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The hidden side of SSE

Social movements and the ‘translation’ of SSE into policy (Latin America)

Dr. Ana Cecilia Dinerstein

Department of Social and Policy Sciences

Centre for Development Studies – Institute for Policy Research

A.C.Dinerstein@bath.ac.uk

The interest

Growing importance of civil society actors in rethinking 'development' and in effecting development policy



Growing interest within international organisations and governmental institutions in obtaining support from social movements and SSE organizations

The context (past two decades)

- SSE experiments and networks (e.g. RIPPES)
- Attention from *Alternative Development* Paradigm
- AD ‘inspired’ Policy (e.g. WB funded Community Driven Development (CDD))
 - Encourages associative forms of production
 - Promotes sustainable development
 - Finances initiatives for vulnerable groups
 - Facilitates access to Land and housing
 - Promotes Women’s empowerment
 - Supports participatory decision-making and local capacity building
 - Offers community control of resources

Problem

- Many SSE movements repudiate the 'growth' development model altogether
- AD neither challenges the market economy nor the idea of growth
- SSE experienced a counter-hegemonic practice
- Debate about viability and desirability of 'Capitalism'
- See themselves as articulating alternatives *to* development...to the growth model...to Capitalism

Listening to the voices

WE STRONGLY BELIEVE not only that another world is possible, but also that it is increasingly necessary

Manifesto of the European Network of Social and Solidarity Economy, (Barcelona, 2011)

IN OUR DREAMS we have seen another world, an honest world, a world decidedly more fair than the one in which we now live ... this world was not something that came to us from our ancestors. It came from ahead, from the next step we were going to take

Subcomandante Marcos, 1/3/94

Finding Inspiration

The SSE is **NOT AN ECONOMY OF REPAIR BUT THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW WORLDVIEW** and applicable alternatives to neoliberal economic devastation

(Press release RIPPSS member organizations, 'Social Solidarity Economy at the 2013 WSF, Tunisia')

SSE in its various forms throughout the world represents the **ALTERNATIVE TO THE GLOBAL CAPITALIST SYSTEM** ... the Assembly calls upon all civil society actors to network their actions at global level in order to enable people all over the world to assert their rights, and to replace the current system that is based on individual selfishness, over consumption of resources, competition, male hegemony and war, by a peaceful, fraternal sober economy of cooperation and peace between all humankind.

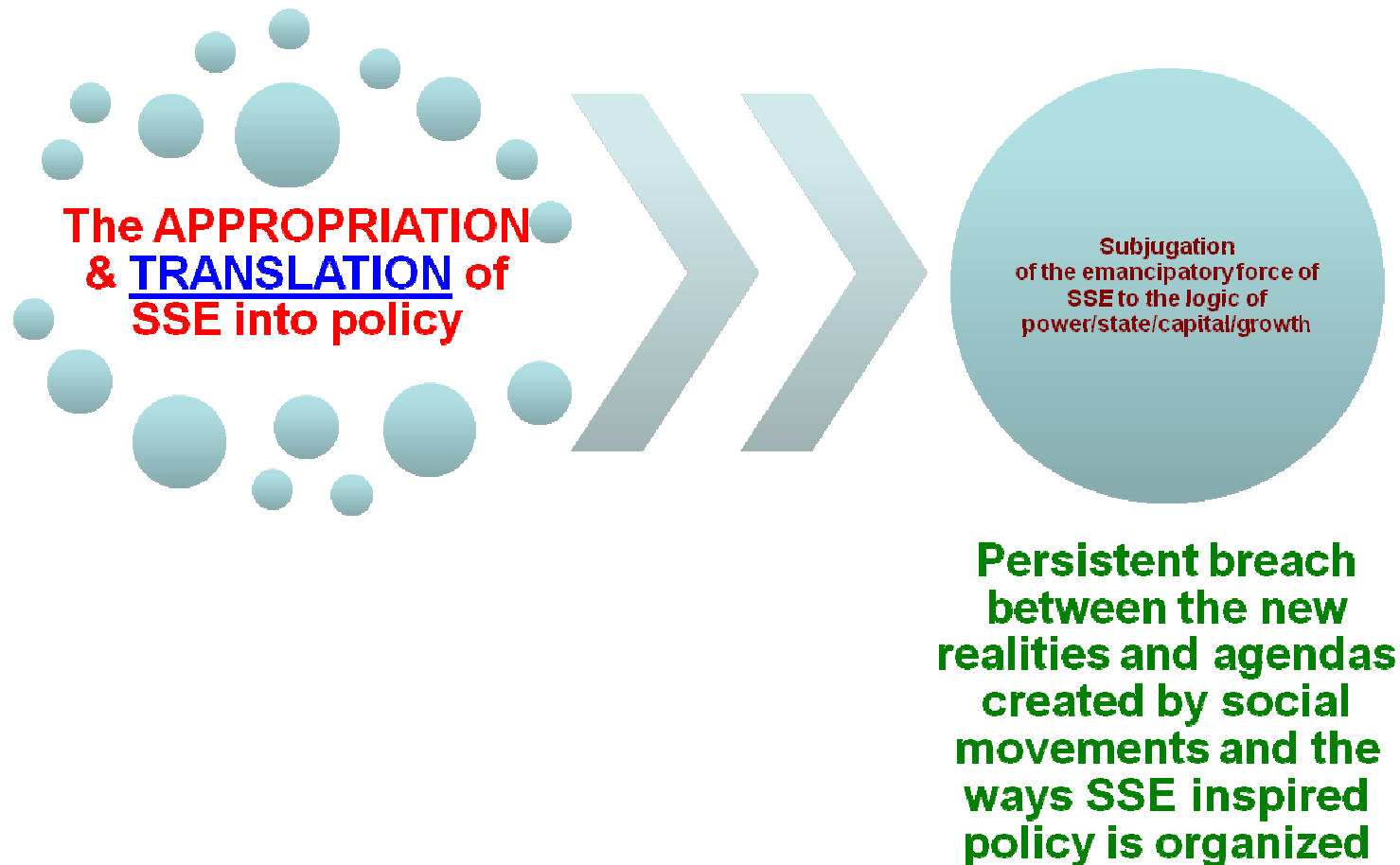
(Declaration of the Convergence Assembly on Economic Alternatives at the 2013 WSF)

Peruvian scholar Aníbal Quijano (2009) put it with regards to Latin America:

‘It is probably the first time in the history of the colonial matrix of power that we are not only hopeful toward the future, we are also working toward that future, and we are beginning to build that future, we are at this very moment building it.

This is not a simple image...neither is a utopia, in the classical sense of the world. This is happening in the planet and in that sense it is ... a phenomenon that manifests itself as a real tendency of a historical necessity’

The concern



Translation

- ❖ Political, legal and policy mechanisms and dynamics through which the state incorporates the cooperative and solidarity ethos of the SSE practiced by social movements into policy.
- ❖ Demarcation of a terrain that renders invisible everything that does not fit in the parameters of legibility of the capitalist territory, demarcated by the State.



Implication

Translation 'as erasure' (Vázquez 2011)

- ❖ -Deradicalises and depoliticises the movements
- ❖ -Eradicates the *hope* for a post-capitalist world
- ❖ Disregards alternative economic possibilities
- ❖ Impoverishes SSE-inspired policy.
- ❖ Movements' drive for democratisation and social justice gets 'lost in translation'

Latin America

- ❖ SSE expands as a tool for ‘organising hope’ (Dinerstein 2014)
- ❖ Struggle over the meaning of SSE
- ❖ Translation includes ideological and physical coercion, cooptation, intimidation, depoliticisation and direct state violence as key tools for policy implementation
- ❖ Movements resist translation

Plan

- ❖ Examples from indigenous, urban and rural movements
- ❖ Contentious politics surrounding *translation*
- ❖ Discuss ‘untranslatability’: SSE’s *surplus possibility* (excess) that has no translation into the logic of policy/law/the state
- ❖ Explore methodological problems that prevent us from engaging with SSE ‘beyond zone’

Struggle over the meaning of SSE



- The Zapatistas (Mexico)

- **Indigenous movements and the problem of autonomy**



- The Movement of Unemployed Workers (*Piqueteros*) (Argentina)

- **Urban Movements and the problem of work**

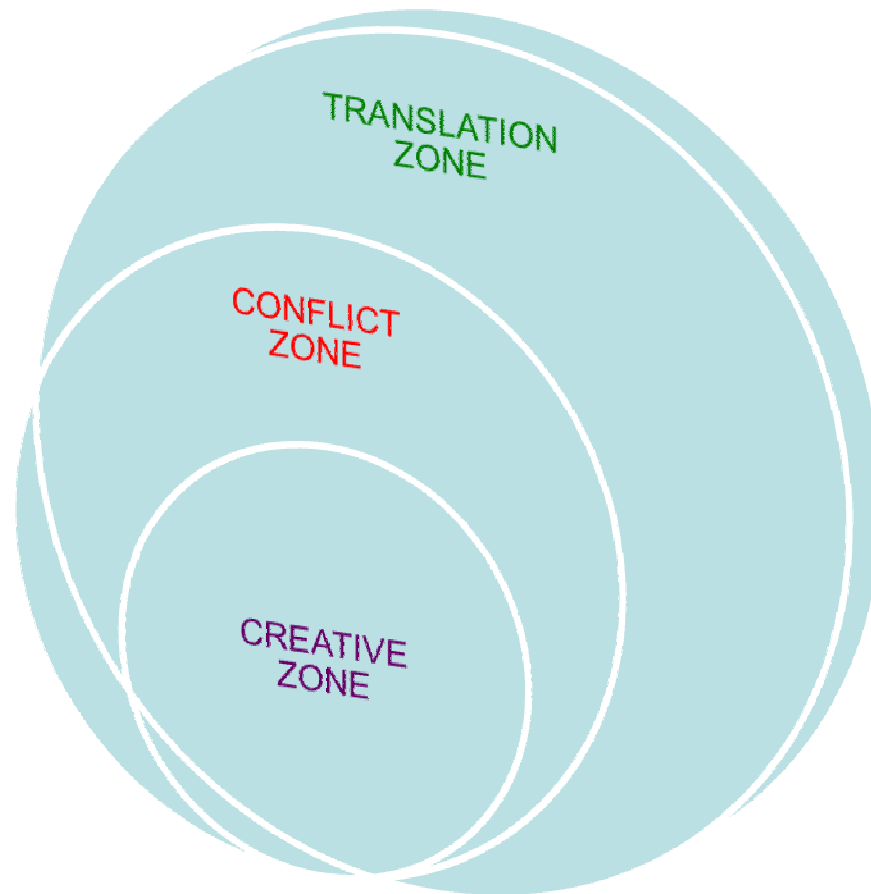


- The Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST) (Brazil)

- **Rural movements and the problem of the land and agrarian reform**



SSE Visible Zones





| SSE/Social Movement | Zapatistas (Mexico) | Piqueteros (Argentina) | MST (Brazil) |
|---------------------|--|--|---|
| Creative Zone | Good Government Councils, the Snails, deliver of Justice, Health and Education in the Lacandon jungle | Cooperatives, community productive projects and solidarity work in the neighborhoods | Agrarian Reform in the Settlements' Education, new values, cooperation, democracy |
| Conflict Zone | -Struggle over the meaning of autonomy ('free municipality' or indigenous autonomy?) -Mobilisation -Massacre in Acteal -Legislation | Struggle over the meaning of work (employment of dignified work?) -Massacre of CTDAV -Criminalisation of poverty | Struggle over the meaning of the agrarian reform (land distribution or food sovereignty?) -Massacre Corumbiara and Carajás |
| Translation Zone | In the Constitution 2001, Indigenous Autonomy is transformed into free municipality. | Social and Labour Policy, Ngonisation of UWOs and depoliticisation | Piecemeal Land Distribution, functional to agribusiness |

Engaging with the *other* reality

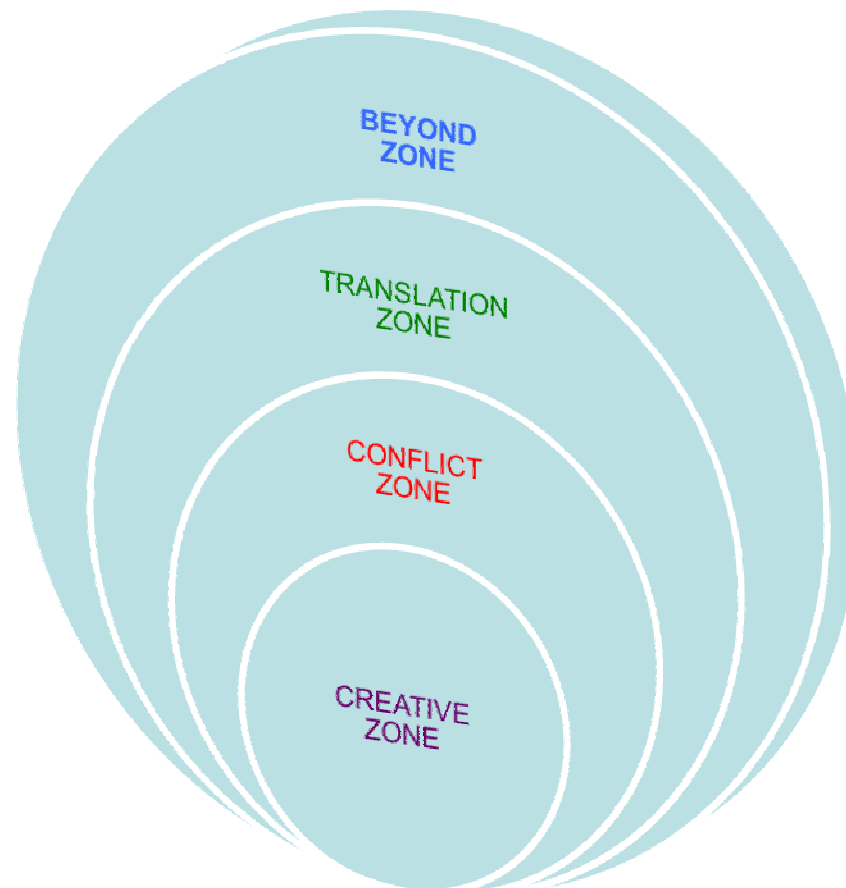
The possibility of translation ‘begs the question of untranslatability: What is that remains untranslatable, outside the scope of translation?’ (Vázquez 2011: 36)

- ❖ Movements are creating alternative *realities* but these are rendered invisible by ‘capitalist realism’
- ❖ How to reveal realities that are suppressed by capitalist realism (Fisher)
- ❖ How to render visible what has been actively produced as non-existent’ (Santos)?

The challenge

- ❖ To engage with the ‘beyond zone’ of SSE is not naïve, utopian or romantic but *political*
- ❖ Requires intellectual effort to transcend ‘capitalist realism’
- ❖ Need to rethink methodological and epistemological assumptions that ‘naturalise’ capitalism
- ❖ Manage uncertainty : *Radical hope* ‘anticipates a good for which those who have the hope as yet lack the appropriate concepts with which to understand it’ (Lear 2006: 103).

The Invisible (Beyond) Zone





| SSE/Social Movement | Zapatistas (Mexico) | Piqueteros (Argentina) | MST (Brazil) |
|--|---|---|---|
| Creative Zone | Good Government Councils & Snails, Justice, Health and Education in Chiapas | Cooperative and productive Work, policy from below in the neighborhoods | Agrarian Reform in the Settlements' Education, new values, democracy |
| Conflict Zone | Struggle over the meaning of autonomy | Struggle over the meaning of work | Struggle over the meaning of the agrarian reform |
| Translation Zone | Constitution 2001, Indigenous Autonomy as free municipality | Social and Labour Policy, Ngonisation of UWOs | Piecemeal Land Distribution |
| Beyond Zone (Invisibilised Surplus) | Self-government and autonomy towards the attainment of <i>buen vivir</i>. Non-representational politics/direct democracy | Cooperatives, self-management in order to attain dignified work (non-capitalist) | Agrarian reform with Food Sovereignty, education into new values, production and cooperation in solidarity |

Rethinking social movements

- ❖ Movements transcend the parameters demarcated by the State and International Development Institutions
- ❖ Not simply protesting, mobilising, lobbying or advocating: they are creating other way, prefiguring ‘the-not-yet-become’ (Bloch) that inhabits the present reality
- ❖ From Claim-making’ to ‘alternative-creation’ roles?

The Shift



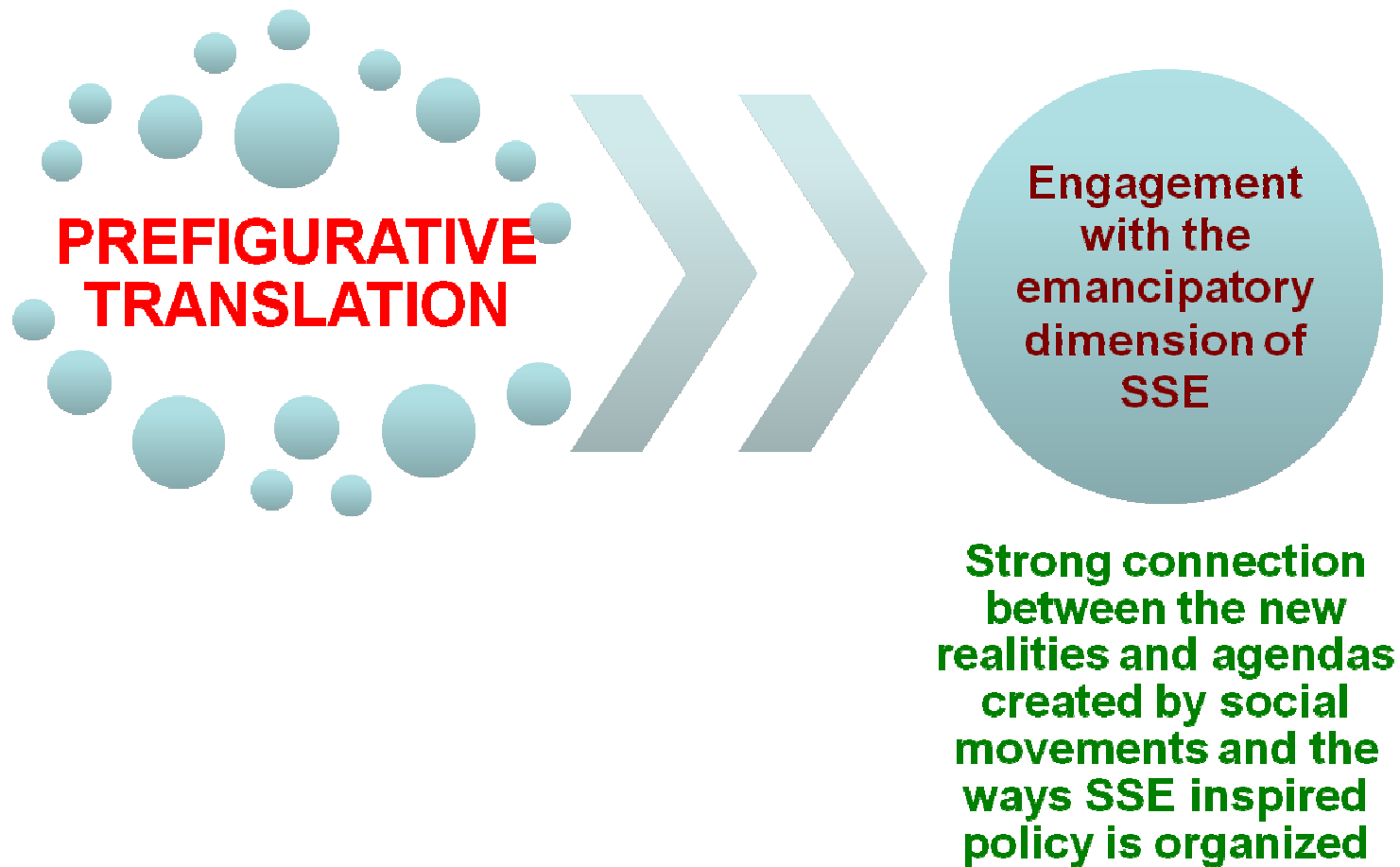
Alternative-
creating
capacity

Prefigurative
translation

Prefigurative translation

- ❖ Does not obliterate hope
- ❖ Problematizes ‘factual reality’ (Bloch)
- ❖ Represents, suggests, imagines in advance
- ❖ Learns *from* the movements’ alternatives *to* development
- ❖ Contributes to the ‘construction of a collective intelligence’ (RIPESS Europe 2012)
- ❖ ‘A work of epistemological and democratic imagination’ (Santos 2004; 2008)

The approach



Bloch highlights

It is a question of learning hope. Its work does not renounce, it is in love with success rather than failure. Hope, superior than fear, is neither passive like the latter, nor locked into nothingness.

The emotion of hope goes out of itself, makes people broad instead of confining them, cannot know nearly enough of what it is that makes them inwardly aimed, of what may be allied to them outwardly.

The work of this emotion requires people who throw themselves actively into what is becoming to which they themselves belong...

The Principle of Hope ,p. 3

Thank you!

