

Social enterprise: is it possible to decolonise this concept?

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Introduction

It seems that Teasdale (2011) was right when saying that social enterprise has been a fluid concept notably disputed by different actors over time - namely scholars, policymakers, and organisations. In fact, it was him who, referring to the diversified organisational types named as social enterprise in England, pointed out the possibility for us to be in the face of a mythical beast. What he seems to claim is that the idea of gathering mismatching narratives under the same name (co-operatives, community enterprises, social business and voluntary organisations), wagering on pretty different solutions to address social problems, is likely to make us believe in a fictional panacea. Having in mind that economic initiatives are used to following the model supported by funding, that State plays a pivotal role in establishing the trends, and that organisations simultaneously try to shape public policies, Teasdale (2011) recalls that discourses in social enterprises are surrounded by political meanings and disputes.

Despite of all the efforts over the last decades to find a common ground between different perspectives and models (Defourny and Nyssens, 2006, 2008; Galera and Borzaga, 2009; Hulgard, 2014; Laville and Nyssens, 2001; Laville, Lemaître and Nyssens, 2006) and so reduce the vagueness of this concept, social enterprises could be said to remain under a dynamic process of change and contest. It is also noteworthy that even when social enterprises come closer to effective democratic control and collective ownership - that is, the most emancipatory format may be assumed -, they seem not be consistent enough to handle the political embeddedness of popular everyday economies. If it is undeniable that there is a connection between third sector organisations and public policies in this regard (Laville, Lemaître and Nyssens, 2006), it is also true that there is a vast range of worldwide hidden women-led popular initiatives which have re-embedded the economy and broaden the scope of 'the political'. This short, theoretical introduction aims to briefly discuss some epistemological and political limits of the all-encompassing concept of social enterprise, proposing a more challenging framework capable of shedding light on silenced community-based forms to face social inequalities. Some questions could be brought to the scene: to what extent may the idea of economic initiatives governed by the people who created them (Defourny, 2001 apud Defourny and Nyssens, 2006) be applied to collectivities themselves? To what extent are they allowed to deviate from the outside-modelled development guidelines?

Drawing on postcolonial theories in the field of economics and in the concept of 'coloniality of power' proposed by the peruvian sociologist Quijano (1992) - according to which populations worldwide have been classified in racial and ethnic terms -, we question if the current models of social enterprise, in the context of an heterogeneous Europe, can really constitute an antidote to

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social inequalities in the broadest sense. For the ongoing processes of racialisation of class, gender, and national identities, social inequalities are not to be taken as merely economic inequality. In other words: economic asymmetries are triggered and deepened exactly because of different intertwining forms of inequality. In this sense, this introduction sets out to answer two main questions: 1) Is it possible for social enterprise as a concept, regardless its concern with social goals, to be immersed into a process of colonisation of imagery³? 2) In case of a positive answer, can we decolonise social enterprises?

Before proceeding further, it is worth highlighting that this short introduction is grounded on the challenges and limits identified in the social and solidarity initiatives in the Global South. By stressing some of them, we aim to discuss to what extent these concerns help us understand the need for broadening the current scope of social enterprises.

1. What may social enterprises have to do with economic coloniality? Economic Democracy and Epistemologies of the South

Economic coloniality⁴ (Lucas dos Santos, 2017) can be understood as a naturalised pattern of power which particularly affects the social imagery and the material life of subaltern⁵ groups - whether they be in the South or in the South of the North -, making them believe in a supposedly universal, evolutionary parameter of development. According to this measure, used to compare the performance of individuals, social groups, economies or translocal communities, some groups should be viewed as progressive and others as backward. As demonstrated by Zein-Elabdin and Charusheela (2004: 2) in the field of Economics, this 'ruler' has been built from a particular narrative of development and used to justify the idea of an "ontological precedence" of Western societies. The most immediate consequence, in symbolic and economic terms, is that other perspectives of living, organising material life and placing value have been viewed and treated as irrelevant, not to say utopian or meaningless, especially when poverty is the problem being raised.

Since some criteria to evaluate economic inequality are universalised instead of being framed within a situated intersectional analysis (Yuval-Davis, 2011), economic coloniality may become a ghostly presence capable of undermining, in different ways, the purpose of some promising economic initiatives focused on poverty and unemployment - social enterprises amongst them. In order to explain how this approximation has occurred and in what way it is possible to deviate from it, we attempt to demonstrate, through the concept of economic democracy under the Epistemologies of the South framework (Santos, 2014), what is at stake when some buzzwords gain prominence and replicability on the economic and political stage. In this regard, we argue that five absences⁶ in the running of social enterprises and other economic initiatives can point out the lack of economy democracy and, in doing so, evince a (neo)colonial perspective.

An excessive concern about technical answers and performance

³ Colonisation of the imagery is a concept discussed by Quijano (1992) which refers to the way through which the modern, western thought has continuously shaped cultural perspectives, social roles, aesthetic judgement and sociabilities, even after the end of colonialism. This colonial imagery affects not solely the countries which colonised other Nations in the past - to the extent they believe in the universality of their values -, but also the countries and populations previously colonised. Quijano was particularly concerned about the way this process has captured the imagination of non-western peoples. With regard to this concept, see Quijano (1992a).

⁴ In the sense proposed by Lucas dos Santos (2017), economic coloniality draws on both decolonial and postcolonial references. However, despite the relevance of the perspective brought by Quijano, Mignolo and Lugones, the very concept of economic coloniality, in the sense claimed here, is more firmly grounded on the postcolonial thought applied to Economics. The discussion proposed by Zein-Elabdin and Charusheela on the narrative of development is to be particularly emphasised. As demonstrated by them (2004: 2), "Economics - in all its different paradigms and philosophical traditions - has played a central role in organising the discourses of poverty and riches (...), and hence the frame for public policy that has shaped the lives of millions of communities around the subaltern postcolonial world (...)". For us, it worth mentioning that this perspective makes sense not solely to refer to the previously colonised countries but also to the subaltern groups within the European Union.

⁵ Subaltern, here, must be read in the sense proposed by the Subaltern Studies. Even being an irregular narrative, the resistance could not be ignored and had an undeniable political sense.

⁶ The idea of absence applied here to economic democracy is inspired by the concept of sociology of absences (Santos, 2006). This latter refers to the way through which some non-western perspectives of producing, living and putting meanings to the things are assumed as irrelevant. We propose to think of economic democracy in a different sense, by stressing what has been undervalued when this subject is tabled.

In the light of a renewed “architecture of democracy”, as proposed by Laville (2018), it can be said that economic democracy cannot be reached in the absence of some relevant conditions. For example, there is no economic democracy without the proper recognition of different rationalities and rhythms concerning the communities’ material life, even if they are not in agreement with the widespread perspective of performance and innovation. Despite innovation may really boost tailored solutions for social problems all over the place, it is not uncommon for these solutions to result from a singular or a very small group of entrepreneurial minds from inside or outside the community. What we have seen is the same myth of the individual creative genius that has fed the field of (Western) Art, “the golden-nugget theory of genius” (Nochlin, 1988: 8). For the best match between social impact and economic feasibility, solutions designed by the very collectivities, being likely to take more time, have been despised and replaced by quicker technical answers to achieve previously defined goals. This excessive concern about performance should be scrutinised more carefully since it brings to the scene universalised criteria towards what is a good result to be achieved.

The underrepresentation of subaltern people in decision processes

A second absence to be considered has to do with the real conditions of participation in decision processes. A broadened perspective towards participation should thus be fostered if we are really interested in economic democracy, bearing in mind that marginalised groups have different conditions of negotiating meanings and communicating points of view and disagreement. A very relevant contribution with regard to this issue was given by Spivak (1988) and Rajan (1993), who both questioned the very conditions for subaltern people, particularly subaltern women, to voice their views without being interpreted or edited. This common mistake can be made by activists and scholars in the rush to safeguard subaltern groups’ points of view. Nonetheless, it certainly applies to different perspectives of social enterprises, particularly social businesses, profit-oriented businesses connected with welfare and voluntary organisations with social goals, to name but a few. This underrepresentation cannot be solved through public inquiry but instead through more participative processes, which take time and go against, for the most part, the funders’ timings.

A vision of a pacified civil society too centered on organisation

It leads us to the third absence. Boosting economic democracy requires being attentive to the diversified ways subaltern groups in the South (or in the South of the North) can communicate a message, not properly sent by words. There are different ways of participating, but we have been focused on the voicing of views, ignoring that a history of muzzling can affect the symbolic conditions of expression. Silence, for instance, can be a very effective way of communicating scepticism and disagreement regarding public policies or local development projects. This silence, in turn, can just be properly understood in a community if there is time for confidence as well as a real desire to understand the context rather than targeting outside-modelled goals. Due to funding pressures and sponsors’ guidelines, social enterprises have been lacking this time for thought, permanent consultation (instead of technical diagnosis) and collective participation. Of course, this situation varies according to the context but it cannot be ignored.

Despite the above-mentioned problems, social enterprises, at least in an European framework, are expected to “deepen the political dimension beyond participative governance”, being given more attention to the specific contexts in which they appear (Coraggio et al., 2015: 235). Besides, “an ideal-type of social enterprise from a solidarity economy perspective” (Coraggio et al., 2015: 235) has taken shape, representing a promising reinforcement in terms of ‘political embeddedness’. This concept refers, broadly speaking, to the way social enterprises can influence public policies and reconnect the political and the economic. Grounded on a Polanyian perspective, it helps us understand the role played by institutions “in the constitution of a democratic framework for economic activity” (Laville, Lemaître and Nyssens, 2006: 278). Hence, they are not pawns held hostage by the invisible hand of the market. The idea of political embeddedness evinces the relationship between economy and democracy (Laville, Lemaître and Nyssens, 2006) and demonstrates that institutions contradict all the time the common belief of a self-regulated market. Besides, the co-existence of different institutions, playing specific roles relative to economic principles, emphasises the plural aspect of the economy. Briefly stated, market is not alone in the

shaping of the economy and different institutions have continuously re-embedded the economy in the social and political orders, against the myth of market self-regulation.

Notwithstanding the relevance of this reflection - that of political embeddedness fostered by Social Economy institutions -, we argue that the sense of a plural economy, as proposed by Laville (2013), has scope to be still enlarged through new frameworks brought by some community economies from the (heterogeneous) South. These challenging economic logics can stimulate a broadened epistemological debate concerning two issues: the visibility of other principles in comparison with economic exchanges (reciprocity, redistribution and householding), and the connection between autonomy and political embeddedness. In the latter, the multiple ways in which this political can be thought in the South amplify what we have considered political embeddedness so far in western contexts. An example of the first issue is the redistribution of resources made by indigenous women in their communities instead of that promoted by the State. It is a kind of community mechanism of regulation, normally despised for belonging to the private dimension. An example of the second issue is the case of exchange fairs in Brazil, usually organised by peripheral women with scant material resources. By constituting a collective stock in a situation of individual scarcity, peripheries' exchange fairs promote a kind of indirect redistribution of the resources according to the members' needs (by means of a social currency). These two examples of community economies evince the possibility of a hybridisation between the principles of householding and redistribution, calling the attention to the role played by women in re-embedding the economy, even in informal contexts. But these forms of embeddedness, be in the social fabric or in political policies (case of the State supporting Solidarity Economy in Brazil and other countries of Latin America), are usually silenced if there is no organisation behind them. What we aim to emphasise here is the following: 1) approaches focused on organisations are not likely to capture these kinds of small-scaled practices led by informal groups of women; 2) Popular solidarity economy and other forms of community economies make more visible other principles of economic integration such as reciprocity, redistribution and householding, as well as the way they are mutually reinforcing.

In this sense, the current limits of 'the political' in our debates on Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) should be tabled. Social enterprises, despite the differences between the anglo-american and the European versions, still need to amplify their capacity of political embeddedness, by going beyond the capacity for Social Economy and Third Sector institutions to reduce the impact of the market and influence the State. Given that a "layered civil society" (Santos, 2003: 24-25) has been consolidated not solely in the South but also in the invisible South of the Global North, it can be said that civil society in Western SSE literature has been overestimated as an all-encompassing concept. There are voices being silenced because of their requests. It is time to question minorities' presence in the public sphere as well as their conditions of symbolic production, that is, the condition of negotiating meanings in the public space. To what extent, have subaltern people in the South or in the South of the North been allowed to effectively express themselves? In the footsteps of Santos (2012), who has pointed out the flimsiness of the Habermasian modern public sphere concept to handle the "incivil civil society" (Santos, 2003), constituted by permanently marginalised groups, we argue that both citizens' autonomy and the appreciation of subaltern narratives are keywords to really face inequalities.

A lack of attention to gender issues

The fourth absence which may compromise the encounter between a wider sense of economy and a "high-intensity democracy" (Santos, 2005: 337) is the gender issue. Economic democracy is directly connected with overcoming gender asymmetries and considering women's contribution to economic integration principles. Because of the market dominance in our economic imagery, the role that subaltern women have played in terms of reciprocity, redistribution and householding remains residual in our debates, whether in Economics, in Feminist Economics or even in Social Economy. In Solidarity Economy, the situation may be a little different, but it is far from achieving the expected level. Despite being women the majority of workers on popular and solidarity economy in the South, theoretical debates on this theme are not informed by a feminist perspective, which could provide a set of contributions: from different readings of what is economy to the recognition of the domestic domain in daily provisioning (Hillenkamp, 2013; Lucas dos Santos, 2018), from the assumption of caretaking as economy logics brought by women to popular markets and solidarity economy initiatives.

A deficit of problematisation for political and economic dimensions

It leads us to the last absence to be considered. Economic democracy does not exist in the absence of autonomy and power of choice. Autonomy, here, should not be confused with the very idea of economic autonomy, which is undoubtedly relevant but not always achieved through social and solidarity economy initiatives. Autonomy, we mean, has to do with the recovery of voicing and the outweigh of the public invisibility to what subaltern groups have been subjected to. Public invisibility is a kind of suffering with political content, characterised by social humiliation⁷ and political debasement (Gonçalves Filho, 2004). Autonomy for these subaltern groups means not solely the capacity of outlining solutions of their own but also the capacity of building a safety network to count on in the face of the absence of a Welfare State and also sometimes a “welfare society” (Santos, 1995).

It is the connection between community economies and autonomy which turn Solidarity Economy or “solidarity-type social enterprises”, in the sense proposed by a group of authors (Coraggio et al., 2015), into a political space. In this sense, we argue that this political dimension could be better understood if we bring to the scene the concept of “subaltern arenas”, proposed by Fraser. Fraser (1990) has used the expression “subaltern counterpublics” to debate the need of recognising insurgent social groups as parallel discursive arenas. Excluded from the so-called bourgeois public sphere, these marginalised groups bring new interpretations on social inequality and solutions for solving it. The fact which is worth recalling is that these informal and autonomous arenas are not only alternative spaces of expression, marked by the emergence of other aesthetics and forms of consumption and circulation of cultural goods. They indeed constitute forms of political acting and transformation of their own realities.

But to a wider sense of ‘the political’, a broader concept of economy is also needed. Gibson-Graham (2002) have argued, with respect to this, that other forms of producing, exchanging and distributing values should be taken into consideration instead of focusing on the triad wage labour-market-capitalist production. What Gibson-Graham (2009) propose is, indeed, an ontological reframing of the economy in order to produce different realities and economic imageries. Solidarity-type social enterprises, while valuing and stimulating people’s autonomy, could certainly be one of these challenging approaches. However, notwithstanding its potential, it is wise to consider what follows: the more Social and Solidarity Economy move closer to criteria valued by market and dominant social imagery, such as performance and efficiency, the more they step aside from different logics of organising material life, in which different criteria of judgement, temporalities, and ways of fostering the principles of economic integration do exist.

In order for social enterprises not to assume a neocolonial perspective in this day and age, they should avoid mimicking business timings and models of governance and performance and consider that different narratives of social emancipation and good living do effectively exist all over the world and even in an heterogeneous Europe (Santos, 2006). At the centre of this debate is the very concept of colonial, which can be understood, here, in two different ways: 1) in the sense that economic science and language have colonised other fields of knowledge, becoming, to a certain extent, the “universal grammar of social science” (Hirshleifer, 1985 apud Zein-Elabdin and Charusheela, 2004: 2); 2) in the sense that our attempts to rethink economy and Economics, as demonstrated by Gibson-Graham, still “tend to be rooted, empirically and theoretically, in Western-centred conceptions of what constitutes ‘diverse’ or ‘alternative’ economic practices” (Pollard, McEwan and Hughes, 2011:3). Western economic imaginary has thus defined what is plausible and, conversely, nonsensical. Consequently, we consider timely to question: can we decolonise the concept of social enterprise? If so, how can it be done? Is the concept of solidarity-type social enterprise, closer to the South, enough to make the change?

2. Condition for decolonising social enterprises

⁷ According to Gonçalves Filho (2004), humiliated subjects are the ones who see themselves as unable to offer something to someone.

It is usually said that colonialism is perpetuated “by justifying (...) the idea that is right and proper to rule over other peoples, and by getting colonised people to accept their lower ranking in the colonial order of things - a process we can call ‘colonising the mind’” (McLeod, 2010). Despite the fact that political colonialism is taken as over, it seems not to be abandoned. Indirect forms of ruling the previously colonised economies remain in operation, contributing for their peoples to believe they have not done enough to overcome their situation of economic inequality. Prescriptions have been issued. Managerial strategies and solutions have been replicated in different contexts to face poverty and other problems concerned with structural inequalities. However, the reasons behind these structural inequalities remain out of debate.

In general terms, decolonising implies seeing oneself as a specific and contextualised reality in a wider frame. Therefore, decolonising a concept such as social enterprise means to recognise the particularity of the western discourse on issues such as development, wealth, and poverty, as already demonstrated by Zein-Elabdin and Charusheela (2004). Development discourse, despite its easily understandable language, disseminated by organisations and even multilateral agencies, has not been able to size or explain the diversity of logics of producing or being productive all over the world. Or, even, to comprehend and represent the diverse ways of thinking of well being and guaranteeing social justice. With regard to this, it is worth recalling three very different examples from which it is possible to learn: the Andean peasant economic system grounded on complementarities in order for indigenous people to deal with inhospitable environments (Murra, 1984; Kessel, 1993), the Swadeshi doctrine in India with simultaneous and intertwined economic, political and social meanings, and the Confucian model of productivity and justice (Pollard, McEwan and Hughes, 2011) - all of them contemporary and far from Western Economics.

These non-Western experiences may help us foster different economic imageries. Besides, they can keep our eyes open to the diversity which is likely to be found in Europe, making us aware that different Europes co-exist within the continent (Bhambra, 2009; Santos and Meneses, 2010). Despite this South in the North is denied on behalf of an identity project, the reality of European communities requires, more and more, a situated analysis. In a wider frame, this South could be represented by what Elias and Scotson (1994) called ‘the outsiders’, i.e. those who are stigmatised for not fitting into the parameters launched by the ones who are ‘the established’ in a community. However, it is worth saying that these ‘outsiders’ are not, as one might think, a negligible amount of people. They belong to different groups: Afro-European people, immigrants, indigenous peoples, Romani and other nomadic groups, muslim population, transgender and peripheral peoples, to name just a few. It is time for the West to recognise that an eurocentric perspective of development is not solely defied by the epistemological diversity of the world (Santos, 2012) but also by the very heterogeneity within the so-called West. This internal diversity in social and economic terms challenges the solutions usually adopted to debate and face environmental issues and social inequalities.

Decolonising economic initiatives such as social enterprises implies a host of measures. There are some of them: 1) reviewing the meaning of ‘the economic’ and the importance given to the development narrative; 2) stretching the concept of democratic innovation, by recognising community knowledges and different forms of participation to outlining tailored solutions; 3) stimulating people’s symbolic autonomy; 4) recognising that social inequalities cannot be solved without an interseccional analysis of the context in which marginalised groups have lived and 5) bearing in mind the way through which social groups, bodies and economies have been racialised. As shown by Quijano (2010: 73, free translation) - and it cannot be forgotten - we have been in the face “of a ethnic/racial classification of the world population”. Despite of other factors to explain inequality, it is undeniable how the racialisation of class, gender and immigration processes has produced economic (in)justice. The manner in which class, gender and migration flows are daily racialised could be viciously muffled and disguised by the idea of economic inclusion. Economic inclusion discourse is not enough - and neither has the theory on which it is grounded, despite all the benefits practices of inclusion may bring about. It does not at all mean that economic justice is a goal to be forgotten but, instead, that it cannot be uncoupled from the idea of cognitive justice (Santos, 2006), which represents the possibility for minority groups to have their ideas and knowledges properly recognised as contemporary and legitimate. In contrast, it has been easier for institutions, national states and multilateral agencies to focus on the discourse of economic exclusion and underdevelopment rather than on the recognition of remaining patterns of colonialism, patriarchal domination and racism.

If social enterprises aim to foster social and environmental justice, they need to recognise the burden that racialised people, especially women, have to bear in their communities. The proposal of environmental sustainability projects, for instance, cannot be uncoupled from the recognition of an institutional and environmental racism, in which marginalised groups are more likely to deal with the absence of the State and the burden of environmental liability. Social Economy organisations and Solidarity Economy initiatives should thus consider the way gender, race and class have been intertwined in the shaping of inequalities.

This twisting of asymmetries should be identified and tackled not only in mainstream economics but also in social enterprises, resulting from the absence of intersectional perspectives to face inequalities. Decolonising either the usual discourses on Economics or the narratives on alternative economies requires paying attention to ‘the non-economic’ behind the economic and managerial jargon, which is capable of evincing hidden bias. This non-economic may assume different forms: the historical trajectory of a concept, the usual absent perspectives when it is addressed, the prevailing key ideas in the main theoretical references or, still, how they endorse or refuse some approaches.

To end up, decolonising social enterprises, implies, more than ever, being open to creative forms of redistributing, reciprocating, and questioning market logics. Gibson-Graham (2002: 17) have already given some clues, such as being attentive to the different forms of calculating commensurability, “performing and remunerating labour”, as well as “producing, appropriating and distributing surplus labour”. The question is: to what extent have social enterprise been concerned about this kind of exercise? The fact is, regardless Gibson-Graham’s advise, we continue tied to the emergency of replicability and business model keywords. Solidarity-type social enterprises are now expected to overcome this deadlock. It is advisable however that some refreshing theoretical frameworks, such as postcolonial/decolonial theories, epistemologies of the South and feminist economics, influence and shape this newcomer concept.

Conclusion

Despite the relevant European contributions to deepen the concept of social enterprise, especially with regard to issues such as participation criteria, decision making processes and limits for profit distribution (Coraggio et al., 2015), some limitations on social enterprises remain in need of a deeper analysis. It is worth questioning, for instance, which criteria of participation have been considered. As we discussed in this text, conditions for participation are far from being a minor question and we cannot assume that voting or giving an opinion will be enough to guarantee effective participation. Except for some worker cooperatives, there seems to persist an imbalance of forces between the ones who plan and run a social enterprise and the beneficiaries of the previously defined social goals. With regard to this, it is necessary to emphasize: autonomy and real conditions for subaltern people to express themselves in social and solidarity economic initiatives are indispensable.

Thus, it is important to also question to what extent decision making processes are really open to all the people involved in a social enterprise. Not being grounded on the share capital does not turn the decision process at social enterprises into a real shared management. Likewise, it is necessary to debate to what extent the myth of individual entrepreneurs was really superseded. The imagery on which many pieces of research continue to be grounded seems not to have changed.

Even before the possibility for a solidarity-type social enterprise model to gain prominence, we argue that its political power can be overshadowed by a short-sightedness towards three aspects in the South and/or in the South of the North: 1) the need for broadening the scope of what is to be taken as the economic (there is still resistance to boost wider economic imageries, such as the ones proposed by feminists such as Gibson-Graham); 2) the comprehension of how the racialisation of class and gender in a heterogeneous South has been veiled on behalf of a homogeneous discourse on poverty and underdevelopment; 3) the need for questioning how neocolonial perspectives may be inserted into standardised economic forms of achieving social goals.

This text intended thus to demonstrate that even a model of solidarity-type social enterprise, compromised with the diversity of contexts coming from the South, needs to be enriched by different theoretical contributions to be able to deal with the colonality of power which has supported hierarchies and unequal economic flows. These challenging perspectives are supposed to come from diverse approaches: feminist approaches on economy and on the field of Economics, postcolonial/decolonial thought, fresh frameworks for political theories on public sphere and contributions brought by Subaltern Studies, which may help us think of the resilience of ‘the political’ itself. Feminist thought, for example, can make us aware of how women remain the protagonists in Solidarity Economy in a body of knowledge primarily built by men. Debates on domestic dimension (Hillenkamp, 2013; Hillenkamp, Lapeyre and Lemaître, 2013; Lucas dos Santos, 2016, 2018) may shed light on the way women from the South have inserted other logics into economic exchanges in a market society and also creatively reshaped the very principles of economic integration in a re-embeddedness effort. It means that different logics are supposed to be valued in the organisation of material life besides performance criteria: the constitution of different sociabilities, the appreciation of local knowledges, the political articulation among subaltern groups to face common opponents, the constitution of different aesthetic judgement criteria with regard to the goods that are produced, consumed or exchanged (Lucas dos Santos, 2013).

So, to be attuned to Solidarity Economy and other theoretical contributions previously mentioned, social enterprises should be pervaded by well-aired narratives and practices. Being focused on social goals might not be enough to guaranteeing social justice in a broader sense since an unbalanced power of choice is likely to affect the decision process within Social Economy and Third Sector institutions. Despite assuming a changeable and flexible form, the fact is that some preconditions hitherto accepted by social enterprises, such as outside-modelled development guidelines, have been neither remotely questioned. Meanwhile, some of these presumptions could be replaced on behalf of citizens’ autonomy and power of choice, even though they affect guidelines’ results. Other logics are likely to arise from the political empowerment and should not be considered suboptimal in case they do not fit into the Western criteria of development. Subaltern participation should not be swallowed by efficiency criteria.

It leads us to the last point. Social enterprises, as well-aired economic initiatives, now rattled by feminist and solidarity perspectives, should be compromised with overcoming racial, economic and social hierarchies. It is worth bearing in mind that these hierarchies may be pervading the social services provisioning, the way State formulates the partnership with non-profit organisations or, still, the processes of participation within cooperatives and other social enterprises. As solidarity economy is expected to be better informed by different theoretical frameworks to evince women’s and other groups’ role in economic initiatives, social enterprises, as grounded on solidarity economy, should also emphasise their political role, fostering an intersectional comprehension capable of decolonizing structures of decision and facing different lays of naturalised asymmetries.

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