Local Human Development from the gender equity perspective: a work in progress

Yolanda Jubeto Ruiz
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List of abbreviations

AWID	Association for Women's Rights in Development
DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
ESCER	Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights
GAD	Gender and Development
GEI	Gender Equity Index
GGGI	Global Gender Gap Index
GII	Gender Inequality Index
HDI	Human Development Index
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IHDI	Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index
LHD	Local Human Development
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USA	United States of America
WEOI	Women's Economic Opportunity Index
WID	Women in Development

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Introduction

> Recognition of historical time matters, not only because it forces an acknowledgement of uncertainty, but also because history's legacy to the present is a set of institutions which structure our perceptions and hence influence our behaviour with respect to that uncertain future.
>
> Shaun Hargreaves Heap (1986)[1]

The goal of this study is to reflect on the capabilities approach from the viewpoint of feminist contributions. Our main theoretical basis is Feminist Economics, a theory that addresses the construction of an economy that integrates and analyzes the different realities of women and men (Carrasco 1999) and responds to their needs and interests. On this journey, it defends the effective application of the economic, social and political rights of women, in order to boost economic democracy and social justice.

This document is part of a group study into the potential of the Local Human Development (LHD) approach to advance in the search for ecologically and socially sustainable and just alternatives that maintain an ability to adapt to different realities. LHD's theoretical and methodological framework is analysed in the opening document written by Alfonso Dubois (2014) which constitutes the point of departure for the studies involved in this research. The goal of this paper is to integrate a feminist viewpoint into this approach, given that such a point of view is crucial in all approaches that aim to overcome the injustices and inequalities that characterize the world today.

This text is divided into two major chapters. The first covers some key points of Feminist Economics, as well as the contributions of ecofeminism, postcolonial feminism and radical institutionalism. The second summarizes the evolution of the gender approach in thought on development in order to focus on the capability approach from the feminist viewpoint and ends with the links that exist among the capabilities that are essential in order to boost the sustainability of life..

The document's starting point is the contributions that we find most inspirational when reflecting on the overlap between Feminist Economics and the processes of building Local Human Development, or the capability approach. The points highlighted are essentially the proposals in favour of the recognition and evaluation of non-

1 Taken from Pheby, John (ed.) (1989): *New directions in Post-Keynesian Economics*. Edward Elgar.

commercial spheres, their concern with gender inequalities and their commitment to social transformation.

Below, we summarize some ecofeminist contributions, based on their interest due to the links they make between the problems of subordinating and marginalizing women with the contempt for nature shown by the currently dominant capitalist and patriarchal culture. We focus on criticisms of the heteropatriarchal capitalist system that have led to a condemnation of *maldevelopment* and its consequences for the bodies and lives of women and men in some of the most vulnerable situations on the planet. Furthermore, many of these authors emphasize the situation of many women, especially the poorest, when suffering these impacts, given that it is they who suffer most of the costs of the planet's degradation, who extreme seriousness is systematically ignored by world's dominant elites.

After the ecofeminist reflection, the text looks at some key contributions by postcolonial or border feminists, whose interest lies in their richness and the diversity of experiences and ways of interpreting the world offered out by those authors. This allows a broader perspective on the complex and diverse experiences of women, since their analyses of the material and symbolic conditions of life begin from their own realities and allow us to approach these realities. Here, gender relationships overlap with those of class, ethnicity and sexual choice, among other basic axes that configure the systems of domination in which they find themselves; systems that are often racist and strongly hierarchized.

In the last section of the first chapter, we look at American institutionalist analyses, since these share with Feminist Economics the concept of economy and power relations, and they enrich this with their reflections on the continuous processes of the construction and evolution of the values, norms and routines that make up a society. Over time, these processes have given form to the diverse characteristics of the gender relations in each culture, which in turn shape the way in which women and men participate in the activities carried out in homes and in communities, in a broad sense. Furthermore, hierarchies are gradually established with respect to the value given to the roles assigned to each sex and to the interactions of women and men with the existing institutions.

The second chapter focuses on matters related to development from the gender equity perspective. Here, brief mention is made of two of the most important theoretical currents that have dealt with this matter, which are *Women in Development* and *Gender and Development*. Then the analysis deals with capability theory and in this section, fundamental dimensions for people's quality of life are selected, the meeting points of this approach with Feminist Economics are sought and the matter of indicators is covered. This report concludes with some key points for the debate on links between the basic concepts articulated by Feminist Economics and central capabilities, bearing in mind both individual and collective capabilities.

1. Significant theoretical contributions in the promotion of gender equity in social transformation processes

Before entering into theoretical matters, it would be appropriate to clarify some terms that will appear frequently throughout this text. Beginning with the **gender concept** itself, which, in its day, constituted a kind of semantic revolution, this term is used to refer to the social construction of sexual differences between men and women. Put another way, it acts "to refer to the cognitive patterning a culture constructs on the base of actual or perceived differences between males and females. Gender is the metaphorical connection of non-biological phenomena with a bodily experience of biological differentiation." (Nelson 1996)

Gender relations reflect a hierarchical dualism between the superior conceptions of the male in relation with the inferior female that is strongly rooted and widespread in our societies' ways of thinking, giving rise to a collective imagination that feeds sexism and sexual discrimination against anything identified with the female. However, we must also take into consideration that "gender is lived differently in different places, bodies and locations" and that it is a fluid construction (Harcourt 2011) that undergoes modifications as societies evolve and change.

The potential for change involved in this concept is undeniable, in that understanding gender relations not as biologically determined, but as socially constructed, involves the possibility that they can be transformed. Furthermore, the relational content of the concept means that it cannot be used as a synonym for women because this point of view would ignore men as social agents and the way that both categories, men and women, interact and construct one in relation to the other..

Figure 1. Notes on the gender concept

Used to refer to the social construction of sexual differences between men and women

- It is not a synonym for *women*.

Great potential for change

- Understanding gender relations as socially constructed means that they can change

Risk of trivialization and distorted use

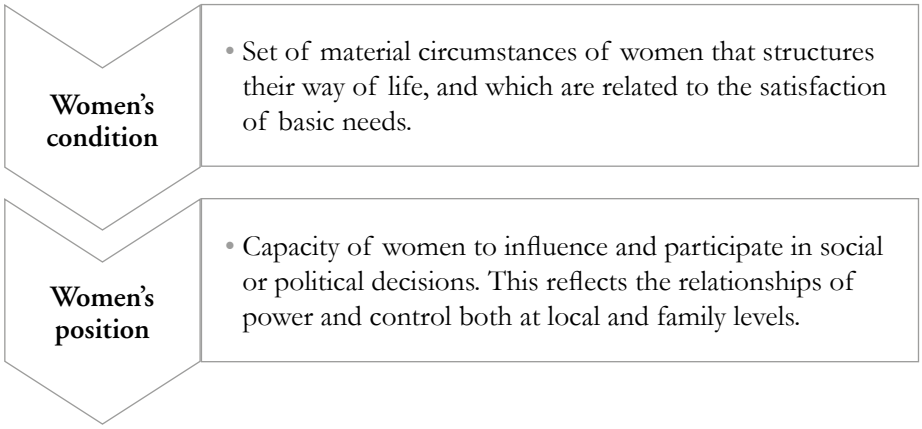
- "Gender has become a technified term. The World Bank uses it as an avowal in order to come to terms with the problem of women; our ministers and institutions use it as an apolitical technical term. But there are criticisms from black feminists who say that the form in which we understand bipolar gender dynamics do not analyze their ways of life".

  Virginia Vargas (10/07/2012) **http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/sociedad/3-198276-2012-07-10.html**

Another important concept that has arisen as a result of the experiences and reflections of diverse women who have been exposed to different inequalities (ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, functional disability, age, etc.) is **intersectionality** (Davis 2005). For the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) it constitutes an analytical tool for gender justice and economic justice, since it is "used to study, understand and respond to the ways in which gender intersects with other identities and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of oppression and privilege" (AWID 2004). This concept is looked at in depth in the section on postcolonial feminism.

Other basic concepts that act as tools to analyze these complex realities experienced by women and men are the **condition and position of women**, summarized in the following figure, and the basic needs and strategic interests of women, whose meaning we explain briefly below.

Figure 2. Condition and position of women



LPractical gender needs derive from socially accepted women's roles in the domestic sphere (mother, wife, housewife) and are immediate needs linked to the extent to which the basic material goods and services required by families and communities are covered, and they motivate female participation in the public sphere.

These practical interests often do not question gender inequality or subordination. For this reason, it is important to combine them with measures that respond to **strategic gender needs**, which arise from the recognition and awareness of the position of subordination, inequality and discrimination of women in society, and are aimed at the transformation of gender-related social relationships and the acquisition of freedom, real equality, self-esteem and empowerment. They are interests that include legal rights, property rights, the right to own wealth, the right to live free from violence, control over their own bodies and sexual and reproductive rights, learning and training on matters that interest them, participation in the design, execution and control of public policies and, in short, the defence of women's human rights.

Figure 3. Practical needs and strategic interests	
Practical needs	**Strategic Interests**
• These are inmediate needs linked to the level of coverage of basic material goods and services.	• These appear in the defence of the human rights of women.

To bring this introductory conceptual section to an end, other central gender analysis concepts are indicated at this point. Firstly, the processes of women´s empowerment and secondly, policies of redistribution and recognition as proposals to overcome the discriminations experienced by women and subaltern groups.

We share the definition proposed by Marcela Lagarde who considers **empowerment** to be the set of life processes defined by the acquisition or invention and interiorization of powers that allow each women or group of women to confront forms of oppression they experience in their lives (exclusion, discrimination, exploitation, abuse, harassment, disparagement, infidelity or betrayal, incapacity to..., depression, self-devaluation, anguish due to a lack of opportunities, means, resources or goods, health difficulties, extreme fear, etc.).

"It can be said that a women, or group of women, is empowered when those powers are no longer external to her, they become her body and subjectivity, way of being and of living. When each woman and each group of women defends, above all, her body, her resources, her capabilities, her goods, her opportunities, her immediate and mediate world. Overcoming isolation requires more than information skills, it is related to the way in which a person sees herself and the world. The development of political awareness is an important, although frequently ignored aspect[2]."

This is the name used for the process of transformation by which each woman, little by little and sometimes with large steps, stops being an object of history, politics and culture, stops being the object of others, that is to say, stops being-for-others, and becomes a subject of life itself, a being-for-herself, a protagonist in history, culture, politics and social life.

In gender-related group processes, empowerment involves, for women, no longer being the other half of the world or an appendix subjugated and dependent on men -the dominant, androcentric and supremacist half-, and become half of humanity, society, community and the group, being protagonists with gender equivalence in society, culture, politics, economics, development and democracy. For each woman and for women as a gender, empowerment consists of being sexual, social, economic, legal, judicial and political subjects. It means being subjects of culture in the sense

2 Lagarde, Marcela (S.F.) "Intercambio y desarrollo humano en América Latina". Cidhal, AC. Observatorionacional.org.ni/files/publicación1201818903.

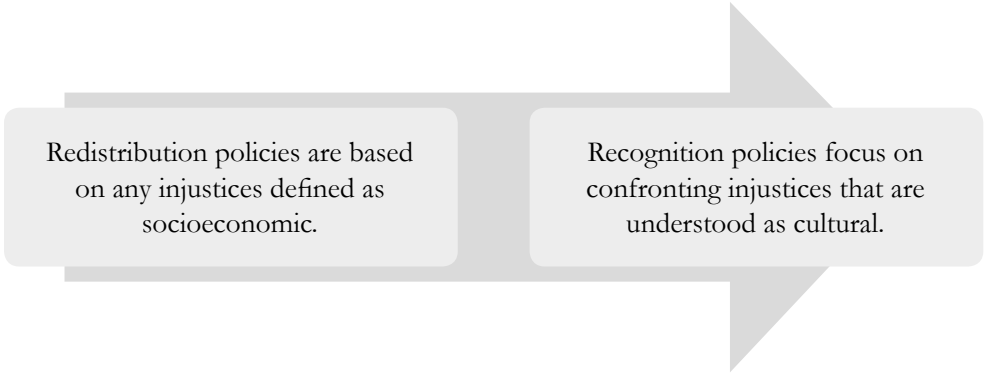
of thinking and feeling the legitimacy to say, communicate, act, experience and create (Lagarde[3]).

This focus on subjects, rights and opportunities can be easily linked to the capability approach, which is a normative approach that starts from the importance of justice in any approach intended to offer steps for social transformation. In these debates, the role of public policies in overcoming discrimination is important, and here the contribution of Nancy Fraser (1996) stands out in relation to the need to combine redistribution and recognition policies in order to cover the intersections of different oppressions. This analysis reflects the suitability of introducing the feminist perspective into analyses of public policies. Her approach's essential ideas are:

Policies of redistribution start from those injustices defined as socioeconomic ones, particularly exploitation, as the consequence of the appropriation of the products of the work of one group by another; economic marginalization, which covers both poorly-paid labour and forced unemployment; and deprivation, which consists of being denied an adequate level of material life. All these are closely related to the central capabilities seen in this text.

Policies of recognition focus on tackling those injustices understood to be cultural, and which are rooted in the social models of representation, interpretation and communication. These include cultural domination, which imposes subjugation on models of interpretation and communication linked to other cultures that are different from and/or hostile to one's own; the lack of recognition imposed on a culture by means of authoritarian representations that ignore others; and a lack of respect, by underrating everyday interactions in stereotyped cultural representations.

Figure 4. Redistribution and recognition policies



3 Lagarde, Marcela (S.F): *Guía para el empoderamiento de las mujeres.* Agrupación para la igualdad en el metal. http://www.femeval.es/proyectos/ProyectosAnteriores/Sinnovaciontecnologia/Documents/ACCION3_cuaderno1.pdf

1.1. Key points of Feminist Economics and development

What is currently called Feminist Economics began to emerge strongly in the second half of the 20th century, although its history is practically as long as that of economic thought itself. Despite this, it continues to occupy a marginal place within the discipline of economics, probably because accepting its assumptions would involve changes that are unacceptable to those who dominate the theory and practice of hegemonic economics. However, although economics has generally ignored the proposals of feminist economists, we believe that they have had an impact on broad sectors of society, including those who seek alternatives to the current system. One example of this social acceptance is the success of the *Jornadas de Economía Feminista* conference that has been organized every two years in Spain since 2005.

As its name indicates, Feminist Economics draws on feminism and economics and is a part of academic feminism, which also includes other disciplines like philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology, law, etc. It should be made clear, too, that this is not a monolithic current of thought, and could not be, given that there is no single feminism or a single vision of the economy.

However, there are some common elements within this current. So, there is general agreement that the final goal of economic activities should be the **sustainability of life**, this being understood as the broad process of reproducing life, which requires both material resources and contexts and relationships of care and affection (Picchio 2001; Carrasco 2009). This process includes, then, the satisfaction of human needs, both material and emotional, in sustainable social and environmental surroundings, for which it is necessary to include both the quality of human relationships and the condition in which we will leave the planet to future generations. The notion of the sustainability of life can be seen as the antithesis of endless accumulation and profit and, although it alludes to human life, it can be extended to all forms of life. Seeking sustainability means organizing reproduction, production and exchanges so that all forms of life can survive in the best conditions, with justice and equality.

Therefore, it is based on a broad definition of economy. It is considered that its object of analysis is the set of links that people establish in order to organize their social relationships linked to the subsistence and material reproduction of the life of the human species, particularly emphasizing the fact that these are also emotional relationships of mutual support and cooperation. In this way, Feminist Economics brings to light the importance of the recognition of life cycles, and of the need human beings have for the care and attention of other people from when we are born until we die, in order to be healthy and have quality of life.

In recent decades, Feminist Economics has tackled many questions and here we would like to focus on three inter-related matters: the questioning of basic economic categories based on its commitment to the sustainability of life; the role of unequal relations in the economy; and the commitment to change to more just and equitable societies.

Figure 5. Central propositions of Feminist Economics

Commitment to sustainability		Analysis of inequalities		Goal of social transformation
Sustainability of life	Conceptual breaks	Analysis of local and global realities	Diversity of women	Public policies for change

A. Sustainability of life

Criticism of the androcentric view of the economy has led to a questioning of the basic analytical categories, for example the concept of work, economic activity, wellbeing and development. One very important contribution has been that of questioning the concept of work, a central element of commercial activity, which conventional economics has considered implicitly or explicitly as synonymous with employment (Folbre 1995; Himmelweit 1995; Carrasco 1999). Work is not just employment (salaried or self-employed labour) and it also includes unpaid work in that the concept of work includes all those activities that are intended to produce goods and services to satisfy people's needs. This questioning of the narrow concept of work has meant breaking open the borders of the economy and taking analysis beyond the market. Doing this also breaks the dichotomous view of the world (activity/inactivity; value/no value; economic activities/non-economic activities; commercial work/non-commercial labour; public sphere/private sphere) making visible the connections between the commercial sphere and the non-commercial one (Dalla Costa 2009).

This reconsideration of work has led to an opening up of the "black box" of **households** by means of multiple analyses of the productive and emotional activities carried out in them. These tasks constitute a fundamental basis for the survival of the species and people's quality of life, without ignoring the power relations that occur in the home or the strategies for conflict resolution created there[4]. In this regard, it has been found that it is generally households that, in the last instance, readjust the economic system and some of those readjustments, principally those that occur in times of crisis, can be especially detrimental to women. It is clear that there are and always have been profound tensions between production and reproduction and these tensions must also be taken into consideration in the debate about development models.

As a result of these reflections, it has been concluded that *homo economicus*, that figure who is so well known in economics schools, where he is presented as absolutely rational, selfish, independent, self-sufficient, not too old or too young, always active in the market and who seeks personal wellbeing exclusively by means of economic profit,

4 A contributor to this study was Amartya Sen, one of the founders of Human Development thinking, especially with his 1990 work.

does not exist. Far from being this stereotyped prototype, all people are dependent and need care throughout their lives, although the intensity of that need obviously varies during the life cycle. It is also undeniable that occasionally the need for care is greater, as is the case with people with different capacities or who are in general dependent. Looking after dependent people requires a great human investment in care and, while most of that care is done by women without payment being offered in return, as if that work were the natural result of affection or love, this work is an important source of inequality with respect to gender (Nussbaum 2012). Care, in general, and the care of dependent people in particular, will be one of the major questions of this century, which in some circles is already starting to be known as the century of care.

It is curious, to say the least, that when analyzing the family with economic criteria (which is what the Nobel laureate Gary S. Becker did in his *New Home Economics*), the selfishness that governs the lives of economic agents is only reserved for some members, since others are supposed to be generous. One of the most questioned elements of the "Beckerian family" is the function of family utility or wellbeing. Faced with the impossibility of adding up individual functions in order to build one that represents the interests of all family members, Becker proposed the theorem of altruism, according to which the altruistic "head of the family" incorporates the functions of wellbeing of the other members into his function of utility. This approach not only conceives the family as a harmonious institution without conflicts of interests, but would mean accepting the order of group preferences as those of a representative individual, "the benevolent dictator". Put another way, the figure of benevolent dictator would be none other than the translation of the dominant patriarchal form of family organization.

This benevolent dictator and that family behaviour contradict a basic principle of neoclassical economics, the principle of methodological individualism. Evidently, the benevolent dictator would only be such at home, and when leaving home, in a strange transformation reminiscent of the case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, he would be dispossessed of his benevolence and in the commercial public space he would exclusively seek his own interest. So, we insist that the "altruistic family" acts not only to legitimize inequalities between women and men but also to justify that this assumption cannot be used in the market. In this way, the conceptual dualism between the market (where it is supposed that all seek their own interest) and the ideal family where harmony and altruistic rules reign is reinforced. It cannot be denied that we are rational and selfish beings, but we cannot accept the premise that these characteristics completely govern our lives. Values such as solidarity, complementarity, justice and reciprocity are important in all spaces, including the market.

Focussing on unpaid care work, these days almost nobody questions the importance of this work in terms of people's wellbeing, although it is not yet included in most economic analyses. In this regard, the authors of the Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (from now on, the

Sarkozy Report) state that "Many services that households produce for themselves are not recognized in official income and production measures, yet they constitute an important aspect of economic activity." So "more and more systematic work in this area should be undertaken. This should start with information on how people spend their time that is comparable both over the years and across countries". (Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi 2009) Therefore, the questioning of the work concept also involves the questioning of the **wellbeing** concept, traditionally linked to maximizing utility and the growth of per capita gross domestic product.

In many countries of the global North, in recent decades, significant changes have occurred in terms of the provision of care in the home, changes directly related to the mass incorporation of women into the labour market. Women have gradually abandoned the role of full-time carers, although this has not brought either the disappearance of non-commercial work or men's co-responsibility in it. There have been many different responses to these changes and, attempting to summarize them by linking them to the above-mentioned models, it can be said that in some places (the minority) there has been a public response that has considerably increased the provision of public care services (the Nordic model); in others the public response has opted for measures to facilitate greater compatibility (in practice, for women) between "outside" work and "inside" work (modified main sustaining model); finally, in those countries where there has been no clear public response, private solutions have involved women working half a day in each kind of work (maternal part-time employment model), double or triple shifts for women or resorting to family networks or hiring people (almost always poor women who are often immigrants) to carry out this work (Mediterranean model) (Larrañaga, Jubeto and de la Cal 2012).

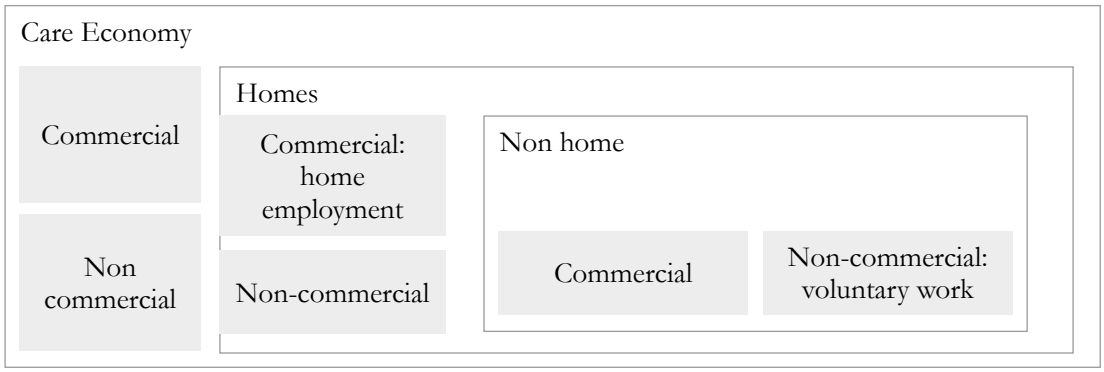
The resource of hiring immigrant women for the care of people and to carry out housework is at the root of what is known as "**global care chains**" that can be understood as another manifestation of globalization, in this case, of care. The links that make up the chain are women, mainly from poor countries, who come to care for and work in homes in the North (although this also happens among countries in the South) and they often leave their children in the care of other women, sometimes of the same family and sometimes hired in an unstable way, who themselves have moved in order to find job opportunities (Orozco 2007, 2010). Two crises have affected the formation of these global care chains: firstly, the social reproduction crisis in poor countries that obliges many women and men to migrate in search of an income that allows them to live in better material conditions and also the care crisis in the countries of the global North.

Although the role of homes is crucial in the sense that it is there where economic activity becomes wellbeing on a day-to-day basis, households are not always harmonious, conflict-free spaces, as they have been represented by some well-known economists, like the aforementioned Becker. Homes are also spaces that are profoundly marked by unequal gender relations that are, for example, at the root of episodes of violence against women.

Translating the focus of analysis beyond the commercial has involved not only opening up the debate about unpaid/paid work carried out at home, but also a greater interest in all those agents who, together with capitalist companies and the State, generate resources. So, currently, there is great interest in "other forms of economy" like the social and solidarity economy[5] or the peasant economy and their role in the quest for wellbeing. At this time of financial and economic crisis, certain experiences (cooperatives, local currencies, time banks...) that are aimed at breaking down the traditional borders between the monetary world and the non-monetary one, and which focus on people's needs, are becoming stronger and more relevant.

In summary, the cycles of human **care** have essentially been laid down in homes and in the unpaid work of women, although it is important not to forget, and even less in these times of crisis, uncertainties and changes, that care is not only carried out in homes, but also outside the house and this care involves the private sector, companies and organizations that are part of the social and solidarity economy. What is more, the links among citizens in the different spheres are very close and it is very important to analyze them and make them visible.

Figure 6. Spaces of the care economy



Emphasizing care outside the home in these unsettled times is particularly important because crises are times of change and in this sphere it is very possible that care workloads are being transferred from the public sector to households, but also to the market. It is more than questionable that companies governed by criteria linked exclusively to economic profit assume the management and provision of services that are essential to wellbeing and, even more serious that such provision involves financial organizations governed by very short-term criteria. We believe that, in this respect, it is interesting to reflect on the role that, for example, social and solidarity economy-related organizations should have in the provision of care.

5 A document on this subject has been written as part of this study.

B. Inequalities

Of the many gender inequalities, it is important to highlight the discrimination that women have to face in the socioeconomic sphere (both in the domestic productive domain, in that of care, and that of commercial work), and in the political sphere (levels of participation in the political decision-making processes that directly influence our conditions of life).

Unequal **gender** relations constitute a structural variable of the first order that affects all social processes and that organizes the whole socioeconomic system, conditioning dynamics at all levels, at the micro level, the meso level and the macro level. At the **micro level**, gender affects individual processes, in homes and in companies. Focussing on **homes**, Amartya Sen, for example, considers that the domestic unit is a place of cooperation and conflict. Cooperation occurs when contributing to family wellbeing. Many activities contribute to the household's prosperity (income, crops, housework...). However, conflict occurs more in terms of sharing out time, access to and control of assets and decision-making regarding these, so the final decisions reflect the power of negotiation of the household's members.

At the **meso level**, gender conditions the workings of the labour markets which, segregated by sex, bring different and unequal employment opportunities and conditions. Women's participation in the labour market has been essential for economic independence because employment is, in most cases, the main (and only) source for obtaining the income needed to acquire the goods and services we need. However, women's access to the market has not occurred in equal conditions, and inequalities in the workplace are one of the clearest and most universal examples of discrimination against women. It has to be said that when we tackle labour analysis from a gender perspective, it is done from our point of view, from the European point of view. So, when we talk about employment, explicitly or implicitly, we are referring to salaried jobs that are very common in our context, but which are far rarer in the global South. For many people, the word "job" evokes a male worker who has an employer, also a man, and who is paid a regular salary. However, most workers in the poorest countries are outside the framework of the employer/employee relationship.

So, in our geographical context, having a job is crucial for most women and men and it is so essentially because it is a source of economic resources. However, in societies like ours a job is much more than a source of earnings and not having one means much more than simply not having an income: this situation creates a loss of identity, frustration, depression, etc.

Despite the great diversity both of women and regions, there are some characteristics that can be considered common to the immense majority of cases and these are indicated here:

Figure 7. Gender inequalities at work

Les participation by women in the labour market

- the activity gap has been closing, but it still exists
- the forms of participation in the market by women and men are still different

Job segregation (the importance of stereotypes)

- greater concentration in few service activities, ones often related to care (horizontal segregation)
- little presence of women in management positions (glass ceiling/vertical segregation)

Greater Job Instability

- higher unemployment levels (although not always) and lover protection in unemployment situations
- higher occurrence of part-time employment, since this is sometimes understood as a kind of work/life reconciliation mechanism
- higher occurrence of informal employment, especially in the South
- higher occurrence of temporary employment

Lower salaries, explained by

- inequalities in training and education
- differences in experience and length of service
- occupational segregation, that is to say, lower value given to positions held by women

Source: Own elaboration.

At the **macro level**, firstly, major macroeconomic aggregates such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) respond to a very narrow and male conception of the economy and, secondly, important policies at the macro level, such as fiscal policies, social policies, exchange rate, trade policies, etc. are not gender neutral either. They are not because in the end they condition and affect people's lives and since the **conditions and positions of women** and men are different, policies can also have unequal effect. However, if decisions at the macro level have repercussions on the micro level, it is no less true that micro level decisions can eventually affect the macro level.

Often the gender roles and stereotypes that continue to have crucial importance lie behind the decisions taken at these different levels. Stereotypes have a picture of women as more apt for certain jobs and more of a burden in others, more interested in private matters and less in public ones, with different styles of work and leadership, etc. The importance and the strength of stereotypes is not a trivial matter. These stereotypes, which are out of people's control, nonetheless affect them and usually determine the terms of their interaction with other members of society, which contributes to the perpetuation of inequalities. In the Regional Report for

Latin America and the Caribbean (UNDP LAC 2010), mention is made of research into the "stereotype threat" which shows that people's performance in specific tasks was undermined when it was emphasized the idea of them belonging to a group whose social stereotype is linked to being less able to carry out the task in question. The cases analysed document poorer performance by people of African descent in Intelligence Quotient (IQ) tests and poorer results, relatively speaking, achieved by women in mathematics tests when, moments before carrying out the tests, belonging to this ethnic group or the female sex, respectively, was highlighted. The persistence of stereotypes and the difficulty of eradicating them are the reasons why, for example, the European Commission (COM 2009) considered the fight against stereotypes as paramount when looking to achieve the real equality of women and men.

However, it cannot be forgotten that if women and men occupy unequal positions it is no less true that there is not homogeneity within groups of women and men. We emphasize the **diversity** of women (and men) because they are often presented as homogenous and stereotyped, and when analyzing gender inequalities statistics are used which are figures that reflect average values behind which very different realities are hidden. The situation of women varies a great deal from one country or region to another, but inequalities in the level of access to resources, the full exercise of rights, etc. also occur within the local level. Inequalities among women make those discourses that attribute single interests to "women" dubious. What is more, sometimes the interests of some women can be self-contradictory.

Evidently, gender inequalities are intersected by many others, such as those resulting from social class, place of origin, ethnicity, age, etc. Therefore, it is important, especially when public policies are analysed, to go beyond generalizations and avoid, as much as possible, talking about women (and men) as if this were a uniform group. What is more, inequalities among women, which have always been significant, are growing and many crises, as is the case at present, can increase these inequalities. The commitment of Feminist Economics to progress towards more equitable societies should promote an interest in groups of disadvantaged women and promote studies that focus on these groups.

C. Social transformation and public policies

Feminist thought grants great importance to the understanding of inequalities, obviously with the goal of overcoming them. What is sought is social transformation through an economy that generates conditions in which people can live well, and do so in egalitarian and just societies.

However, contributions and analyses made from a gender perspective should be contextualized in the local reality because knowledge is not created out of nothing, but is situated; that is to say, it is determined by the economic and social context of a certain historical moment and it is enough to say that realities, whether local or

global ones, are changing, and in times of crisis these changes are more abrupt. This is intimately related to the global/local debate looked at in other documents that form part of this study.

The interaction between the creation of thought and action is, then, very important for change. In this regard, the most common thing is that theory is produced in the North and consumed in the South, where attempts have been made to instrumentalize it and apply it (León 2009). Even so, it is important to recognize that significant changes have been taking place and the North's monopoly in the creation of analytical tools and political proposals is breaking. This is, without doubt, an advance, because although Feminist Economics has brought to light the androcentric features of other currents of economic thought and has disputed them, it is probable that other features have been created and what has been mainly elaborated has been a Feminist Economics focussing essentially on women of a certain profile (white, from the North, middle-class, heterosexual, etc.) and this has been sometimes presented as a universal and objective current. One example could be the notion of employment used (and with it the distinction between paid and unpaid work) which is much more appropriate to the experience of middle-class Western women with clearly defined working hours, than to many women of the South. That is to say, academic production on the subject of unpaid work and its relationship with commercial labour has been based on a concept of employment that corresponds essentially to the countries of the North. This also means that some instruments that have been disseminated in order to understand the relationships between the commercial and the non-commercial spheres are also more appropriate for reflecting the reality of some countries than for that of others. Something similar occurs when the agents involved in care are identified: we always refer to homes, companies and the State, but we often forget the role played by communities in the provision of care. This "forgetting" of the community sphere is probably closely linked to the way we live our lives at present.

It is appropriate, then, to wonder whether the academic production of Feminist Economics has not also suffered from reproducing certain features, possibly classist and ethnocentric features. Indicating such features is not about revealing weaknesses, but rather being consistent with the idea that context is important and can also be very enriching because naming other realities "is the only way of increasing the range of options for imagining other possible worlds" (UN Women 2012).

This diversity, combined with the unequal reality of women and men, has led to a questioning of public policies' neutrality because it is considered that policies have an impact on the relations between women and men. Given this situation, it will be vital to promote policies that are beneficial in terms of gender equity since equality is a key element of wellbeing and development, and not a secondary result. It was precisely in the field of development aid where, in the early 1970s, the pioneering discussion took place about the neutrality of policies with regard to gender relations.

1.2. Ecofeminist contributions[6]

> For ecofeminists, from the ecological point of view, equality for women, for the working class and for racially and (neo-) colonially oppressed peoples, is not possible via economic growth and development.
>
> (Mellor 1993; Mies and Shiva 1993)

Faced with the ecological crisis that the planet has been experiencing over the last few decades, and which is deteriorating due to a lack of measures by the international bodies and most of the world's governments to change patterns of production, distribution and consumption, the link between feminist and ecologist proposals is becoming closer every day. The feminist approach that puts the sustainability of life and relationships between women and men at the centre of its economic analysis has many points of connection with the ecologist approach in favour of the life of the planet, of which we not only form a part, but regarding which we constitute a species that strongly influences its current direction. In this analysis we consider that ecofeminism has contributed reflections of great value, some of which we set out in summarized form below.

Ecofeminism came about as a social movement critical of the dominant economic system in the mid-1970s, as part of the wave of feminism that arose in the 60s and also the ecologist movement of the time. In the words of Mary Mellor[5] (2000) ecofeminism is "a movement that sees a connection between the exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and oppression of women". As such, it has taken elements from the ecologist movement and from the feminist one, involving a challenge to both of them. In the words of Vandana Shiva (2006), ecofeminism is a feminist philosophy and practice that is born from the conviction that the system "emerged, is built upon and maintains itself through the colonisation of women, of 'foreign' peoples and their lands and of nature" and considers the subordination of women and the exploitation of nature as two sides of the same coin: the subordination of life to the priority of obtaining economic profit.

Ecofeminists tend to see the natural world, including humanity, as interconnected and interdependent, and insert the role played by gender inequality into their analysis of ecological crises, given that men and women maintain a different relationship with the natural world. Ecological impacts affect bodies differently and, given the reproductive capacity of women, the effects of capitalist activity, including pollution, affects them uniquely and so they are more aware (or can be) of the consequences of alterations of the ecology on human bodies and, therefore, on our quality of life.

In the first decades of ecofeminist reflection, some of its positions were questioned as tending towards an essentialist universalism, given that some authors defended the fact that, given that it is women who give life, there is a special relationship between

6 This section is based on the book by Mary Mellor (2000): *Feminismo y ecología*. Siglo XXI.

them, and only them, and the natural world. This generated rejection and fear by essentializing and naturalizing both women and nature. This resistance, however, reacted to both radical/cultural feminism, and that of a feminist spirituality, as well as ecofeminism based on materialist or socialist feminism, thereby ignoring the different currents and approaches within ecofeminism.

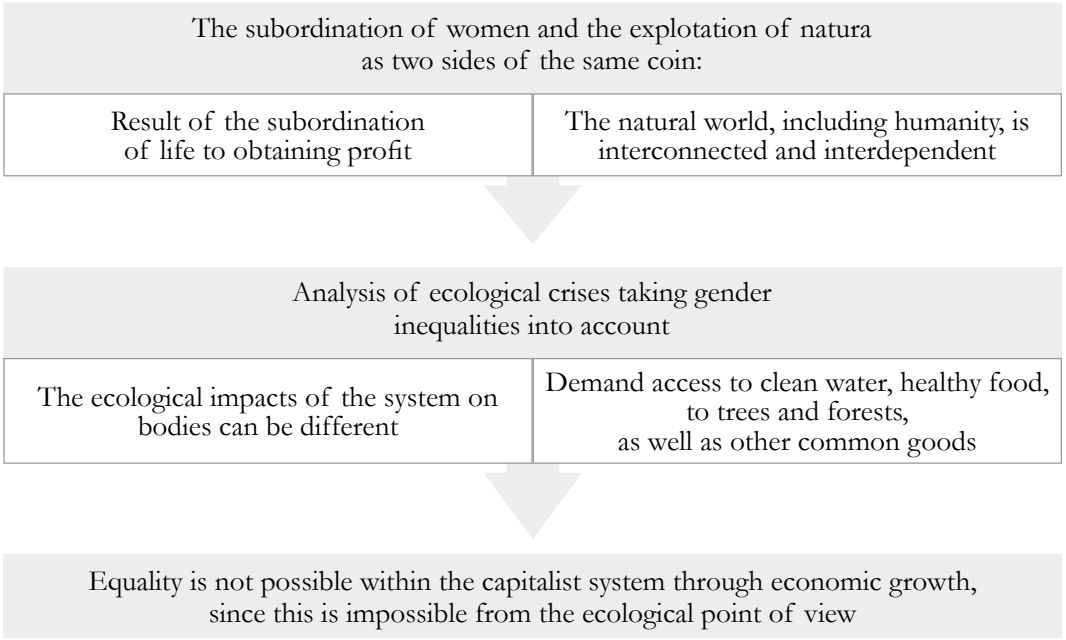
Despite their differences, ecofeminists share a criticism of the feminism that seeks equality within the capitalist system, through economic growth and "development" for women, given that this is not possible from the ecological point of view (Mellor 1993; Mies and Shiva 1993). Furthermore, ecofeminists share the view that the natural world, of which humanity forms a part, has its own dynamic, beyond human "construction" or control.

Their criticisms of the capitalist economic system include those of the effects on health and life of toxic industrial products and waste (agrochemical pesticides, nuclear waste, the military industry...), which have been important in some of the struggles of a significant part of the ecofeminist movement in the North. In the South, demands have been oriented more towards access to clean water, healthy food, trees and forests, as well as other common goods, whose privatization and sometime destruction, has accelerated processes of poverty and illness in whole communities.

In general, it has been the ecofeminists of the South who have most questioned the maldevelopment exported from the North because of its direct consequences on the daily lives of millions of women. Shiva (1995), for example, considers that her ecofeminism is based on the observation that "for poor, rural women of the South, their link with the natural world is the reality of their daily lives; all struggle is ecological struggle", since it is they, as well as the environment, who are experiencing the costs of developmentalist processes. Furthermore, women concerned with the growing seriousness of ecological problems also question and consider the intersections that exist among these processes, racism and the lack of women's representation.

In these analyses, another interesting element is the participatory component in proposals to go beyond the negative practices of predatory developmentalism. The different ecofeminist visions share a view of the links between women and nature, as well as the notion that human beings belong to the ecological world, since we are part of it. However, the social relations that women and men have developed have influenced our relationship with the other creatures on the planet. Therefore they demand analyses situated in the social and economic reality in each geographical context, bearing in mind the intersections of the different facets of the subjectivities of women and men of diverse groups and the power relations within these groups, elements that are all very relevant in order to find out not only how they sit within an environment, but the possibilities that their voices and demands will be listened to, and that they manage to transform the serious ecological problems that we currently face.

Figure 8. Key points of ecofeminism



Source: Own elaboration.

So, analyses and proposals related to Local Human Development (LHD) or the capability approach should pay particular attention to the many and diverse practices of women and men who demand their own goods and communal spaces, their resources, their ways of life, their freedoms, their dignity, their identities and their peace, given that they are a good reflection of the living cultures that exist on the planet and which provide us with clues about how to organize our lives, at the political, economic and cultural levels (Shiva 2006).

In short, the rawness of the ecological crisis and the social crises, as well as creating an excessive load of tasks and care that have to be supported by the poorest women –who are those who are suffering most from the different ways in which the crisis is affecting lives–, has promoted dialogue between feminism and ecologism. As a result of this communication it can be seen that ecofeminist reflections make contributions aimed at empowering women and their capacity for social transformation in a world that is in danger, ecologically speaking. This learning can be very important to add depth to the capability approach, since many women in the world are raising their voices against processes that are destroying their habitat and their ways of life, driven by a developmentalism that adopts different forms (neoextractivism, the privatization of forests, land, water...). In this context we have to bear in mind that the term "development" should be understood with caution, since there is a very strong tendency to identify it with the maldevelopment and developmentalism that destroys the natural world and exploits men and women, upon whom fall the consequences of a system of capitalist, patriarchal and racist domination that is questioned more strongly each day.

1.3. Contributions from postcolonial feminism

> The interminable question, from the point of view of women of other cultures, hardly touched on, if at all, by the intersection of the different axes that make up identities: race, ethnicity, class, sexual tendency and others, seems to confirm the fact that the racism and classism of Western feminism are matters that have not yet been resolved.
>
> Maite Lorente (2005)

An important part of the development economics promoted by European and North American authors, or those from former European colonies educated in the metropolises, has been characterized for many years by a view of the people of the South as inferior beings that need to travel the same path of "progress" and "development" as the North, following its steps and processes. Although criticisms of this viewpoint have been made since decades ago, it still survives in international development institutions. Furthermore, in academia there is a feeling of superiority of the knowledge produced in the North, which is also expressed in its evaluations about "others", reflecting patterns of thought characteristic of the colonial period. For this reason, more and more Southern authors talk about the "**coloniality of power**" as the global hegemonic language of power set up since the conquest of America, which articulates race and labour, space and people, in accordance with the needs of capital and for the benefit of European whites (Quijano 1992; Escobar 2007). This criticism links the mode of capitalist production with the racism that prevailed for centuries in the colonies, which has survived among the dominant elites in the independent states and which has shifted to other social strata through its status as the hegemonic thought that has impregnated the social fabric.

Postcolonial thought has arisen out of these kinds of reflections and so denounces the relations of domination that have been built since the European conquests of peoples around the world. These conquests involved a creation of social relations of domination that gave rise to the "creation of identities linked to corresponding hierarchies, places and social roles, which were constituent of these identities, and, as a result, to the pattern of colonial domination that was imposed. (...) Race and racial identity were established as basic instruments of social classification of the population" (Quijano 2000), and acted to grant legitimacy to the relations of domination imposed by the conquests.

From the time of American colonization and its extension to other continents, a "Eurocentric perspective of knowledge" was produced, and with it the idea of **race** was constructed as a naturalization of these colonial relations of domination between Europeans and non-Europeans. These theoretical constructions were used to legitimize already established ideas and practices of relations of superiority/inferiority between the dominated and the dominant. This hierarchized view of human relations between different cultures is strongly linked to another, older instrument of domination, which is the intersexual or **gender** one (Quijano 2000).

African-American feminist women have carried out their own analyses of the racist effects of colonial thought by analyzing the liberal feminism that spread through the United States from the 1960s and 1970s. These women did not identify with the feminism advocated by middle-class North American white women (unsatisfied with their way of life), given that, in their writings, these women did not denounce many of the oppressions experienced by black women in the USA, yet nonetheless, they made a supposedly global and unifying analysis that excluded other realities and problems. These reflections led them to defend the view that gender oppression did not bring all women down to the same level, since there were other specific oppressions of distinct groups of women that should be analyzed together. So, in 1981 Angela Davis published *Women, Race and Class* which became one of the indispensable works of African American feminism. In 1983, bell hooks (the pseudonym of Gloria Watkins) wrote *Aint I a Woman?,* (inspired by a speech given by the abolitionist Sejourney Truth) which rejects the idea that, according to her, is alive in contemporary feminism, that the root of all problems is the patriarchy, and that the eradication of sexist oppression would mean the elimination of all other forms of oppression. In the opinion of both writers, talking about the patriarchy and not about racism allowed white feminists to continue to act as exploiters and oppressors. **Sexism, racism and class exploitation** constitute interrelated systems of domination; the "paradigm" of race, sex and class, and not just sex, determines the status of female identity.

Within this black feminist tradition, to which writers such as Angela Davis, Alice Walker, Audre Lorde, Patricia Hill Collins and Barbara Smith, among others, belong, a milestone was the *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men But Some of Us Are Brave* anthology, an essential work when it comes to understanding the complaints and proposals of these authors regarding the interrelations of domination systems.

These women and others from other ethnicities, including mestiza, chicana and latina backgrounds, are all urged to practice "feminisms from and crossed by borders", given the complex intersections that constitute the relations of subordination faced by women who are not white, middle class, heterosexual and urban. This "**feminist border thought**" analyses, together with gender relations, those of class, racism, lesbophobia, the effects of colonization, decolonization and transnational migrations, among others. There are many inspiring authors of this border feminism. Among them, three who have been very relevant for us in this regard are Gloria Anzaldúa, whose work "Borderlands, La Frontera: The New Mestiza" (1987) has been crucial in the comprehension of this complex reality, as well as Francesca Gargallo, whose most recent work (2013) is *Feminismos desde Abya Yala*, and Silvia Marcos, with her work on *Zapatista feminism* (Marcos 2010).

Paraphrasing Liliana Suárez Navaz and Rosalva Aída Hernández Castillo in their presentation of the collective publication *Descolonizando el Feminismo: Teorías y Prácticas desde los Márgenes*, we could say that **postcolonial feminism** arises from the need to create a political space characterised by the questioning of the legacies of domination, which

also aims to imagine other cartographies of possible resistance. These intend to "build bridges of communication among feminist traditions that have not been sufficiently represented in academic feminist literature, hegemonized by theoretical production from the United States and Europe. These contributions question ethnocentric feminist viewpoints that had not considered the articulation between gender and race or between cultural identities and gender identities, or the close links among racism, imperialism and patriarchal ideologies and practices" (Suárez and Hernández 2004).

One of the main criticisms is the deformed outlook that Northern thinking, including liberal feminism, has of women of the South. So, for example, Mohanty considers that Western feminism has dedicated itself to "producing/re-presenting a composite, singular 'Third World Woman' –an image which appears arbitrarily constructed, but nevertheless carries with it the authorizing signature of Western humanist discourse" (Mohanty 1987). In the same way, the academic world of the North has created a stereotyped woman of the "Third World" that is an undifferentiated "other", oppressed by both her gender and by underdevelopment.

Another of the major concerns in this area is related to recognition and redistribution, given that many postcolonial feminists link their intellectual development to the theoretical proposals of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, carrying on from them an interest in analysing the effects of **imperialism, colonialism and racism** in their textual and discursive manifestations, as well as in exploring the different strategies of resistance produced by these forms of knowledge-power. In this regard, both Mohanty and Al Saadawi have situated feminist analyses within these intersections in an attempt to show the complexity of the oppression carried out by global, heteropatriarchal and racist capitalism on different groups of women who face multiple expressions of domination.

The decolonizing task of many of the authors of these feminist currents deals with not only knowledge produced in the West, "but also within the same political movements of which some of them are a part, which have tended to reproduce the colonizer's representations and exclusions" (Suárez and Hernández 2004). Postcolonialism condemns, then, "**internal colonialism**", that is to say, the domination of one culture by another, the supremacy of a rationality, an institutionality, and in general one social system over other rationalities and systems for reproducing social life[7].

Among the achievements of "feminism of colour" is putting on the feminist agenda "the opening of discursive closures that assert the primacy of, for example, class or gender, above other axes of differentiation", given that "it questions the construction of these privileged signifiers as autonomous unified nucleuses" (Avtar Brath 2004, cited in Quiroz 2011). In this regard, its reflection with respect to border-identities,

7 Chávez, Patricia et al. (2011): *Despatriarcalizar para descolonizar la gestión pública. Cuadernos para el debate y la descolonización*. Bolivia

the proposal to think of colonialism not as a historical period but as a relationship of power between different kinds of knowing, and the call to reconsider our feminisms from a recognition of diversity, taking into consideration that some differences have been or are the result of the relations of domination of women by women, enrich not only feminism but also social analyses and the possibilities of social transformation. Racial, sexual or social differences must be conceptualized on political and ideological terrain and not only on that of the individual conscience.

Figure 9. Critical contributions of postcolonial feminism

Criticises the "coloniality of power" as a global hegemonic model of power set up from the beginnings of European conquest, which articulates race and labour, space and people.

- Criticises the "Eurocentric perspective of knowledge" with which the idea of race was created as a naturalization of colonial relations of domination
- Gender has been another crucial instrument of domination in order to support hierarchized human relations

Criticizes the feminism advocated by white, middle class women from the North for making analyses that aim to be global but do not include problematic realities

- Rejects the idea that the patriarchy is the root of all problems, and that the eradication of sexist oppression would lead to the elimination of other forms of oppression
- The "paradigm" of race, ethnicity, sex and class, and not only sex, determines the status of female identity

Border thought is in harmony with the critical thinking of women of colour, defined as that which takes the intersection between race and gender as a point where coloniality is embedded. Its critical readings and proposals contain learnings that we consider should be taken into account when analysing the different social realities, some of which are given here for reflection:

- Trying to understand culture and identities without taking the global political and economic system into account perpetuates neo-colonial domination.
- In studies on culture and identity, in which "the other" is analysed, the most common tendency is to polarize differences between a static North and a static South, forgetting specificities within both categories.
- The tendency to homogenize identity stereotypes is one of the patterns most used within the field of international cooperation and specifically on gender and development programmes.

In short, postcolonial feminism is not simply a subset of postcolonial studies or a variety of feminism. It is an intervention that is changing the configuration of both postcolonial studies and feminist studies. Postcolonial feminism is an exploration of the intersections of colonialism and neo-colonialism with gender, the nation, class, race, and sexualities in the different contexts of the lives of women, including their subjectivities, jobs, sexuality and rights, which obviously requires a transdisciplinary analysis.

1.4. Contributions from radical institutionalism

> The ownership of women begins in the lower barbarian stages of culture, apparently with the seizure of female captives (...) From the ownership of women the concept of ownership extends itself to include the products of their industry, and so there arises the ownership of things as well as of persons.
>
> Thorstein Veblen (1899)

With the aim of understanding the processes by which the many discriminations experienced by women are reproduced and the difficulties with eradicating them in the medium term, the old institutionalist school and the later contributions of radical institutionalism offer us a series of instruments that can be used to situate Local Human Development processes (and resistances for advancing towards them) from an evolutionist and transformational perspective.

The starting point of the analysis of what is known as old institutionalism consists of underlining the relevance of institutions in our individual and group behaviours, as well as the role they play in social transformation processes by being closely linked to the social dynamics that are set up in a territory. Something that is revealing in this regard is the concept of **institution** used by institutionalist economics, given that it is understood to mean those habits, norms, customs and languages that people draw on in order to be able to interact, since all those norms, including language, are institutions in themselves (Hodgson 2007).

This view of institutions also underlines the **specificity of territories** and their historical development, when analysing the evolution of each human group and its inter-relations with neighbouring peoples, as well as the proposals they implement or wish to make reality in order to be able to live in the way most in conformity with their personal and collective realization.

Although the institutionalist school does not constitute a monolithic form of thought, since it has no single and unified theoretical body [8], nonetheless, as a whole it defends the view that the starting point of economic analysis is a **theory of the processes, developments and learnings of societies** in which their institutions and the relationships of power and distribution they sustain are key elements of the analysis.

The old institutionalist school arose at the end of the 19th century in the United States during a period of major transformations in North American socioeconomic and scientific structures[9]. Some of the most important changes were those that took place

8 Hodgson, 1989, Jennings, 1993.

9 The USA became, after the Second World War, an exemplar for development models promoted by a large number of Western intellectuals and the international organizations created at Bretton Woods (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund).

in US agriculture through its intensive commercialization and the strengthening of large companies and trade unions, basic elements of the country's industrialization (Mayhew 1999). Two of the outstanding proponents of this school were Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929) and John R. Commons (1862-1945).

The links between the institutionalist school and feminist thought have been clear from the beginning, since Veblen demonstrated a great concern for the social situation of women, and he was considered by his colleagues as a "feminist of the first order". This concern formed a part of the bases of his later social and economic criticism of the business civilization[10]. In his writings, particularly his early writings, he explicitly mentioned women and from there established what later became known as the Veblenian dichotomy. In his opinion, the activities carried out in society can be divided into two groups. Firstly, **male personal exploitation**, whose goal is property, the capture of slaves and servants, and the achievement of social status. And secondly, **female industry**, for the production of useful objects, the care of children and the ill and the arts and crafts. Veblen defined the employment of men as **pecuniary** and that of women as **industrial**. So from the beginning he was aware of the clear sexual division of labour existing in the societies he analyzed, and of the importance of the contributions made by women in social reproduction, in strong contrast and opposition to that defended by the marginalist school of the period.

In its definition of economics, the old institutionalist school opted for a broad, social concept[11], since they saw the economy as the *social organization for the provisioning of society*. "Provisioning is the process of trying to assure culturally appropriate levels of food, housing, clothing and care" (Mayhew, 1999). In the analysis of the development of the economic activities of a society, it is crucial to know the characteristics, relationships and articulations that exist among its basic organizations (homes, community organizations, commercial and business structures and the public authorities, principally).

We share the proposal offered by Veblen, which defines **institutions** as "the established habits of common thought for the generality of [human beings]" in a particular society, habits that develop over time. In other words, **institutions are shared cultural norms** that evolve in non-teleological adaptations to new circumstances and experiences. Therefore, **culture** becomes a central feature of the analyses of social realities and the proposals made, by constituting "the system of symbolic interpretation that unites human thought and action"[12]. In this regard, a society's patterns of behaviour (institutions) are culturally specific and shared by the community within which they have historically developed, and in which they continue

10 Dugger, 1994:3.

11 Feminist economists such as Julie Nelson, Nancy Folbre and Marilyn Power also use this concept of social provisioning as a starting point.

12 Jennings, 1993:113

a constant development. Therefore, if we want to know how a society develops and in which direction it is going, we will have to inquire into the **values** it shares and discover the changes these have undergone over time. The complexity of these analyses means it is important to bring to them knowledge from other social sciences, particularly anthropology, sociology, history and psychology[13].

One of the cultural factors that is crucial to the social development emphasized by this school, and which we also consider to be important, is **knowledge acquisition processes**[14]. Therefore, for example, Veblen underlined from the beginning, the fact that women were beginning to enter higher education in the USA as an indicator of changes in the period's attitudes, mainly caused by "a pragmatic, modern and industrial approach". However, he also registered the strong feeling that still existed within the universities against such a change, describing how "the sense of class worthiness, that is to say of status, of a honorific differentiation of the sexes according to a distinction between superior and inferior intellectual dignity, survives in a vigorous form in the corporations of the aristocracy of learning" (1899). In his time, this male upper social class felt that women should limit their learning to a better execution of domestic service, given that "the pursuit of knowledge was considered unfeminine". It was this which, directly or indirectly, was transmitted to the disciplines taught in the universities, discriminatory practices that lasted throughout the 20th century and in some disciplines still continue.

In this section we also find an interpretation in common with Feminist Economics about the way in which **science** is constructed, and how it is a **social construction**. So, it is broadly accepted that "science has been socially constructed to conform to a particular image of masculinity" (Nelson 1996). This realization obliges us to reflect on the different ways in which women and men are pushed to tackle knowledge and science; a matter analyzed in depth by Harding (1991). The habits of thought that reinforce the hierarchies between the supposed superiority of the male and the inferiority of the female, so rooted in the values defended by the upper classes, also coincide with the meaning of **gender relations** used by Feminist Economics and described above.

Although change is a characteristic that is intrinsic to institutions, that is to say, the social norms of thought and action, there is usually strong resistance to it, given that once a series of habits of thought is established in a society, including hierarchical and exclusive societies, these tend to be stable and remain over time. The explanation given is that this is the way people **manage life's complexity**. "Habits, routines and customs are the rules [people] use to make decisions... People tend to follow these rules because they see everyone else doing so. People also follow these rules because they

13 Another of the characteristics that the institutionalist school shares with Feminist Economics is a multidisciplinary character.

14 Being able to acquire knowledge is one of the three basic options for people in the human development approach, too.

provide a simple way to deal with the uncertainty and the complexity of everyday life" (Hodgson 1989). So, institutional norms offer stability in an uncertain world. In this way, "institutions and routines do not always act as rigidities and limits, but rather they allow decision-making and act to provide more or less reliable information with regard to the predictable actions of other people." Therefore, "in a highly complex world, and despite the uncertainty, regular and predictable behaviour is possible" (Hodgson 1989).

That people's behaviour is predictable does not mean, however, that it is fixed or immovable. So institutions change over time, given that they are socially constructed, and these changes inevitably produce conflicts given the emergence of existing power relations. In the words of Veblen: "The situation of today shapes the institutions of tomorrow through a selective, coercive process, by acting upon [people's] habitual view of things, and so altering or fortifying a point of view or mental attitude handed down from the past." (Veblen 1899). This development is not, then, a linear movement and the reforms are normally inevitable, with it being "reasonable that there be broad participation by affected groups" (Mayhew 1999).

In these processes, the goals and behaviour of agents can be moulded or reinforced by institutions, given that these play an important cognitive function. Furthermore, this influence is bi-directional, given that institutions and organizations are part of society and are in turn modified by it. In this process, the structures of these institutions are also very relevant.

Figure 10. Some basic ideas of early institutionalism

- Institutions are those habits, norms, customs and languages that people draw on in order to be able to interact.
- Institutions are very relevant to understand our individual and collective behavior as well as the processes of social transformation.
- Veblen demonstrated a great concern for the social situation of women and defined the employment of men as pecuniary and that of women as industrial.
- Change is an intrinsic characteristic to institutions, but there is usually strong resistance to it, given that once they habe been established in a society, they help people to manage life's complexity.

Current trends in feminist institutionalism and its encounters with the LHD approach

There are many basic concepts in American institutionalism that can be used to understand better the roots of the oppression of women in societies both in the North and in the South, given that it makes some very open and contextualizable analyses in which there is no single form of social development, but rather this depends on the inter-relations between the institutions and the cultural changes that take place.

The interest shown by Veblen in women's status was ignored by many of the followers of the institutionalist school until the 1990s, a time when an awareness of the importance of including gender relations and feminism in their economic analyses was recovered. One of the approaches most aware of this relationship is **radical institutionalism**, which makes some normative proposals, defending the processes of **democratic and participatory institutional change in societies** (Dugger and Waller 1992), with the goal of resolving current socioeconomic problems. Furthermore, in 1994 Peterson and Brown attempted to "show that institutional economics can provide the basis for a more feminist economics". In this regard, radical institutionalism underlines the importance of **political participation** in the processes of seeking responses to the needs and priorities of a large part of society, and not limiting this to the elite, which has all the means it needs to make itself heard and even to influence the tastes and preferences of the social majority.

Furthermore, **participatory dynamics** are seen largely as a necessity in the processes of incorporating the gender perspective into the economic policies of public authorities, as well as governance processes in the private sector. This need is also emphasized by Feminist Economics, given that in this way women recover their voice in order to shape policies in accordance with their interests and priorities. These processes are complex and not exempt from many resistances and difficulties, which have to be faced up to if the aim is for the poorest groups, which include many women, to participate too on the road to a more equitable society.

In this regard, it is useful to recover the proposal of Jennings (1993), in which she states that "From the perspective of feminist institutionalism, the solution to 'economism' is a **cultural reconnection of home, workplace and polity** that recognizes the reproductive, productive and political aspects of most human activities in all institutional settings and in all social milieux." Therefore, it is necessary to visualize the interconnections among these three classic spheres of action when analysis is made of how they interact, in order to be able to take conscious decisions aimed at resolving the socioeconomic problems that women, in general, and subaltern[15] women, in particular, must face, paying special attention to women with fewer resources, given that the **distribution of wealth** is also a central problem in today's world.

The **human development approach** also coincides with this viewpoint, considering it fundamental that men and women in a society participate in the design of projects and proposals for the future, given that they are the centre of these processes, and without their participation these lack a fundamental dimension.

15 Following Antonio Gramsci, subaltern identifies the subordinate person (or subordinate classes) dominated by the political and intellectual authority of the State (in his case, Fascist Italy). This concept has been taken up and expanded on by postcolonial feminists and applied to their realities.

2. Feminist Economics and Local Human Development: meeting points

2.1. The relations between women and men in thought on development

If Feminist Economics has criticized the partiality of economic analyses, this partiality can also be applied to the concepts of "progress" and "development", given that for decades the model to follow has set, as its principle standard, the accumulation of capital as practiced in the Western world over the last few centuries. This hegemonic pattern of behaviour has marginalized and reviled other, alternative proposals from both non-Western indigenous peoples, and from subordinate or subaltern groups, especially women from groups considered "marginal" by Western theorists.

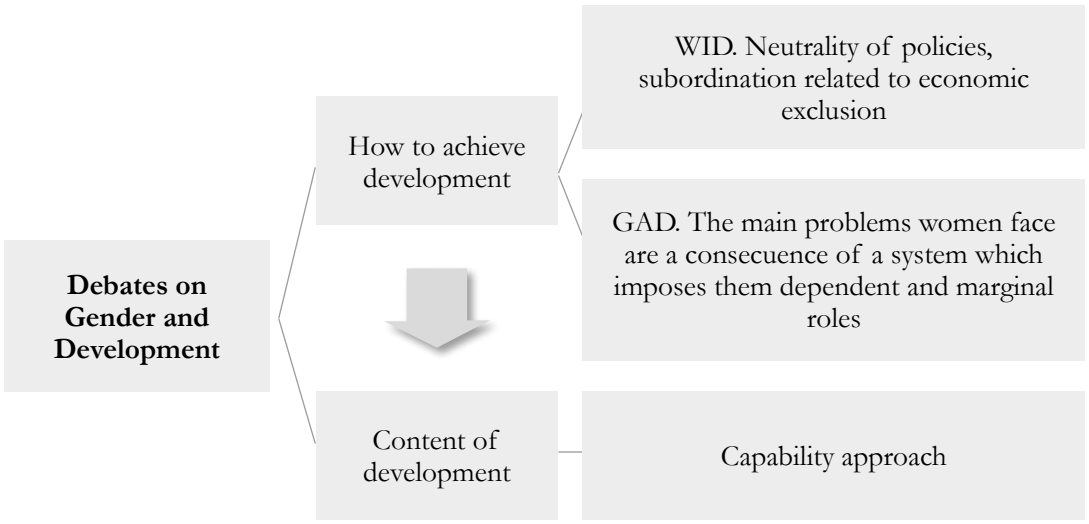
In Western discourse, and that of the main international development agencies, it can be observed that the development debate has changed its focus in recent decades. In short, it can be said that the discussion about how to achieve it has become a controversy about what its content should be. So, for many years, it was maintained that development was so closely linked to mere economic growth that both concepts were sometimes understood as synonyms, and so what was debated was which model would allow the desired level of growth, whether it should be a capitalist or a socialist-style model, and in both cases, industrialization was seen as the way to achieve it.

When what is known as Development Economics began, the concept of development that was identified with economic growth and modernization was not questioned. From the beginning, the modernizing proposal had an explicit or implicit view of the role that men and women had to play in this process. Modern men were the equivalents of the "economic" man put forward by neoclassical economic theory, since in both cases, rational behaviour was his principal characteristic, with behaviour ruled by independence, self-interest, selfishness, dynamism, capacity for innovation, competitiveness, and the capacity to assume risks. For them, economic growth and modernization bring them better working conditions, higher salaries, education and wellbeing. In the case of women, it was supposed that all the changes in the direction of modernization would benefit them, both those entering the labour market and those dedicating themselves to housework and care tasks.

However, in the early 1970s, Ester Boserup (1970), a pioneer and major writer in terms of Women in Development (WID) studies, highlighted the fact that development policies excluded women and concluded that development strategies principally benefitted men. In the second half of the 1970s and during the 1980s, based on the WID approach's criticisms, the Gender and Development (GAD) approach began to be created within the framework of the United Nations[16].

16 For an interesting introduction to this subject, see Benería, Lourdes, Brik, Günseli and Maria S. Floro (2016): *Gender, Development, and Globalization. Economics as if all people mattered*. Routledge. 2. Ed.

Figure 11. Some approaches that have arisen from the debates about gender and development



The GAD approach considers development to be a complex process influenced by political and socioeconomic forces, where relations between sexes are revealed both in the sexual division of labour and in the political, economic and cultural spheres. For this reason, in many contexts gender relations intersect with class and racial relations and the experiences of marginalization of women are analyzed, linking them to relations of power and control exercised by men over resources, assets and decisions in the policies that affect women. The inclusion of this approach was spurred by feminist women with a capacity for impact at the United Nations. However, at a later stage some of these activists complained that certain UN organizations watered down the concept, which has become a part of the gender rhetoric used by this macro institution.

2.2. The capability approach from the gender equity perspective

Different historical transformations and events, including the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, have given rise to a situation in which the capitalist system has become the only hegemonic model for the last two decades. However, it is a colossus with feet of clay, given that it has become clear that economic growth does not directly produce development, but rather it causes ever greater inequities and disparities, which produce growing social and ecological costs. Therefore, the discussion has moved to what the content of the development concept itself is[17]: economic growth *per se* or a broader framework of human development and quality of life. So, a new proposal is being constructed which considers that people must be the end, and not only the means, of development, and this is conceived as a process that broadens the options of people to live a life they consider valuable. This concept, called "human

17 The development concept itself has been questioned with post-development proposals in the South and degrowth proposals in the North.

development", has been widely disseminated in the years since it was formulated, essentially by Mahbub ul Haq, Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum.

The human development approach is also called the capability approach and it can be understood as an approach to the evaluation of quality of life and to theorizing on basic social justice. Capabilities are no more than the response to the question: what is a person capable of doing and being? Put another way, capabilities are what Sen calls "substantive freedoms", a set of opportunities (usually interrelated) to choose and act (Nussbaum 2012), and this approach is closely linked to the rights approach that includes the main spheres in which people have a right to decide about their lives.

Figure 12. The Rights-based Approach and Economic, Social, Cultura and Environmental Rights (ESCER)

Rights-based approach	What are the ESCER?
• It considers that the first step towards granting power to excluted sectors is recognizing that they are holders of rights that are obligations to the State. • The starting point is not the existence of people with needs who should be attended, but subjects with the right to demand certain benefits and conducts. • Economic, social, cultural and environmemtal rights (ESCER) are internationally recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.	• Equality between men and women. • Right to work and social security. • Right to familly protection. • Right to an appropriate standard of life for the person and her/his family, indluding food, clothing, a home and decent living conditions. • Right to physical and mental health. • Right to education. • Right to participate in cultural life, enjoy the benefits of scientific progress. • Environmental rights.

Source: Own elaboration.

In effect, a number of the central capabilities (see Figure 13) listed by Nussbaum are closely related to human rights content recognized by the international community (see Figure 12). In this regard, the language of capabilities can complement and add detail to the discourse on human rights in different ways. However, in some areas, the differences between the two approaches become visible. For example, putting the emphasis on the capability to participate politically compared with the right to vote reveals the insufficiency of this latter right, when it is limited to a mere declaration or insertion in constitutions. Another virtue of focussing on capabilities is that the distinction between the public and private spheres is blurred, which is great progress from the gender point of view. The liberal tradition has influenced the language of rights to such an extent that the non-regulation of what is considered part of private life has been "institutionalized". Lastly, another advantage of the capability approach over the rights approach is that the discourse of human rights is associated with the European Enlightenment and it is accused of privileging the "Western" perspective while, on the other hand, people ask what they are capable of being and doing in all cultures and places, and so the capability approach can easily be taken to any part of

the world. Despite this, the rights-based approach has the advantage of being simpler and easier to understand than the capability approach.

For there to be more opportunities, it is essential to develop human capabilities, that is to say, promote people's capacity to organize their lives in accordance with their personal vision of what is most profound and important (Nussbaum 2002). In general, and by way of summary, it is considered that the most essential capabilities for human development are enjoying a long and healthy life, having access to a quality education, accessing the resources needed to achieve a dignified life, and being able to participate in community life. Without these capabilities, the variety of options available is considerably limited and many of life's opportunities remain inaccessible. However, human development goes further, and other spheres of options that are fundamental to people's quality of life include the guarantee of human rights, human security, care of life and the planet, among others, all of which are necessary so that a person can be creative, productive, enjoy self-respect, develop their internal potential and the feeling of belonging to a community. In short, human development is the development of people, for people and by people.

The concern for people's ability to forge their own destiny, what Amartya Sen calls their "**agency**", is central in the capability approach and is closely linked to freedom. Sen's concept of agency is very like the strategy of **empowerment** advocated by feminist movements in the South, an important example of which is the approach created by the DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) platform. The empowerment strategy seeks the transformation of the structures of subordination with radical changes to the laws, property rights and institutions that strengthen and perpetuate male domination. From that perspective, empowerment is a power-acquisition process, understanding power as the capacity to be and express one-self of those people who are disempowered and therefore who have little control over their own lives.

Gender analysis is central in the capability approach for two reasons (Nussbaum 2012). Firstly, because these problems have a great intrinsic importance, since inequalities as regards women, in many spheres and around the world, are a great deficiency in the field of justice. Furthermore, it is a development problem because denying opportunities to women puts a brake on the advancement of many countries. Secondly, because these problems are a theoretical litmus test that illustrate clearly how the conventional approaches to development are inadequate and that the capability approach works much better.

It is vital, then, to know what the key dimensions of inequality for women are that stand in the way of greater equality between women and men. To select these dimensions, Martha Nussbaum's list of capabilities has been taken into consideration, as has the later adaptation by Ingrid Robeyns in order to adapt it to the reality of countries of the North, summarized in the following figures. Both classifications intend to express the key components of a dignified life. Since all the capabilities are central

and interrelated, we would highlight, from Nussbaum's list, the importance given to the rights of body and mind (to health, to physical integrity, to the senses, to play...), as well as relationships with other people and other creatures (senses, emotions, affiliation, other species, control over one's own environment). Robeyns pays more attention to access to work, both paid and unpaid; it is here that care is situated and so the most hidden part of care, which is the unpaid part, is highlighted; she emphasizes the capability to decide about one's use of time, and breaks down some capabilities that Nussbaum groups into a single category.

Figure 13a. Martha Nussbaum's central capabilities

Martha Nussbaum's central capabilities

1. **Life:** being able to live to the end of a normal human life, and not to have one's life reduced to something that is not worth living.
2. **Bodily health:** Being able to enjoy good health, including reproductive health, nourishment and shelter.
3. **Bodily integrity:** Being able to move freely from one place to another, safely.
4. **Senses, imagination and thought:** Being able to use the senses, to imagine, to think and to reason and to be able to do these things in a truly human way, that is to say, in an informed and cultivated way thanks to an appropriate education.
5. **Emotions:** Being able to have attachments to things and people outside of ourselves.
6. **Practical reason:** Being able to form a conception of the good and begin critical reflection with regard to planning life.
7. **Affiliation:** Being able to live with and toward others and being able to be treated like dignified beings whose value is identical to that of others.
8. **Other species:** Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants and the world of nature.
9. **Play:** Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.
10. **Control over one's (political and material) environment:** Being able to participate effectively in political choices; being able to hold property and have property rights.

Figure 13b. Ingrid Robeyns' list of capabilities

Ingrid Robeyns' capabilities

1. Life and physical health.
2. Mental health and wellbeing.
3. Bodily integrity and safety.
4. Social relations.
5. Political empowerment.
6. Education and knowledge.
7. Domestic work and unpaid care work.
8. Paid work and other projects.
9. Shelter and environment.
10. Mobility.
11. Leisure activities.
12. Time autonomy.
13. Respect (being able to be respected and treated with dignity).
14. Religion.

Capabilities that are clearly essential are access to education, to sexual and reproductive health, to care, to economic independence, to participation in decision-making,

all in a violence-free context. A number of these capabilities constitute focal areas for the UN Women entity, which also works on the peace and security, planning and national budgets, and human rights areas. These capabilities cannot be understood separately and it is evident that they are intimately related.

- ***Access to dignified care***: One of the major contributions of Feminist Economics has been visualising the need for care that we have as people, its importance for quality of life, the way in which it is organized and its relationship to market jobs and public services. Historically, the provision of care has been considered to be an eminently private question and responsibility for it has systematically fallen to women. These inequalities in the sharing of housework and care are the basis of many other inequalities, fundamentally those of an economic nature. Giving a social, political and group response to this question and resolving it in a way that does not continue to prejudice women is one of the great uncompleted tasks that countries share, and it is an essential matter for achieving a socially sustainable model. Access to dignified care is closely linked to other capabilities and forms part of those which are most relevant to equity between women and men.
- ***Access to education*:** As well as being a right linked to the full development of people, it decisively affects the opportunities and quality of life of women and men, families and groups. The effects of education on people's health levels, income, changes in family structure (related to fertility and participation in the economic activity of its members, among others), the promotion of democratic values, civilized coexistence and independent and responsible activity has been amply demonstrated. Therefore, education has a clear instrumental component for progress in the other dimensions.
- ***Access to sexual and reproductive health:*** This is a central matter in the lives of all women, especially young women. At the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994, it was established that sexual and reproductive rights are important goals in and of themselves, as well as being crucial instruments for demographic stability. Three of the most serious problems related to this capability are maternal mortality, teenage pregnancy, and voluntary terminations of these pregnancies, problems that are especially important for the poorest countries and women.
- In today's societies, ***economic independence*** is crucial to having access to the goods and services that will determine people's material wellbeing. Until relatively recently, historically speaking, the dominant family model in many societies was that of the man who worked in the market in exchange for an income while the woman took care of housework and care tasks, and was economically dependent for income on the "head of the family". In most countries, advances in economic independence have occurred with women's participation in labour. However, economic independence is a broader concept than that of income independence because it also covers aspects like access to public services or access to credit and social benefits.
- Feminism has remarked on the need to revise the concept of ***participation*** and the importance of paying attention to spheres other than the ones com-

monly focussed on, such as those located in the sphere of the everyday, which have been marginalized in studies on participation because they have not been considered as political spaces. However, it is important not to forget the risk that this brings with it of the "woman's place" in local spaces and associations being naturalized. It continues to be a priority to promote women's participation in economic and political decision-making spaces. Obviously, the decrease in the quantitative gap in decision-making, although it is a necessary condition for incorporating the plurality of women's interests, it is not a sufficient condition because the mere incorporation of women does not guarantee a firm commitment in favour of their interests.

- ***The right to live a life free of violence***: Violence against women is the extreme manifestation of discrimination and unequal power relations between men and women. Violence, in its many forms (physical, psychological, political, judicial, social...) and the threat of violence, is reproduced in almost all the spaces of women's lives: in the street, in the workplace, at school, in festive and leisure spaces, in the community and in the private space of the home. It has a strong penetration among different cultures and is reproduced due to social tolerance and the complicity of the institutions. Violence against women, due to its extent, character and nature, undermines other capabilities for women and, as a result, becomes a corrosive disadvantage for the human development of societies, as is explained below.

Figure 14. The capability approach and Feminist Economics

- Goal: Present and future wellbeing of people.
  - Sustainability of life.
- Concern for social injustices and inequalities.
  - Especially those who are subject to discrimination (because of sex, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation...) and marginalization.
- Importance of the public sector and public policies.
  - In quality of life and the struggle against inequalities.
- Critical of the traditional view of homes.
  - Homes as spaces of conflict and susceptible to public regulation.

There have been recent important contributions to the capability approach, such as those by Jonathan Wolff and Avner De-Shalit, which incorporate the concept of "**capability security**". They maintain that public policies should not be limited to providing a capability to people but should provide it in such a way that these people can have it in the future. This view of security means asking up to what point each capability is protected from the fickleness and shocks of the market, or from political interests. It also leads to reflection on more appropriate political, administrative and other forms of organization for guaranteeing this security (Nussbaum 2012).

Wolff and De-Shalit also introduce the concepts of "fertile functioning" and "corrosive disadvantage". A "**fertile functioning**" is one that also tends to favour

other, related capabilities. An example might be, in many contexts, education, because it opens a variety of different kinds of options. A "**corrosive disadvantage**" is the opposite of a fertile functioning and can be defined as a privation that has especially serious effects on other areas of life. For many women, violence is certainly a corrosive disadvantage. Investigating possible fertile functionings/capabilities and corrosive disadvantages could be important for detecting areas where public policies should intervene more appropriately (Nussbaum 2012).

There are many points in common between the capability approach and Feminist Economics, since both aim for the present and future wellbeing of women and men, what is called sustainability of life by Feminist Economics (see figure no. 14). This overlap also highlights the analysis of social injustices and inequalities, and also reveals the role played by households and public policies in the realities experienced by women and men in communities and nations and the role they could play in overcoming inequalities, based on an expansion of options that people have to live a life they consider to be worthwhile.

In this respect, Feminist Economics puts great emphasis on the fact that all capabilities, not only that of care in the non-commercial sphere, are crucial to realize people's right to care and be cared for, care understood in a broad sense (paid and unpaid; direct and instrumental, etc.). Both approaches put women and men in the centre, which means rejecting the dichotomous vision of conventional economics and accepting a multi-dimensional vision of people's lives. If it is true that people are at the centre, then their **care** will also need to be. This means, among other things, looking anew at the value of the care tasks that are carried out all over the world, particularly by women, and which are still hidden and undervalued. It would be interesting to be able to measure the economic importance of this care, in its broad sense, because a per capita indicator of such broad care could be indicative of wellbeing. This would involve carrying out a prior exercise regarding which expenses/investments/work are considered crucial to care, because, if this were not done, there would be a risk of including all paid (GDP) and unpaid activities.

We also consider that, with respect to **collective capabilities** at the institutional or organizational level, that "**collective organizations**", of whatever kind, are not animated organization, with a life that is independent of the people who constitute them, but are made up of people. In this regard it is important to revise, firstly, the role and place of women and men in organizations and particularly in decision-making. Secondly, in their commitment to change and, specifically, to changing the development model, it is necessary to put into practice gender **mainstreaming**. Evidently, the reflection could be more interesting if we identify collective organizations that are crucial to LHD. In our opinion, one could be the **social movements** and in this case it would be necessary to analyze them from a gender approach and study the proposals for transformation by feminist movements and mixed and women's organizations. Furthermore, the analysis of the existing economic structures that tend to overcome relations of oppression and develop practices of **social and solidarity economics**

also contributes to a greater depth of understanding of the realities analyzed and their potential for transformation.

Furthermore, if feminist economists have criticized the economic analysis of **homes** as spaces without conflicts of interests, etc., the capability approach has also underscored the deficiencies (in this case of the classic liberal tradition) that consider the family as an element that belongs to a "private sphere" outside the scope of social justice. It is therefore denied that there is any sphere of human life that is truly "private", in the sense that it is immune to legal regulation, although it is admitted that free human lives do require certain spaces in order to, for example, take parental decisions with regard to children. (Nussbaum 2012)

From the Feminist Economics perspective, as has already been mentioned, much importance is given to the role played by stereotypes in the perpetuation of inequalities, stereotypes that are often supported in tradition. The capability approach also tackles the obstacles that an acritical adhesion to tradition puts in the way of women's equality.

In short, the human development approach and Feminist Economics share a social view of the economy, closely linked to a concern, also shared, with social inequalities. In fact, in the 2010 *Human Development Report* it stated that "The capability approach proposed by Amartya Sen was founded on the question of which inequalities would be just or unjust".

2.3. Need for indicators for an evaluation of capabilities

If the capability approach can be considered an approach for evaluating wellbeing, it would be useful to have appropriate indicators of wellbeing in general and central capabilities in particular. An indicator is a measurement, a number, a fact, an opinion or a perception that signals a specific situation or condition and measures changes in that situation or condition over time. Indicators are always a representation of a certain phenomenon, which may fully or partially show a reality.

The Sarkozy Report, which has recently become an essential work of reference in terms of statistics and, above all, measuring wellbeing, maintains that statistical indicators are important for understanding and evaluating policies aimed at guaranteeing the progress of societies, as well as to evaluate the workings of the markets and to influence them. What is measured affects what is done, but if the measurements are defective, the decisions could be incorrect (Stiglitz, Sen, Fitoussi 2008). It is important for indicators to be appropriate in order to capture the characteristics of a specific reality, although at the same time it is important to agree on indicators in order to be able to carry out international comparisons.

Despite the unquestionable value of statistics, it is vital not to idolize them. Firstly, because they are, in the end, no more than approximations to a reality that is always much more complicated and multi-dimensional. Secondly, because it is possible that the measuring process is not always perfect, and so it is important to continue to make

progress with measuring tools and that these are adapted to an always-changing reality. Thirdly, because although it is said that statistics are neutral, it is clear that they reflect a way of seeing the world, and the fact we have profuse information about some matters and very little about others is no coincidence and this reflects the priorities of those who manage and control statistical production. So, for example, the proliferation of labour statistics and the manifest paucity of other work statistics have a reason, reflecting the central importance of employment in today's societies. Furthermore, the lack of statistics about time use means that housework and care tasks continue to be invisiblized even though they have a very direct relationship not only with people's wellbeing, but also with labour statistics and, as a result, commercial production.

Fourthly, because generally statistics are expressed as per capita averages, and so they hide great inequalities in a world that suffers from many discriminations based on social class or socioeconomic level, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation or age. Furthermore, there is a factor, sex, that crosses and permeates all groups, and so gender inequalities that occur in all societies become multiple discriminations for especially disadvantaged groups.

Lastly, it is essential to bear in mind at all times that indicators are not an end in themselves, but rather are a means for gathering more knowledge about reality and, based on this knowledge, proposing measures for change and social transformation. Sometimes, design, compilation and data analysis is such an arduous task that the goal of change, which is crucial in the feminist analysis, becomes lost.

Evidently, it is important that the indicators are adapted to the reality one wishes to study, but it is also important to have indicators that are accepted for different contexts in order to be able to carry out territorial comparisons. It is also valuable to have indicators that allow temporal comparisons to be made, and it is imperative that information collection be carried out at a "normal" time. So, for example, job figures should not be collected at a time of year when there is a lot of seasonal employment.

Having statistics that are disaggregated by sex is essential because, as has been mentioned, without statistics there do not appear to be any problems, so there is no apparent need to take steps. In the words of Hilary Rose of Bradford University, "when there are no statistics, you just get gestures. Statistics help identify problems and can monitor the effectiveness of remedies."

Gender indicators are very recent, because traditionally no distinction was made between women and men, referring only to people in general and so inequalities remained hidden. Specifically, the Beijing Platform for Action dedicated a strategic objective (H.3) to the need to prepare and disseminate data and information aimed at planning and evaluation disaggregated by sex and/or that were specific to women's realities. In this same regard, the third area of action of the 2006-2010 EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality insists on the importance of data and indicators and thus supports the production of comparable data in the EU on gender equality and statistics broken down by sex.

Gender indicators have the function of making visible social changes, in terms of gender relations, over time. Their usefulness lies in showing:

- The relative situation of women and men
- Changes that occur between women and men at different moments of time

Let it be underlined once again that it is essential that disaggregation not be taken as an end in itself, but rather as a medium, an instrument that allows improvements to be introduced into policies. In this regard, since the Beijing and Beijing +5 conferences, the UN has been highlighting the need to adopt gender indicators in order to diagnose the situation of women and men and make public policies consistent.

It is not a matter, either, of being content with the indicators available. It is necessary to make progress with proposing new indicators that adapt better to women's lives and experiences, proposing, as Cristina Carrasco says, new non-androcentric indicators.

A first classification of indicators distinguishes between:

- Simple indicators: they are a synthesis or series of basic data used to analyse some observable aspect of a particular phenomenon, referring to a single variable.
- Compound indicators: they are a "summary" figure that results from the balanced combination of different indicators of a concept and therefore makes reference to more than one variable.

An ever more common way of tackling simple gender indicators is working in terms of gaps or differences between men and women. Working exclusively in terms of gaps has some disadvantages. So, closing gaps is set as the main and only goal, and it is therefore concluded that any tendency towards a gap being closed is positive. This need not be the case because behind small or inexistent gaps there may be serious deficiencies in the situations of either men or women. Furthermore, seeking to close gaps may seem to mean that it is necessary for women to change, but in the end, by underlining women's changes, those necessary for men may be forgotten and hidden.

Simple indicators often used in economic analysis are those that reflect income and jobs. Income indicators are not usually disaggregated by sex and so salaries are usually taken as approximations.

The simple economic indicator *par excellence* is per capita GDP/income. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is an indicator that describes market production yet is used as a normative indicator of wellbeing. If per capita GDP grows, it is supposed that the population lives better, and this is not the case. Per capita GDP as a wellbeing indicator has received many criticisms and some of these are listed in the table below. It can be said, by way of summary, that for GDP it does not matter what, how, or for whom it is produced, and critics point out that the what, how and for whom are important.

Figure 15. Criticisms of per capita GDP as a wellbeing indicator

- Very narrow, economicist vision of wellbeing
- Importance of distribution: behind per capita income, major inequalities are hidden
  - Measuring income inequalities
- Flow variable (exploitation of natural resources). Taking wealth into account
- Ecologist critique: there are productions that cause harm (pollution)
- Feminist critique
- Pigou's paradox and counter paradox
- It does not discriminate among productions: all have equal effects on wellbeing
- Informal economy
- Measuring some productions better (public services measured by cost or quality improvement...)
- Importance of time (unequal working hours)

Convenience of having subjective measurements of quality of life (happiness, satisfaction, positive emotions such as cheerfulness and pride, or negative ones like suffering or agitation (Sarkozy commission 2009).

Feminist criticism underscores the fact that GDP only takes into account market production and therefore does not consider an important part of the country's production, that which takes place in homes, without direct payment and done mainly by women. The debate about evaluation and/or inclusion in GDP of non-commercial production is extensive and ongoing.

In the case of job indicators, the statistics available do not yet offer a global perspective of socially necessary work. The majority of data focus on commercial jobs, supplying data about:

- Labour activity
- Unemployment
- Employment
- Labour inactivity

For the analysis of non-commercial work, the main source of information is surveys about time use which involve stating the amount of time spent each day on different activities done in the home. Today, these surveys are not comparable with those that focus on the labour market for a number of reasons.

Motivated by criticisms of per capita income mentioned, alternative indicators have been designed. Specifically, to go beyond theory, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has proposed development and wellbeing indicators that are different to per capita income and that include other components, providing a more complex view of development. In an attempt to have indicators that capture

the many-sided nature of wellbeing, compound indicators were chosen; these are indicators that have changed over time since they were first published in 1990. The UNDP's development indicators are indexes with values ranging between 0 and 1. If one of the advantages that these have is that they are more complete than simple ones, as a disadvantage we would point out that reading and interpreting them is more complicated. Often the index itself does not say much and its interest lies mainly in the comparisons that can be made over time and across space. In figure 16, some of the most used indicators are presented. The UNDP's indicators were modified in 2010 and the last Gender Development Index is very recent (2014).

It has already been stated that equality is very important for wellbeing and, since the most general compound indicators of wellbeing do not incorporate inequalities, indicators aimed at their inclusion have also been designed, ones which focus particularly on poverty and on inequalities in sharing out resources. Evidently, general indicators do not include gender inequalities either, and, since gender equity is also an indicator of quality of life, in recent years there have been major advances made in the creation of gender indicators. In figure 16, below, we also present some of the most relevant and best known compound indicators.

Plainly, designing indicators means having to think about the most important aspects of the reality intended to be captured. Therefore, a look at the dimensions tackled by wellbeing indicators can give us clues about the essential aspects of wellbeing. From a reading of the dimensions of the indicators summarized in figure 16 it can be seen that there are three dimensions/capabilities that are essential for wellbeing: education, health and economic relations. The economic aspect is essentially tackled by means of income and/or labour indicators.

Gender indicators also deal with these three matters, given that they are considered important for the life of men and women. However, since gender indicators in general are for capturing inequalities between men and women, they tend to focus on key aspects of inequality, that is to say, on the dimensions where the inequalities stand out most clearly. A reading of gender indicators reveals that, together with economic aspects and educational aspects (and, to a lesser extent, health), in order to tackle the problem of gender inequality it will be necessary to deal particularly with questions related to empowerment and participation. In order to evaluate specific capabilities/dimensions (education, health, income...) compound indicators can be used, even though simple indicators are more common.

Figure 16. Main compound indicators of wellbeing and inequality

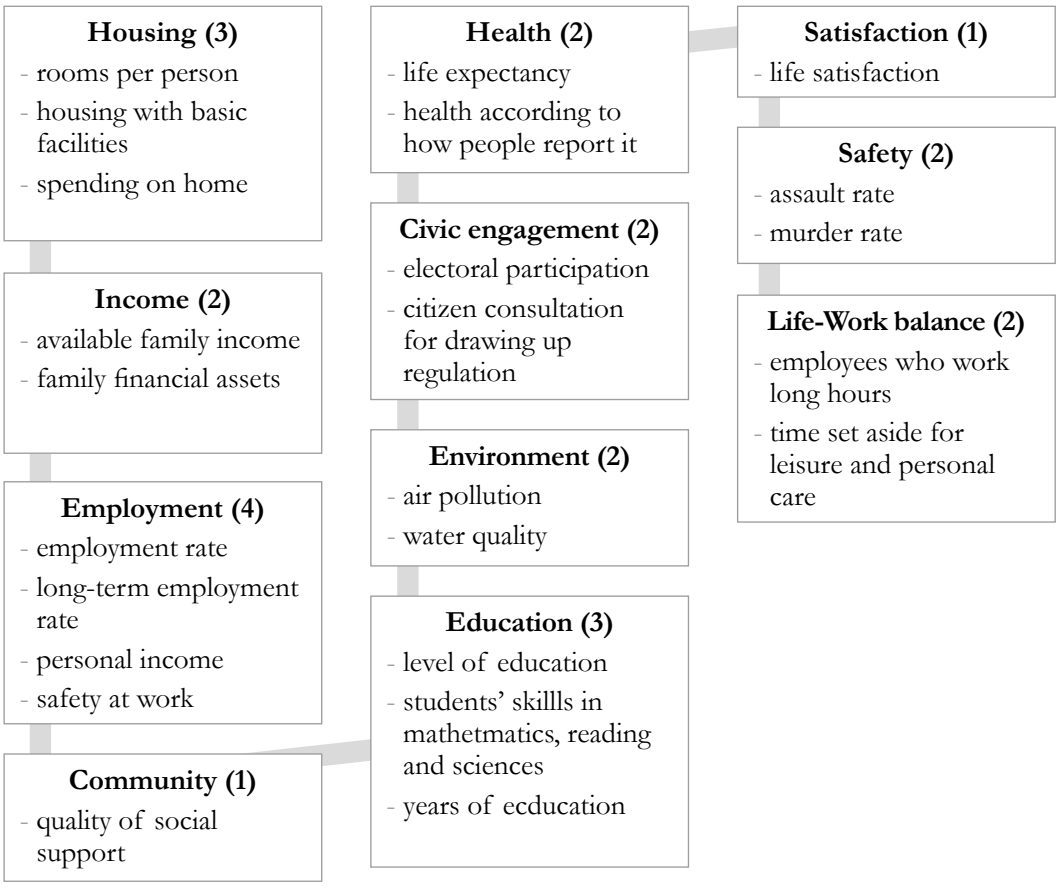
General indicators

Indicator	Organization	No	Dimensions
Human Development Index (HDI)	UNDP	4	- health - education - standard of living
Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI)	UNDP	4	- health - education - standard of living
Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)	UNDP	10	- heath - education - standard of living
Better Life Index	OECD	24	- housing - income - jobs - community - education - environment - civic engagement - health - life satisfaction - safety - work-life balance

Gender indicators

Indicator	Organization	No	Dimensions
Gender Inequality Index (GII)	UNDP	5	- reproductive health - empowerment - labour market participation
Women's Economic Opportunity Index (WEOI)	Economist Intelligence Unit	26	- labour policy and practice - access to finance - education and training - women's legal and social status - general business environment
Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)	OECD	12	- family codes - physical integrity - resources and assets - civil liberties - property rights
Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI)	World Economic Forum	14	- economic participation - education - health and survival - political empowerment
Gender Equity Index (GEI)	Social Watch	10	- education - economic participation - empowerment
EqualIX	Instituto de Estadística de Suecia	13	- labour market - education - income - reconciliation - political participation - demography

Figure 17. The Better Life Index's dimensions and indicators



We make special mention of the Better Life Index, firstly because, when it was published for the first time in 2011, it introduced certain new features and secondly because it is, to a certain extent, an outcome of the Sarkozy Report on wellbeing measurement that has been referred to above. This index has been created by the OECD. It covers 11 subjects/dimensions that were identified as essential for wellbeing in terms of the material conditions of life (jobs, income and housing) and quality of life (community, education, work-life balance, environment, civic engagement, health, life satisfaction and safety). It is made up of 24 indicators including qualitative indicators or ones which refer to people's own perceptions. It is calculated for 36 countries and information is offered about the gender inequalities of all the indicators. The dimensions and indicators of this new compound wellbeing index have been summarized in figure 17[18].

18 **http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/**

3. Key points of the debate

Talking about development means necessarily talking about wellbeing and quality of life, and it is important that achievements be maintained in the future. The fragility of some social attainments that were thought to be secure has been exposed during these turbulent times.

Feminist, ecologist and human development approaches share the search for alternatives, looking for new paradigms that focus on the wellbeing of societies, of women and of men based on an appreciation of their diversity and their links with nature. Feminist proposals support a defence of the centrality of life, as against the prioritizing of commercial relations that subordinate everything to the accumulation of capital; ecologist proposals place an emphasis on the sustainability of the life of the planet as a condition for any socioeconomic proposition for the future; the sustainable human development proposal shares with the above-mentioned approaches a commitment to focus on the quality of life of women and men, based on criteria of both individual and collective freedoms within a social justice framework. Therefore, all these approaches offer vital elements for debate and the structuring of alternative strategies to the current model, linked to the realities of each society, since the participation of women and men in the design, monitoring and evaluation of these approaches is a basic element shared by all three.

The three approaches are very aware that social inequalities are one of the greatest obstacles for developing the potential for individuals and groups to design their life projects and achieve satisfactory lives with human quality. In this regard, we consider that some of the most interesting lines of work consist of in-depth study of the contents of the "sustainability of life" concept, as well as the strategies for advancing in its practical implementation, based on the individual and collective capability approach. It is essential to make progress in specifying the sustainability concept, adapting it to specific realities while also agreeing key points/sectors of a universal nature. It will be important, too, to make advances in the construction and/or selection of sustainability of life indicators.

Another area to be worked on is continuing to analyze the links between access to care and the other capabilities. For this reason, it is important to pay more attention to the very definition of the concept of "care" in order to focus it on care that is essential for the broader reproduction of life, and so analyze its links with the other central capabilities. All this needs to be done not only at the theoretical level, but also

at the practical one. In the matter of care, it will be necessary to look at the provision of care to groups with special needs, and particularly vulnerable groups. Since women continue to play an essential role in the provision of care, it will be crucial to intersect the sex variable with others, such as origin, ethnicity or social class.

The racist character of the roots of the reigning socioeconomic model demands that proposals to replace it be aware of ethnic hierarchization. It is essential to overcome these relations of domination if progress is to be made towards a system in which all people, women and men, independently of their colour, can carry out the life project they consider to be most valuable.

It is important to elucidate the role of the social and solidarity economy in the implementation of capabilities, emphasizing that of care. There are numerous inter-relations among major care producers (whether private or public, commercial or non-commercial). We believe that the provision of services as essential as those that provide direct care to people cannot be left to people's goodwill, since it is not an individual problem but a problem that is the concern of the whole of society. Guaranteeing quality public services to all those who need them is a social, public and collective responsibility and should be considered as an investment in quality of life and not an expense. It can be extremely dangerous to leave care services in the hands of companies that aim to maximize profits. Since this is a task that is especially dependent on the work factor, obtaining profits depends above all on reducing labour costs and this, evidently, affects the quality of the services provided in a very negative way. This is something that should be avoided and therefore it is important to propose alternatives, and the social and solidarity economy should play a major role in these debates and in the proposal of such alternatives. The principles and values by which the social and solidarity economy's various organizations are governed can be a guarantee in order to avoid some negative aspects, because not being governed by the profit motive can be a guarantee of decent working conditions and a guarantee of quality and care when rendering services. The participation of social and solidarity organizations in the care that is supplied both in homes and by public authorities could have positive consequences both for care suppliers and receivers.

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