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### Solidary care economy: politicization and socialization of women's hidden work

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## Introduction

This paper is based on an action research process regarding economic collaboration networks in irregular urban settlements, or "*campamentos*", located in the city of Talcahuano, Gran Concepción. The city is a deindustrialized and neo-extractive area of contemporary Chile. The research was carried out in collaboration with a traditional foundation that works with the regularization of urban settlements. This foundation was particularly interested in exploring the potentialities and viability of solidarity economy strategies to improve their approach to intervention in a context perceived as strongly individualistic. The study was organized through a set of workshops developed with women in three *campamentos* (shantytowns), using a culturally contextualized version of the methodologies proposed by the Gibson-Graham (2006) approach to community economics. During these workshops the variety and density of local economic practices were problematized so as to project alternative economic imaginations. The development and results of these workshops question the social perception regarding the prevalence of an individualistic behavior and allow a debate around the possible relationship between two literary and political bodies: the solidarity economy and the feminist care economy.

The discussion about care economy recognizes the economic value of the set of activities developed mainly within households to care for dependent people –children, the elderly, and the ill– and to reproduce life. More generally, it recognizes the enormous amount of invisible work developed around reproductive and domestic labor, ranging from breastfeeding to gardening, and mainly developed by women through unpaid work. The efforts to measure it, through time-use surveys, show that care economy represents up to 40% of GDP. In a more political and analytical sense, care economy can be argued to produce the real fabric of life, and as such it is structurally prior to, and a precondition for, formal economy. In addition, it is organized through non-capitalist values such as cooperation and affection. The theoretical and political project of solidarity economy, in turn, is aiming to visibilise and promote forms of production, exchange, and consumption that root economic behavior in an ethical and political framework. In other words, it is a heterogeneous form of economy which prioritizes work and community over the logic of capital accumulation. This framework includes from

classical sectors of the social economy, such as trade associations, cooperatives, social enterprises, etc., to various expressions of the popular economy, such as barter and collective savings systems.

The solidarity economy project, in its agenda for visibility and articulation of other economies, has made little systematic effort to recognize the economic density of care in homes. This is paradoxical because, despite the fact that domestic work is certainly transcended by the power dynamics of patriarchy, it also represents an area of economy organized not through self-interest, but through cooperation and affection. As a consequence of this low visibility, there has not been a systematic effort to politicize and develop cooperative systems to reorganize care work. We believe that a discussion of care economy through the lens of solidarity economy can enrich both. This reveals new political and economic possibilities for feminism –in terms of making domestic activities public, valuable, and political– and for social economy movements, as it opens another economic space for its political discussion.

The study was developed with PAR elements in three *campamentos* in the hills of Talcahuano, in the city of Concepción, Biobío Region. The social and historical analysis of *campamentos* in Chile shows a change in their treatment over time. In the 1980s, during the dictatorship, they were perceived as places that fostered active organization and solidarity economy. In the neoliberal democratic context, with public housing policies increasingly tending towards adopting eradication processes, they are considered places of political clientelism and individualistic behavior with scarce territorial rooting due to the precariousness and temporality of the settlements. The study showed important differences between the studied shantytowns; one of them was certainly individualistic and dependent on clientelistic networks, while the other two maintained important and active solidarity economy networks, thus challenging the perception in the literature regarding the loss of solidarity bonds. More importantly, these spaces of economic creativity and associativity were brought together almost exclusively by women who seek to improve, alleviate, and organize their family care work through cooperation. As a result, they build fluid networks for collective savings, insurance, and child care that socialize their home economics organization. Despite this, the women still do not recognize these actions as valuable economic activities, as they are not perceived as part of the monetary economy. These results allow raising the question of whether the popular promotion of solidarity economy in vulnerable contexts, in addition to promoting formal productive economic processes (such as the cooperative model), must truly begin by politicizing, socializing, and valuing those activities carried out by women invisibly, free of charge, and through generosity.

### **Some elements for context**

The great Concepción is the third largest conurbation in Chile. Its growth and that of its surrounding sectors was mainly marked by ISI-type development industrialization policies in the first decades of the 20th century (Fuentes & Pérez, 2012: 35). It became highly industrialized in the mining, metallurgy, textiles, shoemaking, glassmaking, and ceramics sectors, which was in turn associated with an important port development. As such, it attracted an important amount of work force. A major portion of this population settled in neighborhoods and villages built by the same large companies under industrial paternalism policies. However, precarious housing also expanded, initially in *conventillos* or tenements and irregular settlements. Beginning with the establishment of the neoliberal cycle by the military dictatorship, and its maintenance by subsequent governments, much of this industrial development has entered a decline cycle which has put the inhabitants and neighborhoods of the region in a growing situation of economic vulnerability.

Only in the Biobío region there are 152 *campamentos* housing 8,088 families. The Biobío is the second region with most *campamentos* in Chile preceded by the Metropolitan Region. The figures given by the last National Survey indicate that the number of families has increased. 59% of the population in the Biobío Region shantytowns is under 30 years old and they are mostly women. The main reasons for settling in a shantytown are the impossibility of having a place to live (28.9%) followed by the complex economic and employment situation of the families (15.3%). This motive is related to the social imaginary surrounding the yearning of owning a house (14.5%). Additionally, 8.6% of households mention the 2010 earthquake as a reason for living in shantytowns (Techo-Chile national *campamento* survey, 2015).

The main productive activities in the Talcahuano area, where the studied shantytowns are located, are industrial and artisanal fishery and port activity. Therefore the *campamento* inhabitants mostly have jobs relating to these activities. The San Vicente bay area has at least 20 shantytowns located in the hills, which are unurbanized localities in the periphery of Talcahuano.

The history of the *campamentos* varies according to the economic political processes in which they are inserted. The literature describes *campamentos* as marginalized sectors where daily survival is solved through extensive solidarity and camaraderie networks (Lomnitz, 1989); they are spaces of political mobilization –the movement of settlers– (Espinoza, 1988) and they implement a wide range of solidarity strategies (Razetto, 1987). More contemporary texts –considering a consolidated market system– identify a difficulty in finding these practices when the economic model promotes competition and individualism. Ayuro (2002) describes Argentinian *barriadas* speaking of structural, state, and

interpersonal violence where neoliberalism has broken the social fabric of the territory; Goldstein (2013) observes sexual, racial, and class violence in Brazilian *favelas*. Garretón (2010) describes the role of the State in promoting clientelism and subsidiary dependence. The Subsidiary State is characterized by safeguarding consumption, namely maintaining demand by correcting the exclusion problems associated with the model through various forms of assistance, i.e., through focused strategies and actions. Subsidiary policies have aimed at compensating the manifestations of poverty and exclusion without eradicating their causes. In this context, the influence of the previous actions is not only material but also symbolic, building a culture of dependence within the non-privileged sectors, which then often expect to receive subsidies without including a long-term transformation goal. This paternalism is sponsored by the State (Garretón, 2010), promoted by the discourse of the left, and used by the populism of the right. In sum, the analytical construction of the *campamentos* has varied strongly, which leads to the political question of whether solidarity is a value of the past and already completely lost, or if there are real bases to consider a solidarity economy strategy.

### **Solidarity economy and care economy: possible proximities**

The concept of solidarity economy corresponds to both a political project and a conceptual analytical challenge; moreover, it is presented as an attempt at epistemic redefinition regarding the suppositions of economic analysis. Both dimensions cannot be dissociated, given that a political project needs to create a theoretical and epistemic language to sustain it; but methodologically speaking, they can be thought of as different approaches. In political terms, the goal is to build an economy based on ethical solidarity principles focusing around valuing work processes and cooperation (Razeto, 1987, 1993, 1999) with "a strongly critical and decisively transformative orientation regarding the large structures and modes of organization and of action that characterize contemporary economy" (Razeto, 1999:4). In analytical terms, a theoretical space has been sought from which to understand and imagine alternative forms of economic action, which also implies a regarding the anthropological definitions of economic behavior (Dash, 2014).

The classic work of Karl Polanyi (1957) represents an important starting point for this project. In particular, the author redefines economic analysis from a formal deductive modeling exercise based on predefined suppositions such as scarcity, rational action, and utility maximization to an exercise of substantive empirical analysis of historical mobilization practices and resource organization to solve human necessities. These practices do not correspond to an autonomous and self-regulated sphere, but rather are rooted in the social and institutional life of a community. Thus, economics is inseparable from ethics, culture, and politics.

The classical suppositions of economic science have been reworked from the category of rooting. The categories of desire and necessity are no longer considered unlimited, universal, and connatural to the human being, and become perceived as socially constructed processes. That is to say, they originate from social institutions and cultural constructs that promote unlimited consumption. The affirmation of the historicity and contingency of necessities has resulted in the relativization of the supposition of scarcity. Thus, the redefinition of these economic suppositions allows the possibility of thinking and building other economies where values and social norms institute other economic relations that prioritize the intergenerational production and reproduction of life.

In a more contemporary and post-structuralist perspective, the work of Gibson-Graham (2006) also seeks to reveal the heterogeneity and proliferation of empirical economic practices that have been made invisible by formal economic scientific discourse –economic science– and by conventional language and economic imaginary. Both have been hegemonized by what the authors call a capital-centric discourse, that is, a discourse that tends to identify society with economy and economy with capitalism. Their work aims to show that salaried employment, the capital company, and the capitalist market correspond to a sphere of the possible economic universe, and that behind them is an underlying diversity of economic relations –non-capitalist and non-monetary– that cannot be understood from the conventional economy language; and that they in fact populate great part of the economic universe, being keys for the reproduction of life and the maintenance of well-being (Gibson-Graham, 2008).

Overcoming the capital-centric discourse –or as Polanyi would say, the recovery of a substantive economic analysis– is a possibility condition for opening the economic imagination. A political project for the construction of other economic relations is only possible based on generating a language capable of accounting for other possible economic relations.

In terms of an economic political movement, solidarity economy houses collectives that promote diversity of economic relations including exchange, donation, reciprocity, commensality, and cooperation, which adopt many forms including money purchases, barter, clubs, workshops, cooperatives, and joint ventures. Beyond the chosen economic form, the importance lies in the ethical solidarity foundations to which they subscribe. These point –in their more political aspects– towards the "emancipation of the productive forces", that is, the reunification of labor and the means of production, intellectual work and manual labor, economic goods and human necessities, democratic management and innovative work organization practices (Mance, 2000). The debate extends to the problematization of the international division of labor through the right of communities to their own

economic, cultural, social, and human development, as well as through the questioning of current terms of exchange and fair trade.

Many of the groups that inhabit the universe of solidarity economy have a strong female presence. This is especially clear in relation to the so-called proximity services, where social services are assumed facing the shrinking of the State in subjects such as health agents, food safety promotion, and day-care centers, all with precarious contracts and working conditions. Nobre (2004) points out a paradoxical situation: while central functions for social reproduction are devalued and maintained by overworked women, solidarity economy does not take a stance facing this issue, thereby becoming part of the androcentric bias in economic thinking (Nobre, 2004). Furthermore, many solidarity economy organizations acritically reproduce this social labor division, both inside and outside the organization, thus allowing the female double shift. Likewise, women's organizations and participation are scarcely visible in the formal representation structures of the solidarity economy (Nobre, 2015).

Feminist economy has carried out an extensive exercise in unveiling the androcentric biases that underlie economy as a discipline, and that in some senses extend to the thinking of solidarity economy. This androcentrism is expressed in the historical recognition of exclusively masculine spheres as economic –associated with public, productive, and chrematistic work–, while historically feminine spheres, roles, and spaces such as domestic work, care work, and the *oikos* are defined as non-economic. These productive/reproductive, market/non-market, self-interest/altruism binarisms are not simple dichotomies, but rather they express a genderized hierarchical ordering between the rational and the irrational (Dash, 2014). Lourdes Benería (1999) points out that from the *homo economicus* to the Davos man, economic science has ignored affective bonds and the relationships of obligations and care that link people in family and domestic contexts. In this way, the free worker, the rational, maximizing, and self-interested economic actor, is not generically constructed, nor does it account for real economic actors who are inscribed –rooted– in institutional and affective frameworks.

One of the central contributions of feminist economic thinking is the expansion of the concept of work –as a human creative and relational activity– beyond the limits of salaried and productive labor. This includes the set of activities aimed at the biological and social reproduction of life –the sustainability of life (Carrasco, 2001)–, such as domestic, reproductive, and care work, generally developed informally and without salary. All of these activities are central aspects of social reproduction and human welfare. This expansion leads to a rethinking of the notions of full employment, qualification, and even emancipated work, as emancipated work is not possible for women without dividing the domestic tasks among all those who inhabit the same space together (Nobre, 2004). Having said this,

while recognizing domestic work as a real economic area, we must also recognize that this type of work is organized by a substantive, non-monetary, and decommodified rationality (Dash, 2014). However, the "invisibility" acquired by care economy and domestic and community work is due precisely to the lack of monetary –chrematistic– expressions of the activities and flows that do not go through the exchange market; this also leads to a difficulty in appreciating its magnitude and quantifying it.

Work concerning reproduction is especially relevant in context of the neoliberal reduction of the State, where precariousness and social insecurity make care economy more relevant, both inside the home (care for children, the elderly, and the sick) and outside, in the extended care of social life. These cares provide both material (health, housing) and symbolic (trust, the ability to rely on someone) resources. In this way, it is clear how both theoretical bodies – feminist economy and solidarity economy– emphasize human necessities versus utility or profit. Feminist economic analysis has observed the organization of family work in relation to the collective satisfaction of necessities, while the premises of solidarity economy take this question to a communal and societal scale, where work is distributed through social and gender hierarchies (Bauhardt, 2014). However, it must not be forgotten that domestic economy is a space of strongly contradictory human relationships. On the one hand, the presence of solidarity, affection, conviviality, integration, and cooperation in work and the community in the consumption of goods and services are taken for granted. On the other hand, it is also a space of patriarchal and heteronormative domination. In this sense, several of the demands of feminism (Pérez Orozco, 2014) constitute a reaction against distortions of the family; therefore these demands can be expected, at least in part, to find adequate satisfaction within the framework of solidarity economy and specifically in the expansion and recovery of the economic content of the family (Razeto, 1993).

### **Method elements**

The question organized through this research was inspired by the work of Gibson-Graham, which seeks to visibilise real heterogeneity and territorial economic density practices, both for the eyes of the researcher and for the participants of the research process itself. Thus, the objective of the study is not only to catalog solidarity practices in the context of neoliberal Chile and to recognize their gender dimension, but to achieve recognition and valuation of these practices by their own protagonists with the objective of considering the possibility of solidarity as a code and strategy for economic relations. For this reason, the research is organized using Participatory Action Research

codes, as the objective is not only to understand a social process but to transform it, especially from the subjectivity of its protagonists.

Participatory Action Research aims to ensure the collective production of knowledge, including voices and discourses that are not usually heard. Therefore, it seeks to visibilise topics that research with traditional methodologies might overlook. One of the characteristics of this method "that differentiates it from all others is the collective manner in which knowledge is produced, and the collectivization of that knowledge" (Fals & Brandao: 1987, 18). Thus, the individual senses are not as interesting as the collective senses that are given to collective practices (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007). Likewise, the



research activity does not “erase” the researchers but rather includes them in the production of knowledge, placing the inhabitants of *campamentos* as subjects and not as objects (Martí, 2002).

Particularly, this research was developed around a series of three workshops carried out in *campamentos* in the hill area of Talcahuano. These workshops were openly convened through local organizations and leaders. The attendees were women, all mothers, married and single. The age range was broad, from 17 to 60 years old.

Illustration 1. Own elaboration

The workshops were structured based on a contextual adaptation to the Assets Based Communities Development methodology used by Gibson-Graham (2006) in the Latrobe Valley. The first workshop of the series sought to initiate a discussion on the language and the way of perceiving solidarity economy. The other two workshops aimed at identifying the needs and interests of the community as well as the personal, collective, and territorial capabilities for addressing said needs. This is, in the language of Gibson-Graham, the cultivation of subjects capable of recognizing the possibilities of their community economies. Each workshop was organized to promote participation and to be an enjoyable discussion experience within the community (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007; Bergold & Thomas, 2012).



**Illustration 2. Own elaboration**

The activities were registered using photographic and audiovisual cameras and also by voice recorder. The workshops were analyzed through participant observation using field notes and the analysis of the visual and audio records from the workshops.

### **Community economic practices in *campamentos* of the Talcahuano hills**

As previously indicated, this research was part of a process by which a traditional foundation in Chile sought to explore solidarity economy methodologies to improve their work in shantytowns. For this purpose, a collective effort was made to recognize and visibilise the heterogeneity of locally developed economic practices, that is, the set of solidarity activities carried out by people to meet their necessities; and to glimpse the potentialities of a community-based solidarity economy.

In the first instance, this participatory action research sought to visibilise "the other practices" through participation; those activities that exist in the shadows of a neoliberal economic regime that has been discursively and materially hegemonic. In this sense, we were able to recover four types of practices with quite diverse content responding to different needs. All solidarity activities were commonly known in the *campamentos* as "benefits". This concept is widely used with rather interesting semantics: it is something everyone benefits from. That is to say, any type of collective activity that can generate income for common use or for a family going through a special need.

The cooperation organizations identified in the *campamentos* revolved around four necessities:

The first strategy identified was the most used and systematized and constitutes a cooperation system in case of tragedies. It is a set of strategies carried out with the objective of collecting goods and money for a family that is going through a period of crisis or family tragedy. This is especially relevant in the context of vulnerability represented by life in *campamentos*. For example, houses are mostly built of lightweight materials, and families connect illegally to the electric grid; therefore, fires with total losses are very recurrent. Thus, families in the three *campamentos* studied have organized themselves to deal with this type of situation. The responsibility for their organization usually falls on the leaders who plan fund-raiser events, such as "*mateadas*" or bingos. These events function first through the donation of supplies by the neighbors, as well as the active participation of neighbors as consumers in the activity. These events collect relevant amounts of money for the affected family, and community bonds, which are sometimes weak, are reinforced.

"For example, each neighbor commits to making a certain amount of *calzones rotos*, hot dogs, *sopaipillas*, others make *navegaos* and so on (...) Beforehand each neighbor commits to buying three *completos*, for example (...) That way we don't have leftovers "

This way they make sure they do not have losses, they strengthen community ties, and they collect money for the affected family. This type of exercise is important for its diffusion and recurrence; insurance systems are heavily privatized in these contexts. This type of strategy thus represents an important support, precisely at the moment when care and the reproduction of life are in crisis for the family group. Likewise, the collaborative organization of work and resources benefitting the community and the family or person most affected by a tragedy is also relevant. It is an important empathy exercise, demanding time and work on behalf of those involved. It also reinforces the existing relationships of the affected family with the rest of the community.

A less recurrent strategy documented in two of the *campamentos* is the joint savings system with specific objectives. One of the *campamentos* studied has an organization created by settlers called "The Workshop", whose sole purpose is to generate money through various "benefits" and to save money systematically by means of quotas for a common money pool:

"Benefits mean that we sell *completos*, or meals that might be potato salad with stewed chicken, with chops (...). We offer to people from outside, each member is responsible for selling, for example, ten meals. So if we charge two thousand pesos, if we make one hundred meals that's two hundred thousand pesos. You can spend 80 thousand pesos and you earn one hundred and twenty, something like that."

This organization, composed exclusively of women from the *campamentos*, meets weekly at the neighborhood headquarters, with the purpose of designing joint activities to generate more collective savings. The purpose of saving, in this case, is to finance recreational instances associated with family activities and care work; for example children's parties for Christmas and Children's Day, purchasing Christmas gifts, celebrating Mother's Day, and purchasing school supplies.

There are also less organized shared savings groups which seek to save money collectively every month, without necessarily implementing specific fund raisers.

"Every month I put in 3 thousand pesos, with my best friend, we make a pool and decide ok..., we're not going to spend anything until December, for example, and.... the months go by and... the piggy bank goes growing."

This practice shows how social support and collective effort appear relevant even for promoting the private practice of saving.

Associated with savings systems, shared purchasing systems are also documented. These strategies, similar to historical "buying together" methods, aim to obtain better prices in wholesale products mostly using money accumulated in the common money pools generated by savings. All the goods acquired are articles related to family care: Christmas gifts, family shopping baskets with special foods and beverages for festivities, or lists of school supplies. However, the purchase of basic necessities such as food or clothes is not registered. It is also interesting that this exercise involves the democratic practice of getting together and agreeing about what to purchase and the mechanisms to do so.

Regarding collective purchases for the improvement of community infrastructure, such as the maintenance of headquarters and other public spaces, the organizations collectively and democratically manage the resources transferred from the support foundation.

In addition to the previous practices there is a set of solidarity expressions which we will call meetings that are characterized for being smaller and brief, but not less important for the life of the *campamento* families. One example of these events, carrying a strong symbolic charge, is the so called “egg raffle” that accompanies many of the social events in the *campamento*. This activity consists of each assistant collaborating with one or two eggs, which are separated into dozens and subsequently raffled among the attendees through the sale of very low-cost numbers, allowing the generation of a monetary surplus for the organization’s collective use.

“(…) each person brings two eggs and those eggs are raffled. The numbers are sold three for a hundred pesos, and then they’re raffled and the winners get the eggs, by seven, six, five, depending on how many eggs are collected, every Monday.”

These activities, which involve minimal economic and participant management efforts, allow maintaining a culture and a daily cooperation practice complementing and deepening the more complex activities by building meeting spaces for the villagers and demonstrating that economic and social aspects tend to fuse:

*“Everything is for the register, everything is for the register. And everything is for everyone, nobody is going to get more than anyone else. No, because we all pay the same, and we all work the same, everyone pays the same quota, everyone sells the same amount, so everything is equal.”*

Trust plays a central role in the construction and maintenance of these practices. As indicated by Coraggio (2006), for the solidarity economy to make its way into daily practices, negotiations between neighbors should be oriented in such a way that when the individual and the community come into contradiction, the prevailing interests are solidarity and the benefit of the community.

Women and their concerns regarding the general reproduction of subsistence and upbringing play a leading role in the cooperative economic activity of the *campamentos*; they organize, participate, and

support the economic and solidarity instances. This is anchored not in the peculiarities of female subjectivity, but rather in the marked division of labor by gender roles. In the *campamentos* studied, it is the women who bear the burden of domestic work and responsibility for the biological and social reproduction of their families; and it is through those roles and responsibilities that they are present in the economic life of their community. The men –when they are present– meanwhile, enter and leave the territory and their economic life occurs outside the *campamento*. This fact allows recognizing that care work is central to the economic strategies of solidary collaboration developed in the territories. There, solidarity economy practices are carried out complementing and enriching the care economy.

### **The paths towards visibility**

The solidarity practices revealed in this document are not only invisible to observers outside *campamento* life, but are also scarcely recognized as such by the communities that practice them. Although they are recognized as spaces for social organization and the satisfaction of certain collective necessities, they are not conceptualized either as work or as economic activities. In this respect, a spontaneous and systematic gesture made by the participants in the first workshops is very revealing: every time an activity that does not generate direct monetary income is named, people begin to whistle and to boo. This very clearly shows that in spite of the evident importance of reproductive, domestic, and communal work developed by women to reproduce life, these practices are not valued as true and socially recognized work.

A reflection was explicitly conducted in the workshops regarding the value of these activities for the production of well-being and reproduction of daily life; namely, recognizing economic value in practices that are scarcely considered as such. Following that, the female participants became explicitly aware of the productive character of their family and community activity, defining it as a central element to the structure of necessity satisfaction. This in itself is valuable, as it contributes to the subjective empowerment of women in vulnerable contexts; therefore, they transform the perception of their daily work from a construction of devaluation and lack to a feeling of *being able*, where their work is recognized as central to the economic life of their families and communities. In one of the studied *campamentos* this process of empowerment went one step further. In particular, the women participating widely recognized the social, collective, and solidary character of their work. This recognition also generated in them the desire to strengthen and expand it, and the last workshops were true explosions of social creativity where the women applied very innovative visions to begin imagining and planning expanded economic futures. In this *campamento*, the observation of

their own practices created a new economic reality: the possibility that associative work can be institutionalized contributing to alternative forms of subsistence and creating autonomy. This process, however, competes with the feelings of hopelessness, dependence, and clientelism that pierce autonomy construction processes.

## **Final reflections**

In the analyzed *campamentos*, common conversations do not speak of capitalism or market, and there is certainly no talk of combating or modifying it. The strategies deployed are not intended for political relevance in this regard. Despite this, to some extent, they mitigate the dependence of communities and individuals on the market and the subsidiary state; this is especially true in emergency situations when neither the market nor the State respond to their necessities. These practices are the product of their circumstances, which allow small or large expressions of solidarity depending on the characteristics of the community, reinforcing values such as constancy, responsibility, and reciprocity between members. These practices can continue being invisible or undervalued from a structural perspective that pushes these experiences to the margins of economic and social life; or on the contrary, they can be observed from their possibilities for a sociology of emergences (De Sousa Santos, 2009). We choose to observe them from this epistemological option, focusing on their political and economic possibilities rather than blinding our eyes with dark lenses to focus on their limits.

The *campamentos* depend almost entirely on salaried work and insertion into the informal market, and it is precisely there where the settlers seek to satisfy their necessities. Given this condition, it seems remarkable that they carry out autonomy exercises such as those expressed in community savings and purchases, even when these practices are mainly and almost exclusively inscribed in the sphere of consumption. This is because, in one way or another, they demonstrate once again that social creativity is not exhausted, it only hides and adapts to contexts. Following Gibson-Graham (2006) it is observed that the discursive power of capitalism does not hegemonize everything, but rather the practices of mutual care, solidarity, and a collective approach to the necessities of reproduction of life in adverse contexts survive and flourish.

The women organize themselves around certain needs oriented mainly towards complementing care work and ensuring family shopping baskets for all members at the end of the year as well as gifts for their children and for themselves. All of these matters are usually relegated to the private sphere. In

this sense, the resolution in the public sphere of necessities previously registered in the private sphere constitutes a powerful possibility and a junction between solidarity economy and feminist economy.

Following this line, if we open the margins of the economy, examples such as popular kindergartens positively illustrate how the socialization of care work is taken out of the private sphere to be resolved in the public sphere through collaboration. Soup kitchens, once organized both in industrial belts and in the movement of settlers, were also carried out mainly by women. In the cases studied, the strategies deployed by the villagers were focused towards complementing their care work in order to meet those necessities outside the private sphere of their home and in collaboration with other women.

In this regard, it is necessary to broaden the concept of solidarity economy by recognizing the centrality of women's strategies for the associative approach of solidarity care economies. This type of strategies framed in historical feminine roles open possibilities for the advancement and recognition of a new economy where care work is socialized and shared; and also where the transformation of the economy around the sustainability of life contributes to overcoming the material and symbolic contradiction between productive and reproductive work.

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