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A History of Development Through a Gender Prism: Feminist and Decolonial Perspectives

Christine Verschuur

Introduction

The idea that women too have a genuine place in the history of the globalisation of capitalism – or, under its guise, the history of “development”, as it has been termed since the end of the Second World War – has gradually become obvious. Since the 1980s, gender issues have increasingly become an integral part of development organisation’s policy and programme priorities. Many states, as well, have adopted gender equality policies. All but four of the UN’s member states (189 of 193) have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Although a field of studies in “gender and development” has progressively been constructed, theorists of development have been hesitant to recognise the heuristic value of the concept of gender. This chapter examines how the concept of gender contributes to revisiting development studies.

Since the late 19th century, struggles for women’s rights have manifested themselves in many regions of the world, from Palestine to South Africa, from China to Iran, from Argentina to the United States, in India as well as throughout Europe (Katzenstein and Mueller, 1987; Duby and Perrot, 1992a,b; Fougeyrollas-Schwebel, 1997; Gargallo, 2002; Chaudhuri, 2004; Gubin, 2004; Verschuur, 2009a,b, 2010; Destremau and Verschuur, 2012). Women’s rights and freedom have become widely accepted as self-evident, while sexism has come to be seen as the preserve of traditional societies and worldviews, and as a form of resistance against modernity (Devreux, 1995). Yet despite the “mad, wicked folly of Women’s Rights”, as Queen Victoria qualified the matter

in 1870, and despite advances for gender equality as enshrined in laws, sexism and inequalities not only persist but, in some instances, have deepened as well. The concept of gender allows us to examine how and why this is so.

The concept of gender emerged from feminist theories and movements that challenged the ideological, political, economic, environmental and social orders underpinning development. Gender is a tool of analysis through which to understand the social and cultural construction of differences between men and women, and to analyse the persistently unequal relations between them.

I will open my discussion by briefly exploring the contributions of women's historians. I argue that bringing women's experiences to light entails far more than simply "adding women" to history, and define the differences this makes in practice. Next, I will discuss the construction of the field of women/gender and development studies. I will then outline some development theories. I will mention their tendency to deny any history or agency to the subjects, states and spaces linked to colonial powers as well as their euro- and andro-centric perspectives. Development theories have been late to acknowledge the productive and reproductive labour of women, and later the new global division of reproductive labour. In concluding my discussion, I will demonstrate that gender, as a social and cultural construct of differences, allows us to explain the persistence of the organic link between the domestic and the capitalist economies, which is at the heart of the prosperity of global capitalism (Meillassoux, 1975). Indeed, globalised capitalism strives to maintain domestic economies (in which domestic-type social relations predominate), *without destroying them*, however, to strip them of their substance, thus sustaining the globalised capitalist economy (in which capitalist social relationships predominate). Interlocking with other categories of analysis, including race and class, gender allows us to revisit history and theories of "development" by shedding light on the articulation of social relationships in the spheres of production and social reproduction.

The history of development with a feminist perspective is, thus, neither restricted to a particular category of a broader body of work nor to a field of enquiry practiced by a specific set of researchers. Rather, it serves to illuminate questions, including those of social reproduction, that previously had been consigned to the shadows of prevailing interpretations, by utilising marginalised analytical categories, in particular that of gender. Insofar as it is a concept elaborated "elsewhere", by minority groups who had been long considered inferior, gender had for a long time

been discredited and elicited resistance. As Colette Guillaumin had aptly observed, “when the first theoretical texts coming from minority groups appear, they are always, without exception, disqualified at the theoretical plane and presented as ‘political’ products. Which they evidently are” (Guillaumin, 1981; 1992, cited in Devreux, 1995, p. 110).

The contributions of women’s historians

Women’s historians have made important contributions to the analysis of social change. Their theoretical and methodological innovations, as well as their stances on many issues, have inspired thinking on the globalisation of capitalism. As the historian Joan Scott has said, gender is “a primary way of signifying power relations” (2000 [1983], p. 42). By situating issues of power at the heart of the debate, gender proves to be an analytical tool of much broader relevance for a range of social issues. It clearly entails more than simply “adding women” – if that were the case, there would indeed be cause to wonder what difference the endeavour could make.

Women’s history is history connected with a specific social movement and written on the basis of feminist convictions. Social justice, equality between women and men, empathy with subalternised social groups and the search for alternatives “in the here and now” within a “political temporality of the present” (Lamoureux, 2004) all are components of the endeavour whose proponents identify it as feminist. This perspective is distinct from the perspective of progress espoused by both leftist and developmentalist thinkers, which is predicated on future developments, hypothesised changes and, at times, plain wishful thinking.

The feminist engagement of women’s historians explains much in terms of the definition of their object of analysis and the research methods they employ (expounding on which would exceed the scope of this chapter). Women’s historians conceptualise women’s experiences as a historical fact to be discovered and described, which is no easy task, for reasons of methodology, in particular. They view women as social subjects placed within specific historical contexts, whose lives, as family members, workers, members of organisations and social movements are of great interest and import. One of the unique contributions of women’s historians has been to redirect interest in the “ordinary people” of the past – the engine of social history – towards women and gender relations.

Feminist historians have formulated pointed critiques of certain pervasive generalisations about women, stemming from earlier approaches

that focused overwhelmingly on women from the middle and upper classes. Not only did feminist historians adopt a descriptive approach that allowed them to bring women's experiences to life, they also highlighted, within an analytical approach, the very disparate experiences of different women and the interactions between them with broader transformations affecting political and economic structures. They also have been involved in bringing new depth and complexity to a number of issues, including by analysing the conditions in which women constructed and joined social movements. On these and other issues, it is only by using the analytical category of gender that researchers have been able to elaborate responses to research issues and problems (Tilly, 1990, p. 155). Above all, feminist historians place social actors at the centre of their research and acknowledge both the limits and room for manoeuvre of individuals participating in the processes described.

Furthermore, feminist historians have focused on processes of change rather than on situations as they stand. As an expression of power relations, gender is particularly well suited to analyse social change. At the symbolic level, power relations are inscribed in language, social norms and institutional structures. Ultimately, it is in linking the history of women's lives with other objects of study, such as the causality of structural change, that we are able to deduce how women's history has changed previous perceptions of what is important about the past (*ibid.*, p. 155).

The increased focus on the role of women has refined our understanding of power struggles; historically, women may have rarely been victorious, but they were irrefutably actors, nonetheless. "Studying the vanquished allows us to better understand the victors, to understand how and why they won [...] and to take possible alternatives seriously, for example those sought by women" (*ibid.*, p. 167). Even when defeated, deprived and "victims", women remain subjects making history.

Milestones in the construction of the gender and development field of knowledge

As a result of pressures exerted by feminist movements and feminist studies, the United Nations, since its very inception, has set milestones, both in its discourse and the practices of its institutions, by which to direct the advancement of women's rights. Already in 1946, a Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was formed within the UN Commission for Human Rights in order to address problems faced specifically by women and to oversee the implementation of gender

equality principles. At the outset, the CSW identified four domains in which the most pervasive forms of discrimination affected women: political rights, legal rights (as individuals and as family members), access to education, and labour laws. Eleanor Roosevelt, who presided over the drafting of the original version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, succeeded in amending Article 2 of that declaration so that its statement on the extension of equal rights stipulated their application to all individuals, “without distinction of race, colour, sex, language” and other characteristics. In 1951, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) adopted Convention No. 100, which established equal pay for equal work for men and women and the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of employment or occupation. Academics, too, exerted an influence through their writings, which informed the policies of international institutions, in addition to fostering change in conceptual and analytical frameworks. Such was the role of Danish economist Ester Boserup’s seminal *Woman’s Role in Economic Development* in 1970, in which she provided the first thorough examination of the labour of peasant women in Africa, Asia and Latin America, arguing that both colonialism and modernisation policies had had negative effects on women’s status. In 1972, the American sociologist Ann Oakley elaborated on the concept of gender in her book *Sex and Gender*, in which she argued that gender is a social construct, taking up the thread of Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949), in which she had pithily stated that “one is not born a woman, but becomes one”. Inspired by feminist practices, the works of feminist writers fuelled women’s liberation movements, which, in turn, exerted added pressure on the UN and cooperation organisations. The feminist movement mobilised to pressure the American Congress to adopt the “Percy Amendment” in 1973, which henceforth obligated the USAID agency to integrate women’s issues into all of its development projects. In India, an interdisciplinary committee for the study of the status of women published a report in 1974 that signalled a radical reassessment of development policies and women’s exclusion. In many other countries, women’s movements directed increasing pressure towards elected officials, governments and delegations to the UN to put issues of women’s rights and liberties on the agenda. These various pressures led the UN Commission on the Status of Women to launch International Women’s Year in Mexico City in 1975. Subsequently, the Commission held the responsibility for the organisation of women’s conferences again in Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995.

A UN report prepared ahead of the Mexico City conference provided data leading to the conclusion that “women’s situation has deteriorated despite development efforts implemented in many world regions... Production determined by the rules of capitalism and oriented towards profit, rather than the well-being of the population, has limited the scope of many development programs” (United Nations Report, 1975).

The first United Nations conference in Mexico City in 1975 denounced the observed deterioration in women’s situation, notably within peasant populations, as well as the male-oriented development processes and the invisibility of women. It provided an unprecedented degree of public exposure for endeavours promoting women’s rights in non-Western countries, where until then it had received little attention. Parallel to the conference, the International Women’s Year Forum also took place, with the notable participation of various women’s organisations and associations: over 6,000 women, the majority coming from Latin America, attended and actively participated in the debates. Domitila Barrios de Chungara, representing a miners’ wives organisation from Bolivia, argued that it was imperative to recognise the diversity of the forms of oppression experienced by her organisation’s members, most of whom were from indigenous communities (Millán, 2012). In the United States, activists and researchers of the black feminism movement also denounced a lack of acknowledgment of women’s differences and developed the concept of the intersectionality of the categories of race, class and sex (Hill Collins, 2009 [1989]; Combahee River Collective, 1977; Davis, 1982; Crenshaw, 1991).

The year 1979 saw the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Today, the convention remains the most significant international accord on women’s rights. Ratified by 187 of 194 member states (not including the United States, incidentally), it is a powerful instrument for the reduction of gender discrimination and for the promotion of women’s rights in the constitutions, laws and policies of UN member states. Adherence to the convention entails rigorous procedures, including quadrennial reports, which all signatory members are obliged to deliver to a committee of experts who assess each country’s compliance with the provisions of the convention.

In the lead-up to and during the UN Decade for Women (1975–1985), the UN organised many international conferences on such themes as population, labour, health, water and agriculture, to name but a few (see Bisilliat and Verschuur, 2000). The preparations for these events, as well

as for the various forums that accompanied them, stimulated the emergence of a number of transnational and national networks. Ultimately, however, as is evident in these conferences' reports and resolutions, women's issues and concerns were largely ignored and only on rare occasions addressed systematically or transversally as central themes. By the time of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women, held in Nairobi in 1985, the assessment of the UN Decade for Women was not positive. It did, however, result in the formulation of a new action plan. In 1985, the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, produced the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action, which were ratified by 189 UN member states and viewed as major advances. These documents established such fundamental principles as the universality of women's rights and the need for women's empowerment, as promoted by women's movements in countries of the global South, and introduced the notion of gender mainstreaming, that is the systematic and transversal integration of the gender perspective into institutions, policies and programmes. The conference also established women's rights advancement indicators to be integrated into the system in order to provide a counterbalanced perspective on the Human Development Index. Yet, even then, gender was not viewed in terms of an analytical tool that could serve to explain dissymmetries and inequalities, and the debate did not develop within an overall analysis of the globalisation of capitalism. Thus, although the Beijing Platform for Action made proposals that represented advances for women's rights in the social and political spheres, it failed to address the need for structural changes in the economic domain.

Development agencies adopted the fuzzword of gender used deliberately as "an acceptable euphemism that softened 'harder' talk about rights and power" (Cornwall, 2007, p. 70). Indeed, many critical voices have charged that the concepts of empowerment and gender have been stripped of their critical dimension. In countries of the South, moreover, a number of feminist movements and theorists have condemned the use of gender as a *buzzword* that serves to veil and depoliticise their potentially transformative analyses and proposals, and have deplored the urge to mainstream the concept, denouncing what has been perceived as an NGO-isation of women's movements (Jad, 2004; Alvaréz, 2009). The French feminist current of thought, which had given rise to the concept of "social sex relations" ("*rappports sociaux de sexe*") (Delphy, 1970; Devreux, 1985; Mathieu, 1985; Daune-Richard and Devreux, 1992), has viewed the widespread reliance on the notion of gender as conceptually regressive. While it has now been introduced in French

scholarly writing (Chabaud-Rychter et al. 2010) in official French translations of UN publications, it is often defused by terms such as “sex-specificity”, which does nothing to convey gender’s analytical potential. And, in the development agencies milieu, responses to the term today can range between fatigue, ennui and even irritation. Thus, as an analytical category of development, gender continues to generate resistance (Verschuur, 2009b).

Critics have also challenged the UN on the dearth of resources and a lack of clear objectives in the sphere of women’s rights. In 2000, the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established measurable benchmarks and deadlines for advances in international development, amongst which was the commitment to “promote gender equality and empower women” (interestingly, the French translation called for the “autonomisation” of women). This goal, however, was formulated as an isolated end in itself, without being clearly integrated within the broader goals for development. The MDGs were designed to seek efficiency and best practices, elaborated within a neo-liberal perspective, that is, disregarding analyses of the causes of poverty and inequality and leaving the prevailing economic, trade and financial systems unchallenged. A decade after the Beijing Declaration, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) published its global assessment of social justice conditions (2005). Based on an examination of close to sixty studies, UNRISD concluded that neo-liberal policies constituted the most persistent obstacles to achieving the social justice goals adopted at numerous international conferences during the preceding decade, including the goal of gender equality, established in Beijing in 1995. Thus, the meagre political gains acquired by women were compromised by the failure of social and economic policies.

During the UN Decade for Women and subsequent major conferences, UN agencies, bilateral cooperation agencies and various foundations commissioned and funded studies, assessments and research designed to examine development conditions. The resulting intensification of research produced unprecedented volumes of data on which to base informed conclusions. For instance, in 1984, USAID commissioned an audit of 416 of its development projects in preparation for the 1985 World Conference on Women in Nairobi. Among the findings was that in Cameroon, where local peanut agriculture was normally managed by women, a peanut seed multiplication programme had been placed under the exclusive control of men who had no experience with this crop; unsurprisingly, the project failed to produce expected results.

Another study found that Mali's "Opération Riz Ségou" programme had had observably negative effects on local women. This programme aimed at stimulating rice production and consisted of developing parcels, which were allotted to men exclusively. Women – who had a long-established practice of the production of local rice varieties – lost access to quality land, which resulted in increased malnutrition, heightened tensions in relations between men and women, and between women of different status, and in an overall increase in insecurity (Verschuur, 1989). As mentioned above, the period was highly favourable for research funding in the field of gender and development (Bisilliat, 1983; Schrijvers, 1985, Postel-Coster, 1987) and produced an extensive base of knowledge on women/gender and development, thanks in large measure to the collaborative efforts of women's movements, cooperation agencies and researchers. Finally, the creation in 2010 by the United Nations of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (generally termed UN Women), consolidating a number of UN agencies, provided in a sense a statement of recognition for this specific field of knowledge within the UN system.

In concluding my overview, I think it apt to propose a periodisation for the elaboration of thought on women/gender in development. The exercise will also allow me to highlight issues that, to my mind, are central to the significance of gender as an analytical tool that opens new perspectives onto the history of development:

- Initial work in the domain recognised the previously unacknowledged labour of women, in particular that of "Third World" peasant women (Boserup, 1970; Benería and Sen, 1981). The generalised devaluation of women's work is closely linked with the sexual division of labour, which is an analytical – rather than only descriptive – tool to analyse inequalities between men and women (Young, 1978; Benería, 1982; Kergoat, 2000). The first UN Conference on Women, held in Mexico City, in 1975, brought to the fore the notion of development's male bias (Elson, 1991), that is, the social and economic invisibility of women, their confinement to the domestic sphere and the shift to male-oriented, Western production policies (Pronk, 2000[1975]). Programmes subsequently proposed by cooperation agencies, with the stated aim of better "integrating" women within development processes, in fact aimed to more thoroughly harness the female workforce as a previously under-utilised resource for the benefit of capitalist development. However, cooperation policies failed to take

on the numerous insights then provided by feminist economists and sociologists into the overall devaluation of work performed by women and of the unpaid domestic work in particular.

- The next period was marked by analyses of the social relations of sex, race and class within the new international division of labour in the context of globalised neo-liberal capitalism. Many studies focused on issues such as the integration of women in the delocalised manufacturing industry, the feminisation of the proletariat, women's increasing importance in informal urban economies and the feminisation of migration (Benería, 1982; Kabeer, 1995; Federici, 2002; Sassen, 2005). In a time of globalisation, social reproduction activities were part of the new international division of labour. Research accorded particular focus to care work and the "care drain" (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2002, p. 17), that is, women's migration to perform care work – whether for dependent persons or others – in more affluent regions, as domestic workers, nannies, health aides etc., while continuing to ensure the reproductive activities of their transnational households, across borders (Verschuur and Catarino, 2013).
- The third period has been characterised by the acknowledgment of identities and the struggle for rights at the domestic, local and transnational levels, in a globalised context. Researchers deconstructed the colonial image of the "Southern woman" opening the way for renewed analysis on the construction of individuals as subjects of their own history (Rauber, 2003). Significantly, women's movements and feminists (including those from minority and migrant groups) in the global South have provided an impulse for the re-examination of the interlocking nature of race, caste, class and gender relationships, as well as for critiques of the hegemony of Western feminisms (Mohanty, 1988).

Certain streams of post-colonial feminisms, however, have tended to move away from claims for social and redistributive justice in favour of increased attention to identity and difference, which has led to an overinvestment of cultural criticism and the consequent desertion of critiques focused on political economy. The decolonial feminist perspective, notably advocated by a number of Latin American movements and authors, seeks to link subjects' cultural agencies with concrete social struggles in the prevailing context of the new international division of labour that now characterises capitalist accumulation processes (Destremau and Verschuur, 2012).

Decolonialising development thought

First coined by American president Harry S. Truman in his presidential inauguration speech on 20 January 1949, the term “development” carries the signification of a conscious choice to “reconstruct” on the basis of “reason”, the creation of a rational order and global transformation in order to break with previous ideas, cultures and histories (Touraine, 2007). This vision of development is closely linked with an ideology of progress, of infinite growth: the search for a better future in the multiplication of goods and services. Various models or stages of development emerged, yet, “it may well appear surprising that, fifty years after the international community officially set its sights on extending ‘development’ to the South, this has still not come to pass” (Rist, 1996, p. 28). On the contrary, in fact, the bulk of research results today indicate that the disparities are growing, not only between the global South and the global North, but within them as well.

In 1952, Alfred Sauvy coined the term “Third World”, which he related to the “third estate” of the Old Regime prevailing in France in the period preceding the revolution of 1789. In Sauvy’s words, “at the end, this ignored, exploited, scorned Third World, like the Third Estate, wants to become something too”. Since then, many varied terms have been put forward in attempts to denominate more accurately the world regions in question including under-developed countries, developing countries and less-advanced countries as well as the terms countries of the South and the Global South, which also aim to lay stress on the inequalities within both North and South. Authors adhering to diverse schools of thought have addressed development processes, including “developmentalists” (Rostow, 1963) and dependence theorists (Gunder Frank, 1969; Amin, 1973; Furtado, 1976). Adherents of the developmentalist current argued that modernisation theories would pave the way for “underdeveloped” countries to take off in order to catch-up to “developed” countries (Rostow, 1963) and that, overall, wealth would trickle down from the rich to the poor. For theorists of dependency – an approach further subdivided into several divergent schools of thought – the “periphery” was hampered by unequal trade relationships and needed to sever its dependency ties from the “centre” in order to industrialise on similar terms.

The development discourse, broadly speaking, proves upon critical analysis to constitute “a grand narrative”, a system of beliefs that imposes its specific reading on the trajectory of societies (Rist, 1996).

Stimulated by Western perspectives from the end of the Second World War to the early 1980s, the message of social transformation acquired the characteristics of a “messianic movement”: proponents of the vision promised immediate happiness on earth (in 1972, Bhutan even adopted a Gross National Happiness, or GNH, index and the UN has been debating the idea of replacing the GDP with the GNH since 2004). Liberals and Marxists, developmentalists and dependentists, while differing in their views and understanding of the social processes, successive stages and changes necessary to achieve objectives, all nevertheless seemed engaged in a shared search for “the Kingdom on earth” (Rist 1996).

However, whether they were dramatic or epic, romantic or pragmatic, development discourses and analyses have not succeeded in changing the lives of the populations they addressed and have failed to produce either effective tools of analysis or transformative proposals. Most importantly, they have denied to the communities, whose “development” they seek to advance, the possibility of developing their own world-views, agency or resistance, as well as any spaces in which to reclaim their own histories.

Thus, in Africa, the “dependence paradigm produced a static, frozen history of Africa, one in which external forces played the predominant role [...] In this, dependence historiography shared the logic of imperialist historiography, which presented African history as an extension of European history. The only difference is that the latter depicted Africa’s history as a stirring story of Europe’s heroic efforts to introduce ‘civilisation’ to the ‘Dark continent’, while for dependence historiography it is a sad tale of European pillage and plunder. Dependence history is therefore a history of a continent permanently hostage to external forces” (Zeleza, 2004, p. 107).

The ambiguity of the development discourse is closely linked to its being a “discourse among actors about a society devoid of actors” (Touraine, 2007), in which the “poor” exist only as targets, as neutral individuals, devoid of their own vision or of any agency. An additional blind spot of the discourse is its failure to acknowledge, in a gender perspective, social movements and organisations that provide alternative views, from different locations and temporalities. Yet, even when excluded from power, as well as from social, cultural and economic benefits, the persons who form these movements and organisations are not prisoners of norms and structures: they have the capacities to think, express themselves, take action and offer resistance – they are subjects of their own history.

Notwithstanding their various foci, whether identifying the subject, historicity or social movements as the engine of social transformation, many sociologists of development entirely bypassed women's experiences and the concept of gender. In his analyses of social movements, Touraine laid stress on the work of labourers (but excluded reproductive work), on male workers' consciousness (neglecting female workers' consciousness) and on male workers' movements (ignoring the feminisation of the work force) (Touraine, 1984). The invisibility of "Third World" women was another persistent element of the development discourse (Bisilliat and Verschuur, 2000) and, when they were visible, it was within the confines of a fixed outline of "The" Third World woman: represented as part of a homogeneous group, as a victim, as being traditional, with no agency. By contrast, "the" Western woman was educated, modern, earned a wage, was in control of her body and her sexuality, and free to make her own choices. Indeed, denying women "from elsewhere" any capacity for self-awareness or of denouncing gender inequalities can be linked to a demeaning colonial discourse. In the same way that it was necessary to deconstruct the "myth" (Cornwall, Harrison and Whitehead, 2007) of "the" Third World woman, treated not as the subject of her own history but as the constructed object of Western feminist thinking (Mohanty, 1988), it was necessary to deconstruct the colonial perspective of "the other", "underdeveloped countries", "the poor" or the suburban populations (Lapeyronnie, 2005). "Power relations among nations and the status of colonial subjects have been made comprehensible (and thus legitimate) in terms of relations between male and female" (Scott, 2000 [1983], p. 42). Thus "poor" countries were referred to with qualifiers connoting with "female" characteristics: they were subordinated, weak, exploited and traditional. By contrast, "rich" countries were endowed with "male" characteristics and, thus, seen as dominant, strong, protective, rational and modern.

In her analysis of the process of globalisation of capitalism, Nancy Fraser insists on the changing nature of capitalism: once regulated by the state, but increasingly dominated by neo-liberal modes of operation. Fraser defines state capitalism as a social mode of organisation in which the state plays an active part in steering the national economy (Fraser, 2011, pp. 170–171) and she argues that such conditions, or variants thereof, prevailed in what, at the time, was called the Third World. As a social formation, the "androcentric form of state-organised capitalist society [is] structured by three interpenetrating orders of subordination: (mal)distribution, (mis)recognition, and (mis)representation" (2011, pp. 174–175). "[P]roponents of this new form of capitalism

[by] [d]ismantling key elements of the Bretton Woods framework [...] eliminated the capital controls that had enabled Keynesian steering of national economies. In place of dirigisme, they promoted privatisation and deregulation; in place of public provision and social citizenship, 'trickle-down' and 'personal responsibility'; in place of the welfare and developmental states, the lean, mean 'competition state'. [...] In the Third World neo-liberalisation was imposed at the gunpoint of debt, as an enforced programme of 'structural adjustment' which overturned all the central tenets of developmentalism and compelled post-colonial states to divest their assets, open their markets and slash social spending" (2011, pp. 179–180).

The anti-colonial national struggles of Third World nations are largely seen as a thing of the past. Yet what of the spirit of the 1955 Bandung Conference, which laid the foundations of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)? The passionate calls for social justice, for a new world economic order and for the centrality of the political sphere, which were at the core of that spirit – have they, too, been consigned to history? (Escobar, 2004) The existence of the two regimes of, on the one hand, growing exclusion and poverty for the majority of world populations and, on the other, unprecedented inclusion and prosperity for a privileged minority, suggests that the notion of a "Third World" retains some validity, but also that it is necessary to re-examine certain trappings of modernity (Escobar, 2004, p. 209). If we are to reinvigorate post-"Third World" theoretical frameworks, we must necessarily rethink the modernity that appears as an inevitable component of globalisation processes. For it is modernity that has obscured and disqualified subaltern knowledge and cultural practices throughout the world, from the time of the European conquest of the Americas to the present day. Coloniality, thus, is not only a facet of modernity – it is one of its constitutive elements. Escobar has argued for the need to elaborate an "alternative framework [that takes] seriously the epistemic force of local histories and to think theory through the political praxis of subaltern groups" (2004, p. 217).

Capitalism, therefore, is not only an economic or cultural system, but a *global power network* assimilated through economic, political and cultural processes that together form an integrated whole (Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel, 2007). In Aníbal Quijano's words, "'race,' a mode and an outcome of modern colonial domination, came to pervade every sphere of global capitalist power. Coloniality thus became the cornerstone of this capitalist, colonial/modern, Euro-centred power. This coloniality of power has proved to be more profound and more lasting than the colonialism in which it was engendered and which it helped to impose

globally.” (Quijano, 2007b). In the decolonial perspective, decoloniality should complement decolonisation by addressing “the heterarchy of various racial, ethnic, sexual, epistemological, economic and gender relationships, which decolonisation had left intact” (2007b, p. 17).

The decolonial perspective seeks to re-examine and discuss debates on colonialism, liberation philosophy, the “pedagogy of the oppressed” and dependence theories. It goes further than do world-system analyses (Wallerstein, 2006), which focus on the international division of labour and international geopolitical military conflicts in global capitalist accumulation processes (Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel, 2007). It goes further, too, than do “post-colonial studies in the Anglo-saxon world, which criticise developmentalism, Eurocentric forms of knowledge, gender inequalities, racial hierarchies and the ideological/cultural processes that favour the subordination of the periphery to the capitalist world-system” (2007, p. 14). Thus, where post-colonial studies in the Anglo-saxon world centre on culture and subjects’ agency, and where the world-system approach focuses on political-economic structures, the decolonial approach consolidates both perspectives by viewing culture as intertwined with political and economic processes. It is grounded in the notion of the “coloniality of power” (Quijano, 2007a). Among its central arguments is that global capitalism cannot fully be understood without an acknowledgement of the race and gender discourses that organise the world population through the international division of labour (Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel, 2007). Power inequalities, whether based in gender or race, are just as fundamental to a critical appraisal of the development discourse as are inequalities between and within the global North and South.

The crisis of social reproduction and the spaces of transformation

Development, according to Rist, is defined as “a series of sometimes contradictory practices, which make it necessary, in order to guarantee the social reproduction, to generalise the transformation and destruction of the natural environment and of social relationships, so as to ensure a growing production of merchandises (goods and services) meant, through exchange, for social demand” (1996). An in-depth discussion of the distinct components of this definition, which actually places social reproduction at its centre, exceeds the scope of this chapter. I argue that one element, however, seems questionable: the destruction of social relationships. Globalised capitalism attempts on the contrary to preserve,

rather than destruct, domestic-type social relationships, which, articulated with capitalist social relationships, assure its ongoing prosperity.

To be sure, activities considered “private” or “free” can nevertheless be commoditised, particularly in the context of a new international division of labour drawn along sexual and racial lines (e.g. health care, including procreation). For certain authors, reproduction is at worst a “remnant” of traditional societies or, at best, a romantic “ideal” according to which certain activities and relationships are considered “free” and outside the market sphere. However, feminist economists, sociologists, anthropologists and historians, as well as feminist movements, have long criticised the postulates of economic perspectives that fail to recognise the economic value of domestic work (Benería, 1982; Folbre, 1997). To consider activities performed within the domestic unit as “free” means effectively to naturalise the sexual division of labour and to ignore that, as an analytical category, the division expresses a power relationship. In this scheme, the gender, class, race and power inequalities that make the organisation of “free” or underpaid social reproduction possible, escape attempts at systematic analysis.

Social reproduction simultaneously includes “the demographic and economic renewal of the workforce and the reconstitution of social relations and institutions that organise individuals according to the characteristics inherent to a given system” (Meillassoux, 1991, p. 15). The concept of reproduction, in which women’s non-remunerated work is a central element, provides a useful theoretical framework. While the bulk of development studies has concentrated on the *production* of goods and services in the context of the new international division of labour, fewer analyses have addressed the *reproduction* of the workforce in this context. In “rich” countries, the demand for “ready-made workers” (Marx, cited in Meillassoux, 1975, p. 161) is partly satisfied by immigration, which contributes to the free reproduction of the workforce, due notably to “the immense ‘gift’ of domestic labour that women from the South bestow on rich countries” (Federici, 2002, p. 55).

Four decades of economic restructuring and the changing nature of capitalism have created a new colonial order (Federici, 2002). Rising poverty and inequality, the growing disengagement of the states to invest in workforce reproduction (cuts to social budgets, monetary devaluation, privatisation and liberalisation), as well as reductions in salaries and remuneration for work, have all engendered a crisis of social reproduction in the global South. The organisation of social reproduction is increasingly globalised as rising numbers of men and women, generally

relatively young, embark on temporary transregional and transnational migrations. Data-based studies have demonstrated, for example, that “Mexican society currently subsidises the US economy via labour migration” (Delgado Wise et al., 2009, p. 45) and that Mexican migrants, both female and male, rather than constituting a social or fiscal burden, in fact contribute substantially more to the US economy than they take out of it. A recent report by the OECD has recommended, in fact, that immigration be promoted in an effort to compensate demographic decline and contribute to economic growth, indicating also that “[i]n most countries, migrants contribute more in taxes and social contributions than they receive in individual benefits” (OECD, 2013). Migrant persons, in particular, women, have today become a core component of the mechanisms of social reproduction within affluent spaces and countries.

What we observe is a social, economic, cultural and moral system of social reproduction, including care services, which involves goods and services connected with the capitalist economy. Although the articulation between domestic economies and the capitalist economy has taken on new forms in the new global economic order, characterised by the international division of labour, this order continues to rely on the organisation of all activities and relationships essential for social reproduction, across national borders, within transnational networks.

A number of authors (Delphy, 1970; Meillassoux, 1975; Rey, 1976) demonstrated the importance of preserving domestic-type social relationships for the development of the capitalist economy. Meillassoux and other anthropologists considered that the articulation between the reproductive sphere (dominated by domestic-type social relations of production) and the productive sphere (dominated by capitalist social relations of production) was the “fundamental cause of underdevelopment and, simultaneously, of the capitalist sector’s prosperity” (Meillassoux, 1975, p. 149). Indeed, it is by maintaining its organic links with domestic economies that the capitalist economy assures its own growth and prosperity. In order to perpetuate this articulation, the capitalist economy must preserve the domestic economy sufficiently to harness its substance *without destroying it*. By implication, therefore, the domestic sphere must be maintained partially outside the sphere of capitalist production while keeping its articulation with it. And it is precisely the social and cultural construction of gender, interlocking with class and racial inequalities, which makes the preservation of these organic links possible.

The crisis of social reproduction is, thus, at the very core of “development”. Initiatives are bubbling up to rethink the activities and relationships necessary for social reproduction in grassroots organisations, combining attempts to break subordination relationships. Economic and social alternatives, as well as spaces of expression and solidarity, are emerging. Within them, women establish themselves as subjects of their own histories, within their own territories, “in the here and now” (Rauber, 2003; Guérin, e.a. 2011; Verschuur, 2012). The image of a *bubbling up* seems to me an apt expression of this effervescence threatening to fracture the system.

Indeed, the crises and the negative consequences of global neo-liberal policies have elicited the emergence of alternatives, many of them informed by the ideas, theories and practices of local and transnational women’s organisations, which today are burgeoning the world over. Such organisations work towards the recognition of unpaid reproductive work, increased funding of social infrastructures by the state (water supplies, energy, health system, education, children’s day-care, services for elderly individuals) and the equitable division of reproductive work between women and men. In addition, they elaborate new forms of organisation for agricultural labour and the food economy, collective forms of production predicated on needs rather than profits, natural environment protection and waste management systems, local micro-finance systems closely linked with social and local production objectives, as well as self-managed health cooperatives (Hainard and Verschuur, 2005). Women’s organisations also participate in the implementation of local markets, encourage direct producer–consumer connections and emphasise mutual benefits. They denounce market liberalisation as destructive to both the natural environment and social safety-net systems, organising various initiatives to counteract the trend. They are frequently on the front lines of new formal and informal modes of organisation and defence of both male and female workers’ rights. Indeed, it was due to the actions of domestic workers’ organisations in various parts of the world that the International Labour Organisation adopted the Convention on Domestic Workers in 2011 to safeguard the rights of individuals performing this type of work. Women’s organisations develop diverse social and economic practices that care for the organisation of social reproduction. In this, they sometimes challenge prevailing relations of domination and exclusion, propose new social relations of (re)production and insist on principles of solidarity, reciprocity, equity and justice (see Guérin and Nobre, this volume).

The process of poverty reduction could constitute an engine of growth in its own right: given the broad basis of economic sectors operating at the bottom of the economic chain, it has the potential to stimulate growth that *bubbles up* by increasing demand through increased salaries for male and female poor workers and peasants, in both formal and informal sectors (Jain and Elson, 2011). The transformative power of feminist thought on development resides elsewhere, however: it is in its focus on the organisation of reproduction and production relationships, and its recognition of the effervescent *bubbling up* of myriad organisations acting “in the here and now”, where subaltern women establish themselves as subjects of social transformation.

Conclusion: trickle down or bubble up?

The “grand narrative” of “development” has been imbued with the colonial perspective, has ignored social reproduction work and has silenced the voices and denied the existence of the “other” – whether that other was “underdeveloped”, belonged to the South, was “woman” or a “colonial subject”. Such “others”, overall, were portrayed as having no capacity for thought, no agency, no history and contradictions, were not seen as having their own values, or their own engines of transformation, unless somehow linked with the Western world.

To write a history of subalternised women, of grassroots organisations in the global South, is to change dominant narratives which have previously obscured these thoughts and actions. As women’s historians have argued, such a change implies demonstrating that women’s experiences are of interest, both distinct and significant, and that, consequently, analyses couched in women’s perspectives produce new interpretations of reality. The decolonial perspective, first elaborated by Latin American authors, represents a viable alternative to thinking from the specific historical and political perspective of given societies themselves, rather than simply reflecting on them from an external perspective. The decolonial current of thought both fulfils the requirement to acknowledge the perspective of the “other” and delivers a cogent response to the criticism levelled against post-colonial studies for having deserted ongoing social struggles. Indeed, the decolonial perspective goes further than do analyses focusing on economic structures or subjects’ cultural agency. It takes account of the symbolic and cultural dimensions of the “coloniality of power” (Quijano, 2007a) within the capitalist system. The feminist decolonial perspective

links the symbolic, constructed and cultural dimension of gender and race relations with their economic and political dimension, from the domestic, through the local, to the global levels. In addition, it focuses attention on the fight for economic and social rights by examining the location from which women assume a voice within social struggles. Thus, the feminist decolonial perspective strives to acknowledge the capacity of individuals of different belongings to establish themselves as subjects of their own histories, and, also, to illustrate how gender relations are inscribed within the economic system, with a particular focus on the insertion of racialised women into the new international division of reproductive and productive labour. Ultimately, decolonial analyses of the articulation between domestic-type and capitalist social relationships allow a better understanding of capitalist expansion and the reproduction of gender inequalities.

In conclusion, I contend that integrating the concept of gender into development studies changes the field and revitalises critical analyses of the globalisation of capitalism. I have indicated that the concept of gender situates the issue of the organisation of *social reproduction* at the heart of the debate. I have also noted the importance of the symbolic dimension of representations linked with gender and the questions it raises about identities, institutions, symbols, values and norms. I have emphasised that women and men are *subjects* of their own history, rather than simply “carriers of structures” or victims, who situate themselves within specific local and global struggles. I have also made mention of *colonial fractures* that occur along gendered and racialised lines, in multiple spaces, locally and globally. The decolonial feminist perspective also asks questions about the system of production of subalternised knowledge by male and female workers, by “ordinary” women, by racialised/colonial subjects and by anti-systemic movements (Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel, 2007). Finally, the perspective also reveals bottom-up *utopias* and alternatives elaborated by subalternised groups in the political temporality of the present.

In a time of global economic and financial crises, it is imperative to acknowledge and demonstrate that societal dysfunctions are strictly linked with inequalities and that these inequalities are constructed and not immutable. The hope that prosperity would filter down towards the poor without structural, symbolic and cultural changes in a hypothesised *trickle down* effect was a chimera. In a different, neo-liberal world the capacity for indignation that characterised the “spirit of Bandung” must be awakened by incorporating the voices of subalternised women. Burgeoning initiatives currently *bubbling up* to rethink social

reproduction constitute alternatives to be taken seriously in the collective construction of achievable utopias.

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