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## **Chapter 20**

### **Economy**

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“Economic knowledge does not represent the economy from some place outside. It participates in making sites where its facts can survive.” (Mitchell 2008, p.1116).

## Introduction

The ongoing economic crisis which began in 2008 has profoundly changed our understandings and engagements with the economy in the global North. The economy again became the central concern of public debates but in a new capacity. No longer a taken for granted, well-oiled, and reliable money-generating machine that brings prosperity to all, the market economy came to the fore as a poorly explained, unfair, and unruly phenomenon in need of new understandings. Yet, at the same time, the crisis highlighted the social embeddedness of the economy. It became clear that instead of being a site of impersonal utilitarian logic, robust function, and fair rules, its outcomes depended on power relations, were steered by subjective decisions, and lacked stability. Indeed, no longer a self-propelling wealth-generating system, the economy emerged as messy, infused with power, and made up of actors guided not by economic rationality but as far ranging considerations as greed or generosity, desire to work or hatred of it, the need for bare survival or pursuit of a career, and so on. In short, the economy, which had been defined within neoliberal discourse as a disembodied and disembodied machine-like entity, was now seen as entangled with multiple non-economic concerns and practices with direct bearing on the economy.

This crisis raised issues about capitalism as the only valid economy of modernity while also stirring new interest in alternative economies, alternative practices, and desires for economic difference whether in the form of anti-capitalist protests or calls to reform and thereby restrain the excesses of capitalism. This was made particularly clear in Occupy Movement protests around the world. These protests, on the one hand, brought new attention to existing alternatives, while, on the other hand, they released desires for alternative futures from a subjection to capitalism. It would seem that the economy was not only dissolving but was being rethought, for the first time in a long time, as mutable, as something to be creatively made or organized for community and/or environmental wellbeing.

Finally, it is important to point out that the crisis has shaken the well established and taken for granted academic and expert knowledge of Western economics about capitalism. Suddenly, the economy became poorly understood again and instead of giving polished answers and recipes, economists themselves were questioning their own discipline's ability to respond.

Human geography's concern with socio-spatial dynamics cannot avoid engaging the economy. In fact, the part of geography that engages most with economy – economic geography – is one of the largest and most established sub-disciplines within human geography. This sub-discipline is, however, extraordinarily diverse and, therefore, notoriously difficult to capture in a single text let alone a single book chapter. Yet it is in this diversity that we, like many human geographers, find comfort given that our interests might normally fall well outside (or in the margins) of what many consider economic or, more precisely, consider important to some identifiable and bounded entity called “the economy.” Therefore, in this chapter, we celebrate this diversity and convey what we think is the work that it, and economic geography generally, might do. In particular, we see economic geography, and representations of the economy generally, as performances with the potential to open up or shut down economic possibilities. Our goal is not to produce a comprehensive review of how human geographers engage with the economy or to survey the sub-field of economic geography but to demonstrate the character and strengths of a human geography perspective on the economy and to suggest that that perspective matters, that it has the potential to constitute what is possible in terms of economic practices and processes.

Both the wide variety of possible ontological entry points as well as epistemological approaches makes it not only a dynamic sub-field but one that explores, documents, and, as we shall see, produces economic worlds in ways unlike, in particular, the discipline of economics. The firm, households, regional networks, flea markets, various informal economies, gift exchange, community gardens, and the body ... (the list continues) are all possible sites of economic processes, practices, and innovations. In addition, it is not the case that there is some singular theoretical approach or set of assumptions that see, for example, utility maximization by individual economic agents in each site. On the contrary, economic geography explores and deploys a variety of theoretical approaches not only to comprehend the economy but to perform

it in myriad ways with various economic/political effects which vary considerably from that of economics.

In this chapter, we focus on how different conceptions of the economy in human geography which emerge from four broad traditions in social science generally shaped and continue to shape the concerns and aspirations of economic geographers. We show that these conceptions have changed over time, calling economic geographers to understand differently their subject matter and conceptualize in new ways the role of the economy in organizing human geographies and serving as the terrain for political engagement. What role do conceptions of the economy play in shaping the spatial practices of society and relations in human life? What does “living the economy” (see the introduction to this volume) mean for human geographers when economic practices are constantly remade by different circulations, multiple scales from the global to the body, and everyday experiences?

We first outline our understanding of the economy in order to frame the consequent discussion of different conceptions of it and their relationship with research and practice in human geography. We then offer an interpretation of economic geography today and its distinct character and strengths. Next we briefly examine four broad traditions within social science and how they produced varying conceptions of the economy that guided the work of economic geographers. These traditions include quantitative geography and spatial science, Marxism, feminism, and post-structuralism, traditions which were institutionalized in economic geography in ways distinct from the field of economics and which continue to proliferate new understandings and, indeed, new economic worlds vis-à-vis the research and practice of human geographers (c.f. Barnes and Duncan 1991). In the last part of the chapter, we examine more closely the on-going expansion of what economic geographers might consider economic which results from continued engagements with these paradigms and their combination in new hybrid and forward looking research practices. More specifically, we will reflect upon the emergence of “diverse economies,” as concept and practice, itself linked to and an outcome of previous traditions (see Gibson-Graham 2008). This latter development posits an ontology of economic difference which not only works as a vital critique of capitalist forms of production but also pries open the field of the economic to the articulation of alternatives.

So, this is not a comprehensive review but a review that re-casts traditions in service of what we see as an exciting future for economic geography: one that moves beyond its well-known diversity of approaches and entry points to a diversification of what had been “the” economy. Our hope is to provide a sense of how human geographers understand economic practices and to give shape to the sub-field of economic geography not just as a diversity of ways to understand the economy (beyond and in contrast to economics) but in terms of what we think that diversity does. We conclude that how human geographers understand and engage the economy, contrary to the discipline of economics, enlarges the field of economic possibility (c.f. Gibson-Graham 2006).

### **What is the economy?**

To begin, it is important to explain from which perspective we, the authors of this chapter, will examine the concept of the economy and how it has been conceived and practiced by human geographers. We will present a particular understanding of the economy that we think allows us to productively reflect on the variety of ways human geographers not only comprehend but engage and, indeed, bring into being “the economy.” We rely, in this section, upon the work of Timothy Mitchell who has convincingly “rethought” the modern conception of the economy and revealed it to be a construct of economics, in particular the many metrical and administrative processes which the discipline of economics informs (Mitchell 1998). While economic practices originate in human existence, they are being articulated and made legible by complex interactions between knowledge, discourse, action, and practice with theory playing a powerful role. Furthermore, Mitchell has traced how those representations are then enacted and come to shape economic practices (Mitchell 2005). The economy, it would seem, is at least in part produced by economists (see also MacKenzie et al. 2007).

Mitchell’s compelling work, his “rethinking” of economy (Mitchell 2008) which we see as converging with and amplifying feminist and post-structuralist rethinking of economy (in particular, see our discussion of J.K. Gibson-Graham’s work below), provides a starting point for us and allows us to “rethink” the work of economic geographers (c.f. Gibson-Graham 1996; Lee 2006; Lee et al. 2008). While seemingly less influential, and certainly more humble, than the

discipline of economics, economic geography nevertheless offers myriad theories and practices which are very much alive in the world, busy formatting and shaping economic practices (c.f. Barnes 2008). For example, planners and managers of both cities and natural resources utilize indexes, algorithms, and decision-making tools derived from location/allocation, central place, and other “classic” theories from economic geography (now amplified through their alignment with GIS). Economic geographers’ work on the “embeddedness” of the economy, networks and relations between economic actors, and “communities of practice” often resonate with and even directly inform corporate practice. And, alternatively, critics of the status quo and advocates of “alternative economies” find not only inspiration but practical guidance in economic geographers’ work on, for example, gentrification, globalization, or the gendered processes and spaces of economy.

While considerable research would need to be done to trace just how economic geography formats and brings into being particular economic activities, we nevertheless begin from the assumption that it does, that economic geography “performs” that which it purports to reflect or explain. We do not make claims here as to the degree or success of any particular performance, but we nevertheless find this proposition allows us to examine and judge economic geography theories and approaches based upon the economies that they make possible, amplify, and foster or those which they ignore, elide, and make impossible, that is, the work they do in the world. Contrary to Mitchell (and an increasing number of human geographers) mainstream economics and its attendant public discourse of “the economy” begins from the assumption that it is a singular, unified, and ubiquitous entity or structure driven by its own inner logic and laws (c.f. Gibson-Graham 1993). The job of economics (and traditional economic geography, as we shall see below) is to figure out these laws and predict the behavior of the economy in response to changing global, national, and local circumstances. The job of policy makers is to act upon the economy armed by the expertise supplied by economists. The job of enterprises and individuals is to maximize their interests and utility according to the logic of the economy and be rewarded as a result. In other words, the prevailing notion assumes that there is a single economy which exists separately from society, history, and culture, and that society must respond and adapt to its rules and movements in order to harness its power for its own good. As a result, economic activity, from that which is technocratically driven to that which is spontaneously enacted by

individuals, is shaped and formatted, indeed performed, by economic discourse (understood as a coherent and self-referential body of economic texts, manuals, reports, metrics, indexes, and material practices).

Within this dominant understanding of the economy we see an ontological framing of an entity and/or category as stable and self-evident which is increasingly rare within the social sciences. That is, social scientists, including human geographers, have enthusiastically rethought a wide variety of once sound and centered analytical categories such as culture, gender, sexuality, identity, race, ethnicity, and even place. They have productively recast them as socially constructed, multiple and flexible, and as products of discourse, knowledge, and material practice. Yet the economy is stubbornly un-rethought (Mitchell 2008). It remains a site of an external reality to be reflected in, rather than produced by, the texts and practices of economists (although see work summarized by Ruccio 2008) including those of many human geographers (although see Barnes 2000, 2002, 2008). This is clearly the case insofar as academic work aligns with mainstream understandings of the economy as above, but it is also true of certain critical accounts which similarly see the economy as “out there,” an external structure albeit with different dynamics and outcomes than assumed by mainstream accounts (see Gibson-Graham 1996 for a critique).

Yet we cannot simply posit that the economy is other than what we have always assumed it to be, that its form and characterization, its extent and its boundaries, are not given (or natural or external to the social) but socially constructed in the same way that identity, race, or sexuality might be socially constructed rather than innate, immutable, or otherwise fixed. We need to develop theoretical tools and do the hard work of empirically explicating the economy such that it appears not as pre-existing our analyses but as brought into being and “fixed” by our analyses (see Mitchell 1998), constituted, at least in part, by our practices as human geographers.

Furthermore, destabilizing the solidity and singularity of the economy is simultaneously to limit its ability to explain all other social, cultural, and natural phenomena. That is, like identity, race, or sexuality, we must recognize the multiplicity of such categories not for their own sake but for the freedoms and potentials engendered by such rethinking. To rethink the economy and establish it as a site of diverse becomings rather than as a pre-existing object, we first recognize

the value of an anti-essentialist stance. Emerging from post-structuralist, feminist, and Marxist scholarship, anti-essentialism presumes that any particular phenomenon or entity cannot be said to be the expression of any single determinant or essence. Rather, all “things” are understood to be constituted by all other things including, importantly, knowledge (see Resnick and Wolff 1987). From this theoretical starting point it is clear that knowledge is a powerful force that does not simply reflect but participates in the constitution of reality; knowledge and its various objects are understood, then, to be co-constitutive and always emergent. From this perspective questions such as “what is the economy and what does it include?” or “what are the fundamental dynamics of the economy and what drives them?” are replaced by questions such as “how does understanding the economy from this particular starting point create more economic options for communities?” or “how does this economic phenomenon affect or relate to other phenomena?”. Furthermore, the answers will be seen to emerge from particular ontological assumptions about what are economic processes, how we should study them, and how our work might act to improve or change economic realities. Therefore, knowledge about the economy is thoroughly political, contested, and powerful.

Anti-essentialism does not allow us to judge the work done by various theories and practices of economy by human geographers based upon their correspondence to the economy. Rather it insists that we focus instead on the work done by such theories and practice, and that we trace how they constitute and are constituted by those processes we understand to be the economy. From an anti-essentialist theoretical position, from that particular epistemological entry point, the totality of economic processes and practices cannot be “out there” ready to be comprehended but is socially constructed or, more accurately, co-constituted by, amongst other things, economic knowledge. We are interested in examining what kind of work different human geography conceptions of the economy do in the world. What economic and political interests do they express, support, or stand against? What kind of politics do they enable? Armed with an anti-essentialist approach, we can see what progressive geographic research a particular conception of the economy has enabled and what kinds of exclusions it has produced at the same time. While an anti-essentialist theoretical position suggests that the economy, like other phenomena, is constituted, at least in part, by knowledge, it is the detailed empirical work of Mitchell (1998, 2005, 2008), Callon (1998), Gibson (2001), MacKenzie et al. (2007) and others which has made

clear how “the economy” came to be and how it continues to emerge in ways which align with economic theory (also see Holm 2007, Garcia-Parpet 2007, and MacKenzie 2007 for specific case studies). In their view, the economy is not a thing or an entity that evolved and functions according to its own laws but an intellectual, social, political, and material construct that was constituted through practices of knowledge, calculation, and action.

Timothy Mitchell, for example, shows that this construct, seemingly so familiar and obvious, has a very short history. He traces an emergence of what we know as the economy to the post-war period (Mitchell 1998, 2005). In his paper “Fixing the Economy,” Mitchell writes: “In the sense of the term we now take for granted, referring to the structure or totality of relations of production, distribution and consumption of goods and services within a given country or region, its usage dates only from the mid-twentieth century.” (Mitchell 1998, p.84)

Prior to that, a concept of the economy as an entity with this particular function that operates within a national territory and is in need of scientific understanding did not exist. Mitchell explains that Adam Smith, a father of modern economics, used the word “economy” only in the sense of the prudent use of resources. Even in the 1930s the term still designated frugal human behavior (Mitchell 1998, p. 84-85). While governments and scholars occupied themselves with various aspects of industry, agriculture, and relevant laws, the term “economy” continued to refer to the capacity of human beings to balance ends and needs. Only much more recently did economists, and then policy makers, begin to look at the economy as a phenomenon of its own. This is not to say, of course, that practices and processes of production, appropriation, and distribution were not occurring prior to WWII or that they were not understood as relating to something called “economy” but that such practices and processes were not conceived of as elements of a single and all-encompassing entity which could be discerned, quantified, and, to some degree, managed as the economy.

Mitchell traces the beginning of the contemporary construct of “the economy” as a totality of economic relations to the Keynesian introduction of macroeconomics in the 1930s and, equally, to the development of economics as a science of the calculation of efficient effort. Interestingly, the latter did not originate in the rich political economy of Smith, Ricardo, and Marx because academic economics parted with political economy in the 1870s. Instead, the economic

calculation of efficiency had roots in the discipline of physics. In fact, physics supplied all of the major concepts in use today by modern economics including equilibrium, stability, elasticity, inflation, expansion, contraction, distribution, movement, and friction. Moreover, utility as a driving force behind the whole economy was introduced by analogy to energy. Physics also provided the mode of explanation via the mathematical modeling of mechanical processes which replaced qualitative inquiry, more typical of political economy explanations (Mitchell 1998, pp. 85-86) and made it easier to theoretically separate economy from politics. Finally, the development of econometrics made it possible to look for ways to model not just a single market but the whole system that dynamically changes in response to external interventions:

“The reworking of the mechanical imagery in the 1930s to imagine the possibility of an external force creating an impulse that reverberates through and sets up oscillations within a completely closed system marks the birth of the idea of the economy.” (Mitchell 1998, p. 87)

Yet, Mitchell argues, the economy did not come to be understood “as a self-evident totality” capable of growing through intensification of its properties within national borders until the mid 1950s (Mitchell, 1998, p. 88). He traces how, at that time, economics in the United States became a science with exceptional executive authority insofar as it shaped presidential policies targeted at comprehending and managing the single economic system bounded by national territory. This alignment of government policy and economic theory is then multiplied in other countries. On the one hand, Mitchell traces how a theory developed in, for example, an American neoliberal think tank might travel and transform the economies of urban neighborhoods in Peru through privatization (Mitchell 2005; also see Peck 2011). On the other hand, not just at the level of national economies but internationally, too, the economy came to be thought of as an aggregate of national economies and transactions between them (Mitchell 1998, pp. 89-91).

While knowledge of the economy was produced in many sites, universities became the centers of research and teaching about the economy. Economics grew into one of the largest academic fields which then influenced other social sciences (from sociology to anthropology) which incorporated it into their major objects of study (see Fine 2002 on an “economic imperialism” emanating from the discipline of economics). The particular conception of the economy and

corresponding human behavior that emerged has come to dominate the world. Armies of economists and econometricians set out to "...to find methods of representing every relationship constituting a nation's economic life and giving each one a value." Doing so made them to decide what is to be included into the economy and what is not: "To create the economy meant also to create the non-economy" (Mitchell, 1998, p. 92). Thus, Mitchell claims, the state and the family, along with their actors, practices, labor inputs, various types of work, and consumption were relegated to non-economy. As part of the non-economy, the state performs only regulatory functions while the household is a site of unpaid and unrecorded work. The latter scarcely exists from an economics point of view because it cannot be measured and included in the official monetized economic output. We have to note here that Mitchell's point echoes a persistent concern of feminist theorists with this erasure of household production as a site of work that we address in greater detail later in the chapter. In short, the discursive definition of the economy has profoundly shaped institutions, policies, and actions across local and international scales. This knowledge became dominant in the West and together is referred to as "neoclassical economics" that in recent decades is associated with the ideology and practice of what came to be called neoliberalism articulated in the writings of, for example, Milton Friedman (Klein 2007; Harvey 2005; also see Friedman 1982).

The discussion above, in particular the work by Mitchell, makes clear that the economy is socially constructed. It is and remains, however, surprisingly difficult to rethink despite decades of social science rethinking of a wide array of terms, categories, and ontological givens. Perhaps this is because the economy is so entrenched across political, social, and cultural registers at many levels. Rethinking economy, no matter how limited it might be, does work well to highlight the role of academics in its constitution as practitioners, teachers, and policy consultants and, importantly, this insight lets us examine the traditions of economic geography for the economic world(s) they create rather than for the accuracy of their reflection to some singular and external economy. Just as we might examine discourses of race or gender relative to, for example, the urban spaces such discourses concretize, we can examine representations and practices of economy for the spaces they concretize, the power they constitute, and the lives they make possible. We can ask, what economic worlds do our economic geography traditions foster

or constitute? Into what networks have these worlds been assembled and to what end? And, importantly, how might they be assembled in new ways and with different outcomes?

Rethinking economy also lets us better appreciate and, indeed, utilize, borrow and/or hybridize, the methods and insights of those different traditions. That is, once freed from an association with a particular (perhaps incorrect, politically or otherwise) performance of economy, the tools of various approaches might be re-appropriated and reassembled with other tools and logics to new ends. We might, for example, read them not for their necessary alignment with what is dominant (as most read, for example, the quantitative revolution, see below) but for how they might be productive of economic difference.

Finally, it is increasingly clear that opening the door onto myriad economic practices and process that are socially constructed is to transform the economy into a site of ethical consideration. That is, rather than affecting and transforming places and people of its own volition, the economy is very much our own doing and is the result of our choices and practices at a variety of scales and across many sites. Its trajectories and propensities are not beyond intervention and, despite the many challenges and durabilities of current economic practice, we can work toward alternative economic practices here and now (c.f. Gibson-Graham 2003; Callon 2007; Popke 2003).

Finally, the discussion above makes clear that we can no longer talk about economy as a singular totality. Instead, we analyze and explicate economic practices at a variety of sites. This turn better aligns, we suggest, with the diversity of entry points and approaches one finds in economic geography. Furthermore, understanding those economic practices as constituted by economic geography itself suggests a new terrain across which to find commonality and disciplinary alignment in terms of similar desired outcomes if not approaches or methods (e.g. meaningful employment, environmental wellbeing, new technologies, innovation, etc.). That is, when we remain at the register of “the economy”, singular and external, it is difficult to see our various efforts as anything but competitive (i.e. who has the true or best story about the economy? what is the most important thing to focus on to comprehend the economy?). When we begin from economic practices, we can more easily work toward rich and complex understandings, borrow, hybridize, and learn from each other about the range of economic possibilities and practices we might want to explicate and foster.

## What is Economic Geography

Now that we have established a framework for examining the variety of ways that human geographers engage with the economy, we can turn to those engagements by first briefly characterizing economic geography as a whole. As noted above, economic geography is a large and highly diverse sub-discipline within human geography and it is not our intention to summarize or review it in its entirety. Indeed, there are many excellent edited volumes (e.g. Barnes et al. 2012; Leyshon et al. 2011; Sheppard and Barnes 2003; Coe et al. 2007; Sheppard et al. 2008) on the current status and content of economic geography. Rather, we seek to demonstrate the character and strengths of a human geography perspective on the economy through an explication of four broad approaches that have influenced much of social science (quantitative geography and spatial science, Marxism, feminism, and post-structuralism).

Our reading of economic geography (through these influences) uses the theoretical insights outlined in the preceding section and it initiates an empirical explication of the work done by those various approaches in economic geography. That is, we deploy an anti-essentialist approach that understands economic geography as socially constructed and constitutive of the economy or, more clearly from our perspective, constitutive of various economic practices. We suggest that the connections between approaches in economic geography and the economy itself can and should be traced as a means for better understanding the propensities and potentials of these approaches. We ask, “What work did human geographers do and what work might they now do both to comprehend and constitute the economy?”

We are tempted to draw a parallel between economic geography and economics and to presume that the former works in ways similar to the latter. We might use the work of Mitchell to suggest that economic geography played and continues to play a role similar to economics, that it too was and continues to be implicated in the production of a singular and hegemonic capitalism (which we understand to be entirely possible). This would, however, be to read economic geography only for dominance rather than difference, for its alignment with hegemonic concepts of economy, economic practice, and power rather than for the economic difference it might reveal and foster (see Gibson-Graham 2006, p. 54-57). Given our understanding of how economies are constituted via knowledge production, there is much at stake in how one

conceives not only of the economy but of one's own disciplinary traditions and practices. Do we understand them (or a selection of them?) to reproduce a status quo insofar as they constitute and thereby strengthen their object of analysis and/or critique (i.e. a singular, external, and self-driven capitalist economy)? Or do we read them (all of them?) as possible resources by which we might map, reveal, and thereby constitute economic difference and possibility both within and outside the singular capitalist frame posited by a more orthodox economics?

Reading economic geography for difference is, thankfully, considerably easier than doing so for economics which clearly continues to struggle to incorporate any theoretical dissention from its orthodox core concepts (see Sheppard et al. 2012). Indeed, it would be difficult to equate economic geography with the economics (and the world it creates) which is described by Mitchell. Human geography is decidedly less orthodox than economics and is rather busy constituting the economy not so much as a singular system moving and evolving on its own volition but as a multiplicity of economies and sets of economic practices informed by a rich set of social, cultural, and environmental processes. Furthermore, economic geography has long abandoned any desire for revealing universal spatial laws in favor of case studies, context, relationality, and an understanding of process rather than form. The result is economic geography's now infamous diversity of perspectives (Sheppard et al. 2012).

If the orthodoxy and singularity of economics creates an economy that is singular in nature, empowered by its own motion, and following its own trajectories (to which we must adapt), what economic world is created by economic geography, by its heterodoxy, by its diversity of approaches? In terms of ontology, or those things and categories which make up the economic world and are the starting points for research and analysis, we can certainly see those elements and actors which are traditionally associated with the economy. Firms, markets, regional economies, transnational corporations, labor, and so on are all evident entry-points and objects of analysis in economic geography (e.g. see Dicken 2011). Unlike economics, however, these elements and actors are rarely placed within (formal, quantitative and reductionist) models designed to mirror the dynamics and trajectories of the economy, and assumed to reflect those universal laws of economy to which economics is privy. More often, firms, etc. are examined as empirical cases existing within a real context and acting according to a host of influences and

dynamic processes beyond the laws of supply and demand, the behaviors of *homo economicus*, or the invisible hand of the market.

Insofar as economic geography captures or reflects the economy, it is a diverse place where the motivations, motions, and direction of individual elements and actors are less the product of an internal logic or structure and more a product of context and contingency. The economy, to the degree it is a site to be comprehended as a singularity, is inextricably linked to (and constituted by) other processes which are generally excluded from consideration by economics. Culture and society, gender and identity, bodies and places, as well as the material processes of the environment, technology, and administration all constitute the economy which is performed by economic geography. Even where economic geographers focus on and theorize capitalism per se, it is a “variegated” capitalism (Peck and Theodore 2007) which is differentiated across space and whose contours and trajectories are a function of myriad other processes and practices (e.g. social context, power, relations and networks, identities, gender, culture, race, sexuality, etc.). Economic geography disrupts many of the assumed attributes and dynamics that we normally associate with the economy and, indeed, with capitalism. Its capacities and propensities are no longer seen as inevitable law-like functions but, via the empirical and theoretical work of human geographers, as outcomes of rich contexts and multiple determinants as increasingly evident even in the work of geographers concerned with economic modeling (see, for example, the discussion in Martin and Sunley 2010).

Furthermore, human geographers not only work on capitalism such that it becomes other than what it was assumed to be (e.g. variegated, embedded, and contingent), they also expand the field of the economic to sites and practices outside of the capitalist frame. Again, at an ontological level we see in economic geography a wide range of sites which, from the perspective of orthodox economics, are thought to be outside of the economy (as we have noted in Introduction, the list of such “outsiders” is open-ended). These do not just affect or condition some external economy; they themselves are sites of economic practice and, often, alternative economic performance (Lee 2006; Leyshon, Lee and Williams 2003; Fuller et al. 2010, also see below). It is not that economists do not also explore these “margins,” but that within economics they are peripheral to a set of core concepts and theories which align with the economy. In

economic geography, however, they appear as no more or less vital than other more traditional sites of economy (e.g. firm, etc.).

The ontological diversity presumed and produced by economic geography is, we posit, a product of its epistemological and theoretical diversity, its heterodoxy (c.f. St. Martin and Wing 2007). Theoretical explorations and influences that have been felt across the social sciences and have been incorporated and institutionalized within economic geography such that how one might know the economy and, indeed, how one might perform it have been multiplied. Whereas, for example, in economics such influences produced an academic culture of division, orthodoxy and dissention, and marginalization of theoretical (and hence economic) difference, in economic geography it resulted in a decidedly more hybridized and open academic milieu. Indeed, this is what makes economic geography distinct from economics, it is a site where a wealth of ontological and epistemological difference relative to economy has proliferated and multiplied thereby allowing different economic worlds to also proliferate and multiply.

Finally, this expansion of the field of economy and its possibilities is perhaps not surprising given that human geographers “add space” to economy and do so in ways which are distinct from the New Economic Geography of Paul Krugman (see below as well as Sheppard et al. 2012). Whereas the latter inserts a spatial dimension (i.e. Cartesian space) into its economic modeling, itself made possible by GIS and related geo-technologies and geo-coded secondary data, economic geography sees space as a process and an emergence relative to and co-constitutive with economy. It is not that the economy takes place on some Cartesian stage. Rather, economic dynamics, processes, identities, and performances are inherently spatial (see, of course, Lefebvre 1992; Smith 2008; Harvey 2006 and others on this difference). Furthermore, space, in the hands of human geographers, creates a diversity and a multiplicity that must be recognized. To exist in space is to exist along with and beside others, it is to be proximately located relative to that which is not the same (see Massey 2005). In terms of economy this is to recognize that not only do economic actors differ (e.g. in terms of motivations and behaviors) but so too do economic process and practice; to add space is, in this sense, to see capitalism, for example, as unable to inhabit all spaces, all locations, and necessarily to posit the existence of non-capitalisms, of economic difference. Where there is space, where spatialities are emergent,

there is economic heterogeneity and the emergence, always, of economic difference. The spatialization of economy, understanding it through space, works to broaden the field of the economy and, with it, economic possibility.

## **Economy in the quantitative economic geography tradition**

Timothy Mitchell (see above) convincingly demonstrates that the modern economy is a mid-twentieth century social and theoretical construct that carved out space for new economic subjects who all – from entrepreneurs and neoclassical (and neoliberal) economists to policy makers and other working people – have faith that they should behave according to the economy's inner rules. In the process of defining what is and what is not part of the economy, sites such as the state and the family were excluded despite their importance in the political economy tradition. Moreover, the economy came to be associated exclusively with capitalism and driven, as formulated within neoclassical economics, by an essential market logic, utilitarian rationality, law of supply and demand, and tendency towards equilibrium.

This particular concept of the economy also became central to the nascent field of scientific human geography that formed in the United States after World War II. Prior to that, the so-called “regional” geography prided itself on its rich detail and qualitative descriptions of the natural environment and human activity in particular places (Livingstone 1992). An emergent “scientific” economic geography, however, adopted as its object of analysis the economy promoted by neoclassical economics and insisted that quantification and modeling be its major research tools. In a compelling series of articles, the economic geographer Trevor Barnes (2000, 2001a) has examined the emergence of a post-war scientific economic geography, itself part of a more general quantitative revolution in the social sciences. He draws on various histories of the discipline as well as extensive interviews with those human geographers who introduced and championed the quantitative revolution in geography, and he uses a science studies approach to show that the emergence of the field was a historically contingent process resulting from a combination of developments in other fields, new policy initiatives of the American government, and the personal histories of young men (most geographers were men at that time) who became exposed to quantitative methods and took positions at particular universities (Barnes 2000,

2001a). The science studies approach sees economic geography, in this case its quantitative and scientific tradition, not as a reflection or mirror of the economy getting every more accurate over time but as an assemblage of ideas, techniques, theories, machines, people, institutions, etc. that together create the phenomena we now call the quantitative revolution in economic geography. As an assemblage, rather than mirror, we can no longer judge it for its accuracy of reflection but, instead, we focus on its effectivity, for the work it does in the world.

Illuminating in many ways, Barnes' account also helps us to understand how the post-war conception of the economy as a self-driving market-based machine shaped and was shaped by the research and practice of economic geography. The fascination with quantification and modeling among "space cadets" – young graduate students and professors – that he portrays was not just a rational and inevitable scientific development but was also a response to the prevailing economic discourse and model of the economy which had been developed in economics and regional science. In contrast to the economists who were concerned with national economy as a whole, geographic models sought to incorporate space. Spatial laws, geographers believed, were general laws that shaped socio-economic phenomena including economic growth and urban development. As the goal of spatial science, these laws were to be revealed by the scientific method which involved empirical observation, precise and repeatable measurement, hypothesis testing, and modeling. To isolate the effect of space and distance, geographers theorized spatial distributions using an isotropic plane as the ontological basis of reality. In a now classic paper, John Nystuen (1963) compared this plane to the smooth floor of a mosque where the worshippers arrange themselves with respect to spatial relationships such as distance, direction, relative location, pattern, and so on. The "new" scientific analyses by which human geographers would attempt to model the economy began from an isotropic plane and drew upon the classic works of Von Thünen (concentric model of agricultural landuse), Walter Christaller (central place theory), Alfred Weber (theory of industrial location) and August Lösch (theory of economic landscape) to form the body of knowledge known as "location theory" (Von Thünen 1966, Christaller 1966, Weber 1929, Lösch 1954). Like economists, geographers borrowed from physics a host of conceptual tools for specifying spatial interactions. For example, defining market areas of supply and demand involved gravity-like interactions between cities or other units that varied with population size and distance while the costs of labor, raw materials, and

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transportation were assumed to equally trade-off (see Haggett 1965 for a synthesis of location theory in geography).

As in economics, by the middle of the twentieth century, scientific inquiry in economic geography drew heavily on quantitative analysis. Revealing the underlying spatial patterns of the economy required identifying spatial relationships by measuring the distribution of and modeling the interactions between the components of the system. Berry and Harrison's classic 1958 article in *Economic Geography* titled "Functional Bases of Central Place Hierarchy" (see Barnes 2001a for the history of this paper) represents an early application of spatial science in economic geography that was informed by the new model of the economy developed in economics. The paper utilized quantitative methods such as econometrics which, Mitchell reminds us, were developed within the broad context of Keynesian inspired interventions into the economy in order to combat depression and mass unemployment at home as well as build welfare in European colonies to secure colonial rule (Mitchell 1998, p.88). Similarly, mid-twentieth century economic geographers sought to not only hone their quantitative skills but to do so in order to find solutions to geographic concentrations of poverty, rational distribution of resources, efficient building of highways and housing (Barnes 2001a). From the academic point of view of the time, this could be achieved only by interventions and planning informed by scientific understanding of the economy. Accurately understanding its spatial character required geographers to engage with quantitative modeling within the frameworks of location theory. As in economics, the geographic facts could only become economic facts if confirmed by quantitative analysis and tested against the inner logic of the market system (see Berry and Harrison 1958 as discussed in Barnes 2001a for an example of constructing scientific proofs using geographic data).

From that time on, once accepted as a scientific standard, location theory and quantitative analysis and modeling have become a prevailing approach in economic geography. This approach still accounts for substantial research within the field today after having survived the critiques of Marxist, feminist, and post-structuralist geographers. Moreover, it has experienced a revival in the last two decades in conjunction with the expansion of GIS (geographic information

systems) and GISci (Geographic information science) because of their (often perceived) connection with quantification (Pavlovskaya 2006).

More recently, this kind of economic geography has been rejuvenated again, now by the field of economics itself. It occurred as a result of a “spatial turn” and the rise of geographical economics after the economist and Nobel Prize winner Paul Krugman introduced what he called the New Economic Geography (NEG). To many geographers Krugman’s focus on geographic differences in trade and wealth across the globe was nothing “new” since geographers have been working on similar analyses for decades, albeit outside of the powerful discipline of economics (Martin and Sunley 2010; Sheppard, Peck, and Barnes 2012). In addition, as Sheppard, Peck, and Barnes (2012) explain, critically minded geographers do not generally accept the foundational assumptions and premises of mainstream economics and their conception of space as a process and practice (rather than Cartesian container) is decidedly more complex than that of the NEG. While many economic geographers yearn for geography to play a role in government policy like the NEG and economics generally, most do not wish to abandon the critical and heterodox nature of what they do. In short, the model of the economy developed in economics continues to generate a large amount of geographic research and applications for government and business. Today, this research takes advantage of GIS and large quantities of the increasingly available public and private digital spatial data.

While quantitative economic geography has been the stronghold of the field, its positivist epistemology and political conformism relative to the capitalist state were challenged and criticized by alternative theoretical approaches that entered the discipline in the 1970s (e.g. Marxism, humanism, feminism, environmentalism). As a result, the close coupling of methods, epistemology, and service to the state (in support of a single image of the economy and capitalist development) was loosened (for more on this history see Livingstone 1992). While a scientific and quantitative approach to economic geography continues in this vein today, it no longer pursues (can pursue?) an agenda where the goal is to isolate timeless spatial laws of economy and development. Furthermore, rather than continuing to claim, as it once did, to be the best path to understanding “the” economy, and thereby marginalizing all other approaches, it now coexists

and occasionally overlaps with other approaches (methodologically and epistemologically) within an extremely diverse sub-disciplinary field.

With a post-structuralist sensibility that will not allow us to reduce quantitative methods or even a “scientific” epistemological approach to tools for capitalist development and for reification of the economy, we can look for what this tradition can contribute to imagining future economic geographies of social justice and environmental sustainability. In other words, how might we read the history of the quantitative revolution in economic geography and current related practices for difference? While the strong theoretical critiques of the past worked to equate such methods with the capitalist state (e.g. Harvey 1973; Smith 1989), we use feminist and post-structural theoretical tools to re-read the history of economic geography in order to break such essential associations. For example, we might follow Barnes (2000, 2001a, 2002) and discover just how earnest, hardworking, committed, and caring were the practitioners of the quantitative revolution. That is, behind the neutral academic texts they produced, purposefully devoid of any personal touch, there were passionate and committed scholars driven by the desire to make a progressive difference in the world. They saw themselves as leading a revolution that would transform geography from a descriptive backwater to a tool for progressive and fair economic development. In Berry and Harrison’s seminal paper from 1958, for example, there is an implicit assumption that when one understands distributions of services, one might plan more effectively and thereby provide services to all, fight poverty, and spread economic opportunity. That they sought universal laws (epistemological reductionism) and thereby discounted other processes which clearly shaped the phenomena they were mapping (e.g. the role of race or gender on the nascent suburbanization visible in their data) was problematic but, as noted above, has largely been curtailed vis-à-vis the critical and heterodox disciplinary milieu within which quantitative and scientific economic geography is embedded today. Also, that such tools were coopted by industry and used to serve capitalism per se (ontological reductionism) is certainly true but so too is the fact that these were (and remain) powerful analytical tools and traditions of quantification which need not be tied to the needs of “the economy.” Indeed, armed with these tools and traditions but freed from the epistemological constraints of spatial science, economic geographers today examine economic patterns precisely with respect to class, race, and gender (see section “Economies of the cultural turn”).

The contribution of spatial science and quantitative analysis to research on the economy, even if understood strictly in neoclassical terms, is profound. Spatial science introduced “theory” to economic geography (Livingstone 1992) and powerfully revealed the spatial patterns of capitalist development. One might even argue that without the focus on space promoted by the “space cadets” we might not have been able to theorize and “see” the uneven development of capitalism. That is, they disclosed the patterns and thereby provided the spaces into which later theorists projected new understandings of processes that shaped these uneven patterns (e.g., capitalist accumulation and exploitation, patriarchy, imperialism, and racism). It may be the case that David Harvey’s powerful overture to Marxist economic geography in 1973 *Social Justice and the City* may not have happened without him thoroughly engaging with the positivist quantitative tradition as exemplified in his earlier text *Explanation in Geography* (1969). A similar intellectual journey, from the quantitative geography camp to Marxism during which economic geography, in words of Hodder and Lee (1974, p. 3), broke “out of its neo-classical strait-jacket”, is evident in the lives of many economic geographers including Doreen Massey, Linda McDowell, Trevor Barnes, Roger Lee, Dick Peet, and Eric Sheppard and others whose “lives told” are captured by Barnes (2001a).

Finally, whereas in the past critical economic geographers might have turned their backs on the quantitative revolution (famously Harvey after adopting Marxism), they are now re-claiming and re-appropriating quantification and all it implies to redeploy it within their own epistemological frameworks. The rise and disciplinary claims of GIS is a story which closely parallels that of the quantitative revolution (see St. Martin and Wing 2007). Yet, unlike the quantitative revolution which resulted in an enduring chasm between its approach and that of, for example, Marxist economic geography, we see GIS being rethought early on as a tool for diversifying the economy and for intervening in ways that are not just aligned with a single concept of economy or power (see below). We attribute this inability of GIS to maintain a fidelity to capitalism, to the reproduction and reification of a single economy, to the diverse milieu which is economic geography. That is, powerful tools such as GIS are used by a variety of economic geographers to not only serve the status quo but to also foster economic difference (Pavlovskaya 2004; St. Martin 2005).

As a final note, the qualification of quantitative methods both historically (e.g. via the work of Trevor Barnes) and today (e.g. via the ongoing disruptions and reconfigurations of quantitative methods by economic geographers) and the rethinking of the work they do is both possible and welcome within economic geography. This is largely not the case in economics which remains an orthodox discipline blind to space and wedded to a large degree (although not fully, like in case of Keynesian economics) to neoclassical theorizations and an insistence upon a quantitative approach at the expense of other forms of knowledge production. While economic geographers continue to use quantitative methods, they do so for many diverse reasons and in so doing produce various economic realities (see, for example, Kwan 1999b, Wyly and Hammel 1999).

### **Economy in the political economy tradition**

The political economy tradition that draws on Marxian theory entered geography in the 1960s, soon after quantitative economic geography achieved its mainstream status. In fact, most early Marxist geographers, including Dick Peet and David Harvey, were initially trained as quantitative scholars and worked with mainstream models of the economy. But the failure of the economy and the state to respond to the challenges of the post-war period and as well as the subsequent economic and political crises of the 1970s led to a dissatisfaction with capitalism as the ultimate answer to these challenges and location theory as the understanding of its spatial logic. Marxist geographers directed their critique at both the neoclassical model of the economy and the academic community that supported this model which, in their view, ignored the true causes of human suffering (Harvey 1973, 2001). The late Marxist geographer Neil Smith, a prominent critic of neoclassical location theory, expresses his “political and intellectual frustration with location theory, above all with its inability to account for real geographic processes, patterns, and events...” (Smith 1989, p.145).

A new conception of the economy better suited to explain the unfolding spatial patterns of capitalism emerged from the Marxist tradition. Marxist theory considers market forces to be operating on the surface of and thus masking the true underlying mechanisms shaped by social relations of class and class structures. These relations and structures, and not the impersonal interaction of utility maximizing actors, hold together the economy according to Marxism. The

economy is also seen as a totality but of a very different sort. The source of wealth is the exploitation of labor instead of good business practices and hard work. From this point of view, capitalism is so deeply flawed that no planning or partial redistribution could mitigate the unacceptable disparities in wealth and power necessarily produced by it. This “true” face of capitalism is hidden by liberal economics and must be exposed in order to effectively engage societies in transformative change.

Marxist geographers have made a remarkable contribution to theories explaining the spatial logic of capitalism. Their vision of space as a social product that in turn shapes the space-time economy of capitalism is markedly different from the isotropic plane of spatial scientists and quantitative geographers. Marxist theorizing of space has profoundly affected social sciences (e.g., see Harvey 2006 for a recent recap) and, we suggest, has laid the ground for the recent “spatial turn” in the social sciences. For example, Marxist geographers theorized the unfolding of urbanization with respect to spatial tactics of class struggle (Gordon 1978) in ways similar to how feminists linked suburbanization to patriarchy (Mackenzie 1989); they showed how the overaccumulation of capital reshapes spaces and territories (Harvey 1978); and they provided class-based explanations for gentrification and other important urban economic processes (Smith N 1996; 2002; 2004).

The new Marxian vision of the economy and the role of theory in understanding this economy necessitated a different research agenda in geography. Historical materialism and dialectics became major explanatory tools. Instead of collecting secondary data, conducting large-scale surveys, and modeling utility maximizing behavior and demand/supply equilibrium, Marxist geographers set out to document the living conditions of working people and unveil the hidden spatial mechanisms of capitalist exploitation. They organized “geographical expeditions” to urban ghettos (Bill Bunge 1969), and applied Marxian theory of capital accumulation to the analysis of spatial disparities produced by its tendency to uneven development instead of equilibrium (David Harvey 1978 and Neil Smith 2008).

Marxism introduced a new ontological entry point (class) into economic analysis but also an alternative epistemology (dialectics) which pointed to the political nature of knowledge production and its alignment with particular actors. In his “Manifesto” for geography, David

Harvey (1984) pointed to the necessity to think differently and be aware of the effects of what we think/practice/do as academics because human geography does not innocently reflect the world. Mainstream quantitative geography, he argued, produces knowledge that sustains capitalism. Only Marxian analysis rooted in the historical material conditions of the working class is capable of generating knowledge that will lead to liberation of that exploited class. By linking knowledge to praxis, Marxist geographers opened the economy to class analysis. At the same time their quest for a single truth arrived at by class analysis had the effect of closing other entry points. Other emancipatory knowledges such as feminism, post-structuralism, and post-colonialism were (and still are in some cases) seen by Marxists as secondary to class.

In contrast to economics which ghettoized Marxism and its alternative model of the economy, economic geography embraced it to a degree that, as some argue, it even became the dominant approach within economic geography (Sheppard et al. 2012). Marxism itself proliferated as a variety of approaches and understandings ranging from what is often called “traditional” or structural Marxism to feminist Marxism, post-modern Marxism, post-structuralist feminist Marxism, post-colonial Marxism, etc. While diverse theoretically and epistemologically these strands are unified politically in their critique of capitalism and other social hierarchies. Perhaps reflective of economic geography more generally, we now see within economic geography a variety of Marxisms with varying foci and entry points, and engaged in exciting new alignments and cross-overs to other social theoretical traditions as represented by the work of such prominent economic geographers as David Harvey, Ed Soja, Doreen Massey, Cindi Katz, Melissa Wright, Roger Lee, J.K. Gibson-Graham, and Noel Castree – to name just a few. The diversity of Marxian economic geography is reflected not only in Marxist geography journals such as *Antipode* (thriving since the 1970s) and *Human Geography* (the most recent Marxist geography journal), but in virtually all human geography journals where Marxism continues to act as an important conceptual foundation.

Political economy and Marxism continues to inspire a new generation interested in economic difference and progressive social change. The idea that one might critique the economy as well as intervene and build alternatives to it is fundamental to Marxism and the desires of many today especially with respect to the current crisis of capitalism, environmental destruction, a rampant

consumer culture and its attendant alienation. Yet, we are also aware that critical research such as found in Marxian economic geography can work to reify and bolster its object of analysis, capitalism, through a production of knowledge about capitalism and little else (see Gibson-Graham 1996). That is, despite its alignment with an anti-capitalist political project, Marxism in economic geography can also work to produce the very capitalism it opposes insofar as its discourse and analysis constitutes that which it critiques. Indeed, the work done by Marxism in economic geography has been multidimensional.

Finally, Marxian political economy exerts influence beyond the initial and current community of Marxist geographers. Those who do not incorporate Marxism or who are even antagonistic toward it, admit that the knowledge they produce is, in some sense, political and that other entry points are important to understand. By making explicit the political nature of knowledge, Marxism, one could argue, opened the door (perhaps unknowingly or even unwantedly) to a diversity of entry points into the analysis of the economy. In this sense, it made room for what came next – the proliferation of different strands of Marxism, feminism, and post-structuralism.

### **Economy in feminist economic geography**

Despite their profound differences, both the neoclassical and Marxian conceptions of the economy in geography (as elsewhere) equally excluded women. Location theory had a single subject – an “economic man” (whose logic was assigned to all actors from an individual to a firm to a region to a country) while Marxist geographers privileged class relation over gender and focused on the experiences of the working class assumed to be male. Both bodies of knowledge excluded gender as an analytical category and women as objects of research. Thus, liberal and socialist feminist economic geographers had to rework these respective models of the economy to account for the role of gender relations and gendered economic experiences (McDowell 1991). The shared theoretical premise was that women actually constitute half of the population and work most hours (as argued by ILO in 1982) but their work is either not officially counted or is valued less than men’s work. Since, as already mentioned, neoclassical economics excluded family from what constitutes the economy (Mitchell 1998), in contrast to paid employment, the econometric models and official statistics incorporate household labor only when it is contracted

out as wages to formally employed domestic workers or in the form of food and other services consumed at the market place. For the purposes of market-based economics, therefore, unpaid household labor, mainly performed by women, does not exist. The situation is aggravated by the (erroneous) assumption that in a market economy household labor is (or will eventually be) replaced by formal services. In other societies, unpaid women's work supports to an even greater degree daily social reproduction tasks and plays a major role in food production which is typical in a wide variety of world economies. Yet, this work is excluded from conceptions of the economy from local to international scales. The feminist economist, Marilyn Waring (1990), showed that systems for counting GDP, designed by men, included only paid and formal contributions to the economy. To them, other types of labor, different from their own and unpaid, such as house and care work, for example, did not constitute work to be included in calculations of wealth. Yet, if household labor were counted, national and world GDPs would increase by one to two thirds. Feminist scholars made it clear that by excluding domestic production and households as economic sites, the neoclassical models of the economy have blinded themselves to the labor women perform across the world.

Similarly, first feminist geographers Janice Monk and Susan Hanson argued that mainstream geographic analysis excluded half of humanity from human geography it constructed (Monk and Hanson 1982). For example, the commuting and time-space activity models of Alonso and Hagerstrand, respectively, were widely used to capture the spatial behavior of only male "breadwinners" unburdened by household work, childcare, and other family responsibilities. Women's commuting patterns, however, were much more spatially constrained than men's given the gendered demands of family and domestic care (Hanson and Pratt 1995; McLafferty and Preston 1991). More recently Mei-Po Kwan showed that this situation persists insofar as the latest research on commuting and access to urban opportunities (now implemented within GIS) still ignores gendered commuting patterns (Kwan 1999a).

While Hanson and Pratt and other feminist geographers reworked quantitative methods (by rethinking their epistemological foundations and combining them with qualitative research methods such as interviews, ethnographies, and participant observation) and thereby transformed what was the economy, socialist feminist geographers aimed their critique at the exclusion of

women from Marxist geographic analysis. Marxist geographers, initially mainly men, believed that class structure was the single most important source of exploitation and only its elimination will address other oppressive social hierarchies including patriarchy. Socialist feminists, however, focused on the role of patriarchy within class oppression and found it to be an essential element of the latter. In some theories, it is an integral and enabling aspect of capitalist social relations while in others it is another universal axis of social domination that acts alongside and augments class exploitation. Either way, patriarchy in capitalist societies subjects women to both class and gender exploitation. Therefore, to not incorporate gender into human geography analyses of capitalism would be to not fully understand the economy. In their analysis of regional restructuring, British feminist geographers Linda McDowell and Doreen Massey, for example, have brought to the fore the powerful role of gender in organizing spatial divisions of labor, an insight typically absent from both neoclassical economics and Marxist analyses (McDowell and Massey 1984).

In addition to theorizing gender and patriarchy as fundamental economic relations, feminist geographers have expanded the notion of work to places outside the formal workplace. Socialist and radical feminists have long argued that social reproduction plays just as important a role as production such that housework and care work is as necessary as paid employment (for recent discussions see Mitchell, Marston, and Katz 2004). In addition, feminist geographers established that the gendering of employment patterns begins with the division of labor inside the household and that the dynamic relationship between work and home shapes economic geographies (Hanson and Pratt 1995).

Studying work outside the formal workplace as well as the connections between work and home has been, however, challenging because relevant statistical information is lacking making difficult the incorporation of women and women's work into existing (geographic) models of the economy. To overcome this lack of data feminist scholars have turned to qualitative research methods that could be used to capture the unmeasured, unrecorded, and, often, non-quantifiable economic experiences of women. Feminist human geographers, who saw the knowledge they produced as emerging from a particular location as well as from the experience of gender oppression, clearly made a vital contribution to the new feminist epistemology of situated partial

knowledge that was emerging within the social sciences generally (Jones III, Nast, and Roberts 1997). Therefore, feminists reconstructed the economy as formed in multiple ways and at multiple locations where formal and informal gendered work takes place. Furthermore, insofar as their work situated the economy in other (gendered) contexts and processes, it made it increasingly difficult to talk about any single external economy. The abstractions of both neoclassical and Marxist economics that worked to constitute that economy (either by conforming to it or critiquing it), were clearly at odds with the experiences and lived economies of women (Katz and Monk 1993; Mitchell, Marston, and Katz 2004).

Feminists' analyses of patriarchy and its relationship to economy are, however, meant to be more than just a way to comprehend the nature of the economy or, now, economies; they are meant to change it. That is, feminism is also, like Marxism, a political project of liberation from oppression and feminist knowledge production cannot be divorced from that project. Yet, contrary to Marxism, feminists are not content to "wait for the revolution" (Gibson-Graham 1993) and, instead, see change (emancipation from patriarchal practices) as possible "here and now." While patriarchy, like the capitalist economy, can be seen as a ubiquitous structure with little room for difference, feminists insist that "the personal is political" and that undoing patriarchy can proceed not necessarily through a global revolution but by incremental victories of individual women and groups of women both within their homes and at their workplaces.

That theory of proximate change and possibility vis-à-vis patriarchy has been innovatively extended to the field of "the economy." In particular, the work of J.K. Gibson-Graham (1996, 2006) makes clear that women (and men) are subject not only to patriarchal discourse and practice but economic discourse and practice (performed by a range of actors including economists, economic geographers, and ourselves). "The economy", as a discursive and material construct, works to subject us to its needs and movements, positioning us as powerless recipients of its global machinations. Yet, a feminist theory of change works to disrupt this stifling understanding of economy and posits that neither individual economic subjectivity nor "the global economy" is fixed or immutable (Nagar 2006; Nagar et al. 2002; Roberts 2004). Women (and men) can engage directly in a local and proximate politics of changing the economy just as they have radically changed gender relations thereby improving the lives of millions of women

around the world. This kind of change, personal and political, matters as much as any large-scale political action. From a feminist economic geography perspective we may even “...smash capitalism while working at home in [our] spare time” (Gibson-Graham 1993).

To study gendered economic practices, feminist geographers have built a varied epistemological field and equipped themselves with a wide range of research tools. Having initially focused on qualitative methodologies, in the 1990s they have re-appropriated quantitative research methods and spatial analysis to not only understand gender and class relations but to intervene in them via a new feminist sensibility (see 1995 issue of *The Professional Geographer*). For example, several feminist geographers now use geospatial technologies including GIS to map, represent, and, indeed, open to transformation gendered economic landscapes that are commonly absent from traditional economic geographies (Kwan 1999a; Pavlovskaya 2004; Pavlovskaya and St. Martin 2007). Visualizing the economic practices and work sites that matter to women helps to constitute them as both objects and active subjects of theory and policy (Pavlovskaya 2006).

Feminist economic geography has not only revolutionized our understanding of the economy but it has also made clear that progressive change is possible. In contrast to the neoclassical market economy or Marxian modes of production that focus on a the formal workplace, feminist scholarship concerning economy embraces multiple sites of formal and informal employment and social reproduction while expanding the notion of work to unpaid housework, subsistence production, and care work. Thanks to feminist economists and geographers, women have become major economic actors speaking from multiple locations in many voices and changing the patriarchal economy by their actions on a daily basis. This expanded vision of the economy and the ability to make alternatives to it tangible make the feminist economic geography one of the most forward looking and inspiring traditions.

## **Economies of the cultural turn**

The so-called cultural turn in economic geography (Barnes 2001b) has further modified the conception of the economy through feminist scholarship in combination with post-structuralist and post-colonial perspectives. It made it explicitly socially embedded at the level of everyday economic and cultural practices and political institutions (Peck 1996; Smith A 2002; Freidberg

2003; Stenning et al. 2010). The cultural turn also highlighted the movement of people, goods, and knowledge through horizontal networks connecting places leading to new research on commodity chains, global production networks, and knowledge communities thus evolving into “relational turn” (Hughes 2004; Jackson et al. 2006; Sheppard et al. 2012; Brenner et al. 2010). Importantly, however, the cultural turn makes room for considerations of the economy, via post-structural concepts, as a discursive category and as an assemblage of material and human actors that solidifies into practices, institutions, and even structures under specific historical and geographical circumstances. Such assemblages, however, are not equivalent to any permanent system of economy with its own logic independent from that which constitutes it. Similar to feminism, a post-structuralist conception of the economy necessarily opens it to contestation and the possibility of transformation because what has been historically and contingently constituted can be constituted as otherwise.

What we find especially remarkable about post-structuralism is that, in contrast to previous traditions (e.g., scientific quantitative geography, spatial analysis, Marxism and strands of essentialist feminism), it suggests a potential borrowing from other approaches and a hybridization of methods within a new epistemological frame. While both positivist and Marxist geographers have fought many epistemological struggles with post-structuralism, accusing it of theoretical and political complacency and weakness (e.g., Harvey 1989), we see post-structuralism as enabling politics and working to produce alternative visions of the economy. Since the measure of the efficacy of our research is no longer “the truth” but political impact, post-structuralism dissolves the glue that typically holds together the triad of ontology, epistemology, and methodology in other philosophical traditions. A post-structural sensibility relative to the economy lets us use, for example, GIS to foster new economic subjectivities (St. Martin and Hall-Arber 2007), class analysis to better understand the dynamics of alternative community gardens and community-supported agriculture (Cameron 2010), GIS and qualitative analysis of households to critique national economic discourse (Pavlovskaya 2004), and psychoanalysis to engage questions of economic subjectivity (Healy 2010). These hybrid research projects draw on the strengths of various traditions to engage with and thereby transform the economy (understood as a product of our knowledge and practice). The goal of such work is decidedly pragmatic, an interest in proximate change which might emerge from the

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production of a situated truth as opposed to some eternal truth as was sought by previous social science traditions. Post-structuralism de-links methodologies from their epistemological foundations and liberates research methods to travel across epistemological boundaries without compromising political commitments (Pavlovskaya 2006; Barnes 2009; Wyly 2009). This is because the method is no longer a tool for uncovering a single truth but a strategy for constructing political knowledge about the economy, and, therefore, the economy itself. It is in this way that it generates possibility via alternative economic imaginations (see next section).

At the level of research practice, post-structuralist impact on geography has allowed Marxist and feminist analysis to merge with previously estranged quantitative methods (Wyly 2009; Barnes 2009) while also enhancing qualitative analysis with geo-spatial technologies (Elwood and Cope 2009). This post-structural hybridization of research is perhaps best illustrated by the rise of “critical quantitative geography”, albeit still an oxymoron to many accustomed to the epistemological divisions of the last decades of the 20th century. Following feminist geographers who reclaimed quantitative methods in the 1990s, critical economic geographers today call from the pages of the same major journal – *The Professional Geographer* – for a “critical and quantitative” research practice in order to wield the power of quantitative methods for counter-hegemonic political projects (e.g. economic transformation) (Barnes 2009; also see Plummer and Sheppard 2001 in *Antipode*). They aim to harness GIS, spatial analysis, cartography, statistical analysis, and quantitative modeling to illuminate the effects of neoliberalizing economies as well as related data and knowledge production practices on class, gender, race, and sexuality (Kwan 1999a; Wyly and Hammel 1999; Plummer, Sheppard, and Haining 1998; Pavlovskaya and Bier 2012).

For example, Wyly and Hammel (1999) use statistical analysis to reveal the changing spatial patterns of gentrification in relation to mortgage lending and low-income housing policy as well as race, gender, and class; Plummer, Sheppard, and Haining (1998) use mathematical modeling to demonstrate the tendency of capitalism to spatial disequilibrium instead of equilibrium; and Graves (2003) determines the concentration of predatory lending practices in minority neighborhoods using GIS. Similarly, St. Martin used GIS with national fisheries service data to depict fishers’ labor time in the ocean and to construct community “landscapes” previously

invisible to fisheries management. At least in one instance, his maps influenced a community of fishers to form a cooperative and community-supported fishing enterprise (St. Martin 2005; 2007). St. Martin's work illustrates the forward looking transformative capacity of a post-structuralist vision of the economy. Seen as a practice being enacted and performed by its participants (including academic researchers), a post-structural approach provides, similar to feminism, the possibility of economic change by enacting alternative economies "here and now" (Gibson-Graham 2006) even within the heart of capitalism (St. Martin 2006; Cornwell 2012).

### **Imagining alternative economies**

As we have already explained, the neoclassical model of the economy described by Timothy Mitchell excludes all economic practices in capitalist societies that occur outside formal markets. The Marxist vision of the economy similarly focuses, almost exclusively, on capitalist workplaces. Both theories, consequently, see the economy as a capitalist totality. To the degree there is an "outside" to capitalism, it is, in both theories, to be found only in the past or on a shrinking periphery. A radical reconceptualization of the economy that locates economic difference and diversity everywhere rather than only "before and beyond" capitalism (Callari 2004) has, however, taken root within feminist and post-structuralist economic geography. Borrowing Marx's typology of modes of production (beyond that of capitalism) and combining it with insights from feminist economics, J.K. Gibson-Graham (1996, 2006) eloquently theorized the economy as diverse while also highlighting the effects of the discursive hegemony of capitalism (see, for example, Lee 2006 for another approach to rethink economy as varying in time and space).

They characterized theories that focus on capitalism at the expense of other economies as "capitalocentric." Both neo-classical economics and structural Marxism, in their view, are capitalocentric discourses because of their constant gaze on capitalism. This gaze illuminates the virtues (as in neoclassical economics) or evils (as in Marxism) of capitalism but because it measures, documents, analyzes, maps, and otherwise fixates on capitalism, it works to obscure and/or undermine non-capitalist practices proximate or otherwise. Sites of non-capitalist exploitation (e.g., unpaid housework), intentional alternatives to capitalism (e.g., worker

cooperatives), and even alternative capitalisms (e.g. employee owned firms) are unrecognized, insignificant, or cast as an epiphenomenon relative to capitalism within capitalocentric discourse. As such, alternatives to capitalism become only a distant (in time or space) possibility or are entirely unimaginable. In contrast, the capitalist economy enjoys hegemony in academic research, government policy, and resource allocation and serves as an object of desire to not only, for example, entrepreneurs but also academics. To combat this hegemony and empower non-exploitative alternatives, Gibson-Graham call us to de-center capitalism (1996), to “queer the economy” (1999), and reconceptualize the economy as a diverse field of practice and engagement (2006). Doing so, in their view, would make capitalism smaller and weaker while non-capitalisms, through a host of practices, discursive and material, would become larger and stronger. Clearly, the project to diversify economy speaks to Timothy Mitchell’s critique of the development of neoclassical and neoliberal models of the economy in the process of which “the economy” of capitalism is separated from “non-economy” of the family and the state. Gibson-Graham also take issue with a constricted definition of the economy as exclusively capitalist. Their project, however, aims to not only highlight what such a definition excludes (and it excludes both progressive and exploitative economic practices) but also to examine which of those excluded economies could be understood as already present, viable, and a desirable alternative to capitalism. In other words, their goal is to enable and expand the possibility of progressive non-capitalist economies.

Our discussion below draws on Gibson-Graham’s theorizing the economy as diverse and, consequently, open to alternative and progressive economic performances. To aid the discussion, we reproduce their chart of diverse economies and their diagram of the “economic iceberg” (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1 around here

Figure 1 around here

Neoclassical and structural Marxist theories exclude the state sector from the economy and see it, instead, as a non-economic structure that is supportive of or antagonistic to capitalism. They also exclude unpaid household labor that does not take place in factories or offices and do not produce goods and services for sale. In other words, cooking and consuming breakfast is

recorded in economic statistics and thus adds to and constitutes “the economy” if it takes place in a restaurant; it does not count as part of the economy if made and consumed at home. The same logic applies to doing laundry, cleaning, doing repairs, making clothes, giving gifts, and caring for children, the elderly, and the sick – these activities are included in the economy as services only if purchased or sold.

Also ignored by dominant economic models of the economy is the informal cash economy which, contrary to most stories of the economy, exists in capitalist societies and supports them in crucial ways. Paradoxically, the informal economy, most often associated with pre-capitalist or underdeveloped societies, is most prominent in cities of the developed world where it operates next to and in conjunction with the formal capitalist economy (Portes et al. 1989; Sassen-Koob 1987). Informal economies are also spaces where gender, class, and race powerfully intersect with each other unmediated by state law and policy. Informal domestic workers and babysitters, many of them migrant female workers away from their own families, care for households of the professional classes without which the latter would not be able to do their jobs. Informal restaurant workers, again mostly international or rural migrants, support vast and inexpensive food services in cities from New York to Moscow to Tokyo. The labor of informal immigrant construction workers fuels urban construction across the globe while migrant seasonal workers are essential to the agriculture and food processing industries in the global North (Engstrom 2001). The diverse economy framework incorporates informal work as an important and definitely controversial site of social production and reproduction (see Table 1 and Figure 1). Its location outside the formal economy allows it to escape statistical, and, therefore, academic and political scrutiny while often serving as a site of unregulated capitalist exploitation. At the same time, the informal economy is the space within which people self-organize and counteract the economic deprivation and constraints of capitalism. One such example is the formidable economic impact of migrant workers’ remittances that, along with other goods and services, are being redistributed by what Safri and Graham (2010) called “global households” composed of as much as 900 million people world-wide.

In addition to excluding the state sector, household economies, and the informal cash economy, neoclassical models of capitalism consider all formal economic actors to be profit-maximizing

privately owned capitalist entities. This overlooks the important fact that many formal enterprises and other economic actors follow alternative or “non-market” logics, utilize common property, and operate under relations of production that are not capitalist (e.g. cooperative, communal, feudal, independent producer, etc.). Despite being present within the capitalist economy and even tied to it, they are not engaged in capitalist relations in the same sense as a corporation might be. For example, producer cooperatives collectively appropriate profits and prioritize the well-being and stability of income of their workers and their families over profit-maximization (the Mondragon cooperatives in Spain being one of the most celebrated examples). Housing cooperatives, community land trusts, credit unions, local currency exchanges, farmer markets, community supported agriculture, various non-profit enterprises, green firms and many other economic actors pursue ecological and social sustainability goals rather than profit maximization. In their everyday lives, many – and perhaps most – people in the world and even in the United States and other “capitalist” countries do not act as cold-blooded economic utility-maximizing machines. While such an economic subjectivity is indeed possible (see the debate between Callon and Miller found in Miller 2002, Callon 2007, and the case study by Holm 2007), economic subjectivity from a feminist and post-structural perspective is always fluid, multiple, and never fixed. For example, people may be altruistic and give their last savings to family and friends, they may be embedded in circuits of reciprocal exchange and spend money on gifts, they may live in households with shared/communal domestic responsibilities, they may be members of a credit union or a food cooperative, or they may be independent producers such as most fishers and many farming families. In other words, people occupy a wide range of economic subject positions, sometimes simultaneously, both at work and elsewhere despite the constant effort to interpolate all of us, all the time, as only subjects of capitalism.

In short, “capitalist” societies are permeated by a diverse wealth of largely unexplored non-capitalist economic practices. Indeed, from a feminist and post-structural perspective the goal of revealing the existence and ubiquity of these “others” to capitalism is “...to blur the boundaries between the terms... showing how the excluded ‘other’ is so embedded within the primary Identity [capitalism] that its distinctiveness is ultimately unsustainable (Gibson-Graham, 2000, p. 99; see also Gibson-Graham, Resnick, and Wolff 2000). To deny the existence of economic difference is to do a violence not only against those economic actors who explicitly turn away

from profit maximization and instead seek social and economic justice, gender and racial equality, and environmental sustainability but against all who are engaged in, or wish to engage in, non-exploitative forms of production and consumption for various reasons. The neoclassical model, however, “fixes the economy” (Mitchell 1998) by reducing all economic experience to that of a single and universal economic subject – the profit seeking individual who operates at the allegedly impersonal free market. Equating this economic construct with capitalism precludes the critique of capitalism as emanating from the politicized social domain. Even more importantly, economic research, practices, and policy that begin from and remain within a capitalocentric discourse of the economy work to sustain the economy as capitalist at the expense of other possibilities.

Besides documenting the disempowering effects of capitalocentric discourse relative to alternatives to capitalism, the writings of Gibson-Graham and other “diverse economies” scholars have illuminated strategies for ending capitalism today (e.g. Gibson-Graham 2006; Community Economies Collective 2001; Cameron 2010; Healy 2010; Cornwell 2012). Instead of “waiting for the revolution,” they propose “taking back the economy” from capitalism step by step starting now and offer methods and techniques for doing so (Cameron, Gibson-Graham, and Healy 2013). This requires rethinking the capitalist economy as an already existing diverse economy in order to diminish its hegemony and fostering, via deliberate engagements within communities, new desires for the intentional pursuit of economic, social, and environmental justice. Unleashing this desire would encourage people to pursue economic lives outside the capitalist frame and would allow them to understand themselves as potentially non-capitalist economic subjects (J.K. Gibson-Graham call this process “resubjectivation”).

While we might begin the process of engaging people in, for example, action research designed to foster economic resubjectivation (see Gibson, Cameron, and Veno 1999; St. Martin and Hall-Arber 2007) anywhere, there are clearly sites where economic difference is already emerging. Rather than seeing these sites only from a capitalocentric perspective as economic aberrations or exceptions, as located on capitalism’s periphery or frontier, or as responses to a capitalist withdrawal and retreat, we need to theorize them as diverse economies with their own dynamics, potentials, and possibilities yet to be documented and thereby amplified. For example, De Souza

Santos with colleagues (Santos 2006b) have documented the resilient and socially sustainable nature of communal and indigenous economies. This and other research shows that indigenous economies that operate within various political economic regimes (e.g., colonial rule, state socialism, or neoliberalizing capitalism) often use available economic forms (as different as private enterprise and socialist farm) to enact traditional communal economies that serve to maintain non-capitalist relations of production as well as sustainable relationships with nature (see Pavlovskaya forthcoming for the indigenous economies of post-soviet Russia). What unique dynamics and practices are elided by seeing such economies as always pre-capitalist, archaic, and to inevitably disappear? Once freed from a capitalocentric framing, how might indigenous economies provide new understandings and foundations for ethical and environmentally sustainable production and consumption? We cannot know unless we posit a world of economic diversity and a future open to experimentation.

In many countries, desires for an alternative economy are leading economic actors to self-organize into broad anti-capitalist movements that are often referred to as the “solidarity economy” (Borowiak 2010; Amin 2009). Unable to wait for the revolution, they are experimenting with new cooperative forms of production, inter-enterprise exchange, and financing fostering new economic subjectivities (Cornwell 2012). The extensive solidarity economy of Brazil, for example, unites hundreds of thousands non- or alternative-capitalist economic entities and enjoys considerable government support. Spain, France, and Argentina also have large solidarity economy movements. Ethically guided economic actors form networks and organize the flows of production and exchange among themselves thus making their national solidarity economies grow stronger and bigger. In other countries, such as the United States, the solidarity economy also exists but is not self-organized and has no national identity. As Gibson-Graham’s graphical representation of the economy suggests (Figure 1), capitalism is but one form within a much larger economic totality where most work, transactions, and exchange occur under non-capitalist or alternative-capitalist social relations.

Even in parts of the world where neoliberalization has been particularly aggressive – like in post-Soviet Russia – it failed to generate a totalizing capitalist economy of private ownership and profit-maximization. After the mass privatization of the 1990s, urban households have continued

to pull together resources and rely on a wide range of formal and informal economic practices, often non-monetized and largely non-capitalist, in order to carry out their everyday lives of earning income, doing domestic work, and caring for children (Pavlovskaya 2004). Moreover, despite two decades of concentrated effort to create a single form of private property where private property did not exist, multiple practices of property have emerged and it is clear that individualized private property does not predominate. In agriculture, for example, most privatized land is owned not by individual farmers but cooperatives formed out of what had been state owned or collective farms under the Soviet system. Contrary to the triumphant claims after the collapse of the Soviet Union that capitalism has prevailed and that, indeed, “there is no alternative,” Russia is now home to a wide variety of economic/property forms and, at least in the case of agriculture, it is cooperatives rather than capitalist enterprises that generate most output (Pavlovskaya forthcoming). Limited takeover of the post-socialist space by capitalism has been noted by a number of observers (Pavlovskaya 2004; Round and Williams 2010; Stenning et al. 2010).

In addition to complicating imaginaries of capitalist societies, rethinking the economy as diverse has provided a means for theorizing other societies as consisting of multiple economic practices and, therefore, always containing the possibility for progressive difference. One of the co-authors of this chapter, Marianna Pavlovskaya (2004) has developed a representation of the past Soviet economy as consisting of multiple economic practices irreducible to a single hegemonic state socialist economy (Figure 2). This allowed her to rethink the transition from state socialism to market capitalism, typically represented as a single macro-level “systemic” change, as a transformation of multiple economies occurring at different spatial scales (c.f. Smith and Stenning 2006). This work has furthermore provided grounds for reimagining post-socialist Russia as a space of economic diversity as opposed to a neoliberal uniformity (Pavlovskaya forthcoming).

While a diverse economies perspective might point to processes of economic diversification which are emergent around the world, most national governments pursue only capitalist forms of development and channel their resources toward its achievement. Insofar as we only study, research, aid, critique, and, generally, create knowledge about capitalist dynamics and expansion,

we forego learning about and fostering those “other” forms of economy, property, and economic subjectivity that might provide for enhanced community and/or environmental wellbeing. But disrupting capitalocentric understandings and desires is challenging. Indeed, to some degree, the hegemony of Western capitalism in our economic imaginations is linked to complex processes of orientalism that constructed a Eurocentric culture and governance during the colonial period and beyond (Said 1978). In this respect, the post-colonial project of decentering the West – or “provincializing Europe” – while also bringing to the fore the intellectual, cultural, and political contributions of people in other parts of the world (Chakrabarty 2000; see also Pratt 1992) would help counter capitalocentric representations of Western economies and highlight the role of other economies and cultures in Western and world heritage (Pollard et al. 2011).

In sum, the diverse economies framework allows for making visible non-capitalist economies that support livelihoods around the world, including, and perhaps especially within, the heartlands of capitalism. It also allows for constituting these economies as objects of theory, policy, and desire making their actualization possible within current time horizons.

## Conclusion

The work of “rethinking economy” by Gibson-Graham (1996, 2006), Mitchell (2008), Callon (1998, 2007) and others is transforming how we conceptualize the economic and its relationship with other processes, practices, and actors and has important implications for how we might think about the work that human geographers engaged with the economy do. Rethinking economy begins from an understanding of “the” economy as an outcome or effect of economic discourse, policies, metrics, calculations, actions, and assessments rather than an entity or phenomenon external to discourse, policies, metrics, calculations, actions, and assessments. In this growing body of research, the rethought economy is no longer seen as an overarching system, entity, or force which operates via a set of universal laws, progressing and moving independent of other processes (e.g. culture, gender, race, or community); rather, it is conceived as a variety of sites or assemblages of processes, practices, and actors (human and non-human) that make possible the production and distribution of goods and services. The economy is

*performed* by economists, policy makers, citizens, etc. rather than an external phenomenon mirrored by economic theory.

We are compelled by this vision of research as determinative of economy, as performing the economy which researchers profess to study (Gibson-Graham 1993; Barnes 2002; MacKenzie et al. 2007). While this suggests an enormous responsibility relative to the research practices in which we engage and the knowledge we produce, it also suggests that the traditions and practices of human geographers are necessarily transformative. This is not just the case for the work we do now, informed by such theorizations, but for the work done by geographers past. We, therefore, chose to examine the past not just for the knowledge advanced but for the work done by our conceptions of economy.

In this chapter, we began by reviewing what it means to rethink economy with respect to the role of knowledge as a practice and engagement that shapes “reality”, and, in this case, gives form and meaning to “the economy” from the perspectives of human geography. Central to our review were four broad traditions in social science which came to shape economic geography (quantitative, Marxist, feminist, and post-structuralist) and, we argue, produce it as a heterodox and dynamic sub-discipline. These traditions, and how they were institutionalized in economic geography contrary to, for example, economics, has resulted in a diversity of understandings of economy that at certain times have mutually informed each other and engaged in bitter debates at other times (Johnston 1978; Cloke et al. 1991; Cloke et al. 2004). Our goal in this chapter was not to judge these key traditions vis-à-vis their accuracy or truth but to explicate the economic worlds they performed and continue to perform. Furthermore, we argued that the field of economic geography is distinct from economics (including the New Economic Geography; see Sheppard et al. 2012) insofar as the ontological and epistemological diversity currently found within economic geography multiplies economic worlds and continues to make it a unique site for economic experimentation and possibility.

That possibility is best captured, perhaps, in the work of those who explicitly foreground economic diversity. We, therefore, ended our journey with particular attention to conceptualizations of economy as a diverse field, an approach pioneered by the scholarship of Gibson-Graham in geography and which productively aligns with rethinkings of economy in

sociology and political science (e.g. the work of Mitchell and Callon) and, even, in economics where “heterodox economics” is gaining new adherents. We have elaborated on the research and transformative possibilities opened up by rethinking “the economy” as diverse and, combined with a post-structural epistemological frame, have suggested that such diversity might be revealed and, indeed, constituted through hybrid methods and the multiple entry-points and traditions one now finds within economic geography.

The work of economic geographers, armed with their own wealth of traditions and increasingly open to economic diversity, will, we believe, better align with that of activists who are also productively rethinking the economy as a site open to intervention, local action, and possibility (Santos 2006a, 2006b; Escobar 2009). Around the world and networked via movements such as the World Social Forum there exist myriad enactments of economic difference and diversity that build upon the successes of cooperative production, fair trade, democratic budgeting, peasant and indigenous peoples’ reclamations of land and resources, alternative food and craft networks, and, generally, production and consumption practices that foreground community and environmental wellbeing.

These alternative economic practices require an alternative imaginary of economy as a site of possibility and ethical concerns rather than a global and totalizing system beyond intervention. This is not to say that there do not exist durable command and control structures and practices acting at both local and global scales that we must confront and expose. Yet, it is important that we open up our imaginations and foster those of our research partners to proximate and possible economic change, that we work to ignite desires for economic difference and empower people to act upon these desires “here and now.” We hope that economic geographers today, armed with an understanding of the economy as diverse and their own research practices as performative, can enhance both their ability to critique multiple economic oppressions and multiply alternative economic futures.

## Tables

Table 1 – A Diverse Economy

Source: Gibson-Graham 2006, p.71.

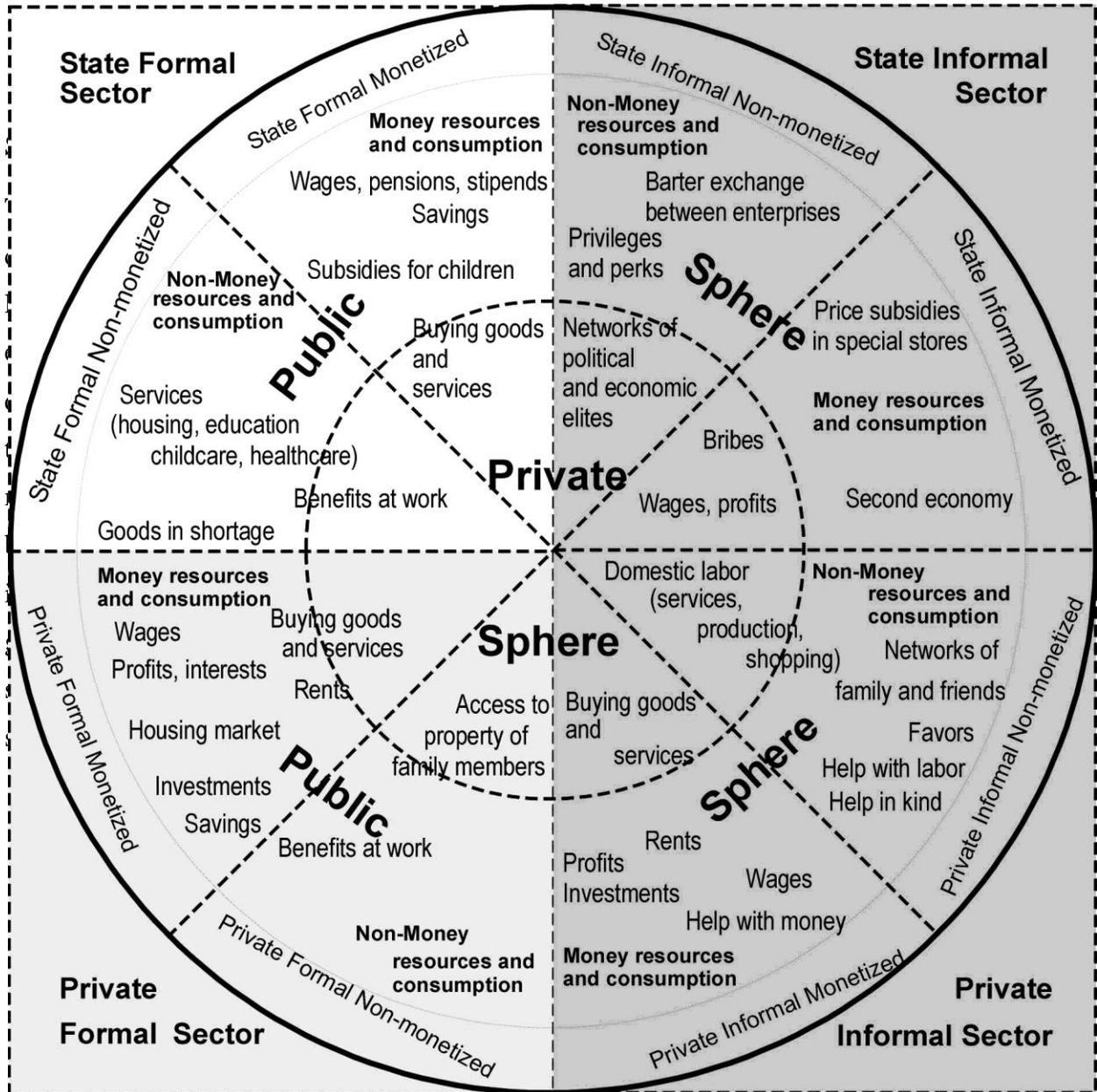
TRANSACTIONS	LABOR	ENTERPRISE
<p><b>MARKET</b></p> <p><b>ALTERNATIVE MARKET</b></p> <p><i>Sale of public goods</i></p> <p><i>Ethical “fair-trade” markets</i></p> <p><i>Local trading systems</i></p> <p><i>Alternative currencies</i></p> <p><i>Underground market</i></p> <p><i>Co-op exchange</i></p> <p><i>Barter</i></p> <p><i>Informal market</i></p>	<p><b>WAGE</b></p> <p><b>ALTERNATIVE PAID</b></p> <p><i>Self-employed</i></p> <p><i>Cooperative</i></p> <p><i>Indentured</i></p> <p><i>Reciprocal labor</i></p> <p><i>In-kind</i></p> <p><i>Work for welfare</i></p>	<p><b>CAPITALIST</b></p> <p><b>ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST</b></p> <p><i>State enterprise</i></p> <p><i>Green capitalist</i></p> <p><i>Socially responsible firm</i></p> <p><i>Nonprofit</i></p>
<p><b>NONMARKET</b></p> <p><i>Household flows</i></p> <p><i>Gift giving</i></p> <p><i>Indigenous exchange</i></p> <p><i>State allocations</i></p> <p><i>State appropriations</i></p> <p><i>Gleaning</i></p> <p><i>Hunting, fishing, gathering</i></p> <p><i>Theft, poaching</i></p>	<p><b>UNPAID</b></p> <p><i>Housework</i></p> <p><i>Family care</i></p> <p><i>Neighborhood work</i></p> <p><i>Volunteer</i></p> <p><i>Self-provisioning labor</i></p> <p><i>Slave labor</i></p>	<p><b>NONCAPITALIST</b></p> <p><i>Communal</i></p> <p><i>Independent</i></p> <p><i>Feudal</i></p> <p><i>Slave</i></p>

## Figures

Figure 1 – The iceberg. Source: Community Economies Collective 2001; drawn by Ken Byrne.



Figure 2 – Multiple economies in the post-Soviet society.



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