Yucatan, the Chamulans established their own government and moneyless economy of what is referred to in the literature of highly sophisticated barter. The rebellion was destroyed by the Mexican army (Har-Peled, 2014). Unfortunately, the nature and mechanisms of the barter system have not been a point of focus for the historians that have focused on this rebellion.

Many of the indigenous rebellions in Chiapas have similar stories. A vision of the Virgin Guadalupe is had by someone in the community. The vision opens up direct

communication with God and inspires or incites a revolt. The communities organize themselves and attempt to drive the colonists from the region with violent consequences from the colonial administration. Unfortunately, there is little evidence preserved that explains how the new governments and economies were envisioned to function. In research for my Master's thesis (Araujo 2011) on resistance to water privatization in San Cristobal de las Casas I examined the use of water, its infrastructure and the maintenance of said infrastructure as a tool for justifying forced labor and reifying class divisions in the city during its conquest from 1528 through 2008. What that research suggested to me as noteworthy about these resistance movements is the desire and regular attempt to create autonomous decision-making structures, alternative legalities and other economies outside that imposed by Spanish and later Mexican rule. While this may be conjecture, I attribute the facility with which these rebellions decided to establish their own economies, as possible evidence that the indigenous communities in Chiapas have always had their own clandestine economies functioning parallel to that imposed by outside rulers.

Little work has been dedicated to the history of indigenous economies in the region and this omission continues to this day. Rather, references to indigenous economies in Chiapas most often reflect on their extreme poverty and subjugation. Evidence for non-capitalist indigenous economies often appears in texts that explore cultural relationships within different ethnic communities in Chiapas. For example, Lenkersdorf's book, *Filosofar en clave Tojolobal* (In English, *Philosophizing in the key of Tojolobal*, 2004), as is mentioned in other sections of this dissertation, reflects on the

collective decision-making practices and sharing of resources within these communities. Other pieces, such as Paoli (2002) or Aguilar Castellanos et al. (2015) explore autonomous decision making practices in Tojolobal and Tzeltal communities. In these pieces and others, the authors reflect on how collective assemblies decide how resources are shared, justice is administered and relationships within and outside of these communities are managed. Economic, political, social and sometimes spiritual relationships are interwoven in these assemblies which vary between horizontal and hierarchical decision-making practices. Tool sharing, mutual aid and collective work practices have been historically consistent and persist to this day in many indigenous communities in Chiapas.

In 1994, after ten years of organizing in the Lacandon Jungle, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN from its Spanish Acronym) took five cities in the state including San Cristobal de las Casas. In many ways, the Zapatista uprising can be understood as the latest in a punctuated, but continuous series of resistance movements in Chiapas, and can be situated as part of a larger trajectory of autonomous resistance movements that establish their own government, economy and infrastructure. The Zapatista uprising was planned to coincide with Mexico's entrance into the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). At the time Chiapas still had a network of plantations that were worked by indigenous persons who lived in conditions of slavery or indebted servitude. The uprising for the most part put an end to the plantation system (Johnston, 2000). Indigenous workers on the plantations armed themselves, took back the land they had worked for generations and made it their own. Most of the land that was

occupied in 1994 remains in the hands of the EZLN and forms the Zapatista Autonomous Zone (their designation for the territories that make up EZLN properties). Since then, Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Tojolobal, and Chol Mayan communities have, over the past 20 and more years, gained improvements in their quality of life and access to basic resources.

The Zapatistas initially rebelled against the terrible living conditions and high rates of child mortality that people were experiencing in their communities (Marcos, 1993). After twelve days of fighting against the Mexican armed forces a ceasefire was called, two years later peace talks began. The Zapatistas negotiated the San Andres Accords in dialogue with the federal government, however the agreement was never upheld. In the Accords it was agreed that indigenous communities would have respect and recognition of the indigenous population's diversity; protection of their lands; participation of indigenous peoples in the expenditures of public resources; communities would decide on their own development plans; and indigenous communities would have autonomy to exert their right to participate in affairs of the state. When the Accords failed to be made into law the Zapatistas decided to never again dialogue or negotiate with the Mexican government, rather they preferred to develop their autonomy on their own terms.

After the EZLN uprising, the people that had worked on the haciendas continued to be isolated from capitalist markets. They lived in communities without access to roads, electricity or running water (in fact many communities to this day do not have access to those resources). The haciendas that were occupied were massive, with large sections of their territories connected by walking or horse paths. The EZLN, recognizing the need for

education; communication and transportation; housing, an economic system that met the needs of the movement; and a healthcare system; began to create a socio-technical network in services and infrastructure. The communities in the movement function autonomously through self-government and direct democracy to this day. The EZLN in particular has created a geographically extensive healthcare, education, electricity, water and roads system. Little has been written about the economies within the Zapatista communities. While much scholarly work has reflected on the Zapatistas and their proposal to create a world that has space for many worlds, built from the grassroots outwards, the EZLN does not appreciate people outside of their movement publishing unauthorized scholarly articles about them. Rather, they prefer to be the authors of their own history.

The widespread uneven development in Chiapas left many parts of the state without access to a larger socio-technical infrastructure, forcing people to create their own. In turn, autonomous development such as that seen in Chiapas is created hand in hand with a high level of decision-making autonomy reinforcing the growth and maintenance of the heterogeneous state (Sousa Santos, 2006:44-45). Heterogeneous states are remnants of colonialism where the legal decision-making framework established by the state is not the only form of law. Rather there is a supra-legal decision-making process (Ibid). In the case of Chiapas, resistance movements, the United Nations, business interests (previously hacienda owners) and other local stakeholders implement policies and practices that supersede nationalized judicial procedures.

Economically, the Zapatista communities, like most indigenous communities in

Chiapas have a hybrid or heterogeneous economy that requires little dependence on money and large amounts of physical labor to work the land and produce both food and exchangeable items. This kind of hybrid local-decolonial and capitalist economy is characteristic of many economies in the Americas (Palomino-Schalscha, 2015). In many ways a heterogeneous economy presents similar characteristics to the heterogeneous state. This is because in these indigenous communities people maintain non-western socio-economic networks while incorporating capitalist practices into their economies. So, if a heterogeneous state presents a wide range of legal decision-making practices by multiple stake holders, a heterogeneous or diverse economy does the same by presenting a wide range of economic practices by local participants. The capitalist system, through the process of development, has left many of these communities, both within and beyond Chiapas, with no other choice for meeting certain needs such as tools, cookware, clothing, etc., than by participating in capitalist systems of provision (Palomino-Schalscha, 2015; Katz, 2004).

As mentioned earlier, Chiapas continues to have a very high level of marginalization to this day (CONEVAL, 2013). Poverty and marginalization in Chiapas has been investigated by proponents of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the new United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 (UNSDA 2030) currently under implementation. In 2009 the state incorporated the MDGs into its constitution and, through the implementation of a multi-dimensional poverty index, created eight different categories for identifying people as impoverished. These categories were income, education lag, access to health services, access to food,

housing quality and space, access to basic housing services, access to social security, and the degree of social cohesion (CONEVAL, 2013). It is notable that the MDGs were employed to meet the same goals as the EZLN. Chiapas has the highest rate of multi-dimensional poverty in Mexico, comprising 76.2% of the population in 2013 (Ibid). According to The National Advisory on the Politics of Social Development (CONEVAL from its Spanish acronym, a United Nations funded advisory board in Mexico), 85% of the MDGs were met by 2015 when the program ended. These seemingly contradictory statistics require some explanation.

In section 2.1.3 I explained that economic research is performative, that is, that the research itself transforms the people and region where it is deployed (Mitchell, 2005; Callon, 2007). Research in development and/or sustainable development, which is economic research, should be understood to be no different (Ferguson, 1991). In the same way that new markets are created, not discovered, poverty indicators are used to designate people as poor rather than being a tool used for discovering their poverty. The people targeted for development most often have other economies in practice before they are found to be lacking capitalism. In Mexico, the way poverty has been defined over time has changed. As is elaborated in chapter 3.3, the definition of poverty by CONEVAL was originally a lack of a certain amount of income that shifted with inflation until 2008. With the implementation of the MDGs poverty became multi-dimensional, meaning now one could be identified as poor through a variety of categories. In effect more people became categorized as poor. When 85% of the MDGs were declared to have been met poverty was not reduced in Chiapas. However, significant changes in local

infrastructure did take place. Some highways were improved; schools and hospitals were built; and the Lacandon Jungle/Montes Azules region of Chiapas was opened up for ecotourism, carbon trading, mining exploration and hydroelectric projects. However, as was revealed over May and June, 2017, 31 hospitals that were constructed since 2010 are not actually in use (Vega, 2017). Rather, these buildings were filled with machines and materials; photos were taken with the governor; then they were closed (Ibid).

Furthermore, the MDGs can be understood to play a counterinsurgent role in Chiapas. As mentioned earlier in this section, the Lacandon Jungle/Montes Azules region was originally a refuge for organizing resistance movements. However, with the initial exploitation of natural resources in the region roads, water piping, high tension electrical lines are being constructed in the region while private and public security forces protect the interests of national and multi-national corporations.

While Mexico was deemed the second most violent country on Earth in 2016 (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2017), Chiapas is among the ten least violent states in the country (INEGI, 2016). Most of the violence felt in Chiapas is economic violence, meaning people experience increased vulnerability to lack of access to basic resources because of the interests of multi-national corporations and coloniality. Moreover, as Maldonado (2007) has argued, the capitalism-coloniality couplet relies on oppression in multiple and intersecting forms that include patriarchy, racial and ethnic segregation, heteronormativity and binary gender-normativity. Such oppressions are heavily felt by people othered in the day-to-day working out of capitalist relations that normalize hierarchies of gender, race/ethnicity, and sexuality. Development towards

capitalism creates both violence and parallel alternatives to capitalist economies because capitalism creates scarcity through privatization. Capitalism, enforced by police, military means, and legal structures obligates people to try to meet their needs with money while denying them access to it (Graeber, 2016). To overcome such imposed scarcity people find ways to be well that are outside or parallel to capitalist relations.

Furthermore, many of the MDGs implemented were the same kinds of projects led by social movements like the EZLN with a few differences. The MDGs of increasing income in conjunction with increasing participation in the education system and social cohesion are directly linked to incorporating subjects into a capitalist society. While the autonomous education, economy and resistance networks created by the EZLN are explicitly anti-capitalist. As land in Chiapas becomes privatized and exploited for its natural resources it is also contested and occupied by social movements. When a person or region is designated as multi-dimensionally impoverished they become targets for development. However, many people of these regions do not consider themselves to be poor, but rather in autonomous resistance to the imposition of a capitalist system. The conflict characteristic of a heterogeneous state waged between the national government, business interests and local autonomous organizations around what kind of economy will be employed and how legal decision-making practices will be implemented continues to this day in the rural and urban regions of Chiapas.

During most of 2016 and 2017 there were regular road and highway blockades in the region surrounding San Cristobal de las Casas. Most of them occurred between May

10, 2016 and August 10th, 2016 totaling over than 260 roadblocks.^v The blockades were led by teacher's unions; community organizations; indigenous and campesino organizations; and political parties as a form of non-violent protest. The organizations demand dialogue; annulment of elections; an end to impunity; money; workers' rights; and political change. The blockades stop traffic, demand a payment of between 50-200 pesos and share flyers about the political demands of the specific movement. Often personal vehicles are permitted to pass through the blockades while the trucks transporting goods for transnational corporations are stopped (sometimes for days at a time). When these roadblocks occur money no longer flows through and out of the state.

Actions like those just described create friction (Tsing, 2005). By 'friction' Tsing refers to how the movement of global capital disrupts and can be disrupted by those that are part of its flow. Tsing mobilizes the term friction to explore how connections do not necessarily run smoothly in the movement of commodities and capital or for those that oppose that process. Here I draw on Tsing's notion of friction to signal how citizens participate in allowing and disallowing capital in the form of commodities and infrastructure to move through and out of Chiapas. With the friction of social movements, the movement of money out of money-poor communities is limited, or slowed down in its travels to national and transnational corporations. Many states in Mexico have similar

^v I compiled these data through reviewing the social media sites alertachiapas.com and ret.io.

processes of resistance at play. The states declared to have the highest rates of “multi-dimensional poverty and extreme poverty” in Mexico (Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca) were also the states that have experienced the most citizen-lead blockades (CONEVAL, 2013).

Social movements in Chiapas take control of their social, economic, political and technical infrastructures in order to meet their needs. Whether it be the EZLN or the myriad other social resistance movements in the state, people either create the infrastructure they need to get access to resources or they take control of the existing resources in order to create social change through anti-capitalist means. The access to resources achieved by these movements often creates benefits for many people. Another example of social movements creating infrastructure for a communal well-being is present in the neighborhood of Cuxtitali, where the El Cambalache project is located.

In San Cristobal de las Casas the neighborhood of Cuxtitali functions somewhat apart from the rest of the city. About a kilometer and a half from the historic center of the city, the neighborhood did not have running water until 1973 when neighbors organized themselves to build the water and sewage system (Fenner and Perez, 1992). The neighborhood is politically organized with an assembly decision-making process. Neighbors are regularly called to meetings in the central plaza of the neighborhood by an announcement that is emitted from a speaker on the roof of a car that circles through the streets. At the designated time hundreds of people come together to listen to the issue at hand and vote on the decisions to be taken. The neighborhood is notorious for its raucousness. There are regular festivities that include live music and fireworks that might

begin at 5:30 AM, take a pause at 10 AM but then recommence in the evening. These parties can last for days with people dancing and drinking in the streets and kids playing soccer in the plaza. As mentioned earlier Cuxtitali is considered highly marginalized.

I moved to Cuxtitali in July 2013, after living elsewhere in the city since 2007. El Cambalache, which began in August, 2014, is located in a shared residential and project space where I live with other people. The house is located one block from the central plaza and because of the strong social networks in the community, it is well known. Most of the people that participate in exchanges in El Cambalache are residents of Cuxtitali. Because El Cambalache strives to increase resource access in this neighborhood without money (which most people don't have much of) it has made an easy integration into the area. The idea that a neighborhood could take control of its economy has been easily incorporated for people that also govern their own autonomous potable water system. In this heterogeneous state and diverse economy people take responsibility for creating many of the systems that development projects offer to provide. However, in Chiapas, in these autonomous social movements and decision-making structures the process is non-capitalist.

The house where the project is located is both a living space and a project space. When El Cambalache began I and two other housemates were living in the house. The space has a large patio; five rooms (two are rented for El Cambalache and three are rented as living space); two bathrooms; a roofed enclave that became our cinema in November, 2016; a well as a large garden area where we have both a vegetable garden, and many fruit trees (orange, walnut, grapefruit, many peach trees and two pear trees).

The house is registered as a historical monument by the National Institute of Anthropology and History. It was built in the year 1800 and has the title *El Labor* (The Labor in English) (INAH, N/D). When I rented the space, the house had been abandoned for a few years and initially required a good deal of work repairing the old roofs and massive cleaning to eradicate a vibrant pigeon and rat population. The house was once a working farm spanning many hectares that was populated with laborers, animals and crops. Over the past fifty years the land has since been divided up and sold off as residential and commercial land (Ibid). Early on it was clear to me that the beautiful setting of the house should be open for use by our neighbors in Cuxtitali as part of a decolonial project. Given the history of indigenous and campesino labor and rebellion in Chiapas, it was also clear to me that creating a new non-oppressive economy in this house would re-appropriate historical and social constructions of the space into one of liberation within this decolonial project. In the next section I elaborate on the methods and methodology used for the creation of the project.

2.3 A Story of Methods and Methodology

In this section I explain the methods used and the methodology behind them. It is important to note that the research presented here is a praxiography. As mentioned in Chapter 1, praxiography is the research and writing of the practices that enact a given object of study (Mol, 2002). For Annemarie Mol the object of study through which she developed praxiography was the enactment of the disease atherosclerosis. Mol's research looked at the practices that create and participate in the enactment of the disease. For Mol this research involved studying the anatomy and pathology books as much as the

decisions doctors, patients, and hospitals took around treating and enacting the disease. I mobilize praxiography both here and in the chapters published as articles to write about the practices used in creating El Cambalache's moneyless micro-economy. The object of study is the action of creation and persistence of that economy, not the women who created it. My focus on the action of creation and persistence derives from our claim (the generators of El Cambalache) that we do not create any universal or generalizable truth about decolonial feminist anti-capitalist economies. Rather, we believe that consensus decision-making is a powerful and fruitful technique for creating non-oppressive economic communities. This means that we understand ourselves not as protagonists that have unique insights into economics or women's knowledge in general, but instead we strive to bring into practice economic relationships that are common in our context and little known precisely because they are obfuscated by capitalism and its enactment through development. If the action of El Cambalache travels beyond its own situation it is because others besides ourselves carry it on elsewhere. It is also important to note that because almost all of the women in the project come from groups that have historically been objects of study, no one wanted to repeat that constructed relationship; we wanted to enact research otherwise—that is, as co-researchers who openly discussed our role together and my role as also a PhD student (a role I took on *after* our initial discussions that would lead to creating El Cambalache in practice; see below).

In the narration of the practices that follow, the reader will find that the process is not a smoothly assembled step-by-step series of events. Rather, we try, revise, fail, revise, dream and practice. One aspect of creating research through consensus decision-making

is that because the decisions taken are made in a collective space we demonstrate how grassroots projects take hold and grow.

Research began in August, 2014. However, it is difficult to identify when the seeds of the project were sown exactly. I have lived in San Cristobal de las Casas since June, 2007 and I have a social network and friends here. Among the people I know we have been talking about the problems of capitalism for a long time. When I entered the doctorate with Dr. Lepawsky in 2012 I talked to him about doing an alternative economy action research project, but informal conversations here in San Cristobal de las Casas began around 2010-2011. In 2012, when my acceptance into the doctoral program made our project a possibility, Patricia, (one of the project generators) and I began to talk more often about our desire to create a non-capitalist economy. In following JK Gibson-Graham's "Start where you are!" philosophy (2006:195) we started meeting, drinking coffee and talking about all of our political positions before deciding that we would enter into working together. We did that for about four months.

Patricia and I have been friends for much longer than we have been working on El Cambalache. We spent wonderful afternoons thinking about what we had to do to make an economy. Early on it became clear that we couldn't make an economy with just the two of us. We would need more people, but we had to think about how to incorporate other people into our project. Both of us believe in a politics of non-domination and being that we had spent years in projects with consensus decision-making practices we felt that the first thing that should be done to start an economy was to begin with a consensus decision-making workshop so that everyone would be on the same page.

Patricia and I started to go around to different popular organizations in San Cristobal de las Casas and do short talks about how we would like to invite women to create an alternative economy with us in July, 2014. Patricia and I had decided that we wanted to create an economy by and for women. This was because women in Chiapas experience high rates of economic marginalization with only 31% of women of the available work force being employed in remunerated positions (CONEVAL, 2013). We were aware that the capitalist economy was not meeting women's needs. Furthermore, in Chiapas, as in most places, patriarchy limits women's voices in mixed gendered decision-making spaces and we wanted the other women and ourselves to be able to think and explore economic ideas as freely as possible. At the end of the month we had our first meeting which was also a consensus decision-making workshop. Six women came, we did the workshop and we never saw them again. That was ok, they were the local older women leaders of the feminist, natural resource defense and indigenous rights movements. They all said they liked the project.

Patricia and I had to rethink our strategy, an alternative economy would not work this way. We tried again. We talked to everyone we knew and tried to get them involved and asked them to tell everyone they knew. We were snowballing. Patricia is an amazing economic theorist, not only because inter-change value first came from her, but because she also includes people into the economy when talking to them. We had another introductory meeting where we offered coffee, tea, cookies and a conversation about starting a women's economy. Twelve women came. That also didn't work. Only two people came to the next meeting. But Patricia was excited, she talked to every woman she

knew even more about the importance of creating an alternative economy.

At this point Patricia and I had been talking for months about the project. We decided to make flyers to put around town and invite women to a meeting. The flyers read, "Have you ever dreamed about starting an alternative economy project? We have too!". At our next introductory meeting about twenty women arrived and we talked about alternative economies. The meeting was not recorded because we did not have consent from the participants being that we were only presenting the project. We had a meeting one week later. This meeting was different; we told everyone at the previous meeting that we would be gardening. Eight women came to the next meeting. We got our tools together and broke open a new garden at one of the newcomer's, Cinthia's, homes. Then, after two hours of intense work, we all moved into Cinthia's kitchen and ate cookies and drank tea. For two hours we talked about mutual aid and creating an economic project that involved exchanging abilities.

Patricia and I had decided that we wanted the women that created the project with us to benefit from being part of it immediately. The immediate benefit would come out of doing favors for each other that involved physical labor and interesting projects. Jenny Cameron and JK Gibson-Graham mention a similar tactic of having pizza parties so that project participants would get to know each other (2001). The initial generators of El Cambalache used a similar approach. We had small gatherings that promoted conversation and interaction so that we could get to know each other and build a sense of camaraderie. We also wanted to talk about non-capitalist economics. So we asked the new members of our group if they would like to talk theory in the afternoons. They

agreed.

For the first few weeks we would meet once a week where we gardened and then made candles for two hours. After a month and a half, we realized there was a lot of work to be done and a lot of things to talk about so we started meeting twice a week for four hours at a time. We did that for six and a half months. To this day we meet for four to five hours once a week and open El Cambalache's space three times a week for interchanges. People come in with whatever they would like to trade and then go into *La Troje* (Our trading space) and pick out what they want. The room is filled with clothing,



Figure 3: Patricia, Aramara, Josefa and Sarai ready to garden when we were just starting El Cambalache. Photo: Cinthia Pacheco Sanchez 10/2014

books, electronics, appliances, picture frames, cosmetics, toys, shoes, tools, art, and

anything else people bring to exchange. We do presentations at other organizations a little more than once every two weeks. In raw data collection I have more than 700 hours of audio and video recordings and we share thousands of photographs. But, over time, the project became much more than one about research. The project has made us friends and we constantly support each other in many ways.

The investigation for my thesis uses a methods assemblage of consensus decision-making that lead to action-research, collective participant observation, collective participant interviewing, collective auto-narrative, collective photography and videography, workshops, participatory public presentations and documentary film tours, Facebook, WhatsApp and blogging. A methods assemblage “is a combination of reality detector and reality amplifier” (Law, 2008:14) as well of collective use of all of the methods necessary for producing knowledge about a certain reality are useful if they meet the needs of the project. Here, I will explain the value and practice of how consensus decision-making functions as a research method and how that lead to the incorporation of all of the other methods in the assemblage.

As mentioned earlier, my co-researcher, Patricia, and I had decided that we wanted every woman in the project to have an equal voice in creating the economy and so we began the first theoretical meetings with a consensus decision-making workshop. Consensus decision-making is a non-hierarchical technique for making decisions based on every person involved agreeing. The technique has a structure that includes a six step process for facilitating consensus based decision making. I discuss the process briefly here (the specific version of it is more fully elaborated in Annexes 1 and 2, which

comprise two versions of workshop documents I developed for this and related research). At the meeting a participant brings information to the group about an issue to be talked about. Ideally, everyone participates in talking about the topic. Then a proposal is created and brought to the next meeting. At the meeting the proposal is brought to the table, it is talked about, modified, and brought to consensus. Consensus means that each person at the meeting agrees with moving forward with the proposal. If any single person disagrees with the proposal, then it cannot move forward. At these meetings it is understood that it is the responsibility of each person to reach consensus.

Consensus decision-making is based in practicing reflexivity as a methodology. Reflexivity is a technique, based heavily in feminist scholarship, to make more equal relationships between people that historically and contemporarily have uneven positionalities of power (Rose, 1997). By using consensus decision-making to guide and determine research we, in El Cambalache, attempt to respond to Sarah McLafferty's observation that 'except in rare cases, the researcher holds a 'privileged' position by deciding what questions to ask, directing the flow of discourse, interpreting interview, and observational material, and deciding where and in what form it should be presented' (1995: 437).

The August 5, 2014 version of the workshop presented in San Cristobal de las Casas was modified extensively with Patricia from an earlier version of the workshop. The workshop facilitator's manual is included in Annex 1. The previous version of the workshop was created while working as a research assistant for Dr. Lepawsky in Sonora, Mexico. The facilitator's manual I developed for this pilot version of the workshop is

included in Annex 2. The participant manuals are not included as they are simply the same manuals without the facilitator instructions. The most notable difference between the manuals is that the manual in Annex 1 is oriented specifically for women living in Chiapas while the manual used in Sonora was developed for a mixed gender audience to talk about workplace decisions within an electronics recycling plant. The manual created for women in Chiapas is focused on transforming the economy.

Consensus decision-making as a research method is built on the idea that only collective decisions created in place by the people that are organizing the economic project are what should decide the questions, process, practices and goals of the research project. This method also suggests that scholars should form horizontal collectives with co-researchers in order to produce knowledge about collective processes. In this way we create and struggle through commoning. One of the data collection techniques that is applicable for this method is similar to the methods for creating a focus group. Through participant observation one may study how topics are decided upon, what decisions are taken and how the group thinks together about different topics, I refer to this as collective participant observation. Co-researchers along with the scholar are creators of the research project. In this way co-researchers also decide what methods will be used to talk about the project and how to make it happen. In El Cambalache we interview ourselves as a group about our thoughts and feelings about different topics that impact the life of the project, which is what I refer to as collective participant interviewing. In this way academic research can contribute to social change processes which are by and for the people they benefit. Rather than creating knowledge at a distance from the community

that produced the data, knowledge is created in situ and is valuable for the people creating it. Dissemination of these ideas in the scholarly literature is part of the primary investigator's commitment to academia. Consensus decision-making as a research method may present a new form of data collection and knowledge production that places lay knowledge on the same footing with academic knowledge.

In writing academic texts about El Cambalache in English, we are aware of the time restrictions for translating each article into Spanish to share with all of the generators, however, all information published in each article and book chapter has been approved through consensus.

Returning to the formation of El Cambalache, after we did the consensus decision-making workshop over two sessions, we began to practice the technique while Patricia and I continued to give workshops on resources and time in the theoretical portions of the meetings. The workshop on resource-full-ness was done over three meetings or twelve hours. This workshop was adapted from *Shifting Focus: alternative pathways for communities and economies* (Cameron and Gibson, 2001:8-10) and the practice of Asset Based Community Development, asset mapping (Kretzman and McKnight, 1993) where communities are seen as resource-full rather than resource-poor. In El Cambalache we asked each person at the meeting to write down all of the abilities that they had and all of the things they knew how to do. These were their personal resources. At first there was hesitation and the usual statements, "I don't know much." However, we explained that knowledge included simple things like washing the dishes, driving a car, caring for children, reading, and speaking a language. Then the participants

started writing and talking, writing and talking. We wrote our lists of resources over two four hour meetings. The experience was intense and emotional. The other members of this new project hadn't thought about all of the things they knew how to do and the abilities were many. As women in Mexico, in a capitalist society we are often told that what we know how to do is unimportant because it doesn't generate money.

This was the beginning of the formation of what would one day be called the Generator Group. At these meetings four other women (not including Patricia and myself), Sarai Garcia Lopez, Cinthia Pacheco Sanchez, Josefa Vazquez Martinez, her daughter Aramara Vazquez Martinez and one other woman who was not able to continue with the project participated. A month later we would incorporate the final generator, Maria Intzin, into the project.

The generators are a diverse group of women who have distinct positionalities and as such complex nuanced lives that complicate my ability to write about them. Rather than provide my analysis of who they are, what their motivations might be and how to describe them I prefer to use texts that they wrote about themselves. Furthermore, the generators understand their identities to be non-essentialist, meaning that who we are is constantly shifting depending on myriad webs of power and positionalities. Staeheli and Lawson argue that in the context of the majority world Western researchers occupy complex positions of power:

when Western feminists enter developing settings, they cannot escape the power relations that exist between those societies or between themselves as academics and their research subjects, even when they wish to do so. Western researchers are in a position of power by virtue of their ability to name the categories, control information about the research agenda, define interventions and come and go as research scientists (1995: 332).

I have tried to horizontalize those power relationships in the methods used in creating the project, including the categories, the research agenda and decisions about how research would proceed have been decided through our consensus decision-making process. My own entangled insider/outsider status (discussed below) complicates the horizontality the project seeks to enact. I am not originally from where I live now, in Cuxtitali. My past experiences are unlike those of the other generators—and, likewise, those of the other generators are not self-similar. Yet, it would also be a mistake to hope to be able inhabit some position of purity from which to enact a more livable world. If we are to ‘start from where we are’, a politics of purity is a very unrealistic place from which to begin (Shotwell, 2016).

In respecting the consensus decision-making process, in what follows I only share the information that the generators have decided to share about themselves. Here I include a short autobiographical paragraph written by each of the generators describing themselves as of October 15, 2015 (my translation):

Josefa Vazquez, 35 yrs. old, is originally from Venustiano Carranza, Chiapas, an indigenous Tzotzil woman, single mother, and life long feminist, activist, and dedicated member/founder of El Cambalache a moneyless exchange based economy of goods and services. The solidarity economy is important for creating social change, because in our reality things are very bad because there is a great difference between the very rich and us, the poor. It is increasingly harder to find work and El Cambalache works to decrease people’s dependence on money. We are contributing our grain of sand while sharing other ways of thinking about the economy.

Sarai Garcia Lopez 35 yrs. old, is originally from Hermosillo, Sonora (Mexico). She has lived in San Cristobal de las Casas for nine years, has a masters in organic chemistry, member/founder of El Cambalache and is

mother of two boys. I love what I do. Outside of El Cambalache I work with organic garbage from which we obtain products with high aggregated value such as quin and organic fertilizers. Within El Cambalache I'm passionate about what we do. Everyday we discover new knowledge and abilities in ourselves and the people that participate in our small economy. Each person that comes to El Cambalache brings with them something they want exchange or an inter-action they want to develop.

Mary Intzin Guzman, 22 yrs. old, is originally from a small community, Juxalja in the municipality of Tenejapa, Chiapas, she is an indigenous Tzeltal woman, economic activist, member/founder of El Cambalache, and currently working on her high school diploma. I participate in El Cambalache with the goal of developing wider solidarity economy networks and to continue learning along the way with the other women in El Cambalache in order to change the economy and through the project engage in a kind of recycling where unwanted goods and things that seem like they are no longer useful have new lives and uses. We fix things that don't work and try to construct a new sense of living and thinking, to do things differently and in a fulfilling manner every day. We do things that seem impossible in the project, that's how we made the Cambalache itself.

Patricia de la Fuente, 54 yrs. old, is originally from Comitán, Chiapas. Patricia is a life-long activist and feminist, member/founder of El Cambalache, she participates actively in the process of education and capacity building with women and indigenous people from different communities. Within groups of women we work to change gender relationships and in El Cambalache I look for exchange and inter-action from myself and the collective to realize our vision of an alternative economy.

Cinthia Pacheco was born in Mexico City. I am a woman, a traveler, independent, having lived 38 springs. My horizons and vision of the world changed when I met activists for creating healthy local food networks, working in agro ecology, and solidarity economies. I studied agronomy and development of biological products and took classes in organic agriculture, solidarity economies and alternative ecological products, however in my travels I have had many experiences which have fed my heart and generated networks between people and collectives responsible consumerism. I like collaborating in collective work to construct other ways of living than those established by the capitalist system.

Erin Araujo, 35, is a PhD Candidate in the department of Geography at Memorial University of Newfoundland in St. John's, Canada. Originally

from New York, I have lived for nine years in Chiapas and have spent time living in Bolivia and Costa Rica. Over the past fifteen years I have worked in a number of collectives and research projects that resist capitalism in many forms. I am a life-long anarchist and feminist.

Writing about the positionality of oneself or others is messy and wrought with contradictions within the feminist struggle to confront uneven gendered power relationships (Rose, 1997; Gibson-Graham, 1994:219). As Butler aptly notes, identity is performed, fleeting and often only comes into being in its repetition (1990). My positionality, like that of everyone else, is constantly changing, depending on where I am and who I am with. I was born on Long Island, New York in the United States. Currently I am in my late thirties. My skin color is what is referred to as white. I am cisgendered and bisexual. Over the past eighteen years I have lived mostly outside of the United States (between 2004-2007 I lived in California and then New York City). I have lived in Costa Rica (4 months in 1999 and 4 months in 2000). In October 2001 I came to Chiapas for the first time. I then moved to Bolivia between February 2002 and July 2003. In July 2003 I moved to Chiapas until March 2004. I then returned to the USA until the summer of 2007 and San Cristobal de las Casas has been my home base since then. As part of my doctorate I spent the fall semester of 2012 in St. Johns, Newfoundland in order to attend classes at Memorial University. I have had long term Mexican partners in San Cristobal de las Casas and long term friendships. I continue to be involved in many different communities, of which, El Cambalache is the space where I participate most. In regards to situating myself within coloniality, decoloniality, and power relationships between myself and the other co-researchers it is difficult to locate oneself. For example, here in

Chiapas, I am always a foreigner, but I am less of a foreigner here than anywhere else. I am close friends with the other generators in El Cambalache. Whenever something important happens in our lives we are among the first to know. For example, last summer, on July 5th, 2016. when Josefa gave birth to her second daughter, it was generators that took turns all day and all night accompanying her in the hospital.

We also play with our positionalities. In August, 2017 Josefa needed access to her medical records and the hospital left her waiting for two hours (this particular hospital is well known for treating indigenous women badly). We were supposed to meet up but she was still waiting. I put on some of my nicer clothes, did my hair and makeup, met with Josefa and requested the documents. They gave them to me in five minutes. However, in other situations it is tactical for me not to be present. When we have meetings with funders that want to fund projects led by indigenous women I do not appear. In El Cambalache each of the generators is working to be equal and we work to make each other equal. There are examples of this process in the articles and chapters presented in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

As is notable from these biographical narratives of each of the generators and myself, we are busy women. Also, as Cinthia often says, “We have probably always been Cambalacheras.” Each one of the generators comes from a very different background and life experience. This is a strength for the project. The consensual nature of our decisions represents many different positionalities that we work to situate as collective knowledge.

Patricia and I put together a questionnaire that each person would work on on their own and then as a group we would develop the answers together at meetings. The

questionnaire is included in Annex 3. The document asks “What kind of economy would we like?”, “With whom?”, “How?”, Etc... We began to answer each question, one per meeting. Meanwhile we did an exercise that had a huge impact on all of us.

We modified the “Worker's Clock” exercise from *Take Back the Economy* (Gibson-Graham, Cameron and Healy; 2013:23-33) to a version where we averaged the



number of hours we spent over a week doing different activities then looked at the percentage of each day spent in each activity (See Figure 4). Then we created our dream clocks and we modified the percentages of time to create a clock that would allow us to do the activities important to us (See

Figure 4: One of the Reality Clocks. The title is "What's up with my time?". Forty percent of the time was spent at home, 10% walking, time with her partner, reading; 25% is spent in remunerated activities and 25% in solidarity activities. Photo by Erin Araujo

Figure 5). We

talked about our dreams and the things we would like to do. Creating the clocks taught at least one of us that what we desire requires more time (105%) than there is in a day (Figure 5)! But this also taught us that to achieve what we actually want, we must change the situations in which we enact our lives. We set out to make this happen.

Among the goals that we spoke about in these meetings were dedicating time to playing drums, learning French, riding horses, travelling more, going on a plane, a functioning Cambalache, having a computer, learning English and having more time for one's self. Since we initially created these clocks all of these goals have been realized and more.

As we continued to meet and talk we began to try out doing swaps with interchange value; think about how we would like to interact with people; and plan our inauguration. I mentioned earlier that as a research project El Cambalache uses collective participant observation; collective participant interviewing; collective auto-narrative; collective photography and videography; workshops; participatory public presentations and documentary film tours; and the collective use of Facebook, WhatsApp and blogging.^{vi} These techniques have been proposed by the generators together, not by myself alone. We have meeting notes and recordings of our meetings, regularly photograph and film ourselves, do outreach on Facebook and our blog, hold presentations to teach people about El Cambalache and talk about it and we create documents that tell

^{vi} See our Facebook page, at Cambalache Sancris Tobal and our blog at <http://cambalache.noblogs.org>

our story, including a documentary film.

In July, 2015, as part of funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities

Research Council
Grant, Reassembling

Rubbish, at our
request Dr.

Lepawsky offered us
\$7,000 to support us

making a
documentary about

the project.^{vii} We
finished the

documentary in the
end of February,

2016.^{viii} It was
collectively filmed,

directed, and

produced. Since

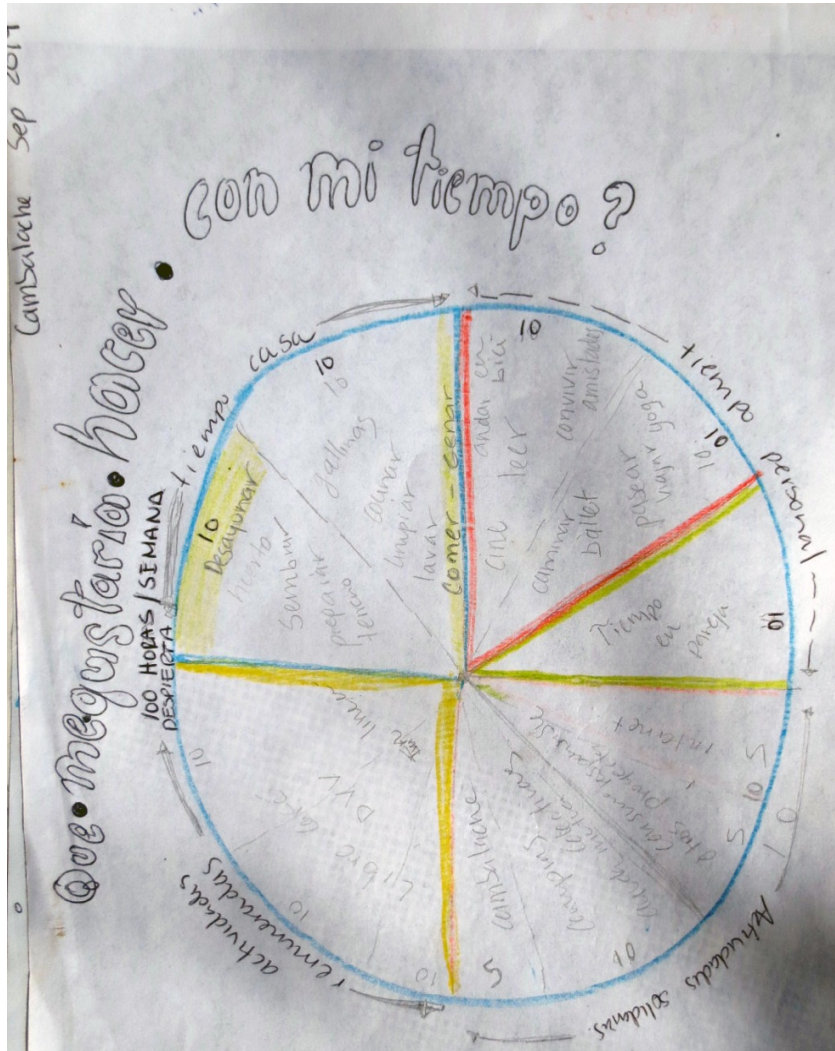


Figure 5: A Dream Clock. The title says, "What would I like to do with my time?" Time at home shifted from 40% to 20%, personal time became 30%, solidarity activities became 25% and remunerated activities stayed at 30%. In this Dream Clock the total is 105%!

^{vii} See co-authorship statement.

^{viii} The documentary is available online at <https://vimeo.com/159060233>

March 2016 we have presented the documentary in over 30 locations including New York, Stockholm, Oakland, Toronto, Mexico City and many other locations in Mexico. The documentary explains El Cambalache and highlights the organizations and individuals that support and participate in the project. We have shown the documentary to 90% of the people that appear in the film. The process of creating the film and its nuances are explored in Chapter 4.

El Cambalache opened its doors to the public on March 21st, 2015. Since that day we open three days a week, Monday afternoons, Thursday and Friday mornings. Now, after two years of working together we still meet every Tuesday afternoon for four-five hours. There is a high level of dedication among us, the generators, to keep the project going and growing in reach and numbers of people participating. As mentioned earlier, over 700 people have participated in around 2,000 exchanges. New people keep coming to the project and the regulars keep returning.

As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, early on the generators decided that all items that are exchanged in El Cambalache are things one no longer wants yet nevertheless work or are easily repairable. In a capitalist market we know well that many things are more highly valued than others. When El Cambalache began to incorporate the public we wanted to demonstrate that items that are highly valued in a capitalist economy can also have value in a non-capitalist space and be a mechanism for creating that space. For that reason, repairing and recirculating discarded electronics hold an important place in the inter-changes in El Cambalache. Myself and others have come to share their abilities to repair computers, laptops, cellular phones, and stereos. During the first year

and a half of the project^{ix} we provided workshops twice a week on laptop maintenance with the goal of creating a network of people that could repair and help distribute computers and phones to those that wanted them and would have difficulty acquiring them otherwise.

As has been noted by a number of authors (see Richardson, 2017; Treem, 2015; Dutta, 2012 for examples) social media has been a site of extended resistance and grassroots political accountability over the past ten years. In Chiapas, the EZLN began using the internet in 1994 to announce its uprising and demands (Enlace Zapatista, 2017). Since that point in time social movements in Chiapas and around the world have made use of the wide reach of what was once the massive network of Indymedia.org (Indymedia Chiapas shutdown in December, 2012). Since then many autonomous news agencies have been created as part of what has become a common method for sharing non-corporate media. These news outlets continue to give grassroots movements that possibility of publishing their own work from their own perspective.

Today more and more people have devices that connect them to the internet, however as of 2014 only 41% of people in Chiapas had access to it (CONEVAL, 2014). Being able to connect to the internet is not as simple as it may seem if one is located in a

^{ix} To this day I continue to repair laptops and cell phones though the workshop on laptop maintenance has been on pause during the time that I have had to switch my focus to writing this dissertation, running a crowdfunding campaign for the project and developing our own autonomous project for funding that has consisted of making artisanal beer to continue paying for the rent in the space. Upon completion of this doctorate we plan on reviving the workshop.

place that is saturated with online apps and interactions. In the developed world there are many critiques that too many interpersonal interactions are governed by smart phones and online applications. In Chiapas this is hardly the case. Rather, internet is still expensive to contract for use at home and cell phone services in Mexico are amongst the most expensive in the world. It is common to see groups of children and adults gathered in front of schools after normal hours connecting to the internet because school infrastructure and sometimes public plazas have free Wi-Fi, often as a direct legacy of Mexico's engagement with the UN MDGs.

In El Cambalache, we see part of creating non-capitalist spaces as being able to access online communities and resources because worlds of knowledge and social exchanges are available for free once one has the tool to connect to the internet. Two of the spaces that have high levels of participation in El Cambalache are online. One of those spaces is supported on WhatsApp. WhatsApp is a software designed for chatting, making calls and having group conversations. The El Cambalache WhatsApp group is specifically for chatting about and connecting inter-changes. The other space is a Facebook page which also facilitates inter-changes as well as announces meetings, news, and events relevant to El Cambalache. The WhatsApp group currently has 121 participants with between 30-50 messages a day and the Facebook pages has over 1000 likes and followers. These numbers suggest the usefulness of El Cambalache as an economic tool for practicing inter-changes. The content of the messages exchanged on WhatsApp are highly varied. They include people looking for specific items such as grain mills, suitcases, cell phone chargers, and tools for gardening and construction. The list is

also used to locate missing people and pets; organize firefighter brigades; get advice about how to connect natural gas components, health issues, and personal problems; get help doing construction; or share free events. These messages indicate that a certain level of trust and interdependence is developing within people that participate in the group. Differently from the WhatsApp list, posts to the Facebook page come directly from the generators of the project to share updates, workshops and events. In El Cambalache's facility we provide people with the option of connecting to the internet for free. We currently pay for internet access; it is one of the ways that El Cambalache functions as part of our hybrid economy in that we common a private, commercially run access point to the internet.

Aside from providing internet access, we also repair electronics that are left unused or otherwise discarded. When people bring us laptops that no longer work there is often an emotional process of separating from the machine. Most people that bring their computers have had the machine for a while and it has sat in their homes in storage because the person does not have a way to discard it. They comment that they feel like the machine could have use but they themselves don't know how to fix it and repair shops often charge cost prohibitive prices for providing services. When they bring me their computer I transfer their data to another disc and talk to them about the process of creating other computers out of theirs. It often takes dismantling 2-3 computers to create one computer. Or in other cases the problem with their machine is a simple fix such as soldering the connection where the power source is connected to the machine or replacing the RAM.

We often talk about decreasing the number of electronics that enter the waste stream in El Cambalache. The number is small, perhaps we receive sixty computers and 100 cellular phones per year and return into use about fifteen computers and forty cellular phones. El Cambalache is not making an impact in decreasing the amount of ewaste in the world. However, something else is happening. I personally repair approximately 1-2 computers or cellular phones per week. Time permitting, I invite the owner of the device to sit with me, unscrew the parts of their machine and I explain what is going on inside. In El Cambalache, in the same way that we are working to un-become merchandise, we are always trying to remove people's fear of their machines. In my experience of fixing these machines and showing people how over the past two years fear is the number one reason why people don't fix their machines on their own. Ninety percent of the machines that are repaired are simple fixes and could easily be done by anyone. However, in the capitalist market, machines are created with actual planned obsolescence where the machine breaks after a given period of time. There is also a psychological obsolescence built into the marketing messages, telling people that certain machines no longer are worth fixing. Few people know that they can repair their own machines. In moneyless or low-moneyed economies repair of machines and the extension of their useful lives can create a dramatic difference in the resources that are available for use.

2.4 A Theory of Inter-Change Value

In this section I describe El Cambalache's theory of exchange value and how it creates distinct economic subjectivities. As an anarchist project we work to remove the

hierarchy of value from the exchange of goods, abilities and mutual aid. At El Cambalache no item or practice has more or less value than any other. We refer to this practice of valuing as ‘inter-cambio’ or inter-change value. Inter-change value can, but does not necessarily, have the same features as what political economists, such as Marx, would call exchange value. Exchange value, as noted in other sections of this dissertation, typically refers to what quantum of an item, say forks, can be traded for what quantum of another item, say a shirt (Marx, 1976:126). El Cambalache’s practice of inter-change value, however, is different from this notion of exchange value. The only quantum that counts at El Cambalache is the notion of one-to-one inter-change.

Inter-change value is built on transforming economic interactions. Here I include a letter from Patricia that explains her reasons for us collectively eliminating the value of things titled, “Why have we abolished the value of things?” (March 16, 2017, my translation, emphasis Patricia’s):

It is my understanding that when we speak of inter-change value, of knowledge, abilities and things where everything has the same value and there is no calculation of value through money nor any substitute of money, what we are doing is **removing the market value from knowledge and abilities that we share and the things that we reuse**. It is difficult to take oneself out of capitalist thinking, because in order to survive in this system of buying and selling of labor (for both women and men) and the product of this labor, the only way possible right now is by making money.

For that reason, removing the market value of things and hours of work is very important. It means that even though at some point we invest money in order to acquire knowledge, abilities and things, when they are brought to inter-change, where money is no longer how their value is measured (of course it is true that they are things we no longer need and time we would like to share) [...] one begins to construct a way of thinking about not making a profit, that is to say, thinking about not exploiting others. This transformation in the way of thinking, begins to, as you say in the documentary, make things start to happen. The Cambalache

community, I think, is beginning, little by little, to realize that among everyone we can contribute to lowering our dependence on money. Generating ideas is a collectively shared process where everyone has something to inter-change. Yes, we are constructing our own economic space parallel to the capitalist system, but we are deconstructing ourselves on the most intimate levels the essence of capitalist thought, that is, to be merchandise.

I hope my reflections are useful and they don't complicate life more, I feel its very difficult to put into words all of the potential that this transformation has...

Patricia touches on several important points in this letter. The first is the idea that by eliminating value from our economies we eliminate the need for profit. As Patricia expresses, without the need for profit we no longer seek to exploit or be exploited in our economic interactions. In the moment of inter-change we promote a different kind of thought, that of questioning: How does what I bring to the economy benefit others? What do I want and need? How do we common well-being? What is discardable? What is repairable? How do I contribute to not only lowering my own dependence on money, but also that of those around me? How do we de-marketize ourselves and value that which is most important to us? While most of these questions are more enigmas than questions that have concrete answers there are some steps that we take in El Cambalache to further the praxis of provoking responses to them. The first step is that of creating value through re-appropriating discards.

What is inter-changed at El Cambalache can be classed into four types: i) things that one no longer needs; ii) abilities (e.g., personal care services; laptop repairs) iii) knowledge (e.g., language or cooking lessons) and iv) mutual aid (e.g., child care; gardening; construction of homes or schools) that people would like to share. Things that

one no longer needs include items that might otherwise be treated as discards (e.g., a radio that might be put out of house as refuse; a cooking pot stored, but out of use, by a household). Yet, via El Cambalache, that radio or cooking pot might be swapped for a class on creating tinctures from medicinal plants or assembling laptops or speaking Tzeltal. In this way we work to incorporate both marginalized knowledge and items that would otherwise be discards back into use and out of storage or the waste stream.

All of the things, abilities, knowledge, and forms of mutual aid that are shared in the project have the same value. For example, one may exchange a class for a sweater or shampoo or for attending our bi-weekly cinema where local and international film and documentary directors present their work. For El Cambalache making everything of equal value has the potential to create egalitarian social relationships while presenting a way for people to meet their needs.

While it is important to have access to ‘stuff’ and be able to share knowledge, the value created in El Cambalache is also a transformation from within each person that changes how we understand and interact with other people. For example, when I asked Raquel^x, a woman in her mid-fifties from Cuxtitali who comes to inter-change about once a month, "Why do people participate in El Cambalache?", she responded, "because honestly, so many people need El Cambalache, so many people value it, there are people

^x The non-generator participants in El Cambalache have had their names changed in this document.

who truly need this project" (November, 2016; my translation). Another example comes from an interview with a film director from Brazil in her mid-thirties who showed her short films in our cinema. She said, "You can share so much in El Cambalache, I had no idea how close I would feel to people in this space. All I wanted to do was show my film so that I could get a sweater and now I'm leaving with so much, thank you so much." (April, 2017; my translation). For us, at El Cambalache these two statements express the finely woven mixture of experience in the project where it is simultaneously a socio-technical network that serves as a tool to meet one's needs and on the other hand the participation in a community of people working to be equal is truly fulfilling on an emotional level.

2.4.1 Articulating Inter-Change Value

Inter-change value is based on several baseline socioeconomic assumptions and goals for social change that came out of a collective decision-making process. These assumptions should be understood to reflect the ideas of the generators in El Cambalache and the baseline ideas employed in creating the project. These assumptions are as follows:

1. In any one geography there is a plethora of kinds of economic interactions. The economy is not limited to only capitalist economics, rather there are many kinds of non-capitalist and alternative capitalist relationships at play at any given time.
2. Economic relationships are integral to social relationships. The hierarchical positionalities created by capitalist economies form unequal person-to-person power relationships between individuals and between mass groups of people. Those

relationships shift when non-capitalist economies are integrated into social relationships. The particular influence of one kind of economy or another on these relationships is more evident in geographic regions where there is a high level of dependence on a single given type of economic system to create access to resources. For example, in regions where capitalism is the principle economy used to gain access to a resource such as water, one's access to water is governed by one's positionality in the hierarchy obligated by the capitalist economy. In regions where capitalism is one mechanism among many others to have access to water, people may not necessarily use capitalist means to have water. As such, one's positionality is distinct.

3. In Chiapas women in general and indigenous women in particular have the lowest access to money out of any socioeconomic group of people. This is particularly notable where 76.2% (CONEVAL, 2013) of the entire population of the state lives below the poverty line. Women in Chiapas are expected to provide food, clothing and other resources to secure the well-being of themselves and their families. Consequently, based on a low access to money we assume that most of the economic interactions between women do not involve money. However, their social networks limit their access to resources due to myriad oppressions imposed through coloniality (e.g., racism, sexism, lack of knowledge of Spanish, etc.) that limit class mobility in a capitalist economy.

4. Access to resources influences one's positionality. In other words if all people participating in the economy have the same access to resources (e.g., knowledge sharing and mutual aid) then we take a step towards a more equal positionality in the 'struggle to distribute power more evenly' (Farrow et al., 1995: 71).

5. Despite highly unequal access to money, we live in a time of incredible surplus of other things, knowledge, and abilities that could be circulated with mutual aid.
6. Class, gender, ethnic, racial, and sexual classifications imposed both internally and externally on each person and group of people limit the movement and expression of both physical and psycho-social resources (such as self-esteem, emotional connection, love, empathy, and care) between groups of people as a consequence of coloniality.
7. Hierarchical relationships are destructive to individuals and groups of people because they require the subjugation of people and non-human others. Hierarchy limits one's ability to thrive and flourish.

Based on these assumptions and building on the experiences of the generators through years of consensus decision-making we decided that inter-change value would foment specific goals for creating social change. These goals are:

1. Create an economy where each person has equal access to the resources available.
2. Create a space where women and anyone else vulnerable to violence are comfortable and safe to be and express themselves.
3. Support community members to make non-capitalist economic decisions.
4. Emphasize the importance of forms of knowledge that are not generally considered to be important in a capitalist economy.
5. Support the sharing and growth of forms of indigenous women's knowledge in order to emphasize the importance of these forms of knowledge.

6. Assert that each person is resource-rich. When a new person enters the economy every other person in the economy becomes more resource-full because they now have access to the abilities of each new person.
7. Create a network of abilities and knowledge that will supplement the lack of access to important services such as healthcare, education, construction (e.g., of homes) and childcare.
8. Increase people's access to electronics through repair and redistribution because of their importance for communication and access to information.
9. Decrease the quantity of items that enter the waste stream.

Based on these assumptions El Cambalache articulated inter-change value in praxis. This form of practicing value is derived from an attempt at creating an economy that is based in women's needs and ways of making ends meet. Inter-change value reflects the economic experiences of the people in the collective that created it. Each member of the collective has had a different experience of capitalist and non-capitalist economies derived from where we are from to the distinct oppressions and geographies that each person has faced throughout their lives. That is to say, capitalism itself has a positionality that can be situated as much as each of the generators of El Cambalache.

In Figure 6 I provide an example of the ranges of the experiences of capitalism for the members of El Cambalache to demonstrate the varied experiences of women's dependence on money to meet their needs. The image represents the level of presence of capitalism in the economy. The diagram is a visual representation of the range of the incorporation of capitalism in the economy that begins on the left with the developed

world where a high degree of resources are only accessible through capitalist economic relationships. On the right side of the diagram appears the majority world where resources are accessible to different degrees through both capitalist and non-capitalist means. The two extremes of the range represent on the left an economy where resources are only accessible through a capitalist means and on the right an economy where

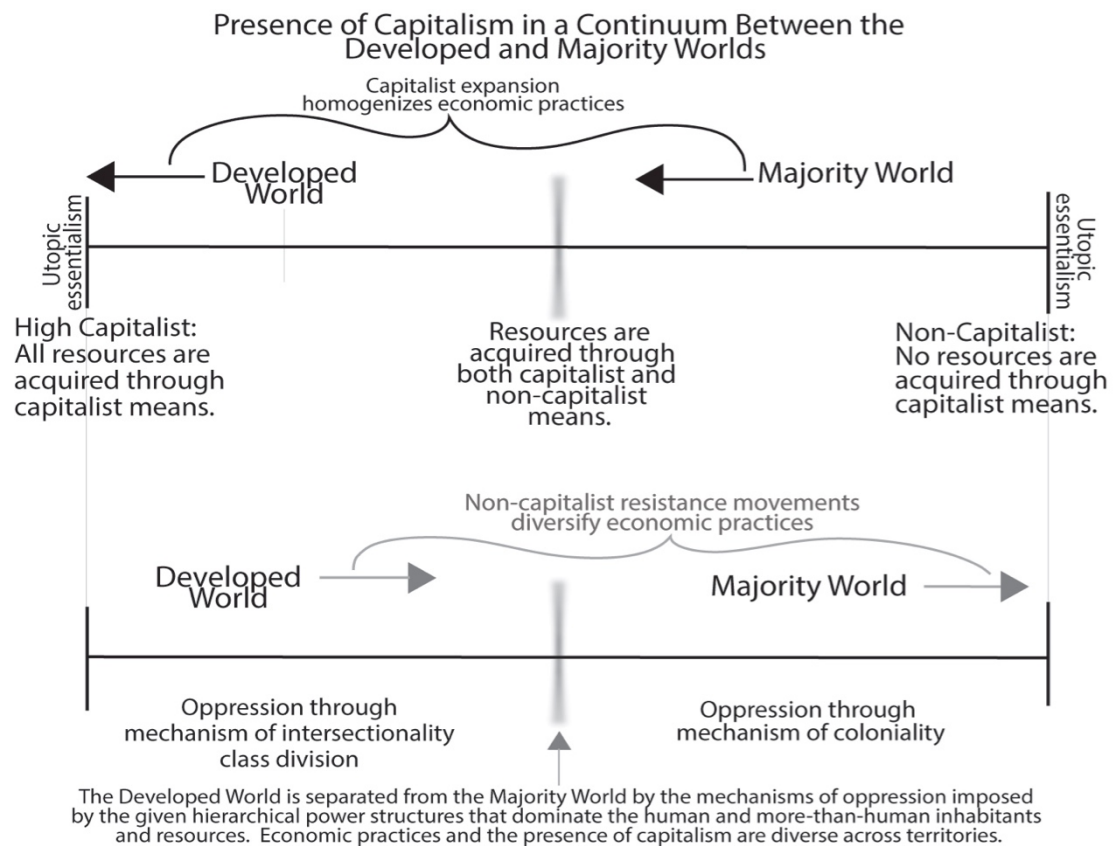


Figure 6: Presence of Capitalism between the Developed and Majority Worlds. By Erin Araujo

resources are only accessible through non-capitalist means. The ends of the range could be interpreted as utopias (in the sense that they do not actually exist in those ideal forms) whereas the range between the two utopias is a representation of the hybrid nature of existing diverse economies. In order to understand the diversity of economic thought

present in the creation and practice of inter-change value it is important to understand that the generators group has had diverse experiences of the economy ranging from almost entirely capitalist through almost entirely non-capitalist economy based in the distinct geographies where we grew up.

The great diversity of practices and beliefs across economic geographies can be seen in the following example. My experience of growing up in the middle class mostly white suburbs of New York City has been that everything there seemed to require money, even walking in the nature reserves on Long Island requires money. In Huntington, Long Island many activities that could lead to certain levels of self-sufficiency such as owning chickens or other livestock on one's land are not permitted according to town ordinances. There, in my experience, one's identity feels to be constructed through the items one owns and the media one consumes. As mostly white middle class Americans we were taught that we should be the best and only the best prosper into class mobility. We were taught to desire money at all times, expect to always be treated with respect, acquire discerning tastes regarding food, style, music, etc. and never settle for less. We attended the same schools as the children of the mostly El Salvadorian immigrants in the area, but in my college preparatory, arts and humanities classes we rarely mixed. Our socio-economic classes were made brutally clear from an early age.

There is more access to money in Long Island and physically there is more money built into the environment than there is in Chiapas. In Long Island many people that suffer terrible oppressions and in general, the oppressions we face limit our ability to access money, but the experience of living in a money-dense location is distinct from

Chiapas where there simply is not a high abundance of money.

The other members of the generators group in El Cambalache hail from Sonora, Morelos, and Chiapas, Mexico. The differences in the geographies of Mexico are important. In Sonora, a state that borders with the United States, or Morelos, in the center of the country, resource access for women is more dominated by moneyed interactions than in Chiapas where as a condition of coloniality, women have less access to money and women's access to resources is less dominated by moneyed interactions. Both Sarai Garcia Lopez (from Sonora) and Cinthia Pacheco Sanchez (from Morelos) have master's degrees in biochemistry and agro-ecology respectively.

Of the three generators from Chiapas; Patricia de la Fuente Castro, Josefa Vazquez Martinez and Maria Intzin have each grown up and lived most of their lives in comparatively distinct diverse economies. Comitán, Venustiano Carranza and Tenejapa are very different locations with very different levels of incidence with capitalism. Comitán is a small city with a population of around 150,000 people (INEGI, 2017) that has functioned as one of the key points of trade and access to the tropical regions of the state due to its location somewhat near the border with Guatemala (Aubry, 2008). Venustiano Carranza is small town of around 16,000 people (INEGI, 2017b) in the middle of the state in a largely rural area that is constantly under pressure by mining companies to undergo exploration of a large gold vein in the municipality. Finally, Tenejapa, has a population of approximately 2,000 people and similarly about 75% of the population is indigenous (INEGI, 2017c).

For Josefa and Maria growing up in Chiapas, as indigenous women, they were

exposed to very different worlds than Patricia, who grew up as a mestiza woman in Comitán. Josefa (37 yrs. old) and Mary (24 yrs. old) were told from a young age that they could not inherit land, that their voice was of little importance in family issues, that their place was to clean, cook, and help raise their younger brothers and sisters. Patricia (55 yrs. old) grew up in Comitán in a very different time and place. Patricia was on a basketball team, she was encouraged to study accounting in a university so that she wouldn't have to depend on anyone (according to her mother) and after finishing her degree dedicated her life to feminism and indigenous rights social movements.

It is this range of experiences of capitalism and non-capitalist economies embodied within the generators of El Cambalache that has contributed to the creation of inter-change value as derived from our distinct geographies. In order to understand inter-change value it is important to understand the range of distribution of money across geographies. Within a monolithic capitalist economic paradigm, development agencies often refer to locations that have a high density of money to be understood as a *rich* or developed geography and conversely regions that have a low density of money are referred to as *poor*, *impoverished* or *undeveloped* geographies. In this section and others of the dissertation rather than using the terms rich and poor to refer to the density of money in a region I refer to high or low access to money or high or low density of money. This shift in language is important because in part El Cambalache works to remove hierarchy in the value of resources and within the El Cambalache economy money is the only resource that has no value. All other items and abilities have the same value.

We live in multiple economies at all times. This implies that, while in El Cambalache money is not used as a medium of exchange, everybody that participates in El Cambalache uses money regularly in both capitalist and alternative capitalist economic relationships. Furthermore, in El Cambalache we use money to pay the rent, utilities, purchase tools that are unavailable otherwise and to travel. However, in the functioning or practice of the project, within inter-change value, money is valueless. As is mentioned in other sections of this dissertation, it is common in Chiapas and other parts of the majority world to live in a hybrid economy that is not only diverse, as defined within community economies research, but hybrid (Palomino Schalscha, 2015) in which the sociotechnical networks that are our economies have multiple rules and regimes of value according to the space within which the specific economic activity is practiced. In El Cambalache we work to lower our dependency on money and provide access to resources to people that have limited access to money.

Poverty as is defined through development projects such as those of the MDGs is very real. Poverty, in definition and practice, is an important part of the violence of coloniality that is exerted upon populations by the state, trans-national corporations and the resulting expressions of capitalism. In no part of this dissertation do I seek to romanticize poverty. When the dominant economy makes access to basic needs difficult or impossible humans and the more-than-human are destroyed in a process of widely accepted systematic murder justified through economic means.

El Cambalache is an attempt to reduce poverty (here understood as a lack of access to any given resource, physical or psychological) not by incorporating more

people into a capitalist economy that creates its own specific type of poverty, but rather, by creating or enhancing other ways of acting economically parallel to or outside of capitalism. In this way the terms *poor*, *rich*, *poverty*, and *wealth* are insufficient for explaining how people participate in either a capitalist or non-capitalist economies. In order to decenter and dismantle capitalism it is important to recognize that the variety of economic interactions in a diverse economy lends itself to myriad definitions of the terms rich and poor and their derivatives. As is mentioned in Chapter 3 these words are culturally specific. Noting the cultural specificity of the words *poor*, *rich*, *poverty*, and *wealth* matters because they reify the given economy within which they are defined. By limiting the definition of rich and poor to access to money in a capitalist economy or the density of money in a region we continue the expansion of capitalist hegemony through language. El Cambalache works in small steps to decrease our incorporation into and dependency on capitalism through language (El Cambalache functions in Spanish, Tzeltal and Tzotzil) and the practice of doing inter-changes through those languages and their cultures. So while one may not have access to much money, one often has access to a wide variety of physical and mental resources that are generally not well valued in a capitalist system (e.g., women's ideas and physical work; indigenous labor in general; Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Tojolobal and Chol knowledge and experience; knowledge about living and practicing hybrid economies; practices for generating collective thought and autonomous governance; pedagogical knowledge about how to teach others that they can do many things without being an expert; etc.). As a consequence, we refer to people and

communities as being resource-full^{xi} in order to create no differentiation between people that have a high level of access to money and people that have a low level of access to money.

Each member of the generator group has had a distinct lived experience of the economy that inspired the creation of inter-change value. Our positionalities have contributed to understanding the economy and what kinds of access to resources we may aspire to have in very different ways. This is because the oppressions and privileges we each have faced across economic geographies have not been the same. In the same way that the capitalism is not ubiquitously implemented in exactly the same way across the globe, neither are the oppressions necessary to keep it functioning.

For El Cambalache it is important to include the emotional experience of economic exchanges in a capitalist market in knowing what inter-change value should not be. The constant experience of letting people down, of watching your loved ones feel bad, go hungry, or suffer and even die from inadequate medical care because they cannot acquire everything that in a capitalist economy implies success and well-being extends the oppression that is coloniality. Coloniality is present in the experience of constantly working, destroying one's body to acquire money while knowing that the money will not be enough to meet one's basic needs.

How these goals are addressed is elaborated in the following sections of this

^{xi} Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993.

chapter.

2.4.2 Creating Value

Inter-change value is a feminist praxis of creating value out of knowledge/abilities and discards that are de-valued in a capitalist economic system. In order to create value where it was once assumed that there was only poverty El Cambalache had to do away with a hierarchical notion of value between things, knowledges, and abilities. The destruction of differential valuing of what is exchanged was done recognizing that when value is assigned it immediately creates artificial hierarchies assigned by a power-structure that discriminates against us rather than supporting us. The creation of hierarchy across any groups of things, ideas, resources or people is not only violent towards all that are located in the lower rungs of the given scale, but it also destroys the possibility for learning about or with and becoming close to that which is undervalued through hierarchy.

In order to remove the capitalist market value from an object or ability it is not simply enough to say value is abolished, rather we have to rethink our interactions with the world and each other. Within interchange value, value is derived from continuing the “life” of objects, knowledge, or abilities as well as giving the persons who consent to interchange them a sense of accomplishment and worth. Self-sufficiency or autonomy as expressed through one being able to resolve problems in a group or individually is a fulfilling experience. It creates inner strength for people and decreases one’s sense of vulnerability. In El Cambalache we work to spread knowledge around healthcare, construction, repair, electricity, cooking and other knowledge that support people increasing their well-being not only because the knowledge is useful and decreases one’s

dependence on money, but also because on a personal level they are knowledge that build internal strength because we become members of a community that can resolve our own problems. The desire to build autonomy, to know that we are capable of becoming a community that can fix itself has been a logical and fluid process derived from the situation we find ourselves in with one another in Chiapas. We have started from where we are.

Over the past twenty-three years the Zapatista communities and volunteers that come to participate in solidarity with them have created an immense amount of infrastructure in the region. Roads, high tension electrical lines, water systems, an education system that attends to around 50,000 children, a limited but functioning healthcare system, a system of governance, a military, and an agro-ecological system have developed through the work of indigenous communities in resistance and their supporters. They did this with access to few resources and an immense community of support outside of the capitalist economic system and under constant psychological violence and regular threats of physical violence from the Mexican government. In El Cambalache we have this massive example to learn from and build on.

The Zapatistas have taught us that one does not have to be an expert in a given form of knowledge or ability in order to practice it. Rather the world we work to create is built by practicing it, working with others to share and create new knowledge and being humble in recognizing that collectively we contain the knowledge to experiment and create worlds. Each person contains myriad abilities that might not be initially understood to be good at contributing to each and every project but can have exciting implications. It

is often easy to forget in a money dense society that each person brings much to the world. Rather than each person only being as worthy as their state sanctioned education (or indoctrination), their titles and their accolades that are created by others located higher up in the hierarchy, we recognize each person as a whole, resource-full being.

2.5 Conclusion

As the reader will see in the following three chapters, the El Cambalache research project is an action-based research project that embraces research in diverse economies, generative justice, decoloniality and anarchist economic geography. These four fields of knowledge and research agendas, theoretically resonate in the desire to create non-dominating, community-based social change. The process of practicing decoloniality while building a practice of anarchist economics creates space for investigators to produce knowledge alongside co-researchers where co-researchers are equally engaged in deciding the steps and goals of the research at hand. In the creation of El Cambalache this practice has been incredibly fruitful in creating new non-capitalist economic knowledge and subjectivities for participants.

Co-Authorship Statement

The work and ideas in this dissertation have been created through a collective consensus decision-making process with the generators of El Cambalache. While all work in the dissertation is my own, the information and concepts grew out of conversations within the two years of creating El Cambalache. This process is explained in chapters 3, 4 and 5 of the dissertation. Furthermore, the writing and publication of these chapters was part of a collective agreement of inter-change with the generators of El Cambalache. From the beginning of the project it was agreed that I would find money-based support for the project in exchange for writing single authored articles to meet the requirements for the dissertation and completion of the doctorate. The dissertation has been created with comments and editing by my academic advisor, Dr. Josh Lepawsky. I have also received and incorporated the feedback from members of my internal review committee, Dr. Dean Bavington and Dr. Stephen Healy. The articles presented here have gone through an extensive peer review process where I have incorporated feedback from three distinct double blind reviewers and the two editors for each special edition of the given journals that published this work. Finally the book chapter incorporates extensive feedback from the editors, Dr. Marcela Palomino Schlascha and Dr. Nicole Gombay as well as Dr. Josh Lepawsky. The research project has been supported by funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada as part of the Reassembling Rubbish project, SSHRC Grant #435-2012-0673. More information at reassemblingrubbish.xyz

Chapters

3.1 Paper 1. “Consensus decision-making as method: how non-hierarchical research creates generative justice.”

From: Araujo, E. (2016). “The Consensus and Discards of Generative Justice: empirical practices from a money-less economy in Chiapas, Mexico”. Teknocultura.

Introduction

Following Law (2008) and Mol (2002) among many others, methods create realities. Scholarly action research can create conditions and praxis that support the flourishing of generative justice, where generative justice is a bottom-up approach to constructing egalitarian socialities (Eglash and Garvey, 2014) as well as the right to generate unalienated value and its benefits (Generative Justice Wiki, 2016). Action research is “a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview” (Reason and Bradbury, 2008). Generative justice through action research begins by enacting research that not only benefits research participants but strives to create the egalitarian world we want to live in. As I will demonstrate in this article, research can be an important part of generative justice because of its performative qualities; it creates a space for knowledge production that supports bottom-up social movements while co-researchers present a voice not often heard across classes that transforms power relationships among those who produce knowledge. Heterodox

economic projects present an opportunity for simultaneously resisting the exploitations implicit in creating alienated value while transforming access to resources. The practice of creating network and method assemblages that change how economic relationships are enacted aims to transform the social relationships within them. Non-capitalist networks change how economic exchanges occur.

In San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico, El Cambalache (The Swap in English) is a moneyless economy of repair and reuse of items that are normally considered discards and an exchange of abilities, services and mutual aid. The project, constructed in a practice of non-domination, has established its own exchange value called inter-change value. In inter-change value all goods and services have the same value. A sweater can be exchanged for a radio or an English class. A pencil can be exchanged for a dentist appointment or a bag of lentils. Furthermore, El Cambalache is built on repairing items such as laptop and desktop computers and cell phones both within the city and in rural areas. By working to increase access to information technologies, the project seeks to meet people's growing communication needs where there is little access to money to purchase machines. The project enacts generative justice because it is built in horizontal power relationships among the six women generators of the project and the people that participate in exchanges. The project came into existence by using methods of non-dominative decision-making.

This article is a praxiological study of methods that have lead to creating a bottom-up economy of equitable resource distribution. These methods include performative research within the DEF, using consensus decision-making as a research

method, and building on the practices of creating heterodox economic thought as specified in the book *Take Back the Economy* (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013). As an experiment in creating theory from practice, El Cambalache works to create a pluralistic economy generated by women that are mainly from Mexico, ranging in classes and ethnicities. As a grassroots project located in Chiapas where money is hard to come by but other resources are available, we recognize that each person might not have enough resources to meet their needs and desires but as a diverse community, we have enough. In that way, we build networks of economic autonomy and generative justice.

The work of JK Gibson-Graham and the Community Economies Research Network (CERN) has demonstrated that research into the diversity of economic relationships that exist within and alongside capitalist economies presents a great range of subjectivities, experiences and examples of resource re-allocation that build communities of care and well-being (See Gibson-Graham et al., 2013; Roelvink et al., 2015, among others). As a practice in generative justice economies that equitably distribute resources and embrace non-dominative forms of goods production create unalienated value and transform relationships between humans among each other and with the more-than-human. The value of goods and services becomes unalienated when the social and environmental relationships of production are explicitly attached to the item or service. These economic projects shift how consumption is viewed and experienced. For example, in El Cambalache, accumulation of goods is antithetical to everyone in the community having access to what they need and desire.

There are recognizable differences in the way that political and economic

organizational forms encourage and discourage activism, protest and relationships among the human and more-than-human. Where more-than-human refers to non-human agents such as animals, places, emotions, things and flows (Wright, 2015:392). Specific organizational structures such as hierarchy and capitalism transform the economic relationships among people and the more-than-human. When non-capitalist, non-hierarchical relationships of exchange are woven into the networks between and among humans our relationships to other actors is shifted. Recognizing the embedded nature of "States", "Societies" and their "Economies" (Polanyi, 2001) one must also look at how the expectations assumed within economic practice engage how people view each other both within and beyond activist circles. The practice of forming economic relationships that are non-oppressive creates spaces for mutually dependent communities that can shift how states and the institutionalization of capitalism enforce scarcity of resources when we live in a time of actual resource abundance (Graeber, 2016; Bookchin, 1986). Anarchist theory, praxis, and scholar-activism seeks to build a world free of domination while creating an analysis of how hierarchy creates unequal power relationships. Building economies free of hierarchy creates rich fertile spaces for the enactment of liberatory relationships among both humans and the more-than-human.

This article looks at how the methods used in creating non-oppressive economic interactions shift how the social is enacted and provides space for theorizing and reproducing liberation focused economies. The literature review brings together concepts of methods assemblage and feminist decoloniality of thought in order to privilege performative economic action-research in order to create spaces of generative justice.

Performative research recognizes that the investigator is always a part of creating the worlds that they are researching and as such, performs specific kinds of knowledge production (Gibson-Graham, 2006). Callon (2007) refers to a similar process in capitalist economic research as being per-formational because traditional economic research requires creating the on-ground-conditions and regulations for different economic practices to occur. This research is situated within the Diverse Economies Framework. The literature review concludes with an overview of consensus decision-making as a practice that supports egalitarian anarchist research within generative justice. The methods section elaborate how and why consensus decision-making was used as a research method along with activities from the Community Economies Collective. The findings report back on how a moneyless economy based in non-hierarchical economic, material and social relationships foster generative justice. The analysis section examines the implications of the findings and the replicability of the project.

Literature Review: Methods Assemblage as performative economic research-inquiry and diverse economies

Within the Social Studies of Science and Technology, it is recognized that not only the social sciences but academic scholarship in general do not discover scientific phenomena but rather create conditions for the circulation of a very specific type of knowledge about the world and its interpretation, executing realities as they discover them (Latour, 1999; Callon, 2007a). Law (2008, 2011) has extended this argument further to suggest that scientific knowledge reflects Western ontos and epistememes, insisting that scientific knowledge is culturally specific to the West. He argues for the

creation of methods assemblages that can create and participate in the construction of ontos and epistemes that are commonly obfuscated by Scientific thought. For Law, otherness, independence, anteriority, definiteness, and singularity, are the primary ways in which Euro-Americans ontologically understand the world (2008:25). However, there are many worlds and ontos that do not embrace those core values (Law, 2011).

The decoloniality of thought also calls for the recognition of other epistemes and ontos (See work by Lugones, Mignolo, Quijano). Scholars in this field recognize that not only is Scientific thought culturally Western, but that it is tied in with a history of colonialism and purposeful epistemicide (Sousa Santos, 2014). In working to enact ontically diverse economic spaces it is important to be conscious of the violence that has accompanied the imposition of western scientific thought on the world and that action-research in the majority world is situated within a constant fight to bring other ontos and epistemes into validity within academic thought. For that reason, the methods used for the production of knowledge must come from spaces of oppositional consciousness and resistance to ways of being and thinking that engage in oppressive politics of domination (Sandoval, 2000). When creating methods assemblages, the methods used can only lead towards generative justice by recognizing the histories that have constructed Western thought because they are based on the benefits of colonialism. Assemblages are the combination of interrelated social, discursive and material artifacts (DeLanda, 2006). Methods assemblage in this sense brings together these artifacts in order to investigate and create new knowledge (Law, 2008). These artifacts are not innocent; they are developed within specific hegemonic regimes that support institutionalized Capitalist

thought and practice (Sandoval, 2000; Potts and Brown, 2005). Returning to Law (2008), moving away from research that assumes "out-there-ness, independence, anteriority, definiteness, and singularity" of knowledge simultaneously open the door for embracing connectedness, presence, fuzziness and multiplicity. Embracing these possibilities can construct spaces for non-oppressive, liberatory economic relationships.

Research that embraces connection and multiplicity resonates with anarchist thought and inquiry because it can potentially eschew domination within the assemblage by placing all actors in the network on an equal plane. Anarchism, which rejects domination in all forms while working to create horizontality among both human and more-than-human actors opens the possibility for thinking differently about how agency impacts economic relationships. Embracing the more-than-human nature of economic practices situates humans as only one part of the network, recognizing that the goods and services exchanged also transform economic relationships. Discards and the practice of wasting are cultural constructions (Bird-Rose, 2003). As is often recognized, that which is considered waste for one person may be a treasure for another. In El Cambalache, as will be elaborated in the findings section, discards are the primary objects inter-changed. When items that are normally considered discardable and thus lacking value are valued equally with "new" items in an economy, the hierarchy of value normally assumed in capitalist economics is undermined. Working to remove hierarchy within economic practice may also create non-hierarchical relationships in other relational spaces. Post-humanism re-imagines the economic assemblage to include all other beings and objects as actors within economic praxis (Roelvink, 2013). These heterogeneous actors decenter

humans in economics. Rather, the objects and processes needed to provide services share an equal part in the exchanges. Methods assemblages that eschew hierarchy should embrace post-humanism to enact ontos that privilege connection and multiplicity.

By recognizing that knowledge is socially constructed within a history of colonialism and a constructed hierarchy of humans dominating the more-than-human, I here return to the practice of how specific methods create worlds that support western hegemony. Michel Callon (2007b), in researching how economic knowledge is produced, has focused on the practices embraced by economists. His findings reveal that economic research does reveal a world at play but rather is constructed. Specifically, the theorists he studied did not study and report on existing economic practices but rather created predictive suggestions, theories and models in order to constitute markets, politics and specific market regulations which then forge economic worlds. In this sense they actively naturalized Capitalism, implying that though they actively shaped markets, they found that the world worked as their performances played out. In enacting resistance to Capitalism through research, these thinking technologies are useful for generating diverse economic thought and practice that produces spaces free of dominations. Michel Callon (2007a:139) argues for abandoning the distinction between economics and politics because of the political-economic assemblages necessary in the development of technology, markets and politics are intertwined and inter-dependent (Ibid:158). This is important for constructing methods assemblages because rather than classes and capitalism being assumed to be normal, they are enacted in their production through the interests of those benefiting from the exploitive relationships that capitalism requires.

Similarly, Çaliskan (2010:202) argues, the separation of the distinct spheres of political, social, production or exchange are artificial, created by the scholars that research them. Contemporary economics (most generally within capitalist thought and practice) are regarded as per-forming because they are generated by think tanks and economists.

In returning to bottom-up heterodox economics, the work of scholars in the CERN exposes the myriad economic practices that are constantly enacted within, alongside and in resistance to Capitalism. Rather than envisioning the economy as a monolithically capitalist space, economic relationships are multiple (Gibson-Graham, 2006; White and Williams, 2014). On an average day a worker will not only engage in remunerated work but also care, gifting, volunteering and sharing (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013). White and Williams (2014) further complicate this picture, looking at remunerated and gifted work where neighbors in neighborhoods in rural and urban localities in Britain will do yard work and other chores for each other out of feelings of care, affection and interdependence even when money is exchanged for the activity. Other scholars have looked at community gardens, community supported agriculture (Cameron, 2015), time banks (Werner, 2015), cooperative enterprises (Healy, 2015) and other diverse economic practices. Gibson-Graham (2006), similarly to Callon and Çaliskan, privileges the performative work done in economic research. However, she embraces it as a provocation to create the livable economic worlds that focus first on developing well-being and collective access to resources (Gibson-graham et al, 2013). Economic research then is always action research, whether it be done through think tanks to further capitalist hegemony or in enacting community focused research that creates well-being and

increased access to resources for all persons involved. Scholar-activist research that embraces non-hierarchical decolonial anarchist economics has the capacity to construct and perform economic relationships that not only benefit research participants or co-researchers, but also resist domination and oppression, thus making space for generative justice.

Because research practices are important in the construction of economic worlds, inquiry into how practices, enacted as methods, transform our economic relationships can be revealing for understanding the subjectivities created in the performance and creation of unalienated value. Annemarie Mol (2002) researches the practices of treatment and diagnosis of atherosclerosis, which are very different depending on the doctor, the patient and the institution. This created very different realities for all involved. By studying the practices involved in treatment she realized that there are multiple realities that are created by each practice as it is recommended. Meaning that depending on the practices chosen to realize a given activity, whole other worlds will be created because of the practice. In this sense the goal of overcoming or living with atherosclerosis was not only impacted by best practices, but rather in the process of treatment realities were enacted.

Praxiography is the writing and study of practices and the multiple worlds they create. Later in the *Logic of Care*, Mol (2008) examined how the practices and their logics created or denied the act of care between doctors and their patients. By studying how practices enact realities, scholars can focus on the implications of their method assemblages. In studying heterodox economic projects, rather than creating prescriptive research that discovers economic relationships, praxiography provokes research that

embraces the economic multiple, the myriad worlds that come out of diverse economic relationships.

The focus of the praxiography that is contained in this article is the practice of consensus decision-making as part of a method assemblage for developing non-capitalist economies. Consensus decision-making is the practice of making decisions in groups where each person in the group must agree with the outcome. Often contrasted to the majority vote where a percentage, usually between 51% and 66% of the participants must agree with the outcome, consensus is seen as creating the possibility for non-hierarchical decision-making. This is because within a majority vote those that lose the vote are obligated to enact a reality they do not agree with. On the other hand, in consensus decisions, conversation, debate and affect are taken into account in modifying the agreement so that all parties may have an outcome they can agree with. If one accepts the understanding that each person is an expert in their own domain of experience, with the caveat that there may be no true understanding of the self, then the decision-making process within a group of people would logically be a decision-making process among experts. The concentration of power in decision-making processes can be seen as a continuum from one person holding the decision-making power to all persons holding the power to make decisions for the group (Arnstein, 1969). In a consensus decision-making structure, all persons participating in the process are responsible for making decisions, and this responsibility is held both by the individual and the group in order to share information, create an open, welcoming space and communicate one's thoughts (Butler and Rothstein, 2007; Graeber, 2013). While the structure of making decisions aims to

create horizontal power relations among participants, this idea rarely occurs completely, with group power dynamics constantly shifting among participants according to their social relations (Freeman, 2014). However, it is a goal worth working towards.

Consensus decision-making within action research presents possibilities for participants to engage in horizontal decisions within their own spaces and projects. As a research method consensus presents options for participants to lead action research projects in unexpected and sometimes often liberatory directions. In studying the practice of consensus as a research method attention should be focused on interaction, expression, outcome of decisions and the multiple practices that arise as a result.

Methods

Generative justice requires specific methods and methodology in order to create performative non-oppressive decolonial feminist economic systems. Working within a scholar-activist framework, this project must take into account ameliorating relations of hierarchy towards horizontality while creating inclusive participatory spaces where actors in the economy have the possibility of deciding how resources will be distributed, what needs and desires should be met and consequently assume the responsibility of participating in that process. As a praxiography of consensus decision-making the focus of this section is how doing research is constructed through consensus. When used as a research method the decision-making process itself functions similarly to a focus group while the researcher or collective of co-researchers engages in participatory observation and group exploration of thoughts and feelings about the direction of the activist-research. Recognizing that research is always performative (Gibson-Graham, 2006) allows for the creation of collective responses to oppressive situations. Following the

framework laid out by Freeman (2014) it is important that the decision-making process is highly structured in order to avoid elite tendencies that evolve through close personal relationships among members of groups. A consensus requires that all participants agree on the decision at hand in order for it to be ratified. As such, participation in the conversation, debate and equal access to information is required for all participants. Consensus decision-making has been a cornerstone in creating the El Cambalache project.

We began research in July, 2014. After several conversations with another woman, Patricia, in San Cristobal de las Casas who I had known for several years, we decided to invite other women we knew and post flyers in town asking, “Have you ever dreamed of making an alternative economy? We have too!” and invited other women to come to a meeting. In early August, 2014 myself, Patricia and four other women came together to talk about creating a non-capitalist economy. Patricia and I suggested that our first meetings be workshops on consensus decision-making so that each person would have the same knowledge about how meetings worked and how information sharing would happen.

El Cambalache opened its doors to the public on March 21st, 2015, eight months after our initial meeting. We met twice a week for four hours each meeting, totaling over 240 hours of meeting time. During that period, we tried to divide our time between practicing our economic ideas- exchanging, mutual aid, sharing meals, working on collective projects such as gardening- and developing economic theory. Recognizing that each member of the collective comes from a very different lifeworld with distinct

understandings of our ontos and epistemes, we gave ourselves time to listen to each other, think together and have fun.

Of course, not all voices are heard equally in the project. There are differences between us that facilitate some women to speak more than others. Patricia said to me the other day, "It's frustrating that they [Other women in the collective] expect me to answer a lot of the questions in our presentations when they've been part of the process of creating this economy. I want to them to speak more so that I can learn too. It's not right that they expect only to learn from me, it's not a one-way street." In part age and experience is a factor. In our collective we range from Mari, being twenty-two years old, through to Sarai, Josefa and myself who are thirty-six to Cinthia, thirty-nine and Patricia, being fifty-four years old. There are other differences too. Some of us have been activists longer than others, some of us are indigenous women, some of us have master's degrees, half of us are from Chiapas, one of us, myself, is from New York. I'm a doctoral student, though I've lived in Chiapas for nine years. Each of these factors influences our confidence in our ideas, and our readiness to say what we think. However, we have an agreement, a philosophy, that each person is full of abilities and resources that the rest of us don't have. The information and analysis that I share in my articles and other writings is agreed upon by consensus. However, it does facilitate a fluidity in my ability to express what I think about the project that others might not feel.

Generative justice begins with just, inclusive communication where those involved enter into the space with the goal of learning from each person building the project. Consensus decision-making can provide that space; it requires time,

responsibility and humility.

When used as a research method the decision-making process must be accompanied by clear, well-defined goals. In the case of this project, the goal from the outset was to create a non-capitalist economy. However, the nature and specific form of the economy was unknown. In order to explore the possibilities of how and what our economy could become I proposed we as a group do a modified version of the activity called the "Worker's Clock" outlined in the book *Take Back the Economy* by Gibson-Graham, Cameron and Healy (2013). The activity consisted of looking at how each member of the group spent their time each week, then adding up the hours in each activity and creating percentages of how much of our time was involved in each activity, which was then drawn onto a pie chart. Then when we were able to see how we spent our time, we created new charts that we called "dream clocks" with new percentages of time for different activities. The initial intent of the activity was to show and talk about what percentage of our lives were spent in Capitalist activities. The clocks did show that. We, as a group, spent between 21%-28% of our time in capitalist work relationships. This is work done for money, where another person benefits from the use of our surplus. While this did impact our way of thinking, showing that we are not engaged in capitalist activities all of the time, something even richer came out of the activity. When we created the "dream clocks" we set into motion realizing our dreams. These included realizing our economic project, learning to play the drums, having a smart phone, having a computer, traveling, having a baby, painting more, and having more personal time. We've realized all of these dreams. Travel was a dream for several people. Since the clocks were made in

September, 2014 El Cambalache has traveled in Mexico to Veracruz, Quintana Roo, and Merida. In the coming weeks, we will visit all of those places and one of our members will fly on a plane for the first time. We have also traveled to New York, Stockholm, Oslo and San Francisco as part of our project. The project created a documentary that was completed in March, 2016 and we have used that film to continue receiving funding through my PhD advisor as well as travel grants. El Cambalache has also received solidarity housing, food and transportation as exchanges for showing the film. Realizing dreams is an important method for creating generative justice. It allows for the seemingly impossible ideas to become reality.

Following Law (2008) methods assemblages are not predefined lists of methods appropriate across the board for all investigations. Rather, they are chosen as are deemed useful. In our case, a focus on making dreams come true was an important method that motivates us to this day to create a just economic space.

In order to begin our money-less economy another activity used during the beginning of the project was an inventory of personal resources. This activity is a modification of the Portrait of Gifts activity from the book *Shifting Focus: Alternative pathways for communities and economies* (Cameron and Gibson, 2001). This activity asks participants to check off predetermined abilities as defined by the researcher that are envisioned as gifts each person has within them. I modified this activity to be open ended where each person lists all of the things they know how to do. These resources were explained to include every language and skill each person can and likes to do. Members of the collective then wrote long lists of all of their abilities.

Findings

The four methods presented in the methods section, consensus decision-making, the reality clock and dream clock, making dreams come true and doing an inventory of personal abilities, each had massive impacts on the direction the project has taken. Consensus decision-making and the inventory of personal abilities have contributed to the creation of non-hierarchical spaces. This is due to the inventory revealing long lists of abilities held by each person. These abilities included everything from cooking skills, to language skills, knowledge about gardens and medicinal plants to biochemistry and entomology. While there is not enough space in this article to list all of the abilities present in the collective, suffice to say that reading the lists had a large impact on how each member of the collective viewed herself. When we began the project most of the other members in the collective came into it feeling like they enjoyed the idea of creating an alternative economy but had no idea what they could offer. They looked to Patricia and I for guidance. However, after the inventory each person saw and understood that they were full of resources, that each person had a great deal to offer in the creation of the project and that anyone that participated in our economy would also have much to offer, even if they were money-poor they might not be ability poor. Building from that realization the collective created the concept of inter-change value. Moving away from exchange value where ex- is an exclusive separation between the what is being traded and the person, inter-change value is a change from within for each person that participates in the economy where all knowledge and things are valued the same. Things are valued the same because the project asks people to trade items they no longer want and abilities, mutual aid and knowledge they want to share.

As we created and began to experience inter-change value among ourselves, the horizontality of our consensus decision-making increased. It is difficult to overcome feelings of inadequacy that accompany market relationships where it is believed to be ok to exploit people and be exploited. In recognizing the resource-full-ness of each member of the collective we have been able to increase the participation and responsibility each person takes for the project.

Our consensus decision-making practice involves regular rotation of the roles of moderator, note taker and timekeeper. By emphasizing the responsibilities of each role, each member of the collective takes responsibility for their participation in the meeting. This has been a significant influence in creating a feeling of confidence in members of the collective. The ability of each person to create structure in our decision-making process reinforces the egalitarian feeling between participants. However, on several occasions when Sarai was asked what is the most difficult part of bringing about El Cambalache, she responds, “Coming to consensus. We are all very different and making decisions together requires time and Patriciaence.”

When we began the project decisions were made around questions such as, “How many people will participate?”; “Who will participate and will men be involved?”; “Should we have a core group or should it just be open?”; “How will the exchanges begin?”. Each of these questions were debated over several meetings. While it may seem like a long time, giving time to create answers that were reflective of the collective was important. For example, the number of people participating was difficult because on one hand a small network of connected women that traded together would create a small

interdependent community while if we worked to create a large network we didn't know if there would be interest in the project or what it would look like. However, within the goal of trying to make dreams realities we decided to include as many people as would be possible and figure out how to make it work as it developed. It was also decided that the Generators group would be small, six people, an all women group that would develop and administer the project. We tried doing exchanges and mutual aid between each other first to see how it would feel and work when more people began to exchange with the project. It was also decided that men would participate in the larger economy but not in the generators group because we wanted to create space for women in a non-oppressive economy.

El Cambalache opened its doors to the public in March, 2015. Over the past fourteen months over 700 people have participated in inter-changing. Three other Cambalaches have opened in Veracruz, Merida and Bacalar here in Mexico. When each person walks into the space the members of the collective have a goal that we will emphasize the resource-full-ness of each person regardless of where they are from, their body and related politics, in or the class they are supposed to occupy.

The more-than-human actors in our network have also played an important role in creating realities. The items that are exchanged transform many aspects of daily life for those that receive them. One example was a stroller that was received in exchange for a haircut. The woman that received the stroller greatly needed it but could not afford to buy one. Once she had it, her back problems and transportation problems were greatly resolved. Other important transformative items have been warm clothing in the winter,

cell phones and laptop computers. Each of these items in one way or another has shifted how the person using them experiences their lives.

Analysis

The practice of using consensus and activities that made explicit each person's abilities and desires has contributed to creating a space of learning and experimentation that increases resource access for participants while resisting the feelings of marginalization and inadequacy that comes with capitalist economic relationships. As a practice in creating a space without hierarchy in line with anarchist thought and practice, this is still part of our work. Some members of the collective feel more equal than others and share their ideas more freely. However, by striving to create a space free of hierarchy the project was able to create inter-change value which works to make each item and service more equal in the exchanges that occur in the project. By making people feel resourceful when they enter the space, El Cambalache works to bring about resistance to capitalism in small incremental steps with many people, with the goal of increasing a sense of well-being among our community. Of course, the project exists alongside capitalist markets and work relationships. Everyone that participates in the project whether they be in the generators group or in the larger public has a separate form of income that pays the rent and other aspects of life that require money.

El Cambalache works to change who is creating knowledge and what kinds of knowledge are valued. By making all information that is shared about the project part of a consensus process, you, my reader, are reading a collective thought process created by six women in Chiapas, Mexico. While our ideas are built in the practice of creating our

economy, we strive to slowly, incrementally decolonialize knowledge production. Collective voices, especially of women in moneyless economic projects, are rarely heard or permitted in scholarly spaces. We seek to change this. Knowing that three other Cambalaches have been brought into being by other women in Mexico, we see a small change in process around value and self-worth. Our epistemologies are built on the experience of seeing hundreds of people practice inter-changes and so we produce knowledge. Our methods assemblages are non-conventional research practice but the ontic implications; creating inter-connected economic communities of trust and well-being are valid activist goals. Our project is not perfect; capitalism is still a significant part of our lives after a year of practice but we're working at it. El Cambalache takes items that could be discarded and knowledge that is marginalized and they are given another life in an inter-change economy.

By studying the practices that were involved in creating El Cambalache one can observe that building trust and working to realize dreams is a goal based, long-term action research project. The outcomes are not predetermined or even possible to hypothesize because collective thinking combines the lifeworlds of each person and depends on their sense of possibility. In El Cambalache we were fortunate to find highly optimistic members that were open to learning from each other. The creation of inter-change value stems from embracing non-hierarchical thinking as well as being open and predisposed towards creative experimental thinking.

Conclusion

Generative justice is created through practice because it is supporting the flourishing of a world that is in construction. By striving to create spaces of egalitarian access to resources and unalienated value of goods and services, this practice challenges scholar-activists to eliminate hierarchical thinking from research practice. This is no easy task. Methods change how scholars practice knowledge production. By embracing experimental methods such as consensus decision-making, a researcher has to let go of their direction of the project and allow for the trajectory of the action research process to be decided by co-researchers. Rather than looking for predetermined economic relationships, consensus decision-making as a method determines the outcome of the project. In the case of El Cambalache this practice has been fruitful and inspiring for those participating in it. However, there are still hierarchies in our group. The economy is not everywhere and we are still figuring out how to include people in the best way possible into the project. What the project can say is that it has been bottom-up, because we depend on each other to create fulfilling ideas that are tested daily by the people that engage in inter-changes. Our economic project is only as good as its ability to meet people's needs and in Chiapas there is little money and much need. The other Cambalaches in other parts of Mexico are in their own process of deciding how inter-change will work in their community within their time restraints and conceptions of resource access. As a collective voice we challenge scholars and activists to value each other and to explore the unknown spaces of generative justice. One step in the process will be, following Gibson-Graham (2013), to start where you are. Unfortunately, there are so many spaces where generative justice is needed that there may be few if any places on

Earth that does not experience some aspect of the ravages of capitalism. By working where we live each person has the opportunity to engage in a long-term horizontal economic project that begins with asking, What do we have and, what, as a community do we need? Scholars in particular can support this process because of the wealth of knowledge they might possess around non-hierarchical economics and decolonial relationships.

Consensus decision-making as a research practice presents a challenge to researchers to place their “expert knowledge” on the same plain as their co-researchers. It requires one to value the experience of oppressions such as capitalism as equal to their own. In many ways this is the decolonization of knowledge, it is recognizing that people, their experience of the world and the base of knowledge that it comes from are of equal value. In consensus decision-making, because the goal is to create a non-oppressive space, researchers have to engage in non-oppressive practices. The knowledge that will be generated in those spaces will support the struggle we all face in undermining capitalism on a daily basis.

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3.2 Paper 2. “Collective Exchanges: Reflections from a decolonial feminist moneyless economy in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico”

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Introduction

In Chiapas, Mexico as in many places, structural violence abounds. Among the many violences suffered by those living in this area, is a systematic denial of access to basic resources. Food, healthcare, literacy, potable water; money, technological devices such as cell phones and computers; and a well maintained infrastructure of roads and electrical lines as well as many other resources are hard to come by for most people. Since the Spanish Conquest of this region many groups of indigenous peoples have rebelled against the various colonial and neo-colonial governments, the slave holding plantations, and the corporations that deny access to these resources (Garcia de Leon, 2002). In contemporary times the fight for resource access continues. In Chiapas, though the struggle of the Zapatista Army for National Liberation is among the most well known organizations internationally, a good number of projects fight for autonomy. Many organized groups of people work on a variety of levels to increase resource access through the creation of autonomously governed territories, campesino organizations, autonomous media collectives, direct producer to consumer networks and other heterodox economic projects. This article tells the story of the process of organizing people in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas through a small moneyless economy called El Cambalache (The Swap in

English). The project seeks to increase resource access for participants while generating an inclusive feeling of resource-full-ness. El Cambalache promotes the idea that while there is little access to money in this region, attaining money does not necessarily lead to amassing resources. This is particularly important when resources include solidarity, mutual aid, education, collective process and experience and other immaterial forms of wealth. Within this moneyless economy it is recognized that each person in the economy might not have everything they need and want but as a community we have enough. Access to resources can be mediated without money.

Following Murray Bookchin (1986:59), “...the state capitalism of our time organizes its commodity relations around a prevailing system of material abundance. A century ago, scarcity had to be endured; today, it has to be enforced...” This material abundance stems from technological advances that have increased production of basic and not-so-basic goods to a point that there are enough resources for people around the world to meet their needs (Ibid). However, bureaucratic systems mediated through a state-enforced neoliberal capitalist-military complex effectuate limited and complicated resource access (Graeber, 2016). In response to the combination of material abundance of resources and enforced scarcity, a plethora of heterodox economic projects have bloomed around the world over the past twenty years. These projects take the shape of time banks, sharing boxes, collective and cooperative businesses, mutual aid networks, cooperative and collective housing, free stores, Really Really Free Markets, Swap Shops, alternative currencies, Counter Economics, Participatory Economics and many other non-capitalist projects.

The work of JK Gibson-Graham and the Community Economies Research Network has made a significant contribution to de-centering capitalism as the monolithic omni-present Economy. Their work explores the diversity of economic practices that are happening at all times among different actors across time and space. Participation in heterodox economic projects provide the possibility for participants to practice community building and economic resistance. Karl Polanyi (2001:60) writes,

...social relations are embedded in the economic system. The vital importance of the economic factor to the existence of society precludes any other result. For once the economic system is organized in separate institutions, based on specific motives and conferring a special status, society must be shaped in such a manner as to allow that system to function according to its own laws. This is the meaning of the familiar assertion that a market economy can function only in a market society.

Following Polanyi, in a neoliberal capitalist state, laws and institutions are created and enforced to keep resources private rather than communal, to obfuscate from consumers' knowledge of how their goods are produced and to maintain exclusionary classes with little mobility between them in order to keep labor cheap. By changing how these relationships take place, new, unknown ways of enacting the social are given space to bloom. Embracing this knowledge within a heterodox economic project brings forth economic relationships privileged within what what Healy (2009:1652) refers to as epistemological pluralism. Relationships between humans and the more-than-human are given space to shift towards more mutually supportive, egalitarian interactions, where the roots of knowledge and what is considered knowledge are purposefully multiple. Heterodox economic projects are well positioned to meet the needs of participants while

redistributing resources more horizontally. In particular, non-capitalist economic projects redefine how value is assigned to goods and services while increasing access to these resources for populations that live in money-poor areas. Furthermore, if a market economy requires a market society, in money-poor regions, where a market economy suffers, a market society is therefore less present as well as the accompanying institutions and legal frameworks.

El Cambalache [1] is a money-less exchange-based economy focused on reviving, repairing and reusing discards as practice in degrowth and decoloniality (Araujo, 2015). The project asks, “Can new economic realities be realized as a project of liberation?” and, “How do economic rules [2] become realized as a non-capitalist economic project/community?” This paper focuses on how the rules and structure of a solidarity economy work to organize actors and networks in horizontal (non-hierarchical) relationships of sharing, support and exchange to create what Chakrabarti and Dhar (2015) call politicized social transformation. The project is generated by six women. People are invited to exchange things they no longer need, as well as knowledges, skills and services they want to share. Everything has the same value because the goods traded are discards and the services provided are done through the joy of sharing. It is also believed that each person has something to contribute, be it a story, a skill, or a thing. The goods and services received in El Cambalache are actors in transforming lived contexts. Whether it be a stroller, which is often priced beyond what is accessible for many people, a sink, a sweater or a language class, each exchange creates a benefit, a shift, and a

network. The economic rules, simple and clear, organize people and realize a communal sociality. In order to create horizontal relationships in the larger economic project, women in the Generators group of El Cambalache practice horizontal decision-making through consensus within the concept that non-hierarchical relationships beget more of the same. This paper also asks the question, "Does the act of consensus decision-making create horizontal power relationships and/or do they construct a reality-to-be of non-oppressive politics which realize themselves in practice?"

This article explores how ideas springing from Anarchism, Decoloniality and Community Economies present practical options for creating other, more liberatory socio-economic relationships. The methods and methodology section elaborates how action research can be mediated through consensus decision-making. The findings and analysis sections explore how the project creates specific subjectivities and relationships among participants where exchange values are transformative social constructions that not only organize people but also create social experiences in a moneyless economy. Finally, the paper concludes with an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the organizational form of El Cambalache specifically through its use of rules and non-hierarchical decision-making practices in order to organize and invoke resistance to the normalization of capitalism.

Literature Review: Locating Our Economy

The Social Studies of Science and Technology and the Decoloniality of Thought bring to the fore the question of how knowledge is generated and who is generating it. Though

specifically, the Decoloniality of Thought examines how continuing currents of colonialism shape the experience and social construction previously colonized peoples. Both fields coincide in the concept that Knowledge is produced in a specific location by certain people that are permitted specific debates and knowledge production (Law, 2011; Mignolo, 2000; Souza Santos, 2007). Here, I differentiate between Knowledge and knowledge. Where Knowledge refers to institutional and highly indoctrinated [3] forms of knowledge that arise through practices of elite knowledge production that stem from centers of colonial and neo-colonial power. This Knowledge is produced and located in Europe, the United States, and many of the states in the Commonwealth of Nations as well as elite spaces in territories that have experienced colonialism. These places constitute what is often referred to as the Minority World [4], the Western World, the First World, the Developed World and/or the Global North. The use of these terms has been proliferated within the politics of development as a specific capitalocentric view of how nations and states should be developed so that they may better fit within an acceptable market structure (Sachs, 2010). The language used is telling of its strength as hegemony, where the words "world" or "global" are used to refer to what are few people and less space. The authors of such language claim their ideas are "universal" or that situated ideas are "generalizable". Beyond the borders of the worlds that create "universal" Knowledge there exists what Anzaldúa (1999) refers to as the *borderlands*; spaces (both physical and intellectual) where undetermined liminal lifeworlds bring about the Decoloniality of Thought. This proposal refers to rejecting the continuing colonialisms that make invisible the thought, theory and practice that reflect lifeworlds

beyond the dominant hegemonies of the *Minority World*. Sousa Santos (2010, 2014) has investigated the five century long process of epistemicide over most of the planet since the discovery of the Americas. His work demonstrates specific examples of how epistemes in colonial territories were violently destroyed in order to further the hegemonic imposition of a zero-point epistemology. Much work has been done to obfuscate the ontos and epistemes beyond the borders of empire, in spite of the multiplicity of unique, place-based ways of being and constructions of knowledge that saturate much of the world. In response to Westernization through coloniality Walter Mignolo (2011) has suggested that scholars and non-scholars should engage in Epistemic Disobedience, where we actively create and privilege knowledge and praxis that defy those epistemes originating in the centers of empire.

In recognizing the epistemicide that was part of the centuries-long institutionalization of terror and violence called colonialism, it is important to be cognizant that the destruction was also ontic. The subjectivities of people that lived the oppression and destruction of their communities, knowledge and ways-of-being were negated as an institutional process. The decoloniality of thought, while promising for creating a liberatory politics of knowledge, is not without its critiques. Decolonial feminist scholars writing from locations within and beyond the borders of empire have called attention to the principally male voice that is present in these discourses, noting that hetero-patriarchy is often also a colonial construct. For example, in writing about how gender relations were among the first impositions of coloniality Maria Lugones (2010:743) explains,

Only the civilized are men and women. Indigenous peoples of the Americas and enslaved Africans were classified as not human in species—as animals, uncontrollably sexual and wild. The European, bourgeois, colonial, modern man became a subject/agent, fit for rule, for public life and ruling, a being of civilization, heterosexual, Christian, a being of mind and reason. The European bourgeois woman was not understood as his complement, but as someone who reproduced race and capital through her sexual purity, passivity, and being homebound in the service of the white, European, bourgeois man. The imposition of these dichotomous hierarchies became woven into the historicity of relations, including intimate relations.

The constriction of sex based definitions of gender, compounded with the hierarchical ranking and dehumanization of every person that was not a white European bourgeois man has done work to hide and erase many subjectivities. The economic project that El Cambalache, a collective of six women, strives to create is located in this history and its residues. Our work in part is create other spaces for gender, women's thought, and epistemic disobedience. Similar to Lugones proposal, we build this resistance collectively. Here I quote her at length because the similarities in our proposals, while they were not created knowing each other, are not coincidental, they come from living in these spaces.

One does not resist the coloniality of gender alone. One resists it from within a way of understanding the world and living in it that is shared and that can understand one's actions, thus providing recognition. Communities rather than individuals enable the doing; one does with someone else, not in individualist isolation. The passing from mouth to mouth, from hand to hand of lived practice, values, beliefs, ontologies, space-

times, and cosmologies constitutes one. The production of the everyday within which one exists produces one's self as it provides particular, meaningful clothing, food, economies and ecologies, gestures, rhythms, habitats, and sense of space and time. But it is important that these ways are not just different. They include affirmation of life over profit, communalism over individualism, “estar” over enterprise, beings in relation rather than dichotomously split over and over in hierarchically and violently ordered fragments. These ways of being, valuing, and believing have persisted in the resistant response to coloniality. (Lugones, 2010:754)

This being together, creating close contact among those in resistance to colonialisms and allowing for our mutual collective creation in plurally gendered spaces that extend to all other life spaces is an essential part of El Cambalache that is elaborated later in this paper.

Scholarly practice, the work of producing Knowledge has played an important role in creating and obfuscating worlds. Gibson-Graham (2006), building on the work of Judith Butler looked at the performative nature of the social sciences recognizing that scholars shift, perform and influence the realities they study. While, Michel Callon (2007) and Timothy Mitchell (2007) have focused on how economists did not study and report on existing economic practices but rather created predictive suggestions, theories and models in order to constitute markets, politics and specific market regulations which then forge economic worlds. Callon refers to this process as not only being performative but

also enacting performance, where performance is the active formation of economic practices and relationships (2007). In working to refute the idea that there is only one economy, the Diverse Economies Framework reveals a wide range of economic interactions that happen among people everyday within and along side what was once considered a monolithically capitalist economy (Gibson-Graham, Cameron and Healy, 2013). The once common idea, that Capitalism was everywhere, in everything [5] has since been rejected to reveal a great range economic interactions. While it is evident that the governments of each nation-state maintain and extend the form of economy it has chosen to impose on its citizens, more situated sites of practice reveal many kinds of economic, socio-political, care-focused, ecological interactions (Araujo, 2016). Within economic relationships these exchanges may take the form of gifting, sharing, unpaid labor, barter, and alternative-capitalist practices (White and Williams, 2014). While they are small, decentralized and varied in meaning and experience, these practices are ubiquitous (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Graeber, 2001).

Anarchist thought and practice strives to do away with all forms of domination (Clough and Blumberg, 2012:337) by creating horizontal power-relationships among humans and the more-than-human members of assemblages. While there is no one specific way to enact anarchism, there are many options for free expression as long as it does not oppress another member of the community. Non-capitalist economies can take on anarchist characteristics when those economies do not require domination to function. These networks are expressions of small though vibrant anarchist communities at work (White

and Williams, 2014). Heterodox economic projects sometimes support a practical path towards autonomy. Where autonomy is the ability for participants to decide how the economy will function, who will benefit and how power relationships will work among its members. The goal of creating autonomy for an economic community or any other kind of community may be anarchist through practices such as mutual aid, the desire for freedom and self-organization (Chatterton, 2005:545).

Resistance takes on many forms, from extensive mass movements, to active desertion, to individuals simply not obeying rules and procedures (Scott, 2012; 1985). Organizing resistance among people in a diverse and complex ontos-rich space often requires creative, novel approaches to tackling problems and envisioning resolutions. The relationship between activism/resistance, politics and economic organizational forms has a long history. Those who have opposed the dominant economy have suffered oppression and destruction in myriad ways. Be those systems feudal, slavery, state socialism, capitalism, or other economic systems, the cost for not practicing the system which one is expected to uphold is often a costly prospect, risking access to the resources necessary for flourishing, life and liberty. The embedded nature of the economy suggested by Polanyi may be present at the macro scale of nations, though at the micro-local scale, following the work of the Community Economies Collective, there is a great diversity of economic praxis. At both macro- and micro- scales the relationship between how economic exchanges are practiced and the political experiences and goals of those practitioners are linked.

The great heterogeneity of economic praxis that simultaneously exists within and alongside capitalist (Gibson-Graham, 2013; Roelvink et al, 2013; White and Williams, 2014) and post-soviet (Pavlovskaya, 2013) organizational forms further demonstrate on one side, active resistance to imposed economic systems and on the other side, desire by people to share, give, volunteer and exchange in ways not prescribed by a nation-state, but rather as they choose (Araujo, 2016). Other social processes at hand form and shift how economics are practiced. Norms such as the privileging of generosity rather than avarice, of well being in the home rather than abandonment of children by their parents, care for neighbors and friends as well as mutual aid and support often guide how people interact with each other far more than official government mandates about the activities of Homo economicus.

There are many examples of heterodox economic projects around the world that challenge the capitalist dominance of economic relationships. SEWA, the Self Employed Women's Association in Ahmedabad, India is a trade union started by and for women that is not only a union that struggles for access to adequate income, but also full employment, literacy, shelter and education (Sewa.org). While the Mama Lus Frut scheme in Papua New Guinea provides income to women for collecting oil palm fruits that have fallen to the ground which is then used within the local indigenous economy to support many aspects of social reproduction (Gibson-Graham, 2004). In New York City several women's' collectives work to make women's' issues more visible while educating

their communities and embracing horizontal decision-making structures (In the next section I elaborate the importance of decision-making structures). These collectives include The Blue Stockings Bookstore, Activist Center and Fair Trade Cafe [6]; the WOW Cafe Theatre [7] and Black Women's Blueprint [8]. Each project provides space for thinking about and organizing around issues of gender, access to resources and social empowerment. While this is only a short list of projects created by and for women and their communities, it is important to recognize that within each of these projects, women have created them in order to improve their access to resources and autonomy in their societies. Rather than solely looking to be incorporated into the neoliberal economy, they are working to have the collective effect of transforming their communities and increasing community members' resource access not only in physical goods but through networks of care and support.

Methods: Learning How to Swap

Research methods enact realities (Law, 2004; Mol, 2002). This project embraces performative economic research in order to put in motion an economy with horizontal power relationships where it creates space for, “the oppressed to become researchers of their own circumstances” (Gibson-graham, 2006:133) and create new spaces through Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) (Ibid).

Action research began in a series of conversations with Patricia about what kind of economy we would like to be part of. Recognizing that we would have to work collectively to bring about a heterodox economic project, we posted flyers in San

Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico during July 2014 asking, "Have you ever dreamed of being part of an alternative economy project? We have too!". The project came out of an experience of frustration around feeling trapped in a predominantly capitalist economy, where years of activism had made small strides towards changing our economic interactions. The project was originally conceived as a non-capitalist economy; however, its form was unknown. In August, 2014, six women came together to meet, learn, and talk in a collective that continues to function and conduct economic research to this day. From the beginning it was decided that every meeting would have a physical work component or productive activity as well as a theoretical component while we organized ourselves to realize a community economy. The collective was informed from the first meeting that while the goal of the project would be to create a solidarity economy, we would also be conducting economic research as the economy grew. Though I am originally from New York, at the time research began I had been living in San Cristobal de las Casas for seven years and had participated in a number of collectives and social change projects. Weary and aware that many people, especially those involved in social struggles, frequently have problems with academics, I nervously explained that I was doing research for my doctorate and that each person could decide to participate in the project as a co-researcher or as they chose. Everyone said they were very interested in documenting our process and progression as a project. To this day, all information and discussion around how the project is presented is agreed upon by consensus. More recently, after a screening of our project's documentary film a scholar in the audience asked me about my positionality in the project. Later, I asked Sarai, one of the members

of the collective what she thought about my presence as a scholar in the project. She responded, “I think what most academics don't understand is that they aren't any more important than anyone else.” The other members of the Generators group are Sarai, Josefa, Cinthia, Mary and Patricia. Two of the six Generators are indigenous women and all of the women in the group are Mexican except for myself, being from New York. Half of the group is from Chiapas. The group ranges in age from twenty-two years old to fifty-four years old at the time of writing with the median age being thirty-five. Each member of the Generators group has a job outside of the project, with work in biochemistry, a Pharmacy assistant, a cafe barista, a cafe administrator, and an accountant.

In San Cristobal de las Casas there is a long history of activism and resistance. Since the Spanish conquest of Chiapas there have been mass rebellions about every 20 to 50 years (Garcia de Leon, 2002). The Zapatista uprising in 1994 was one of the most recent and recognized rebellions worldwide. However, locally, there are many organized leftist groups, made primarily of both campesino and indigenous peoples in resistance to the state and capitalism. Many activists, people that were once activists and those somewhere in between live here. In Chiapas there was never a mass killing of activists in resistance to the state on a scale similar to the genocide in Guatemala or El Salvador in the 1980s and 1990s. Rather, while there has been violence and massacres, most participants in resistance groups have survived periods of mass insurgency. There is a long history of knowledge among activists in radical thought and practice. The combination of current activists with many people with the experience of having lived through the heartbreak of

disillusionment when social movements are not necessarily what they seem, leads to a multitudinous public that is simultaneously very busy and somewhat bitter about the possibilities of what a new project might achieve.

These first barriers were overcome through the decision that each meeting would end with the realization of a previously inchoate goal. Over the first eight months, the group connected through two four hour meetings each week, talked, did workshops and projects together and created the Generators group. The first meetings were workshops in consensus decision-making, accompanied by gardening at each person's house, making candles, decorating the space and celebrating birthdays [9]. Working and socializing created a space for camaraderie, story-telling, and developing trust. Over time the Generators group grew and realized a communal space for care-taking and creative exploration where group process was open to newness and risk. As Mary, one of the Generators commented, "We walk together towards anti-capitalist thinking, constructing a community where we can exchange and inter-change."

Consensus decision-making was the primary action research method. It was implemented from the beginning to encourage each participant to take on the responsibility of generating the project. While consensus decision-making is not normally considered to be a research method, it uses many tools that are common in qualitative methods. One of the most similar standard methods for looking at group thinking and idea construction is the focus group. Because a consensus requires that each person in the group agrees on the

decision being made in order for it to move forward, participant observation, collective questioning, and debate about each step of the project has allowed for a collective creation of the research at hand.

The use of consensus decision-making has built a practice of non-hierarchical, decolonial economics. Consensus decision-making has a long history in activist and specifically anarchist circles for making decisions where all participants are included (Graeber, 2013). It has been embraced by many movements because while it may take time to come to a decision where all participants are content, and there are critiques of exactly how horizontal relationship may be, there is a greater chance of the decision at hand reflecting the desires of decision-makers. This is contrasted with a majority vote, where up to 49% of those voting may not agree with the outcome but will be forced to go along with it. Consensus was used as a research method in order to negotiate and minimize as much as possible the asymmetrical power dynamics that often arise and separate scholars and co-researchers in action research (Gibson-Graham, 2006).

The project functions as much as possible without hierarchy, with the belief that if the assemblage is imbued with non-dominative practice, it would resonate within the heterodox economic network. As a research method, consensus decision-making is interesting because while the project is explicitly performative in that a community economy is being created as research and resistance to capitalism, the direction and form taken by the project is entirely decided by the group. As a member of the Generators

group I have been part of the formation and execution of the project, however my voice has been one of six. Consensus decision-making requires all persons involved in the meeting and the decision being made to participate and agree with all steps before moving forward through an explicit structure that facilitates knowledge-sharing and open communication [10]. Any one person that does not agree with the decision can block it from happening. The structure used in this form of consensus decision-making embraced by El Cambalache was developed by Freeman (Accessed 06/14/14). Built out of delegation, responsibility, distribution, rotation, allocation, diffusion of information and equal access to resources, consensus strives to collectivize knowledge to the furthest extent possible. Horizontal power relationships require an active emphasis on helping those that participate less to participate more and those speak more to speak less in order to even asymmetrical power relationships. Walking in the door, each person carries a multiplicity of ontos, epistemes, power relationships and conceptions from each lifeworld. Recognizing these complicated lenses that are worn, makes the consensus process difficult but worth the time invested.

El Cambalache opened its doors to the public on March 21st, 2015. Many conversations were had about how the project would advance and how the public would interact with the Generators group. It was decided that anyone could participate in exchanges while the Generators would administer the project. Over the past fourteen months over 700 people have exchanged goods and services in El Cambalache. Their participation may occur only once or they may come regularly. People that participate in exchanging come from

all different backgrounds and nationalities. Most people that participate come from the neighborhood where the project is located, in Cuxtitali. They are mostly women and often have little access to many basic resources such as clothing, domestic appliances, and electronics.

Findings: Exchange value changes everything

In fall of 2014 three of the Generators put together a presentation for the rest of the group on exchange value. In the meeting, exchange value was presented as an emotional process. The focus was the moral and personal values that are exchanged in economic interactions. Exchange value was an emotional experience that came from each person's life. The Generators talked about the shame and betrayal felt when one's work is valued less than what is needed to buy all of the essentials for daily life. They spoke of the fear of being in debt and not meeting commitments, as well as the fleeting happiness that comes when things are purchased and feelings of self-worth as varying depending on access to money. There was a desire among the group to forge an economy that did not effect those feelings. As time passed and the conversation grew it was decided that the project would be based on redistributing that which was under-valued; for example, abilities that were not necessarily used for making money but were something that the person enjoyed would be valued as important. Objects that were unwanted but still useful and would normally be considered garbage would be the primary goods exchanged. This was the rule that was developed, "Everything has the same value because what is interchanged are things one no longer needs and knowledge, abilities and services you want to share". The project accepts just about any object as long as it functions or is repairable. A

pencil will have the same value as a sweater, a chair or a laptop. To this date over seven hundred people have participated in exchanges from diverse parts of the region and the world. When asked what they think about El Cambalache most people reply, “It's useful”, “It makes sense that things should be shared” and, “People feel like they are part of something”. One participant said, “I like how all things and services have the same value, it means that what I can share is as important and valuable as what someone else shares and that makes us the same.”

Intercambio in Spanish is the literal translation of exchange, but *inter-cambio* is a term we have created, meaning each person is changing together with another person or group. *El Cambalache, donde tenemos el valor de inter-cambiar* (The Swap, where we have the courage to change together) is one of the rules born of consensus, written on the office walls and repeated time and again. This rule refers to the desire to create a community that is not tied to the rules of capitalism. Specifically, the rule contradicts notions such as, a person is given a value based on accumulated wealth, where race, gender and class are tied to the ability of each person to acquire money, goods and power. Josefa, one of the members of the Generators describes *inter-cambio* or *inter-change* as, “It is a change that comes from the inside out, it is changing the way one thinks, not everything can be bought with money, it is also about being more generous in order to share what you don't use anymore and knowing other people can use it.” El Cambalache organizes people because it meets the needs of those that participate in it by providing goods and services as a community where everything has value, the same value. This process is explained by

Patricia, defining inter-cambio as, “Recognizing within ourselves that we are a social construct of an oppressive hetero-patriarchal capitalist system, in order to identify that, and from there, begin to construct other life alternatives”. Sarai adds, “To think about 'dismantling capitalism' first we must begin with work, from below, from the depths. We begin to loosen these interior barriers that have been imposed upon us since we were born in this capitalist system.” While Cinthia, reflecting on the impact of inter-cambio said, “Inter-cambios are concrete anti-capitalist actions that we can do in the quotidian, ...without waiting for the great revolution that overthrows the capitalist system. Through inter-cambios we change ourselves and at the same time our individualist, consumer, competitive relationships imposed by capitalism.”

One man who has come several times to El Cambalache works walking door to door collecting garbage from homes and businesses for a small fee around midday. He is in his sixties and is accompanied by his grandchildren who work with him. He was invited in to get to know the project and though he doesn't speak much Spanish (He speaks Tzotzil, a local indigenous language), his grandson translated for him. As a garbage collector, he sees discards everyday in all their forms. However, upon entering into La Troje [11], our storage space where unwanted items become exchangeable items, he began to look at Sarai in disbelief, “I don't need money to take these things?” translated his grandson, “No”, said Sarai, “Its a swap, you leave something here that you don't want or want to share”. “But I have nothing” he said, looking away. “Everyone has something to offer, have you thought of teaching Tzotzil? That's very useful.” At this point he became

emotional. “I didn't think that was something someone would want.”, he said. A week later he came to schedule when he would begin giving classes.

Conflict Inter-changes

Between June and August, 2015, El Cambalache encountered it's first obstacle to the idea of not accumulating goods, and sharing to build a sense of community through moneyless exchanges for the first time after hundreds of exchanges. Several participants in the economy began to take many many pieces of clothing, sometimes amounting to up to 90 pieces. They would come several times a week. Members of the Generators would try to explain that the project is about focusing on needs and building a community where among everyone there is enough. However, they continued to take and take. Sometimes things would be returned but for the most part objects were leaving in quantities that seemed far beyond the needs of any single family, regardless of how large. This was brought up in many meetings. At first it was decided that the ideas of the project needed more explanation because after living in capitalism for an entire life, perhaps it was difficult to value not accumulating things. However, the abuses continued. The problem were the rules of the project, that because everything has the same value, the exchange values are non-hierarchical so 90 shirts can equal one shirt. Furthermore, “Was it ok or not if people sold things they acquired in El Cambalache?” It was decided that as in other types of economic interactions, participants should not be interrogated as to how they were planning on using their goods or the knowledge they acquired in classes. Some members of the project were in favor of barring the abusing participants from being part of El Cambalache. However, that idea didn't survive consensus, rather in the end it was

agreed that time limits would be set to how often people could come to El Cambalache (once a month for those that take a lot) and that a special meeting would be set up where the Generators would sit down and talk with the participants so that everyone was on the same page and from there a decision would be taken.

Analysis: Consensus Reflections on the Value of Waste

Consensus decision-making in conjunction with the personality of each of the Generators transforms inter-personal relationships and the group thought process. The space created by the easy sharing of ideas in a group with horizontal power relationships allows for the development of concepts such as inter-cambio, as well as other rules that enable building an inclusive social movement.

Discards take all forms, not only are goods and knowledge under-valued, but people as well. Though there has been a great deal of resistance to the denigration of indigenous people in the region with successful incremental struggles to support a multiplicity of ways of life, oppressions continue. Having something to give when one is told they never have enough draws people in and includes them in the resistance to being under-valued. Following Hawkins (2006), the way each person wastes positions them as the ethical person they want to become. In becoming a space beyond Capitalism El Cambalache transforms waste into usable items and creates inter-cambio.

El Cambalache practices a form of value constructed by meeting physical, emotional and intellectual needs/desires through the inclusion, transformation and flourishing of

community members. Moving beyond commodity fetishism, which creates a hierarchy of value, El Cambalache privileges horizontality; valuing commodities, knowledge and services. One of the key points of struggle within social movements is to include those people that are marginalized or discarded by Capitalism in conjunction with other structural violences. This marginalization pressures social movements to create assemblages free of domination that must be anti-capitalist because Capitalism creates alienation and hierarchy through exploitation and commodity fetishism.

As a feminist decolonial anarchist project, El Cambalache includes multiple ontos and epistemes in the structuring of the project to undermine dominant hegemonic discourses around wealth and growth from the centers of empire. Consensus decision-making creates a space where ideas and proposals are heard and discussed by all members of the Generators. This assemblage, as an act of epistemic disobedience, creates space for practice and knowledge creation where previously a discourse against capitalism and the frustration with a lack of resources overwhelmed debates about how to resist domination. El Cambalache has brought people together from many distinct circles that share the goal of redistributing resources, while building a network to do so that did not exist formally at the scale of the project. Doing more with few resources is a constant process in Chiapas, and building a non-hierarchical heterodox economy out of discards re-assembles the possibilities of what may be an economy. The value of the discards in El Cambalache has a distinct form of value where the goal is that the sheer act of participating is highly valued, not equated with an abstract symbol but rather an inter-cambio. Because

participation is inclusive a community of people is slowly growing together, exchanging and meeting, learning, giving and taking. The relationships that develop in non-hierarchical spaces beget respect and an assumption of responsibility for each person that uses the space. Rather than barring those participants from being part of the economy, concessions were made in order to accommodate their participation in the project. This reinforces the inclusive participation in the project. It also creates a space for transformation for all persons involved, where a man who believes he has nothing to give can be a teacher or people that abuse the system can be welcomed in to become better members of the group. There is a feeling of pleasure in seeing people find things they need as each person becomes part of something.

Conclusion

El Cambalache realizes money-less onto-rich spaces by dismantling capitalism in exchanges which create inter-cambio through consensus decision-making and collective action research. As a resistance movement, El Cambalache calls forth practices that feeds the flourishing of non-capitalist economies because it is a diverse network of people, things, ideas and practices that transform each other towards non-dominative relationships through a rule-based system. The use of a non-hierarchical, open-ended decision-making process resonates throughout the network as an organizational form that begets more non-hierarchical relationships. These relationships create an inclusive space for participants and those who will in the future further transform El Cambalache into new liberatory decolonial realities that eschew individualist consumption based thinking and embrace collective well-being. The focus on exchange value as an emotional process

that negotiates the gamut of experiences and self-worth in particular, presents an alternative scale of value that incorporates the experience of economic actors in the network. This perspective arose within an anarchist space where economic practices are built around having sufficient access to resources and providing that access to the surrounding community. El Cambalache contributes to the literature on heterodox community economies, anarchism and feminist decolonial thought by providing a living example of what a horizontal non-capitalist economy may look like. Finally, El Cambalache proposes a different organizational form, based on clear, simple, economic rules where participation and inclusion in the project are easily achieved and few barriers other than knowledge of the existence project limit participation.

While the project is small it strives to construct decolonial, feminist, political-social transformation by embracing epistemic plurality. As a collective we have worked to create trust within our group so that each person's ideas are valued even if they don't fit within traditional ideas of what is knowledge. This process has been complex and most transformation happens within the Generators group. As project grows we will have to explore how to extend our decolonial practices outwards into the community that is forming. This will be a new path for us. The project is a daily process that looks to decrease our dependence on money. Returning to Lugones, through our praxis of decolonial feminism we look to produce ourselves everyday in non-hierarchical collective well-being. While it is unknown how long El Cambalache will continue to flourish or how far it will reach, we are encouraged by the appearance of three new

Cambalaches since the project began. We invite other interested groups and scholars to join in this process with us so that our network may undermine the dominant economy.

Endnotes

1. Full disclosure, this author is one of the founding members of El Cambalache
2. While much work has been done on how performance of capitalism is done by economists, scholarship on performative scholarly practice of non-capitalist economics is less present. See Roelvink et al. (2013)
3. See Chomsky, Noam. 2012. How the young are indoctrinated to obey.
http://www.alternet.org/story/154849/chomsky%3A_how_the_young_are_indoctrinated_to_obey
4. See Esteva, Gustavo and Prakash, Madhu Suri. 1998. Grassroots Post Modernism. Zed Press
5. This idea reflects much more about those proposing it than the evidence shows about the practice of capitalism.
6. See <http://bluestockings.com>
7. See <http://www.wowcafe.org>
8. See <http://www.blackwomensblueprint.org>
9. A similar technique for building camaraderie among project participants suggested by Cameron and Gibson (2001) was having a pizza making party where participants could cook together and get to know each other.
10. For a more detailed description of the step by step process for using consensus decision-making see Butler, CT. X (1987) On Conflict and Consensus. Portland: Food Not Bombs Publishing
11. La Troje is a word used in Tzotzil communities in the Venustiano Carranza municipality of Chiapas. It means the storage space for corn, corn occupies an important place in many cultures in Mexico. It often is a metaphor for the life energy. La Troje for El Cambalache is the space where all objects, clothing, apparatuses and food are received and exchanged.

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3.3 Paper 3. Building an alternative economy as decolonial praxis

From: Araujo, E. (2017). "Building an alternative economy as decolonial praxis". In Eds Palomino-Schalscha, M and Gombay, N. *The Politics of Indigenous Spaces: Forging Indigenous Places in Intertwined Worlds*. Routledge.

Note: The editors of this collection have requested that the words Indigenous and Western are capitalized.

Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the possibilities of using decolonial thought to create diverse economic praxis through action research. Possibilities for social change arise when a small but growing moneyless economy of 1,200 people strives to be a daily manifestation of decolonial spaces and relationships. These praxes are realized in a multi-ethnic, women's moneyless economy called El Cambalache (The Swap in English) that began in March, 2015 in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico. The project is

situated within the multiple Indigenous economies that exist parallel to the capitalist economy in Chiapas. The participants in El Cambalache are not only Indigenous peoples, rather, the project self-consciously draws on anti-essentialist understandings of identity that brings people together across class, gender and ethnic positions as they are performed in practice. El Cambalache explores the kinds of communities, interdependencies and mutual aid arises when money is removed from economic exchanges. The project is generated by six women (including myself) with the goal of dismantling capitalism. For us, dismantling capitalism refers to the ability of each person to take small actions on a regular basis that take apart the capitalist economic system. Within the project the goods that are exchanged are, as is written on the walls of the space (my translation.), “[...] things one no longer needs, and abilities, knowledge and mutual aid that one wants to share.” Discards are incorporated into a stream of exchanges that expands resource abundance because it maintains goods, marginalized knowledge and abilities in circulation. By reimagining the usability, value, reach of mutual aid and lifetime of an object or form of knowledge; communities of abundance appear. Throughout the chapter I draw on the work of decolonial and feminist scholars as well as my fieldwork to question capitalist definitions of poverty and hierarchy imposed upon Indigenous communities in order privilege non-capitalist forms of creating value.

The praxes of exchange in our moneyless economy enact value through practices that are similar to, but not exactly barter. Here are a few examples of what exchange looks like at El Cambalache. A few days ago a boy came into El Cambalache and exchanged his toy car for an electric heater for his family’s house. Later that day two

Indigenous Tzotzil^{xii} women, a mother and a daughter, swapped ten pieces of clothing and two pairs of shoes for fifteen different pieces of clothing. No money changed hands. Nor was an exchange of ‘this’ for ‘that’ explicitly conducted in the sense barter implies. At El Cambalache we do exchange differently. We have a saying: ask yourself what you need. We also say exchange is ‘one-for-one’, but we have consciously and deliberately refused to define what counts as ‘one’. We’ve painted our sayings on the walls. We tell them how El Cambalache works. The sayings are our scripts. The script helps organize exchanges. A few months earlier a doctor’s appointment was swapped for fruit, and legal counseling was provided in exchange for painting a room. El Cambalache is much more than barter, it promotes social change and does not depend on the availability of any one single person’s resources. Each person exchanges with the entire Cambalache community.

El Cambalache challenges many norms around who generates the economy, how value is enacted, how exchanges function, and how the distribution of wealth is determined. Our micro-economy has been created by women, mostly Mexican, some of whom are Indigenous women, and myself who is neither. At El Cambalache we take identity to be something non-essential. Identity can be enacted and, as such, can be

xii In the state of Chiapas there are 11 indigenous languages spoken from Mayan and Zoque origins. These languages include: Tzeltal, Tzotzil, [Ch'ol](#), [Tojolabal](#), [Zoque](#), [Chuj](#), [Kanjobal](#), [Mam](#), [Jacalteco](#), [Mochó Cakchiquel](#) and [Lacandon](#). Of these languages, four are more prevalent, consisting of: Tzeltal, Tzotzil, [Ch'ol](#) and [Zoque \(INEGI, 2017\)](#).

enacted differently in economic exchanges. This process will be explained later in the chapter.

The project is an exploration in decolonial economic praxis, where Indigenous and non-Indigenous women work together to revalue ourselves as generators of an economy. Decolonial economic practices, as will be elaborated later in the chapter, refer to economic interactions that do not replicate a standard version of capitalism, but rather express a plurality of economic relationships (Palomino-Schalscha 2015). The imposition of capitalism is one aspect of coloniality that Indigenous communities are obligated to incorporate into their cultures. Coloniality refers to the persistence of situations where colonial administrations no longer exist but the power structures of those administrations continue to oppress racialized and ethnic groups of people via economic, cultural, political, epistemic, sexual, spiritual, and economic means (Grosfoguel, 2007).

Decolonial economic practices open possibilities for creating economic systems of value and exchange not originating solely within a Western episteme. Many of the indicators that are used to determine poverty, such as income or access to education, are indexes of how well a population is incorporated into a capitalist economic or political system. These indexes do not necessarily reflect the diversity of economic practices at play in Indigenous lifeworlds. Indigenous perspectives were not included in the creation of the capitalist economy in Chiapas. Rather, Indigenous people in the region were historically sources of labor in the forms of slavery, indebted and forced labor (Garcia de Leon, 2002). While these practices for the most part do not continue in the present, Indigenous people in Chiapas continue to have the lowest access to monetary income in

the state (INEGI, 2016). These communities are often considered poor. Categories of poverty are imposed on residents of Chiapas by the Mexican government's application of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals are rejected in El Cambalache.

Many Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities work to overcome their lack of access to money by creating heterodox economic spaces that incorporate both Indigenous economic practices and capitalist practices alongside each other (Gombay, 2012; Palomino-Schalscha, 2015). Money and hierarchical capitalist relationships can be a destructive force in Indigenous communities creating social division between community members. Many communities construct economies that embrace multiple economic systems as a survival tactic (Ibid; Ibid).

Seventy-two percent of people in San Cristobal de las Casas are categorized as poor, meaning they live on less than \$1,369.67 Pesos per month^{xiii}. They are not using much money to meet their needs. Other, non-monetary, mostly informal, economic practices are at play (Núñez Medina et al., 2016). These activities include sharing, non-monetary exchanges, volunteering, gifting, and many others. The *economy* is not a monolithically capitalist space, rather there are many different kinds of economic relationships and practices happening at any time (Gibson-Graham, 2006). These interactions include remunerated and non-remunerated work, sharing, volunteering,

^{xiii} This is between \$75-\$80 USD depending on exchange rates as of 7/9/17.

mutual aid, different kinds of profit distribution and other forms of economic relationships. Economic plurality, incorporating a capitalist system in part into a communal system, is often an important strategy for Indigenous communities to make ends meet while preserving their economic practices and concepts of value (Palomino-Schalscha, 2015).

El Cambalache embraces economic plurality by creating a micro-economy parallel to capitalism. It is organized, in part, by Tzotzil and Tzeltal women's ideas about how an economic system should provide access to resources for the women. In Chiapas, only 31% of women able to work participate in the remunerated labor force (INEGI, 2011). El Cambalache's non-monetary economy recognizes that money is not necessarily the most abundant resource in many Indigenous women's lives in Chiapas. A women's economy in Chiapas includes more people if the medium of exchange is not money but rather that which is most abundant in their lives be it knowledge or goods.

Assembling El Cambalache on a Foundation of Decolonial Thought

Coloniality has fundamentally driven the construction and institutionalization of political and socio-economic world systems over more than five hundred years in the Americas (Wallerstein, 2000). The practice of coloniality is evident in institutionalized physical violence as well as a process of manipulation and destruction of existing power relationships (Quijano, 2009); what de Sousa Santos calls 'epistemicide' or the destruction of precolonial epistemes (2014); destruction of multiplicitous expressions of gender (Lugones, 2010); transformation of the meaning and use of the landscape (Quintero Weir, 2010; 2013); homogenization of language (Quintero Weir, 2010;

Lenkersdorf, 2002); reconfiguration of borders and marginality (Mignolo, 2000); and the imposition and transformation of economic relationships and practices (Amin, 1990).

Projects that resist coloniality are faced with confronting both contemporary expressions of oppression and the foundations of history and truth. Decolonial economic projects like El Cambalache challenge coloniality on a day to day basis by reflecting on how we think about ourselves as women; our roles in creating knowledge; what is implied in non-monetary exchanges; and how to value knowledge and abilities that are not highly valued in a capitalist economy. In this section I will provide examples of how thinking and acting decolonially opens spaces for building networks of mutual aid while re-valuing abilities and knowledge marginalized within a capitalist economic system.

Knowledge originating in the Americas has been relegated to the margins of thought. Mignolo (2000) refers to this process as border thinking because non-Western knowledge is registered and documented, but placed outside the territory of legitimate knowing which remains the province ruled solely by Western forms of knowing. These liminal intellectual spaces that have survived in the Americas have been referred to as the borderlands (Anzaldúa, [1989] 2012). The borderlands are the spaces of thought and being that are not incorporated into a Western lifeworld but persist all the same. In El Cambalache, we as the generators of the project, began our economy from the liminal borderlands of Mexican, Indigenous, women's knowledge and practice, but not as essential forms of identity. At first we had to see ourselves and our borderlands as performed; as locations from which another economy could begin. Much work has been done throughout history to prevent the borderlands from being recognizable starting

places.

During the conquest of the Americas Spanish conquerors and later their colonial and neocolonial counterparts *saw* the territories and people as “empty” of culture. The people that inhabited these regions were seen as non-beings (Quintero Weir, 2013:12). Sousa Santos (2014) refers to this as 500 years of epistemological blindness, a blindness to other epistemes not considered modern. This blindness ontologically limited colonized peoples through the imposition of the neocolonial modern/capitalist paradigm. In order to counteract this blindness and consequent limits on ways of being Sousa Santos (Ibid) advocates for moving towards an epistemology of seeing. Seeing opens the possibility of moving from envisioning the peoples of the Americas as ontologically and epistemologically “empty” towards seeing the multiplicitous ways of being and knowing that continue to exist to this day.

In enacting decolonial praxis one must acknowledge the importance of existing epistemes and ontologies while recognizing that much damage has been done to these ways of knowing and being. In creating a decolonial economic project like El Cambalache, it is important to see the people participating in the project not as poor or empty of those resources necessary to be successful in a capitalist economy. Rather, we can envision the economy as a space that understands each person to be full of resources in accordance with both how they experience the world and the cultures that they come from.

As mentioned above, San Cristobal de las Casas has a high level of poverty. The residents of the city are seen and measured to be empty of wealth by statisticians. They

are called poor and they are treated as poor, meaning they are regularly provided with low quality healthcare, little access to employment and low quality education. The poor are attributed little social power and as such they are cast into poverty. However, there is much wealth within the city, it is just not valued in a capitalist economy. Part of the project of creating a non-capitalist, decolonial economy in El Cambalache is to build social power without relying on money.

The nexus of language, meaning and economic relationships can be used as a starting place to fortify access to resources and shift conceptions of social power. Lenkersdorf (2002) investigates how Tojolobal (a Mayan language in Chiapas) is expressive of inclusive community relationships. The suffix *-tik* places a “*we*” or “*ours*” or “*us*” on the end of the word. This *we*-ness locates the thought, concept or practice within an inclusionary space of community. The tendency in the language is for issues to be approached from the plural “*we*.” In this way, the community is the primary unit of decision-making, social power and resource distribution rather than an outside hierarchical governing body such as a government. In Tojolobal the individual is not the primary point of measurement, rather the collective of the community is a whole unit. Lenkersdorf (2002:151) notes, not everyone in the community is interested in an inclusive sociality. Rather it is a general trend that stems from the language and is enacted among many people.

In moving away from a Western epistemology, by engaging first with *we* and then the process, economic relationships are required to change. Various forms of capitalism are built on the belief that the individual is the first point of survival because the

mechanisms of alienation within labor exploitation separate each person by their skill and labor agreement with the employer (Marx, 1976). Capitalist mechanisms of profit and exploitation are fundamentally linked to a process of coloniality where the economic system not only creates an oppressed class of people that are subject to myriad forms of violence but also, a break with the *we* in favor of the *I* in order to create individuals who are exploitable. Capitalist subjects do not exist naturally, rather they have to be created (Mitchell, 2011). In a capitalist system at the most basic unit of the workforce, the individual, each person is pitted against another in competition to be the best worker. If the community, the *we*, is the basic unit of labor, the construction of the individual as the point of competition to be the best, to be isolated as better than the rest, falls apart.

Some economic practices and knowledge have survived coloniality, managing to persist in the borderlands. Others have originated during the past 500 years that are distinct from capitalist thought and practice. In many parts of Chiapas, a number of Indigenous communities make economic choices that evidence the desire to preserve the well-being of the community in direct contradiction with decisions that would best fit well-being of the individual in a capitalist economy (Núñez Medina et. al, 2016). Núñez Medina et al. (2016) conducted a statistical socio-economic analysis of Indigenous communities in Chiapas in order to understand why they continue to experience high levels of poverty while the rest of Mexico as a whole has decreased its overall poverty in the past twenty years. The study found that many Indigenous communities prefer to move away from cities and sources of remunerated work for individuals in order to create beneficial living conditions for a group. The authors refer to this process as a tendency

towards social cohesion. Social cohesion in this case refers to people maintaining access to resources for all members of the community through minimally monetized economies. These economic practices are based on sharing, trading, repair and mutual aid. The lack of money or the category of poverty does not mean that there is a lack of economic activity. Concepts of wealth and value in these non-capitalist exchanges are different from those of wealth and value in a capitalist economy.

In El Cambalache two of the generators of the project are Indigenous women from Tzotzil and Tzeltal communities. The consensus decision-making process we use incorporates the well-being of all who participate in El Cambalache to the degree that we are able. One characteristic of El Cambalache that makes it distinct from other moneyless economies in Chiapas is that the project is located in a small urban area where we work to implement the *we* in creating well-being for people that have little access to money. The project seeks to create a change in how participants understand themselves and each other as economic agents by implementing an inclusive economic space that incorporates indigenous languages and practices. This part of the project is fundamental because many indigenous women in San Cristobal de las Casas suffer high levels of racism and sexism on a daily basis, so finding ways to perform identity in different ways that meet, resist, and/or work around such subjectifications by others is necessary.

Lugones contends that from the beginning of colonialism, gender was brutally imposed through physical and psychological tactics of terror and subordination (2010). The violent control of the body, its identity and its place among the civilized for indigenous peoples is not just a phenomenon of the past. Within coloniality, women in

particular, but also anyone that does not fit into gender normative definitions suffer verbal, physical and economic violence, both within the family and beyond (Ibid). Femicide is widespread with one woman being violently killed every two hours across Latin America in 2015 (CEPAL, 2016). In Mexico between 2010-2015 an average of 2,552 (0.4%) of all women were violently killed per year (INEGI, 2016).

In El Cambalache, our economic praxis is a re-socialization and de-essentialization of ourselves, our bodies and our possibilities. Our economy depends on recognizing that we as racialized, ethnicized women have to work on, talk about and reconfigure our conceptions about who we are and what we want. In El Cambalache we consciously delink ourselves from the colonialities of thought, power and gender, in order to orient a creative resistance through the generation of heterodox economic spaces.

Decolonial economics can involve creating an economy where care is incorporated into part of the system (Quiroga Diaz, 2015). This idea has long been embraced by the Community Economies Research Network. Economies that strive to incorporate the *we* into exchanges build spaces of care for people that practice them (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Graham and Cornwell, 2009; Werner, 2015). The collective embrace of one another's well-being as an economic project implies not only actively practicing resource redistribution but also reevaluating use and exchange values. What is valued in an economy is diverse and should/can shift (Appadurai, 1988). This diversity among distinct groups of people has been referred to by Appadurai (1988) as composing regimes of value. Rather than trying to fit the vast array of ways that people engage in economic interactions into being valued by how closely it reflects capitalism, he suggests

that the diversity of how exchanges occur and their meaning should be embraced.

Economic decoloniality has the potential to be an open process where the practice and meaning of items and abilities exchanged are not valued based on their relationship to capitalism. Valuing can be an autonomous collective practice that meets the ontological and epistemic needs of those participating in it. El Cambalache works to rethink poverty by creating spaces in the project for women and men to enact resourcefulness. By starting with the resources that each person has we begin redistributing both Indigenous and non-Indigenous resources and regimes of value. When new regimes of value are embraced then we can begin to revalue ourselves and our communities.

El Cambalache: Moving Towards Economic Decolonial Praxis

El Cambalache opened its doors in March, 2015 after eight months of talking, debating, practicing and learning to work in a consensus decision-making model. The project is run by a generator's group^{xiv} of six women ranging in ages from 23-54 years old. We are Patricia de la Fuente (Pati), Maria Intzin (Mari), Sarai Garcia Lopez, Cinthia Pacheco Sanchez, Josefa Vazquez Martinez and myself, Erin Araujo^{xv}. Five of us are Mexican, with three of us being from Chiapas, one from Sonora, another from Morelos and finally myself, from New York. Two members of the collective are from indigenous

xiv The Generators group is the group of six women founders that administrate El Cambalache.
xv Our project is a public and collective project and as such we do not use pseudonyms in publications.

communities, Mari is Tzeltalera and Josefa is Tzotzilera. All of us have lived in San Cristobal de las Casas for ten years or more^{xvi}.

When we began the project we all agreed on having a horizontal consensus decision-making structure and philosophy, where no one person would have a hierarchical relationship with any other. Every decision had to be made together with unanimous agreement. Consensus decision-making is a common way to make decisions in both Tzeltal and Tzotzil communities. *Kochelin jbahtikin* in Tzeltal means we all influence each other and ourselves in our inner collectivity (Paoli, 2002:56). This is often used in community assemblies when debating decisions. In El Cambalache the connections and interactions that we build around reaching consensus are both serious and lighthearted where we can try out ideas that might seem impossible, unusual and difficult to realize.

In the eight months of conversations that culminated in El Cambalache we began thinking about what our non-capitalist economic project would look like, fuel and create. We decided that similar to our decision-making process, everything exchanged in the project would have the same value. This is because the items exchanged are things one no longer needs (what would normally be discards), abilities, knowledge and mutual aid that

^{xvi} For a more in-depth discussion of the positionality of myself and other generators see: Araujo, E. 2017. Community Inter-Changes: Creating an Inclusive Moneyless Economy in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico. Doctoral Dissertation. Memorial University of Newfoundland

one wants to share.

The project works to decrease our community's dependence on money while working against marginalization. El Cambalache sees marginalization as actions that support classism, racism, gender violence, sexual and cultural discrimination; in the invalidation of different kinds of knowledge; and the wasting of useful things. The project is an attempt at a decolonial praxis because it comes from the place that we are in and is built out of the experience of the community that participates in the project. Starting where we are and building on our community's experience becomes decolonial praxis through three main activities. First, we begin to re-learn and act in ways that do not reproduce coloniality. Second, we embrace Tzeltal and Tzotzil economic practices and language. Finally, the third is through reconstructing exchange and use values where participants decide on their own what their objects and knowledge are worth exchanging for.

At the writing of this chapter over 1,200 people have participated in exchanges. El Cambalache opens its doors for exchanges three days a week for 3-4 hours at a time. We are located in the neighborhood of Cuxtitali in a rented house that is both a project space and residence for some of the generators of El Cambalache. Around 350 people participate regularly while another group of 121 people (with some overlap) converse regularly about inter-changes through El Cambalache's WhatsApp group and Facebook page. Three Cambalaches have opened in other locations in Mexico (San Andres Tuxtla, Merida and Bacalar) and each one functions differently. Each Cambalache was begun by a woman who has met with at least one of us in person. After that meeting we travelled to

the location where the new Cambalache would begin and provided support through a presentation, knowledge sharing, and problem solving. Each Cambalache has evolved according to the local needs of people in the area. In San Andres Tuxtla, Veracruz, people exchange things and have communal meals together once a month; while in Merida people exchange books in public spaces like parks and plazas; and in Bacalar, Quintana Roo, El Cambalache is part of a women's spiritual healing center where women celebrate the moon and exchange things according to lunar cycles. The only requirement to be met to create a Cambalache is that everything and everyone has the same value. We call it *El Valor de Inter-Cambio*. The name is a play on words because *intercambio* is the literal translation of exchange in English, so one meaning is simply exchange value. The other meaning, *el valor*, is the strength to, *inter-cambiar* change from within, valuing interchanges (*inter-cambios*). Through this play on words, we have imagined other ways of doing economic exchanges outside of or parallel to capitalist notions of exchange value. Language play provided a basis for us to reimagine basic concepts of economic interchanges. By practicing inter-changes of things, abilities, and knowledge, we perform other ways of creating value.

When we first began the project we did workshops for each other. One of those workshops, that of consensus decision-making, was done several times in different ways. It was important from the beginning that we created a non-prescriptive space for our women's economy. We wanted to develop a space of trust. For many of the generators we had a hard time expressing what we wanted. We needed to first recognize ourselves as being full of resources to be able to use them. The change from within that became *inter-*

cambio is exemplified by a few questions and comments made by Pati, the oldest member of our group, who is from Comitán, a small city two hours away from San Cristobal de las Casas,

We are women with history, with life stories, [*sic*] how are we constructing our lives? When we think about this, transcending our own values is very important, sometimes we block ourselves when we need to open our wings [...]. In the distinct world that we want to create, the way we make decisions is fundamental, we are unique, irreplaceable, unrepeatable. We have to work together to create consensus, if we don't all understand each other our ability to make decisions falls apart. (August, 2014; San Cristobal de las Casas; my translation)

Pati's words exemplify some of the decolonial concepts that the project embraces. Every person, their experience and their participation is important in the construction of the economy. As women living in a world inundated with patriarchy, in Chiapas, our decolonial process is not simply embracing Tzeltal or Tzotzil economic practices. Rather, we also work to create liberatory spaces for indigenous women that encourage them to value their voice and experience. The project includes literal and figurative spaces for experimentation and creativity. However, these were not easy accomplishments.

While all of us desired to create an economy by and for women, we were nervous, a little shy and unsure of how to proceed or who we were working with (we met each other in forming the project). For example, Mari, one of the generators, is twenty-four years old and comes from Tenejapa (a Tzeltal community near San Cristobal de las Casas). Not long ago, before El Cambalache began, she would rarely if ever speak to large groups in public. After over a year with El Cambalache, she regularly speaks in

public. She explained her process of valuing her voice,

In my community women are always told not to speak, their voices are not regarded as important. I never learned that my participation in a conversation was something important. But now, in El Cambalache it took me a long time to share my ideas. I didn't know what people would think about them, and everyone knows so much, I thought they would think I was stupid. Now I realize that I need to participate in El Cambalache for it to work. (June, 2016; Merida, Yucatan; my translation)

Indigenous women in Chiapas experience high levels of oppression. Coloniality, patriarchy and modernity make having access to basic resources incredibly difficult. In El Cambalache we realized that we could build and lean on each other in order help ourselves as a group to revalue ourselves. This process, for us, had to be anti-capitalist, collective and feminist. Our decision-making structure has been key in this process. Only through clear egalitarian communication can a decision be made. Returning to Pati:

The hierarchical decision-making process is incorporated into capitalism because the search for money and power requires individualism. But there are so many of us that want to transcend this system. (August, 2014; San Cristobal de las Casas; my translation)

In creating decoloniality El Cambalache makes small steps forward out of the desire for there to be a different economic system, where each person is part of a group that does not embrace individualism. However, it has been important for us that each member of the Generators is supported to be who and how they choose to be. Finding the strength to follow one's own voice and desires can be difficult. From the beginning, the Generators felt that finding this strength was an economic problem. We needed to support each other

as individuals so that each person could be resource-full. We regularly think collectively about how to make that happen to everyone participating in the project. Josefa, 37 yrs. old, from the town of Venustiano Carranza (about two hours from San Cristobal de las Casas) was reflecting on how she made decisions in her life and commented,

I began to think about all of the decisions I had made in my life and I felt good about them, they were worth it, and then I began to think about thinking collectively, it doesn't take away who we are as individuals, that is the challenge of collective decision-making. (August, 2014; San Cristobal de las Casas; my translation)

In Josefa's comment she brings up an important tension, that of the self, the individual and the collective. On one side we need each person and their experience to be a distinct part of the decision-making process, each person in the collective is very different. That difference creates the richness of being able to create something that is a plural economy where the interests of one person do not exceed those of others.

For me, this project began as an action research project for my doctorate degree. I knew that I wanted to create a non-capitalist, decolonial, feminist economic project. Before the doctorate began Pati and I had previous conversations about the possibility of creating an alternative economy. We knew that we could not do this alone. When I was accepted into the PhD program I found a small amount of funding to begin the project. However, I worried that my research interests would guide the project's formation. In the beginning stages, we spoke about the project being research and invited the other generators to be co-researchers. From the beginning Pati and I agreed that our project would have to be guided by consensus decision-making. When we all agreed that no

voice was more important than any other things began to flow. In capitalism the hierarchical desire for one person or a few to benefit from the subjugation of others is often naturalized. After a lifetime of indoctrination in thinking that we have to mold ourselves into marketable beings of production and subservience, that each one of us has less value than the employer, it is incredibly difficult to be equal. However, as a collective of generators we began to work intensely at transforming ourselves into equals.

In some of our reflections in El Cambalache we recognized that we give power to other members of the collective. There are many power dynamics imposed upon us. We have to respect that valuing one's own voice is a personal/group growth process. For us it was easier to value each other and see each other as equal or more-than-equal while subjugating ourselves. Power relationships are complex. Age, ethnicity, locality each contribute to how each person values themselves. In the previous section of this chapter I explained that decolonial praxis confronts our ideas of truth and history. In the experience of building a decolonial economic project we are constantly confronting our own minds and experiences of privilege and oppression. Our project works to create spaces for women, that includes all of the women that choose to pass through our doors. Men are welcome too but El Cambalache is first a space for women, then a space for men. The project focuses on the equity of women because we need spaces for supportive self-realization where we can try out new ideas, make mistakes, learn and explore different ways of doing things without being told that our ideas are wrong, stupid or naive. Indigenous women in San Cristobal de las Casas are confronted with complex social pressures including the pressure to make money and participate in capitalist spaces while

being limited by oppressions of where are indigenous women expected to be within the city. It is important to create spaces for socializing. El Cambalache offers a space for women to socialize freely. On Thursdays, the day Josefa opens the space, El Cambalache becomes full of women and children. Women come to talk, hang out and let the kids play. Many people come to El Cambalache just to share their thoughts because when we are together we are resource-full.

For my part, I am aware that I am not from Chiapas, and though I have lived here a long time, there is much I do not know nor understand about what is *normal* here. In that way I am conscious that my ideas about how to proceed are different. However, being from Chiapas does not solve this problem because when one is from a place, has grown up there, it is sometimes difficult to question what is *normal* and transform the daily oppressions that we all live. Each one of us has to constantly be aware that we do not know what the outcome of the project will be, that we do not know how to resolve economic oppressions, but that we get clues along the way that indicate where a path might be made. Being comfortable in a space of not knowing how things should be done, of not having a traditional path to follow is exciting, thrilling and frightening. We are humbled to be part of a process of valuing the knowledge and resources of each person brings while learning how to be in collectivity everyday. One of the generators, Cinthia who is 40 yrs old and from Morelos put it this way,

In every single one of the actions proposed by the generator group in making decisions about each step we take, we try to break with vertical power structures and generate horizontality where each voice is heard. However, in practice this has been difficult to achieve. Some voices express themselves more and are heard

more often while others are left and we take up the proposals of those voices and those decisions. On the other hand, we don't all always share the same enthusiasm or intensity for the proposed activities. However, we take on that idea in order to realize someone else's dream and we might not feel as passionate about it in the same way, and sometimes that brings discontent or frustration with the person that suggested the idea. When we don't have the same level of participation in said activities, on occasions it can be seen as a lack of commitment. (March, 2016; my translation)

Decolonial praxis does not come easily. Each person lives coloniality on an intimate level. Hierarchy has been naturalized and cultivated within each of us from a young age. The desire to have a leader is built on a notion of collectivity. This collectivity is expressed within the idea that the people that do not hold the position of leader think alike. Leadership is based in the belief that a leader will further an idea that represents our own. However, that is not likely to happen. Each person's experience in the world is unique. Though people may be oppressed in the same way, that does not imply that they live, think, or feel the same. The belief in leadership is a mechanism of oppression that conveys only specific people should lead and representation of ideas by a leader is the closest one might come to another person expressing a similar idea. This is one reason why collective decision-making is frustrating, we have the commitment and responsibility to participate in a decision or a conversation; however, when we don't express ourselves and follow others we feel anger and frustration. For us in El Cambalache, we embrace these feelings because it implies that we are shifting ourselves towards more equal relationships.

On several occasions where Pati, expressed frustration that other members of the Generators group were not participating as much as she was. She would say that

everyone in the collective has a responsibility to participate. We can't create this project with only a few voices. I want to argue here that this is decolonial praxis. The process of creating an inclusive economy involves growing and changing, breaking with hierarchy and embracing our collectivity within the practice of dismantling capitalism. A decolonial economy for El Cambalache is messy and dynamic. There are many things to overcome and there is no one correct path to follow.

Conclusion

In 1549, Fray Bartolome de las Casas banned slavery and unremunerated work in Chiapas. In 2011, 14.8% (493,109 people) of the able bodied workforce (3,331,815 people) of the state were working under unremunerated conditions (INEGI, 2011). Women's participation in the workforce amounted to only 31% of able women (Ibid). Large swaths of denizens in Chiapas have low access to money. However, access to resources is part of coloniality. Indigenous women in particular have been denied access to the most basic resources for centuries. Through creative social processes many women have created ways to procure what they need for themselves and much of the time for their families. Pluralistic economies that run alongside and sometimes intertwine with the capitalist economy have been both a physical and cultural survival strategy for many Indigenous peoples.

Decoloniality can be done in practice and built by the community that it serves. It is often a messy, complicated, elating and frustrating process. We are breaking from the myriad indoctrinations that we have lived our entire lives. Breaking indoctrination means re-evaluating what is true and where the truth(s) come from. El Cambalache works

towards creating an economy that meets the needs of the people who participate in interchanges while simultaneously existing in a space of constant growth and transformation. This process and the project are not perfect. It only opens three days a week, there are many things that people want that we do not have, it is difficult to make abilities, knowledges and mutual aid circulate. But somehow, people keep coming and others are starting other Cambalaches in other locations. As women we have been the subjects of structural and social violence our entire lives, but in healing those wounds we become more than subjects, we become generators of other different socio-economic relationships.

In our work it has been important to create our micro-economy out of Tzeltal and Tzotzil women's economic practices. By recognizing that these ways of doing economic interactions do not necessarily require money, that women in Chiapas do not have high levels of access to money we reevaluate concepts of wealth and poverty. In El Cambalache we are resource-full; we have a wealth of knowledge, abilities and things that are as diverse as the people that participate in the project. We invite others to realize non-hierarchical decolonial economies based in the resources that are most abundant in where you live. If you are interested in creating a Cambalache in your area do not hesitate to get in touch.

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4.1 Summary: Collective Documentation

El Cambalache explores how value is created or recuperated through a methodology of consensus decision-making. In the previous chapter I presented articles and a book chapter that embody the challenges and benefits of how consensus decision-making can be used in furthering action research in anarchist, generative justice and decolonial projects. Within these pieces and the larger project there are a variety of entangled issues. In this section I bracket these complexities within a larger analysis of inter-change value and an expansion of the DEF through an analytical narrative of the collective dialogue that was realized as our documentary. I use this narrative because it reflects not only El Cambalache's process of knowledge production but also how the generators decided to tell what we believe are the contributions of our project.

Between July 2015 and March, 2016 El Cambalache created a 25 minute documentary, Inter-Change Value (original title in Spanish: *El Valor de Inter-Cambiar*). The film was created by the six generators of El Cambalache and two other women, Alicia Arandis and Laura Almendros. Both Alicia and Laura had worked in other documentary film projects and they provided us with support and capacity building around storyboarding, filming and editing.

The decision to create a documentary came about because my academic advisor, Dr. Josh Lepawsky, was exploring the possibility of creating a documentary about another research site. I was a research assistant on that project and was very enthusiastic about my participation in it. Dr. Lepawsky suggested that I turn that enthusiasm towards creating a documentary about El Cambalache. As soon as I brought the proposal to the

table, it was immediately approved by the other generators in June, 2015.

In early July, 2015 we began to meet and plan out our film. None of us had made a documentary before (I would begin production with Dr. Lepawsky several months later on his project). El Cambalache had only begun about four months earlier. The generators of El Cambalache found ourselves in a very enthusiastic moment that lacked much clarity about how to proceed. We began meeting and brainstorming. We had to decide: "What was our story?", "How do we tell it?", "What are the most important parts of the project?" and "How do we represent the project, the generators and our praxis through video?".

Here is an excerpt from one of our early conversations about situating our message:

Maria: [...] For example, why is capitalism bad? The word bad, it's not the correct word, because I don't think it's like that. It's more about knowing when to use it as well, I mean it does have its benefits and its um

Cinthia: Processes?

Maria: ah, yes, exactly [...] thinking about it, if there wasn't any money and only inter-changes, it reminds me of how things were once done in the communities. When things were only shared through exchanges of things that one had and other people needed, well of course it generated, more than anything, that we had to be more sociable with people, we had to have more humanism with people, because otherwise you ask yourself, 'How can we get along, if not like this?' Friendship forms between people as well as affection because if something happens to you and someone gave you something you needed and then you gave them something, well you're probably going to need something from them again some day and you'll be able to help them as well, it's just nicer.

Erin: It's like a responsibility?

Maria: Exactly, well, it's not a responsibility, it's like I give you

Sarai: It's not like you have a commitment as much as I gave you something once so now you'll have to give to me

Maria: and then you give to me

Sarai: but a connection is created where for the most part you can count on someone's support [...]

Maria: This is very nice and then, now, looking at capitalism, one wants more, I want this, I want this, and it's like to always be wanting wanting, and not giving

Josefa: It's that, I mean, like more more more, but it's for me, for me, for me and then you spend your life working for the money to get it.

Maria: and then you don't care about what others have and you don't care if you're just you alone, you just want more and more and there's no mutual aid between people where there once was. Where once it was like, I help you because I have something and I'll share and now there's not much of that.

Josefa: I don't remember who said it but capitalism creates individuality it's always me me me.

Maria: and when you want that you're only thinking about the worst in other people while when you share with people you create friendship

Josefa: It's about creating community between us, because also in community it's not only about wanting to be in harmony with each other and get into that sort of circuit, rather in community it's about making, between us, the possibility of creating relationships and to not be closed to that.

(San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico; July, 2015; my translation)

The excerpt of this conversation provides a small window into our process of group thought and reflection about the theoretical basis that underlies our project. In the transcript Maria explores the relationships between capitalism and non-capitalist non-monetary economic practices. I have always been impacted by the presence of anti-essentialism in the collective thought of El Cambalache (no one but myself has studied in the social sciences). When Maria expresses that we have to know how to use capitalism and understand its processes while recognizing that the individualism breaks social relationships of mutual aid she is speaking from her experience of growing up in a hybrid economy. For people that grew up in indigenous communities in Chiapas, they have been on the front lines of watching how economic practices have changed dramatically over time. As mentioned in the section on the historical context of Chiapas and El Cambalache, most people in indigenous communities grew up in situations of low remuneration for labor on massive plantations. They maintained economic practices

specific to their communities and worked other small parcels of land for their own consumption. This version of capitalism, verging on (or sometimes actually was) indentured servitude was distinct from the capitalism that has come to Chiapas after 1994. This capitalism, once called development and now has become sustainable development, has sought to incorporate indigenous communities into a capitalist market. That is the shift that Josefa and Mary are talking about in the transcript above. In no way do I think that either version of capitalism should be eulogized or celebrated. The collective economic practices of mutual aid that existed alongside the plantation system were an antimony that has been subsumed within neoliberalism. For that reason, when we began to create the documentary, we emphasized the social connections of care and friendship that are woven within the practice of mutual aid.

Using mutual aid to challenge individualism has also been explored by Annemarie Mol (2008). She questions the capitalist nature of care relationships within western medicine by asking, how is care incorporated into a system that has money as the goal? El Cambalache pushes this concern further by focusing not only on healthcare but in all kinds relationships. Abilities and goods that are provided as mutual aid shift how care and other services are provided by transforming access to healthcare and other abilities into relationships.

When we began filming it was decided that our interviews would be done collectively in order to reflect the collectivity of all aspects of the project. Here is an example of an interview:

Josefa: Well, we'd like to know what you think about el Cambalache?

Juana^{xvii}: For us there's a lot of benefit, and it's a big help for us and our well-being, more than anything else
Josefa: Well what do you think about what you're taking with you that you inter-changed with what you're giving? More than anything what we'd really like to know is what kind of benefit you're seeing.
Juana: The benefit is in helping other people while at the same time we help ourselves with all of these things that will be useful for us. Thank God.
Josefa: That's the idea, that everyone benefits, [...] we are creating a chain that people give to us and we all give, and all of this is moving all the time, and that's the idea, that if there are other people that aren't using things, then we can use that.
Juana: Yes!
Erin: What are you taking with you today?
Juana: Clothing, toys, shoes, stationary store-type stuff, a backpack
Erin: What are you leaving here?
Juana: Shoes and clothing as well.

(July 30, 2015, El Cambalache, San Cristobal de las Casas, my translation)

In this example Josefa and I not only interview Juana but there is also a moment of group thought that includes Juana in thinking about what our economic relationships imply. This relationship has come about through regular conversations with everyone that comes into the space (including Juana) about what is happening for them when they inter-change. In our experience, no one person in the collective should do an interview alone because the things said and the experience of interacting will be seen differently by each person. We collectivize knowledge by having collective experiences. It is important to also note that we see ourselves as creating collective knowledge in these moments. That means that because the interview is collective, we are being interviewed along side other

^{xvii} We have changed the names of the non-generator participants in the project.

participants and each other. For that reason, we consider these to be participatory collective interviews.

This interview didn't make it into the final cut of the documentary. In this transcript Josefa and I are speaking with a woman that has been inter-changing with us for four months. Juana is in her early twenties, has two children, lives in Cuxtitali, and has little access to money. However, it is important to note that this does not limit her clarity in that she is helping others and herself or the emphatic "yes!" that she expresses when she agrees with Josefa. El Cambalache is not a charity. Everyone that participates is, as Josefa emphasizes, part of creating a collective benefit for everyone that participates. In this way, El Cambalache embraces inclusive economic practices.

Inclusive economics, as mentioned in the section on the theory of inter-change value, strives to create horizontality within economic relationships. Everyone is equal and their knowledge, abilities and things have equal value. The inclusionary positioning of El Cambalache creates unique opportunities for creating knowledge that comes from people and relationships that are marginalized within capitalist economic relationships. El Cambalache is interested in knowledge held and created by people that are not considered the best in a capitalist system (which are most people on Earth), that have not necessarily been indoctrinated into western-style education and/or gain access to basic resources through non-monetary relationships of mutual aid. It is important to note that we are not interested in studying these people as research subjects. Rather, we are interested in creating knowledge with them that is derived from people understanding themselves as resource-full.

In a resource-full economy competition is discouraged. We do not believe that any person should be better than any other. Rather, it is important that people are encouraged to explore their ideas and practices creatively and freely within a community-based goal of improving the quality of life for all involved by thinking through issues together. In a capitalist economy there is a widely held belief that competition creates quality. However, in the experience of the generators of the project competition is a mechanism that excludes people within an uneven arena. Ideas that are created through consensus decision-making are the result of diverse minds coming together to solve problems. Problem solving within a process of horizontality embraces thinking through the complexity of the needs and interests of all those involved in the process. For that reason, our documentary includes many of the groups and individuals that participated up to that moment in supporting and inter-changing in the micro-economy.

Economies parallel to the capitalist economy grow because people choose to be part of them. In order to desire to participate, micro-economies have to be successful in meeting people's needs. This can only be accomplished by increasing one's quality of life, not only through building access to resources and abilities but also as a fulfilling personal experience. This is a distinct process from a capitalist economy or any other economy that is imposed by a government. Economies imposed by nation-states obligate denizens to participate in them. When a person chooses to not participate or is not able to participate in an obligatory economy, they are no longer able to meet one's needs for social reproduction, thus falling into poverty. For example, here I present a section of text from the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, *Goal 1: Eradicate*

Poverty:

Poverty is more than the lack of income and resources to ensure a sustainable livelihood. Its manifestations include hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education and other basic services, social discrimination and exclusion as well as the lack of participation in decision-making. Economic growth must be inclusive to provide sustainable jobs and promote equality.

(UNDP, 2017)

Goal one presents the consequences that people suffer when they have been incorporated into a capitalist economy that does not provide enough money for them to meet their needs. The consequences for not participating in development towards a capitalist economy are oppressive and even deadly. The final line of the paragraph from goal one suggests that sustainable jobs would promote equality. However, I question, 'How will equality be achieved within an economic system based in exploiting workers to benefit from the surplus they create through their labor?'. For this reason, indigenous communities that have long had other forms of economic practices and relationships are forced into participating in capitalist economies as well. If capitalism and development met people's needs and created equality, then there would be no need for projects like El Cambalache.

Decolonial research into the nexus of capitalism and coloniality insists that they impose intersectional oppressions on the communities that suffer them (Grosfoguel, 2009). The economic research on-going at El Cambalache recognizes that nexus but also challenges it by bringing to the forefront indigenous women's economies and

experiences. This is important because our micro-economy does not strive to contest capitalism per se. El Cambalache is not exactly a direct response to capitalism in the sense that its foundations do not revolve around singularly refuting capitalist relationships of hierarchy and exploitation. Rather, the project begins with a reflection on how to increase access to resources for and by women that have low access to money.

J.K. Gibson Graham wrote, "Start where you are!" (2006). When El Cambalache began, we did just that. Now, several years on, it has become clear to me that it is also important to take into account where you actually are. The location, space and positionality of where we begin to create economic projects such as El Cambalache, are as important as the interest in creating the project itself. In our experience creating a community economy takes a massive amount of time and commitment as a research project. Three years into the project it still feels like it is beginning. In that sense researchers have to understand that it is important to have a long term commitment to making the project work regardless of funding schemes and other academic timelines. The project also requires that one establishes and maintains trust, friendship and connections in your community. However, the location of the project is also incredibly important as a conditioning factor on the kind of knowledge that is produced as a result of the project.

In Pandora's Hope, Latour (1999) reflects on how knowledge is created as a mechanism of bringing specific information back from the field to be analyzed and processed in order to meet the qualifications for being considered scientific knowledge. My relationship to San Cristobal de las Casas and my permanence here both before

beginning El Cambalache and onwards through the present has been essential to my intellectual growth and perspective. Informal indigenous women's economies in urban settings are difficult to see and engage with for non-indigenous persons due to the high levels of marginalization experienced by both the women and their economic praxes. This marginalization also creates a response for self-respecting people which often is something along the lines of, 'Why bother? These people aren't gonna get it anyway.' In my experience, friendship, trust and emotional intimacy take time and commitment from both people in any relationship. For that reason, it is of utmost importance that indigenous people are the ones talking about their experience and their communities. Non-indigenous people would do well to have long term commitments to building relationships in order to create collective knowledge. For this reason, returning to the documentary, it was important to El Cambalache to share the joy and connection that is involved in non-hierarchical, inclusive economic relationships. We wanted to show that it is possible to create non-oppressive spaces, by acting thoughtfully.

Decolonial research benefits extensively from being immersed for years or a lifetime in the locations where that research is taking place. Presence is just the beginning. Thinking, acting and being decolonially is an embodied process that requires years, a lifetime and even generations to bring about. In this way the collective thought embraced through the horizontality of the generators of El Cambalache has been essential to all of us learning to speak, be quiet, share and filter our ideas. It goes further, our bodies, identities, positionalities and value within larger nation-states are afforded by our locations (Sultana, 2014:337). Sultana notes, "The simultaneous existence of multiple

systems that define our realities can cause cognitive dissonance sometimes, especially for those occupying liminal spaces and plural diasporic identities." (Ibid). This cognitive dissonance is evident in the presence and continuity of hybrid economies. In one economic space one will participate and interact within the constrictions of the social norms that are required by capitalism. However, in others, where appropriate we will act and think collectively as is expected within a moneyless economic space such as El Cambalache.

The myriad moneyless spaces of mutual aid and hybrid economies of the majority world are happening in diverse contexts within highly varied collective lifeworlds that are well-known to those that enact them. Research in diverse economies can benefit extensively from incorporating the epistemes and ontologies that produce these economic relationships.

4.2 Conclusion

On September 7, 2017, an 8.2 Richter scale earthquake rattled Chiapas and Oaxaca. San Cristobal de las Casas lost power for a half hour, many buildings fell and some homes caught on fire. In our city three people died. When power returned and the internet came online the WhatsApp group in El Cambalache became saturated with messages. People were checking in and sharing information about damages from around the state and other parts of Mexico. Over the next few days, people began to use the list to coordinate centers to collect food, tarps, medicine and labor brigades. Ten days later when a 7.1 Richter Scale earthquake hit Mexico City and surrounding areas people used

the list to find people, share information and organize help. In these moments of mutual pain people acted through mutual aid not only in El Cambalache, but around the country. Currently El Cambalache is organizing and laying the groundwork to become a center for organizing brigades for sharing labor and abilities. Our micro-economy can be literally and metaphorically an economy that repairs.

Performative research into hybrid economies can create immediate resource access for communities that have low access to money without creating capitalist labor relations of exploitation. In the days after the first earthquake in Chiapas, the generators were talking about how to act collectively to support the survivors of the earthquake that had suffered the loss of their homes. Patricia said, "We have to recognize that the people we work with already are survivors of capitalism." (San Cristobal de las Casas, September 10, 2017, my translation). There began an ongoing conversation about how to realize community actions of support that are not charity but rather create the possibility for strengthening non-capitalist economic practices.

The imposition of development programs has stifled and/or obfuscated the presence of non-monetary economic relationships. While these projects may not eliminate the need for money, money-less economic projects can decrease dependence on money while strengthening relationships among participants. Rather than constructing money-poor communities as regions of poverty and extreme poverty, a resource-full or asset-based approach to creating community economies provides opportunities to share resources across class boundaries. In areas where money-poor economies require and construct money-poor societies non-capitalist economic relationships fill the spaces that

development programs would like to transform into capitalist spaces. Building on Quintero Weir (2011), these areas are not empty of meaning nor are they lacking economic relationships. Money-poor regions are full of them. Non-western systems of thought also have non-colonial economic relationships inter-woven into the sociality of those systems. The DEF makes present the wide range of alternative capitalist and non-capitalist economic practices that are continuously at play in any economy. However, what is not present in the framework is the geographic nature of the extent and kind of practices enacted in the world where they are located. Further research into decolonial economic praxis is necessary in order to understand the extent and variety of exchange-values, use values and socio-technical networks that flourish in regions that are classified as experiencing poverty and extreme poverty. In our current efforts to contribute to the reconstruction of Chiapas we hope to further decolonial economic praxis through recognition of the possibilities that each earthquake survivor has within their own resource-full-ness.

Projects like El Cambalache question and confront discourses of dependency, vulnerability and emptiness. The methodology for doing decolonial economic research is important. Decolonial projects privilege the importance of identities, epistememes and ontos that have been subverted by the colonial/modernist project. The methods used in research should not reproduce those power relationships. Rather, by using non-hierarchical research methods such as consensus decision-making the voices of the people in the communities where research is done will guide the practices and research questions to be realized. Scholars have an important role to play in this process. As agents of change they

can support decolonial projects by bringing strategies, knowledge and resources. However, it is of utmost importance that scholars take an equal role as the other co-researchers in the project. This can require investigators to limit their participation in a project so that all co-researchers may participate equally. If academic pursuit is the production of knowledge, then the knowledge that is produced in egalitarian research spaces will be novel. As an example, in the three years of its existence El Cambalache has produced both scholarly work both scholarly work, such as this dissertation and the papers that comprise it, as well as other peer-reviewed publications and academic presentations beyond it (two book chapters, two peer-reviewed articles, and four presentations in academic conferences), a documentary (screened over twenty times in Mexico and internationally with the presence of its creators and recognition of honorable mention in a film festival), grassroots educational materials, community events, other sites of implementation and two radio interviews. While El Cambalache is a small project that is just beginning, the creation and implementation of inter-change value has opened a window into the possibilities of an economic praxis that may support the flourishing of resource-full communities. Many scholars often struggle to locate unique research topics in their fields that are not being studied by others. In El Cambalache we seek other activists and scholars to replicate and expand the work that we are doing.

Community economies research projects are highly time and labor intensive. They require previous social networks in the location where the project will happen. The needs of each community will be different. For that reason, consensus decision-making is a useful tool for learning about what resources are lacking and what resources are present

in a region. When the people that are the economy are part of the decision-making process, new, different economies emerge that meet local needs.

Anarchist theory and practice serve to support the creation of non-oppressive local economies. While realizing a goal of equality among participants is very difficult in the short-term, working towards that goal begins to transform hierarchies into horizontalities. In the same way that creating a moneyless economic project does not eliminate the need for money but decreases it; creating horizontal decision-making structures decrease hierarchy. Because anarchism is seen as a work in progress, many anarchist projects do not have the expectation of creating the immediate great revolution. Rather they strive to create change everyday that will lead to realizing a different world. El Cambalache strives to create this other world every day.

Decolonial economic projects are under-researched in Chiapas. Centuries of slavery, indebted servitude and epistemicide have obfuscated many non-western economic practices. However, these practices exist and the hybrid economies that incorporate them continue. El Cambalache is working to more fully integrate non-western economic practices into the quotidian actions of the project. We hope that by exploring and incorporating more indigenous economic ideas and practices into our economy that we will expand our network of participants.

Today in El Cambalache and all over Chiapas we are faced with crisis. The impact from the earthquake compounded with coloniality presents significant challenges for ensuring the physical, epistemological and ontological survival of many communities.

However, the distinct subjectivities that decolonial non-capitalist economies support can be key in creating a reconstruction that increases well-being for disaster survivors. By expanding our understanding of the extent, richness and complexity of diverse economies in the majority world we can begin to visibilize those practices while creating liberatory possibilities for the people that engage in future decisions around autonomous reconstruction of their communities. In this way El Cambalache contributes three important concepts to geographic literature. These are: the majority world is replete with non-capitalist and alternative capitalist economies; small urban horizontal economies can create well-being for participants across class, ethnic and gendered lines; consensus decision-making when used as a research methodology can empower participants to practice and create knowledge that supports the community that it comes from. The survival of diverse economies in the majority world is under attack by development projects. However, scholar-activist projects such as El Cambalache can contribute to supporting the growth and maintenance of these economies. The future of economic relationships is unknown, but we can contribute to the survival of communities and their economies through the creation of liberatory, consensus-based economic projects.

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5 Appendices

5.1 Appendix 1: Fronteras Decision-making Workshop

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Why decision-making?

Decision-making practices are among the most important activities that will happen with any group. The ability for a group to decide and plan the present and future actions that will be taken is essential for leading to the success of group, business or organization. This workshop looks at the power structures implicit in certain kinds of decision-making and then focuses on two kinds of horizontal decision-making practices: voting and consensus. The nature of horizontal decision-making practices and the social and labor related implications of horizontalized relationships between workers is explored in this workshop.

Workshop Goals:

At the end of the course participants will be able to:

- Identify different types of decision-making practices
- Differentiate and explain the difference between hierarchical and horizontal power structures in organizations
- Explain the positive and negative aspects of voting as a decision-making process
- Explain the different roles and practice of consensus decision-making
- Define consensus decision-making

Workshop Timeline

This workshop is 6hrs and 30mins long. When run over the course of 1 day it will take a total of 8hrs with a 1hr lunch break and two 15min breaks in the morning and afternoon.

Introduction (15 min)

Facilitator: Good morning! Today we are going to talk about decision making practices in groups. Making decisions is a difficult process for many people and that practice can become more complicated when we include one or more people in the decision making process. However, in the workplace and our lives making decisions is one of the most important skills that one can have and this single skill will greatly impact our lives as individuals and the lives of the organizations or businesses we work in.

Before we get started, lets do a short activity just to get us together and present as a group.

Icebreaker (13min): Mirroring

Break the group up into two lines facing each other. Choose one line to begin. The people in the first line will do movements with their body and the other person has to mirror them, doing the same movements. This goes on for 3-4min. Then switch. Now the other side moves and their partner follows. After the activity ask people what they thought about the activity. What can we learn from leading and from following?

Decisions in Retroworks (40 min)

Facilitator: How are decisions about how Retroworks functions made?
 What are the benefits of that process?
 What are the obstacles that make decision-making difficult?
 What makes decision-making easier?

Benefits	Obstacles	Tools to make decisions easier

On a piece of paper facilitator has three columns already written, these are “benefits”, “obstacles”, “facilitators or tools”. As participants answer the questions the facilitator writes the answers into the columns.

Facilitator asks participants, “Who can sum up the benefits, obstacles and tools of decision-making?”

Participants should cover the main points mentioned by the group, if it is not mentioned or decision-making is not a group process, then the facilitator should note: the benefits of making decisions in a group are that everyone is included in deciding where and how the business will grow, the obstacles are that people have different opinions, perspectives and experiences which leads to different desires for the organization and finally the tools mentioned here are _____ but throughout this workshop we will be working on developing more tools for making decisions as a group.

Power structures (45 min)

Facilitator: Before we get deeper into decision-making practices, we are going to talk about power structures of businesses and organizations. For the most part there are two types of power structures, one is hierarchy and the other is horizontal.

“Who can tell me what is a hierarchy?” “How are decisions made in a hierarchy?”

Participants should respond: in a hierarchy one person has more power over others, this person usually makes decisions or designates other people to make decisions, this forms a chain of command.

“Who can tell me what is a horizontal power structure?” “How are decisions made in a horizontal power structure?”

Participants should respond: A horizontal power structure implies that no one in the business or organization has more decision-making power than any other. This means that while different tasks might be divided out between members of the group no one has the ability to decide alone what will happen, unless the group decides that that person will be able to make those decisions.

Hierarchy	One person has more power over others, this person usually makes decisions or designates other people to make decisions, this forms a chain of command.
Horizontal Power Structure	<i>No one in the business or organization has more decision-making power than any other; everyone is equal. This means that while different tasks might be divided out between members of the group no one has the ability to decide alone what will happen, unless the group decides that that person will be able to make those decisions. In this structure there are no bosses and there are no employees, everyone is a manager. In a horizontal power structure decisions are made either by voting or by consensus</i>

In this structure there are no bosses and there are no employees, everyone is a manager. In a horizontal power structure decisions are made either by voting or by consensus.

This should be previously written on a piece of paper and placed on a wall.

How does it feel when one person or a few people make all of the decisions for most of the other people involved? How does that impact one's interest in working in a place or being part of an organization or group? When do you feel most motivated to work? When you are working for yourself or when you are working for someone else?

What does it mean to have a horizontal power structure? If everyone in the group has equal power over how decisions are made what might that mean for the future of Retroworks?

Break (15min)

Decision-making- Voting (50 min)

Facilitator: What are some of the most common ways that groups of people make decisions?

Participants should say voting and maybe consensus decision-making

Facilitator: Today we are going to focus on voting and consensus decision-making practices. Who can tell me what is voting? How does it work? What are the different kinds of voting that people use?

Facilitator should summarize what participant says and then say, "In this workshop we are going to talk specifically about majority rule voting where one person each has one vote because this is what is most commonly used in organizations and businesses" Show a piece of large paper with the definition of voting on it:

Voting: A decision-making process where voters are able to choose one option from several. Each person is allowed to vote as many times as the group decides. Voting requires a majority of votes for the decision to be agreed on. Not everyone in the group may agree with the outcome of a vote.

How many people have voted before in their lives? How did that feel?

One kind of voting is where each person has one vote and they are allowed to vote on only one option. This might happen in the case of voting for president. You can only choose one person for president. Another kind of voting is when several options can be chosen and each person has one or more votes. This might happen if for example a business is deciding what colors or flavors its products will be. In this case each person might have more than one vote. Let's try it out.

Activity: Facilitator reads off different topics to vote on and people submit secret votes for each one.

Vote #1: Only people wearing white socks are allowed to eat cookies today

Vote #2: This week, in order to save gas, everyone will walk to work

Vote #3: Men can only speak after women

Facilitator reads the results of the polls.

Facilitator: are there any results that people don't agree with? Why? How would you feel if the decisions made in the voting were imposed on you all of the time? One of the problems with voting as a decision-making process is that decisions are imposed on us. There is a sort of control or oppression in the voting process, the majority decides what will happen but that leaves up to 49% of the voters unhappy with the results. One of the problems that can arise with voting is that some groups of people never have their point of view acknowledged by the group, so the group can become divided because people feel like they will not be accounted for. Many times this can cause large problems within a group. Has anyone ever been in a situation where the workers or group members are divided and anger grows among people because of how decisions are made?

Consensus Decision-making Definitions (1hr)

This afternoon we are going to talk about another kind of decision-making process called consensus. Does anyone know what consensus is or has anyone been a part of it? For the purposes of this workshop we are going to define consensus decision-making as:

Consensus decision-making	The decision-making process in which all participants have equal power relationships and each person must agree with the decision in order for it to be passed. Each person should actively participate in the decision-making process and take responsibility for the function of the group to move forward in harmony, respect and active cooperation. This process recognizes that you are the most qualified person to to decide what will
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	happen in your life and so you should participate in the process of making that happen.
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It may sound difficult, the idea that everyone will agree on a decision, but it can be a rich and fulfilling experience in which all members of the group are taken into consideration. Whether one is a man, woman, young or old, in consensus everyone's point of view is valid and contributes to the improvement and life of the group. The more people that are involved in making the decision, the more just, inclusive and well thought out the decision will be, like the saying goes, two heads are better than one. The other important thing about consensus decision-making is that it relies on a very specific structure which, when everyone knows the steps to take facilitates conversation and decisions. Print out and place Illustration 1 on the wall. Go through those steps with the participants. Are there any questions at this point?

Now we are going to go directly into different beliefs and practices associated with consensus decision-making. The first is conflict.

Conflict

In consensus conflict about ideas is expected and embraced. It is believed that disagreements about what decisions will be taken are natural parts of working in groups. However, when being part of a consensus process it is important to learn how to have productive conflict. What is productive conflict? Productive conflict is the process where disagreements about ideas are expressed but they are not presented with insults or judgment. In your workbooks you have an example of productive conflict and unproductive conflict.

*******Show scenario of productive and unproductive conflict*******

What is happening in the comic? What are the differences between how the participants are speaking to each other? What emotions are displayed in the dialogue?

Because people care about the work they do and how it is done, it is normal to feel strong emotions about issues that happen at work. We all want the business to do well and grow but it is important to remember that the point of having proposals and talking about the decisions to be taken is that we modify decisions to meet the group's needs, not just the needs of individuals. In this way, when a proposal is being considered it is important to ask one's self, do I want this for myself or for the group? We'll come back to conflict when we practice consensus in a bit. Are there any questions at this point?

Roles in consensus decision-making

Each person that participates in the consensus process has a role to perform.

Facilitator: moderates the meeting, keeps a list of the people that will speak in the order that they raise their hands, decides when there is enough agreement in the group to hold a consensus

Note taker: Notes the dates and times of the meeting, the details of the discussions held, the agreements and disagreements, the decisions taken and the points for the agenda of the next meeting. Furthermore, the note taker for one week will be the facilitator the next week, thus ensuring that the facilitator has spent time with the meeting topics.

Time keeper: This person makes sure that the conversations for each meeting point stay within the time allotted.

Materials organizer: This person makes copies of all the material that will be needed at the meeting. They also allot time periods for each part of the meeting and create agendas to be distributed to each person as well as copies of the proposals to be decided.

During this workshop and the week that follows each person will have each of these roles in order to practice and learn.

Proposals

The next part of consensus decision-making is the process of proposals. Each decision to be made is first presented to the group as a proposal, preferably a written proposal. Then a certain amount of time is decided for members of the group to consider the proposal and think about any concerns or support they might have for the proposal, this is usually until the next meeting.

Discussion

Once the time has passed between meetings a discussion is scheduled in the meeting agenda and opened up in a meeting with a specific amount of time for talking about the positive and negative aspects of the proposal. It is important that everyone participate in this discussion because this is the moment when any worries or proposed modifications will be addressed about the proposal. Once this conversation happens either the proposal is brought to consensus or it is taken back by the person who presented the proposal so that it may be modified to meet the needs of the group, then it is presented at the next meeting. Sometimes these modifications are made in the moment if the decision has to be made immediately.

Consensus

When the time comes for making a decision the facilitator will decide that there is enough agreement in the group the facilitator calls a consensus. In this moment the facilitator asks, does anyone abstain from voting? Some members of the group may choose to not participate in the decision because they do not agree with it on a personal level but do not feel like it will damage or hinder the business. If a large number of people abstain from the decision, then a consensus cannot be made and the proposal will

be sent back for revisions or simply dropped. People that choose to abstain from the voted are asked to say the reason for abstaining if they choose to before moving on. If few or no people abstain from the decision, then the facilitator asks if anyone votes “no” to the proposal. If anyone, even just one person votes no to the proposal, the proposal is dropped and cannot be made again in the state that it is in. The proposal must go back to start the entire process over again, this time with modifications. If everyone agrees with the proposal, then consensus is made and the group moves on to the next topic.

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Lunch (1hr)

Facilitator: I hope everyone had a nice break. Before we begin, did anyone have any thoughts or questions about the work we did in the morning?

Trial Meeting (2hrs)

Let's do a trial meeting. Let's all sit around a table together. In this fictional meeting let's pretend that we work at an ice cream factory and we make 25 flavors of ice cream to be distributed throughout the state. The business is growing and some people want to sell ice cream in neighboring states, while other people want to keep business only in Sonora and not grow too fast. Furthermore, some people want to add more flavors of ice cream and some people want to have less. In this meeting a report on the financial state of the business will also be discussed. I have already created an agenda and I am going to give each person a piece of paper that explains your role to play in the meeting and how you feel about the topics at hand. Normally the agenda would come from the notes in the last meeting and would be developed by this week's facilitator who was the note-taker last week.

Agenda (2hrs)

Go Around 20 min

Report on status of the business- Olivia (20min)

Proposal 1- New ice cream flavors- Raul (30 min)

Proposal 2- Increasing ice cream distribution- Alicia (30min)

Evaluation and closing (20min)

Roles

Note-taker-- Susana

Wants the business to be the best it can whether it grows or stays the same. She is worried that conflict about growth is hurting the business

Time keeper-- Leonardo

Likes the business exactly the way it is and doesn't want to change anything. He is worried that if things grow too quickly they won't be able to maintain the quality of the ice cream that they have.

-Raul's brother

Olivia

Thinks that the women in the group know what is right for the business and the men only create problems. She likes proposals made by women and doesn't like the proposals made by men.

-Olivia is married to Pedro

Alicia

Wants to increase ice cream distribution to other states. Sonora isn't big enough for the potential of this business. If they could sell ice cream in other states, they would make more money and employ more people and have other offices in other places.

Jorge

Wants to sell ice cream in as many places as possible. He also wants new ice cream flavors. He likes grow and challenges. He feels like people that don't want to grow are holding the business back.

Lucia

Doesn't want the business to grow too fast but feels like if everyone else wants growth then she will too. She likes it when there isn't too much conflict in the meetings because she is already tired.

Raul

Wants to have more ice cream flavors because he believes that it will reach more customers and increase sales. The problem with this business is that people don't want to change and move forward with the times.

-Leonardo's brother

Diana

Likes any proposal as long as it includes a plan on how to make it work and the training to get there. If there isn't a plan or training she doesn't want the proposal to happen.

Pedro

Wants more ice cream flavors but thinks that if the business expands to other states it will get too big and buying new trucks and trying to distribute ice cream to far away places will be too expensive.

-Married to Olivia

Meeting Materials

Proposal #1: New Ice cream flavors

Our business has had the same 25 ice cream flavors for 10 years. People have different like and dislikes these days. We need new flavors. We should also get rid of the flavors that don't sell very well. For example, the chapulin flavored ice cream only sells 30kgs a year and the spicy butter flavored ice cream only sells 20kgs a year. We could improve our business if we make new flavors like avocado, coconut with chocolate pieces and mole.

Business report

Over the last year the business has grown 20%. We have sold 10,000 kg of ice cream in 10 towns. We have 3 working ice cream delivery trucks and 1 truck that needs repair. After paying for salaries and purchasing equipment the business made 30,000 Pesos of profit. We should have a discussion about what to do with those 30,000 pesos. Some possibilities would be hiring someone else, fixing the broken truck or investing the money in expanding the business.

Proposal #2: Increasing ice cream distribution

Our business has done very well selling ice cream in Sonora over the last 10yrs. However, it is time to grow and start selling ice cream in Chihuahua and Sinaloa. If we grow our business we will make more money to put into hiring new people, improving our equipment and increasing distribution of our unique ice cream flavors. The success that we have had only shows that we will continue to have success.

Facilitator: the participants have the agenda and proposals in their workbook. Hand out one role to each person in the group, ask them not to share what is written on the papers with other people. You will facilitate this meeting. Ask the people that are the note-taker and the time keeper if they feel ok taking notes and keeping time. Make sure the note-taker has something to write on and the time keeper has a watch or time piece. Remind the note-taker and time keeper of what to do in their role. They can look in their workbook to review what are their responsibilities.

Begin the meeting. First on the agenda says "Go Around" explain to the participants that every meeting should start with a "go around" where each person says how they are feeling and what they expect from the meeting. As facilitator you should go last. Ask someone to start the "Go Around" also, because this is a practice meeting ask each person to say their name when they start. Remind the note-taker that they should write down the time, date, and the name of each person in the meeting. Next ask Olivia to read the report on the status of the business. After the reading ask participants to share their thoughts on what she has said. Explain that: in order to speak participants should raise their hands and the facilitator notes each person to speak in the order that they raise their hands then signals to them to speak. No one else should speak when another person is speaking. After the conversation if any one has suggested a proposal the note-taker should write

that down and the proposal would be prepared to be presented for the next meeting. Then ask to read proposal #1. Remind the participants that this is a decision to be made together and so conversation should focus on talking about people's feelings and thoughts about the proposal being made. If the conversation gets to a point where people agree then suggest to hold a consensus. If there is no agreement explain to the participants that the proposal would have to be modified and if this was real life, then the proposal would be presented again with modifications at the next meeting. Do the same for proposal #2. Finally hold the evaluation and closing. Explain to participants that the evaluation is explained in their workbook. The evaluation is a brief summary of how each person felt in the meeting and what they hope for the next meeting and then in closing participants say a little about what they are going to do in the time before the next meeting. The note-taker begins this part of the meeting and reviews the decisions made and the discussions held during the meeting. The note-taker also reminds people of where and when the next meeting will be. This should be decided upon beforehand. Then the person sitting next to the note-taker begins the evaluation for themselves. When everyone has spoken the meeting adjourns.

15 Minute Break

Review of the meeting (20min)

Ask participants to reflect on what they thought of the meeting. What did they like? What were the strengths of the meeting? What were the weaknesses? What would they do differently in their own meetings?

Write these things on a piece of paper.

Other parts of consensus (30min)

Consensus decision-making is a process that takes time to learn and practice. As you have seen today it is something that can be done by everyone. There are some important parts of consensus that we will talk about briefly now and you can read about in your handbook if you want to learn more.

Committees

The first practice is that of forming committees. Committees are small groups of people that have special work to do in the group. These committees have certain responsibilities that pertain to the knowledge and skills that each person has. For example, in a business there are normally committees for financing/accounting, technology, training, exploration and whatever else might be important for running the business. For example, in the finance committee there are people that have been trained in managing finances for a business and/or want to learn about how to manage that part of the business. Some of the responsibilities of the finance committee would be managing the money in the organization, paying people, etc. It is important to define the responsibilities of each

person in the business so that they know what to do and when to do it. By having committees we also recognize that each person's work is equally important and should be equally respected even though the responsibilities are different.

Active Listening

Another important skill in consensus and many other kinds of communication is the process of active listening. Active listening is a practice where each person in the group focuses on what the person speaking is saying and not on responding to what they are saying. This may sound strange or unusual but it helps for us to take the emotions out of decision-making and focuses on the information being communicated. It is important when we actively listen that we focus on our own body language and make sure that we are showing the person speaking that we are completely listening to them and that we are open to what they have to say. What kind of body language shows that we are open to what the person is saying?

When we are facilitators in the meeting, it is important not only to actively listen but to summarize the important points that people have made in the conversation before deciding to move forward. In this way we can avoid talking in circles or making the same points over and over again.

Trust

One of the most important parts of horizontal thinking is the belief and practice that we believe that the other person in the group is trustworthy and their ideas are valuable. We also need to trust that everyone wants the best option for the group not just themselves.

Openness

Speaking openly and explicitly about how we feel and the changes that we want or don't want to happen is an important part of consensus decision-making.

Closing (5min)

Thank you for all of the work you have done here today in this workshop. I appreciate your focus and energy on decision-making practices. I hope that the conversations today and the practice that we had will facilitate consensus decision-making here at Retroworks. If people are interested in this process we can continue to use consensus for the rest of the four days of workshop this week.

5.2. Appendix 2: Cambalache Decision-Making Workshop

CONTENIDO

INTRODUCCIÓN

- Metas del Taller.
- Programa de Trabajo.
- ¿Qué esperamos del Taller?

DINAMICA: Espejando - Presentación de las(os) participantes.

EL PROCESO DE TOMA DE DECISIONES

ESTRUCTURAS DE PODER VERTICALES Y/O HORIZONTALES EN:

La familia, Los espacios de trabajo, En el barrio, En la colonia, En las organizaciones.....

LA TOMA DE DECISIONES POR VOTACIÓN

Práctica de toma de decisiones por votación Ejercicio de votación “Votemos y decidamos por”

EL CONSENSO

Creencias y prácticas diferentes en el proceso del consenso: EL CONFLICTO.

Papeles en el consenso.

El Consenso y el Proceso de las Propuestas.

El consenso y el Proceso de Discusión.

El Consenso y su Proceso de Toma de Decisiones.

Ensayo de reunión

Inicio, Fin, Evaluación y Cierre de ensayo de reunión.

Reflexiones sobre el trabajo del día

Cierre del trabajo del día

HORA	ACTIVIDAD	LÍNEAS DE TRABAJO	TIEMPO	RESPONSABLE/ MATERIALES
10:00 A	INTRODUCCIÓN	En plenaria	15 min.	FACILITADORA
10:15	-Presentación -Metas del Taller -Programa de Trabajo -¿Qué esperamos del Taller?	<p>¡Buenos días! El día de hoy vamos a hablar de la toma de decisiones en grupos. Tomar decisiones es un proceso difícil para mucha gente y esta práctica puede llegar a ser más complicada cuando incluimos una o más personas en el proceso. Sin embargo, en el lugar de trabajo y nuestras vidas lo de tomar decisiones resulta ser una de las capacidades más importantes que uno puede tener. Poder tomar bien las decisiones como grupo y individuos afectará las vidas de las organizaciones y negocios en que trabajamos.</p> <p>Metas del taller:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identificar tipos diferentes de las tomas de decisiones • Diferenciar 		

		<p>y explicar la diferencia entre estructuras jerárquicas verticales y horizontales en las organizaciones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicar los aspectos positivos y negativos de votar como proceso de la toma de decisiones • Explicar los roles diferentes y las practicas del consenso. • Definir que es el consenso 		
HORA	ACTIVIDAD	LÍNEAS DE TRABAJO	TIEMPO	RESPONSABLE/ MATERIALES
10:15 a 10:30	DINAMICA: Espejando	<p>Este taller tomará un total de 8 horas con un descanso para la comida de 1 hora y dos descansos de 15 min, durante la mañana y la tarde.</p> <p>Antes de que empecemos vamos a hacer una breve actividad para juntarnos y estar presentes como</p>	15 min.	Facilitadora

		<p>grupo:</p> <p>Vamos a dividirnos en dos filas mirándonos de frente.</p> <p>Las personas en la primera fila harán unos movimientos con su cuerpo y la otra persona reflejará los movimientos.</p> <p>Ahora cambiaremos de lugar y haremos movimientos para que nuestra (o), compañera (o) nos siga.</p> <p>¿Cómo se sintieron haciendo los movimientos?</p> <p>¿Qué podemos aprender de liderar y seguir?</p>		
HORA	ACTIVIDAD	LÍNEAS DE TRABAJO	TIEMPO	RESPONSABLE/ MATERIALES
10:30 a 11:00	Presentación de las(os) participantes	Cada una(o) de las(os) participantes nos presentaremos ante las(os) demás diciendo:	30 min.	Pegatinas para escribir nuestros datos y ponémosla en nuestro pecho

		<p>Nombre completo</p> <p>De donde viene</p> <p>Su estado civil</p> <p>Sí tiene hijas(os), cuantos....</p> <p>A que se dedica</p>		
<p>11:00 a</p> <p>11:40</p>	<p>Proceso de toma de Decisiones</p>	<p>Facilitadora:</p> <p>Cada una(o) de las(os) participantes responderemos a estas preguntas</p> <p>¿Cómo tomamos decisiones en nuestra familia, espacio de trabajo, colonia, barrio, organización?</p> <p>¿Cuáles son los beneficios del proceso?</p> <p>¿Cuáles son los obstáculos en la toma de decisiones?</p> <p>¿Que facilita las decisiones?</p> <p>Una vez terminado de contestar las</p>	<p>40 min.</p>	<p>Facilitadora:</p> <p>papelógrafo que tiene tres columnas ya escritas: “beneficios”, “obstáculos”, “facilitadores o herramientas”. Mientras que los participantes responden, la</p> <p>Facilitadora lo escribe en las columnas.</p>

		preguntas, preguntaremos ¿Quién quiere resumir los beneficios, obstáculos y herramientas que facilitan el proceso de la toma de decisiones?		
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***Nota:** Las/los participantes deberían tocar los puntos principales dichos por el grupo, si no lo mencionan o si la toma de decisiones no es un proceso del grupo, entonces la facilitadora puede mencionar uno de los beneficios de tomar decisiones en un grupo es que todas y todos están incluidos en decidir por donde y como el negocio crecerá. Los obstáculos son que la gente tiene opiniones, perspectivas y experiencias diferentes, las cuales presentan deseos diferentes para la organización y finalmente las herramientas mencionadas acá son . Durante lo largo del taller estaremos trabajando en desarrollar más herramientas para la toma de decisiones como grupo.*

HOR A	ACTIVIDAD	LÍNEAS DE TRABAJO	TIEMPO	RESPONSABLE/ MATERIALES
11:40 a 12:25	<p>Estructuras de poder verticales y/o horizontales en:</p> <p>La familia</p> <p>Los espacios de trabajo</p> <p>En el barrio</p> <p>En la colonia</p> <p>En las organizaciones</p>	<p>Facilitadora:</p> <p>Antes de que entremos más en el tema de la toma de decisiones, vamos a hablar de las estructuras de poder que se dan en los diferentes espacios de nuestra vida cotidiana.</p> <p>Entre otras, los dos tipos de estructuras de poder más presentes son la vertical y la horizontal.</p> <p>¿Quién quiere explicarnos que es una estructura vertical?</p> <p>¿Cómo toman decisiones en una estructura vertical?</p> <p><i>Las(os) participantes pueden responder: en una vertical una persona tiene más poder sobre otras; tiene una jerarquía que le permite ser la persona que normalmente toma decisiones o designa otras persona para</i></p>	20 min	<p>Papelógrafo en la pared con el concepto de:</p> <p>Estructura de poder vertical - Jerarquía</p> <p>Estructura de poder horizontal</p>

		<p><i>tomar decisiones, así se forma una cadena de comando.</i></p> <p>¿Quién quiere explicarnos que es una estructura horizontal?</p> <p>¿Cómo se toman las decisiones en una estructura horizontal</p> <p><i>Las(os) participantes pueden responder: Un estructura de poder horizontal implica que nadie tiene más poder para tomar decisiones que cualquier otra persona. Esto implica que mientras que las tareas diferentes pueden ser divididas todas (os)del grupo, nadie tiene la capacidad para decidir a solas. En esta estructura no hay patronos ni empleados, todos son iguales. En una estructura de poder horizontal las decisiones se toman por votar o en</i></p>		
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		<i>consenso</i>		
HORA	ACTIVIDAD	LÍNEAS DE TRABAJO	TIEMPO	RESPONSABLE/ MATERIALES
	Retroalimentación	<p>Facilitadora:</p> <p>¿Cómo nos impacta el interés que tiene una(o) en un lugar (familia, lugar de trabajo, colonia, barrio, organización....)?</p> <p>¿Cuándo se siente una (o) más motivado para trabajar, cuando trabajas para ti misma o cuando trabajas para alguien más?</p> <p>¿Qué significa tener una estructura de poder horizontal?</p>	25 min.	
12:25 a 12:40	DESCANSO	<p>Sí todo el grupo tiene el mismo poder sobre cómo las decisiones son tomadas ¿qué puede significar para el futuro de nuestro proyecto de reinventarnos una economía?</p> <p>DESCANSO</p>	15 min.	

<p>12:40 a 14:00</p>	<p>LA TOMA DE DECISIONES POR VOTACIÓN</p>	<p>Facilitadora: Siguiendo con el tema de la toma de decisiones</p> <p>¿Cuáles son las maneras más comunes que conocemos, que utilizamos para tomar decisiones en la familia, espacio de trabajo, barrio, colonia, grupo, organización?</p> <p><i>Participantes dirían que son el votar y el consenso y quizá no participan en el proceso de toma de decisiones, que solo toman decisiones de lo que se les asigna u ordena</i></p>	<p>20 min.</p>	
HOR A	ACTIVIDAD	LÍNEAS DE TRABAJO	TIEMPO	RESPONSABLE/ MATERIALES
	<p>Práctica de toma de decisiones por votación y por consenso</p>	<p>Facilitadora: Ahora vamos a hacer un juego para practicar la toma de decisiones por votación, en donde una persona tiene un voto para ejercer y decidir, pues es lo más común en los grupos/organizaciones</p>	<p>20 min.</p>	<p>Facilitadora:</p> <p>Papelógrafo con la definición de votar</p> <p>Votar: Es un proceso de la toma de decisiones en que las personas que votan pueden escoger una opción de muchas. Cada persona tiene permitido votar tantas veces como decide el</p>

		<p>¿Quién quiere explicar qué es votar?</p> <p>¿Cómo funciona el tomar decisiones a través de votar?</p> <p>¿Cuántas de nosotras hemos votado en nuestra vida?</p> <p>¿En qué situaciones hemos votado y en qué otras situaciones las gentes usan la votación?</p> <p>Ejemplo:</p> <p>Un tipo de votación es cuando cada persona tiene un voto y solo puede escoger una opción de dos. Esto puede pasar en el caso de votar para un presidente por ejemplo. Otro tipo de votación pasa cuando algunas opciones de muchas pueden ser escogidas y cada persona tiene uno o más votos. Esto puede pasar por ejemplo en una cooperativa que está decidiendo cuales colores o sabores</p>	<p>grupo. La votación requiere una mayoría de votos para que la decisión sea aceptada. No todas/todos en el grupo estará de acuerdo con el resultado del voto.</p>
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		serán sus productos. En este caso cada persona quizás votara más que una vez.		
HOR A	ACTIVIDAD	LÍNEAS DE TRABAJO	TIEMPO	RESPONSABLE/ MATERIALES
14:00 A 15:00	Ejercicio de votación “ Votemos y decidamos por ”	Facilitadora: Lee temas diferentes para votar y las (os) participantes votan de manera secreta: Voto # 1: Sólo mujeres con calcetines blancos pueden comer galletas hoy. Voto # 2: Esta semana, para conservar la gasolina, todas y todos caminaremos al trabajo. Voto # 3: Los hombres solo pueden hablar después de las mujeres. Voto # 4: Las mujeres prepararemos la comida para la reunión y los hombres harán el programa lo dirigirán.	50 min.	***FACILITADORA: RETROALIMENTACION Lee los resultados de la votación. ¿Hay resultados de la votación con que gente no están de acuerdo? ¿Por qué? ¿Cómo se sentirían si las decisiones de votaciones siempre serian forzadas? ¿Alguien ha estado en una situación en donde las (os) integrantes de un grupo están divididos entre si y hay enojo entre personas por la manera en que se toma las decisiones?

		<p>Voto # 5: Las mujeres irán a las reuniones en las escuelas de nuestras hijas(os) y pedirán permiso en sus trabajos.</p> <p>Retroalimentación ***</p> <p>COMIDA</p>		
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Uno de los problemas con la votación como un proceso de la toma de decisiones es que las decisiones están impuestas a la gente. A veces es porque uno no está de acuerdo con las preguntas o a veces no le gusta el resultado. Hay un aspecto de control y opresión en el proceso de votar; la mayoría decide que pasará pero esto puede dejar hasta 49% de las personas infelices con los resultados. Uno de los problemas que puede sugerir con el voto es que algunos grupos de personas nunca tiene su punto de vista reconocido en el grupo, entonces el grupo puede llegar a ser dividido porque hay gentes que se sienten que no están incluidas en el grupo. Muchas veces esto puede causar problemas graves en el grupo.

HORA	ACTIVIDAD	LÍNEAS DE TRABAJO	TIEMPO	RESPONSABLE/ MATERIALES
15:00 A 15:20	El consenso	<p>Facilitadora Esta tarde vamos a hablar de otro proceso de tomar las decisiones que se llama el consenso.</p> <p>¿Alguien sabe que es el consenso?</p> <p>Puede parecer difícil, la idea que todas y todos estaremos de acuerdo con una decisión, pero puede ser una experiencia rica y gratificante en la cual todos las (os) integrantes del grupo somos tomados en cuenta. Tanto si una es mujer u hombre, joven o grande. En el consenso el punto de vista de cada quien es válido y contribuye al mejoramiento y vida del grupo. Con más personas involucradas en la toma de una decisión, como dice el dicho, dos cabezas son mejor que una. La otra cosa importante en el consenso es que depende en una estructura bien específica, en la cual, cada quien conocemos los pasos, esto facilita la conversación y la</p>	20 min.	<p>Facilitadora: En este taller vamos a definir el consenso como: El proceso de toma de decisiones en la cual todas/todos las (os) participantes tenemos el mismo poder en las relaciones y cada persona debe estar de acuerdo y participar activamente en este proceso, para tomar la responsabilidad que nos toca cumplir en el funcionamiento del grupo, y así, crecer en la armonía, el respeto y la cooperación activa. Este proceso reconoce que tú eres la persona más calificada para decidir que pasará en tu propia vida y entonces tú tienes el derecho de participar en el proceso de hacerlo.</p>

		<p>toma de decisión.</p> <p><i>Imprime en grande la ilustración #1 y colócala en la pared. Habla de los pasos con los participantes.</i></p> <p>¿Dudas y/o comentarios?</p>		
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HORA	ACTIVIDAD	LÍNEAS DE TRABAJO	TIEMPO	RESPONSABLE/ MATERIALES
	<p>creencias y practicas diferentes en el proceso del consenso:</p> <p>El Conflicto.</p>	<p>Facilitadora: Ahora vamos a platicar de las creencias y prácticas diferentes en el proceso del consenso: Lo primero es El Conflicto...</p> <p>En el consenso el conflicto de ideas es anticipado y bienvenido. Está pensado que los desacuerdos acerca de cuáles decisiones se tomarán son aspectos naturales de trabajar en grupos. Sin embargo, cuando una(o) es parte del proceso del consenso es importante aprender como tener conflictos constructivos.</p> <p>¿Alguien quiere compartir que se imagina que es un</p>		<p>Facilitadora: ¿Qué es el conflicto constructivo?</p> <p>El conflicto constructivo es el proceso en que los desacuerdos de ideas están expresados pero no están presentados con insultos o juicio. En sus manuales tienen un ejemplo del conflicto constructivo y el conflicto no constructivo.</p>

		<p>conflicto no constructivo?</p> <p>¿Alguien quiere compartir que se imagina que es un conflicto constructivo?</p> <p>¿Qué está pasando en el cómic?</p> <p>¿Cuáles son las diferencias entre cómo los participantes están hablando entre ellos?</p> <p>¿Cómo se sienten las gentes en el dialogo?</p>		
HORA	ACTIVIDAD	LÍNEAS DE TRABAJO	TIEMPO	RESPONSABLE/ MATERIALES
		<p>Facilitadora: Porque a la gente les importa su trabajo y como está hecho, es normal sentir emociones fuertes sobre lo que pasa en el trabajo.</p> <p>Todas y todos queremos que las actividades del grupo anden bien y crezcan, pero es importante acordar que el punto en tener propuestas y hablar de las decisiones que se tomarán es que las modificamos para alcanzar las necesidades del grupo, no solo las necesidades</p>		

		<p>de los individuos.</p> <p>De esta manera, cuando una propuesta está en el proceso de consideración es importante preguntarse a una(o) misma(o): ¿quiero ésto para mí o para el grupo?</p> <p>Volveremos al conflicto cuando practiquemos un poco al consenso.</p>		
<p>15:20</p> <p>a</p> <p>15:30</p>	<p>Papeles en el consenso</p> <p>Cada persona que participa en el proceso del consenso le toca un papel:</p> <p>Moderadora.</p> <p>Escritora de ideas</p> <p>Contadora del tiempo</p> <p>Organizadora de materiales</p>	<p>La Moderadora: modera la reunión, mantiene una lista de las personas que hablarán en el orden en que levanten la mano, decide cuando hay bastante acuerdo en el grupo para tomar el consenso.</p> <p>La Escritora de ideas: Escribe la fecha y asistencia, los detalles de las discusiones, los acuerdos y desacuerdos, las decisiones tomadas y los puntos para la próxima reunión.</p> <p>La contadora del tiempo: Asegura que las conversaciones de cada reunión están adentro del tiempo permitido.</p>	10 min	
HORA	ACTIVIDAD	LÍNEAS DE	TIEMPO	RESPONSABLE/

		TRABAJO		MATERIALES
		<p>La Organizadora de materiales: Organiza los materiales que serán necesitadas durante la reunión y los distribuye a todas(os) las(os) participantes</p> <p>Nota: En cada reunión habrá rotación de cada uno de estos papeles, para que todas y todos conozcamos y practiquemos, escritora de ideas para una reunión, será la facilitadora de la próxima reunión, así aseguramos que la facilitadora copnoce bien los temas a tratar.</p>		
<p>15:30</p> <p>A</p> <p>15:40</p>	<p>El Consenso y el Proceso de las Propuestas</p>	<p>Facilitadora: La próxima parte del consenso es el proceso de las propuestas. Cada decisión por ser tomada esta presentada al grupo como propuesta, preferiblemente por escrito. Luego una cantidad de tiempo está designada para que las(os) integrantes del grupo consideren y piensen sobre lo positivo o negativo que podría tener para la propuesta, ésto normalmente se queda para la próxima reunión.</p>	<p>10 min.</p>	
	<p>El consenso y</p>	<p>Luego de conocer y reflexionar sobre la</p>		

	el Proceso de Discusión	<p>propuesta, se abre el proceso de discusión esta calendarizando un tiempo designado para platicar sobre los aspectos positivos y negativos de la propuesta. Es importante que todas y todos participemos en la discusión, porque este es el momento para que expresemos cualquier preocupación o modificación a la propuesta.</p>		
HORA	ACTIVIDAD	LÍNEAS DE TRABAJO	TIEMPO	RESPONSABLE/ MATERIALES
	El Consenso y su Proceso de Toma de Decisiones	<p>A la vez que pasa esta conversación, la propuesta entra en el proceso de consenso. Pros y contras, modificaciones, que pueden tardar muchas reuniones para tomar la decisión de aceptarla o rechazarla definitivamente, aunque dependerá de la urgencia por decidir, el tiempo que requiera, puede ser en una sola reunión.</p> <p>Algunas(os) integrantes del grupo podrían elegir</p>		

	<p>Por Fin el Consenso</p>	<p>no participar en la decisión porque no están de acuerdo con la propuesta en un nivel personal pero no sienten que dañara o obstaculizar el funcionamiento del grupo.</p> <p>Es necesario saber las razones de estas abstenciones, y si hay un gran número de personas que se abstengan de la decisión, no es posible tener un consenso y la propuesta regresará para ser modificada o anulada</p> <p>Si pocas personas o nadie niega ser parte de la decisión, entonces la moderadora pregunta que si hay un voto de 'no' a la propuesta. Si alguien, aunque sea solo una persona vota no a la propuesta, la propuesta se deja al lado y no puede ser discutida otra vez en el estado en que esta. La propuesta tiene que empezar de nuevo todo el proceso de discusión y decisión, esta vez con modificaciones severas.</p> <p>Si hay un acuerdo entre todo el grupo entonces tenemos consenso La</p>		
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		<p>moderadora participará al grupo que se tiene el acuerdo necesario para decir que hay consenso. Y el grupo pasa al siguiente tema.</p>		
HORA	ACTIVIDAD	LÍNEAS DE TRABAJO	TIEMPO	RESPONSABLE/ MATERIALES
<p>15:40</p> <p>A</p> <p>15:50</p>	<p>Ensayo de reunión</p>	<p>Facilitadora:</p> <p>Vamos a hacer una reunión de ensayo. Primero, vamos a sentarnos alrededor de una mesa. En esta reunión de ficción vamos a imaginar que trabajamos en una un grupo que hace helados y hacemos 25 sabores de helados que están distribuidos en los barrios y colonias de San Cristóbal. Nos está yendo muy bien, y hay personas que quieren vender helados en Comitán y Tuxtla, mientras que otras personas quieren mantenerse solamente en San Cristóbal y no quieren que crecer demasiado rápido. Además, algunas personas quieren añadir más sabores de helados</p>	<p>5 min.</p>	

		y algunas personas quieren menos. En esta reunión también habrá un reporte de cómo vamos.		
		<p>Roles o papeles que interpretaremos (como los trabajamos en tu casa y que tal estos más?)</p> <p>Amanda- Tú eres muy amiga de Jorge y tienes un interés sentimental por él, así que lo único que dirás es que estás de acuerdo con su propuesta y que la apoyas.</p> <p>Arturo- A ti no te interesa la decisión que se tome porque no estás seguro de continuar en el grupo, te mostrarás distraído, chateando en tu celular y haciendo comentarios que no tienen que ver con la reunión.</p> <p>Zenaida – Tú crees que lo mejor sería seguir solo en San Cristóbal pero diversificando el producto, podrían ser helados de sabores e introducir la venta de raspados.</p>	5 min.	

HORA	ACTIVIDAD	LÍNEAS DE TRABAJO	TIEMPO	RESPONSABLE/ MATERIALES
	<p>Propuestas:</p> <p>Propuesta No. 1 y Propuesta No. 2</p> <p>(Como las modificamos en tu casa)</p>	<p>Facilitadora: Pide a Raúl que lea la primera propuesta, Recuerda a las(os) participantes que ésta es una decisión para ser tomada como grupo y que sus participaciones deben enfocarse en hablar de cómo se sienten y que piensan de las propuestas: y abre la ronda de participación.</p> <p>Si la conversación llega a un punto en que las(os) participantes del grupo están de acuerdo, entonces puedes sugerir tomar un consenso. Si no hay acuerdo explica que las(os) participantes tendrían que modificar la propuesta. Si fuera en la vida real, la propuesta se estaría presentando en la próxima reunión con los cambios.</p> <p>Repite el proceso para la Propuesta No. 2</p>	40 min.	
	<p>Fin de la reunión</p> <p>Evaluación y Cierre</p>	<p>Facilitadora: La evaluación es un resumen breve de cada persona hablando de la experiencia vivida en la reunión y que esperan para la próxima.</p> <p>También hablan de las</p>	30 min.	

		<p>tareas que tienen para la próxima reunión.</p> <p>Una vez que ya han dicho su palabra todas y todos La escritora de ideas resume las decisiones y acuerdos tomados en la reunión, incluyendo las tareas, la fecha, lugar y hora de la próxima reunión y da por terminada la reunión</p>		
	Descanso	DESCANSO	15 min.	
	Reflexiones sobre el trabajo del día	<p>Facilitadora: Pide a las (os) participantes sus reflexiones sobre el trabajo del día.</p> <p>¿Qué cosas les parecieron importantes que les hayan sido aprendizajes?</p> <p>¿Qué partes del trabajo del día les parecieron no importantes, incompletas, aburridas, etc.</p> <p>¿Qué les gustó? ¿Qué no les gustó?</p> <p>¿Qué harían diferente para una nueva reunión?</p>	20 min	Papelógrafo
	Cierre de el trabajo del día	<p>Facilitadora: Asumir el compromiso de Tomar Decisiones en cualquier circunstancia de nuestras vidas es de vital importancia. Atrevernó como mujeres a exigir que</p>	15 min.	

		<p>nuestras palabras sean tomadas en cuenta es nuestro reto. La toma de decisiones a través del consenso es un proceso que requiere tiempo y práctica para aprender.</p> <p>Como lo hemos visto el día de hoy requiere de estar con el pensamiento y el corazón abiertos, para escuchar con paciencia y respeto lo que cada una(o) tenemos que decir. Una de las cosas más importantes en pensar de una manera horizontal, es que todas y todos somos iguales, es la creencia y practica de confiar mutuamente entre nosotras(os) como grupo, confiar en que cada quien queremos lo mejor para el grupo y no sólo lo mejor para cada quien de manera individual.</p>		
HORA	ACTIVIDAD	LÍNEAS DE TRABAJO	TIEMPO	RESPONSABLE/ MATERIALES
	Cierre (continúa)	Recordar que cuando hablamos de una manera abierta y explícita acerca de como sentimos y los cambios que queremos o no queremos ayudamos al proceso de consenso.		

		<p>Tener siempre presente que cada una(o) tenemos en sí el valor de nuestra palabra, que todas y todos tenemos valores, conocimientos, capacidades, habilidades que contribuyen a llevar a cabo los proyectos que soñamos y queremos construir en comunidad.</p> <p>Demósnos las gracias por todo el trabajo que hemos hecho en el día de hoy. Valoremos mucho nuestro tiempo y energía que hemos puesto en la práctica de la toma de decisiones y vayamos con la alegría de haber compartido entre nosotras y nosotros.</p> <p>Hasta la próxima.</p>		

5.3 Appendix 3: Collective Questions For Creating El Cambalache

**¿Has soñado con participar en
un proyecto de economía
alternativa?**

;; Nosotras También;;

¡Ven a conocer El Cambalache

El Cambalache

Es un espacio de mujeres donde hacemos un trueque de valores, conocimientos, habilidades, saberes y mucho más.... Encaminados a iniciar una red de intercambios solidarios. Queremos bajar la dependencia del dinero y fomentar nuevas comunidades económicas distintas de las prácticas capitalistas.

IDEAS DE PARTICIPACIÓN EN EL CAMBALACHE

-La creencia de que cada una/uno de nosotras/os como persona puede contribuir y que su contribución es esencial al funcionamiento del grupo y el proceso de crecimiento en total.

-La creencia de que todas y todos somos iguales y que cada idea es importante, estará presente en nuestro trabajo cotidiano.

-La creencia que estamos por la construcción de un espacio de confianza, donde todas/os podremos decir lo que sentimos y pensamos, y que nosotras/os cuidaremos de esta confianza.

-El compromiso de echarle todas las ganas para crear un ambiente de respeto, solidaridad y armonía.

¿Cuáles valores te gustaría añadir?

¿Cómo te imaginas una economía de Cambalache

¿Con pocas personas?, ¿Con muchas personas?, ¿Cómo un grupo?, ¿Cómo una Red?,

¿Con quiénes te gustaría compartir esta aventura de participar en una economía solidaria?

En caso de que te gustara compartir esta aventura con hombres ¿con quiénes te gustaría compartirla? Niños, adolescentes, adultos, con todos.

Según tú respuesta anterior ¿Cómo quieres que sea este compartir?

¿Cómo te has sentido en el tiempo que has venido participando de esta iniciativa de economía solidaria?

Qué te hace o te ha hecho falta comprender?

¿Cómo te imaginas participando?, ¿Qué quieres aportar?

¿Alguna otra pregunta o preguntas para reflexión que quieras proponer?
