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Commons & community economies: entry points to design for eco-social justice?

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Abstract: Many designers today (including ourselves) are experimenting with how their practice can engage in meaningful ways with the complexity of pressing social and environmental issues. Being very much concerned with the politics and power relations that run through such issues, in this paper we will explore what points of orientation the framework of the 'commons' and that of 'community economies' – seen from an autonomist and feminist Marxist perspective – can offer when working on socially and politically engaged projects. We mobilise these two frameworks as possible entry points through which eco-socially just modes of reproducing livelihoods can be fostered. Moreover, we will consider how they can encourage designers to more directly activate their skills to support human activities that move our societies towards eco-social justice.

Keywords: eco-social justice, commons, community economies, vectors

Introduction

Ever since we decided to stay with the field of design – after an ethical crisis of purpose in year three of our undergraduate studies – we have been driven by the desire to activate our skills for social, environmental and political matters. So if today we still call ourselves "designers" this is because we are convinced that designers contribute to create powerful – even if not always desirable – imaginaries that shape the ways in which we live in this world. Having lived over prolonged periods of time in various places around Europe (the Italian Alps, London, Warsaw, Leeds, Milan, Naples, Stuttgart) and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (Jerusalem, Bethlehem), while simultaneously producing socially and politically engaged projects in those places, we have become acutely aware of the detrimental consequences of globalised capitalism: environmental destruction, extreme inequality,

exploitation, precarisation, displacement, dispossession and the dumping of all sorts of other negative externalities on those with less power – all effects constantly justified by the holders of capital[1] to remain key players in what is called "the economy".

Despite (or maybe even because of) the overwhelming nature of many of the situations we have engaged with, we are more eager than ever to see design skills mobilised to enact prefigurative politics that bring into being ways of doing and relating that call forth radically different and eco-socially just futures. Thus, what we are attempting to do here is to engage with autonomist and feminist Marxist writings in order to grapple with the question of what human activities can constitute 'vectors'[2] that allow for a "queering of the economy" (Gibson-Graham, 2006a, p. xiii) and a creation of commons through which destructive capitalist relations can be undone. So we are writing here with the question in mind of how design skills can be mobilised to foster such queering vectors that might open up, construct and enact ways of living that go beyond the eco-socially detrimental ones created by capital.

Commons and commoning – a possible basis for eco-social justice

In our quest for sustaining social and political engagement for progressive social change our attention has been drawn to the commons by autonomist Marxist thinkers, who frame commons as "a means to the creation of an egalitarian and cooperative society" (Federici & Caffentzis, 2014), and whose interest in the commons "is grounded in a desire for the *conditions* necessary to promote social justice, sustainability, and happy lives for all" (An Architektur, 2010, author's emphasis). In short, in a perspective that seeks ways for achieving eco-social justice, the commons represent a

> "social system in which resources are shared by a community of users/producers, who also define the modes of use and production, distribution and circulation of these resources through democratic and horizontal forms of governance." (De Angelis & Harvie, 2014)

Therefore, commons encompass a material as much as a 'social' dimension that both fosters and in turn is sustained by the cultivation of *other* values and "value-practices"[3] (such as solidarity, care, co-operation, mutuality, interdependence) rather than the precarising and detrimental ones that are located at the basis of capitalist social relations and are in turn reproduced by them (such as exploitation, individualisation, personal profit, competition, maximisation of efficiency).

For the political economist and commoner Massimo De Angelis, the commons are based on the construction of "common interests" by "communities" of people, and are enabled and reproduced through practices of "commoning" (2009) – a term coined and popularised by

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[1] By 'capital' we mean money that is being invested into something with the primary goal of generating more money (Harvey, 2010, p. 76).

[2] With 'vectors' we mean realms of human activity that have the power to catalyse people's desires and energies to reach a specific common goal. Here we connect with Mariarosa Dalla Costa's formulation on "engines" (Dalla Costa, 2003).

[3] Value-practices being described by De Angelis as "those actions and processes, as well as correspondent webs of relations, that are both predicated on a given value system and in turn (re)produce it." – "(…) selecting what is 'good' and what is 'bad' within a value system and actually acting upon this selection" (2007, p. 24).

autonomist commons-historian Peter Linebaugh (2008) as a process by which people start to take their lives into their own hands – that is, the social practices of constant democratic and horizontal negotiation of the members of a given community around the terms of access to the resource(s) it holds in common (De Angelis, 2010a). Importantly, De Angelis defines "community" as

> "a web of direct relations among subjects whose repetitive engagement and feedback processes allow them, through conflict and/or cooperation, to define the norms of their interaction on the basis of *other* values than those of capital." (2007, p. 65, author's emphasis)

This makes the tight interrelation between commons, community and commoning unequivocal. There can be "no commons without community" (Federici & Caffentzis, 2014) and "no commons without commoning" (De Angelis, 2010b).

When we engage with this framework of the commons and consider how socially and politically engaged designers can mobilise practices of commoning, create commons and/or communities in order to foster eco-social justice, it is of importantance for us to question the notion of a commons as a "resource". This questioning is especially relevent to us because in our era of the "anthropocene" or even "capitalocene" (Haraway, 2014; Moore, 2014a, 2014b) – in which "humankind [or, more precisely, capital] is foregrounded as a geological force or agent" (Gibson-Graham & Roelvink, 2009) – we find the idea troubling that on the one hand we have "human communities" and on the other hand we have "resources" for humans to use. We rather like to embrace a critical posthumanist approach that sees humanity but as one amongst many natural species, and that avoids a utilitarian vision of more-than-human others, especially as such an approach seems more conducive to foster social *and* ecological justice. Indeed, as (for example) J.K. Gibson-Graham and Ethan Miller show, the expansion of the capitalist economy has proceeded hand in hand with the establishment of an instrumental vision of nature as something passive, separate from "the economy", and as a "resource" that is only there in order to be exploited by certain humans to generate profit (2015) – or, one may add, as a dumping ground for waste of all sorts, which again becomes a means to generate profit as part of legal or illegal capitalist economies (Brave New Alps, 2011). Therefore, within the context of the commons, there is a need for an update on the idea of resource (as much as that of "community") in order to encompass posthumanist conceptions that acknowledge that "it is no longer possible to identify a singular 'humanity' as a distinctive ontological category set apart from all else" (Gibson-Graham & Miller, 2015, p. 10). And this is in fact a realm where we can see designers contributing prolifically to progressive practices of commoning by experimenting with this shift in perspective through practice. What does it mean to design for just relations between humans and more-than-human assemblages? What kind of power relations between different actors do our design proposals for commoning strengthen, weaken or transform?

Commons and enclosures – a frontier to constantly negotiate

To further define positions from which to design for commons as a basis for eco-social justice, we think it is also important to locate commons in a broader historical and political framework to attune ourselves to what often seem subtle, but can actually be quite big differences. Since the 1970s, neoliberal politics have taken capitalist value-practices – framed around private property, exploitative labour, the submission of nature, exchange value and profit to yet new levels of intensity and capillarity that have resulted in increased individualisation, competition and asymmetric accumulation of wealth and power (Harvey, 2005, 2008) that is, value-practices that have been normalised by humans around the world. In this dynamic, the term "new enclosures" – coined by the Midnight Notes Collective in 1990 – defines capital's large-scale attempt to "subordinate every form of life and knowledge to the logic of the market" (Federici, 2010). Moreover, this term highlights the fact that the creation of commons and their enclosure is an ongoing process rather than one relegated to history.[1] Quite on the contrary, the constant creation of commons by the people and their enclosure by capital is what in fact constitutes capital's main engine. Specifically, De Angelis underlines how the constitution of new forms of commons is the accumulated result of past struggles which "capital, if it cannot administer them on its own terms with new forms of governmentality compatible with accumulation, must enclose" (De Angelis, 2007, p. 82). Capital must enclose – the ultimate aim of enclosures being to "increase people's dependence on capitalist markets for the reproduction of their livelihoods" (Ibid., p. 133). In this sense, for De Angelis, enclosures represent entry points for capital into new spheres of life, a perspective that underlines the idea that

> "capital [is] not […] a totalised system, but […] a social force with totalising drives that exists together with other forces that act as a limit to it." (Ibid., p. 135, author's emphasis)

Sticking with De Angelis' line of thought, capital is in constant search for the limit that separates what capital has already colonised and what is still there to be colonised. At the same time, capital elaborates strategies to overcome this limit (which De Angelis calls the "frontier") and expand its sphere of influence. We – that is, people – instead become aware of this frontier only in the moment in which capital attempts to overcome it and we have to decide whether or not to defend it: "the extent to which we are aware of enclosures is the extent to which they confront us" (Ibid., p. 144). To capital's enclosing drive, De Angelis counterposes strategies of counter-enclosure, or, the creation, defence, and expansion of the commons, which, as a result, provokes also a diversification and complexification of the colonised-colonisable frontier. In fact, for Silvia Federici, the privatisation of vast portions of land, water, services, knowledge, culture around the globe has ironically produced, in the people directly or indirectly affected by it, a heightened attention towards those things that were previously held in common and the social relations – such as solidarity, cooperation,

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[1] In more traditional Marxist accounts, primitive accumulation – through the expropriation, privatisation and commodification of common lands – occurred only at the outset of capitalism and laid the foundation of a capitalist mode of production, constituting its precondition (see for example, Marx, 1976, p. 714).

direct democracy, attention to use-value – that were embedded in and sustained such common properties (2010). We therefore see the capital-commons frontier as in constant transformation, always shifting and mutating in form, as from one side capital encloses and from the other people defend existing commons threatened by enclosures or constitute new ones in ever new spheres of life. To use the words of De Angelis and Harvie, "the commons are the terrain of a clash between capital and commonism" (2014).

The question, then, for us as designers is what are the conditions that we put in place, and what kind of politics do we enact, when engaging in the creation of such new commons. What effects does the work of designers have on the defence or enclosure of commons? If by creating material, social or digital commons we effectively build new segments of this frontier, we think it is crucial to consider the following questions: how do we build commons and communities? What features do we provide them with? What chains of resource extraction, commodity production and disposal do we tie them into? What form do we give them and what kind of practices and relations does that form afford? If our aim is to construct commons and practices of commoning that confront, exit or undo capitalist relations in a drive for eco-social justice, how do we make sure that these new segments are as impermeable as possible to the infiltrating forces of capital? Indeed, what we want to avoid is to construct parts of a frontier that actually welcomes or encourages easy entry points for capital into spheres of life revolving around the commons and practices of commoning (see also, Elzenbaumer, 2015). What we want to stress here is the importance for designers (but also engaged citizens more generally) to see the act of defending or creating commons as politicised, as inscribed in relations of power and as requiring awareness of the challenges of commoning vis-à-vis capital's infiltrating and enclosing drive.

When considering the frontier between commons and enclosures, Silvia Federici and George Caffentzis alert us, for instance, to the fact that today we recurrently encounter commons that are being set up by groups and organisations seeing in them a vehicle to gain "security, sociality and economic power" (reported examples include consumer groups, home-buyers, many urban gardens and assisted living homes), which although speaking to genuine and legitimate desires, are little transformative in nature, and thus risk – often unwillingly – to generate new forms of enclosure. This is because brought into life by "a broad range of social democratic forces that are either concerned with the extremes of neo-liberalism and/or recognize the advantages of communal relations for the reproduction of everyday life", these commons are

> "constructed on the basis of the homogeneity of its members, often producing gated communities, providing protection from the 'other', the opposite of what the principle of the commons implies for us." (Federici & Caffentzis, 2014)

In fact, in less politicised approaches to the commons, these often represent a third category of property (with related values and value-practices) that peacefully coexists with the public and the private, and which today are mainly driven by capitalist logics of accumulation. This is for instance evident in the work of 2009 Economic Sciences Nobel Prize winner Elinor

Ostrom,[1] who was awarded the prize for her analysis of economic governance, especially in relation to the commons, concentrating mainly on the material dimension of the commons, in the sense of tangible resources such as land, water, air, forests, lakes, fisheries, and on the sets of rules of access and governance that guarantee the sustainability of such goods. As the awarding of this Nobel Prize demonstrates, an interest for the commons is rapidly growing within those who are concerned with the crises constantly threatening capitalism and who are afraid that the colonising drive of capital, infiltrating into ever new spheres of life in order to increasingly commodify social relations as encouraged by neoliberalism, will in fact prove to be more detrimental than beneficial for the thriving of "the (capitalist) economy".

The combination of two factors – capital needing to constantly put to work huge amounts of labour and natural resources, and the abovementioned shared concern that neoliberalism is in many ways damaging what it should instead strengthen – has brought more and more economists, development planners and policymakers to see in the commons an enormous realm that "can be made to produce very well for the market". For example, the discovery that "under proper conditions, a collective management of natural resources can be more efficient and less prone to conflict than privatization" (Federici, 2010), could have profound effects on the way capital and enclosures operate. As Federici underlines, this approach is in line with a growing interest in the commons and the appropriation of their language by the World Bank and the United Nations, who at least since the early 1990s, in the name of preserving humanity's heritage of "global commons", have put in place regulations that enclosed, for example, large portions of rainforest, and granting access to them to only well-paying eco-tourists, or that aimed at "governing access to the oceans in ways that enables governments to concentrate the use of seawaters in fewer hands" (ibid., 2010) through the institution of Exclusive Economic Zones.

So for people interested in moving towards eco-social justice through the commons and commoning, the award of the Nobel Prize to Ostrom is both a matter of celebration and concern. Celebration, because this means that the discourse around the commons gets placed right in the centre of the mainstream, thus representing a unique opportunity for emancipatory struggles around the commons to become more visible. Concern, because – as De Angelis and David Harvie point out – usually the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences signals "a paradigm shift *within* the strategies of management of capitalist social relations" (2014, p. 289, authors' emphasis). This echoes Federici's point about an increasing interest in the commons from the side of institutions (not least also from the cultural industries and the field of design) as a lifeboat for capital and business (more or less) as usual, currently struggling to find strategies to get growing again while avoiding a "social and ecological apocalypse at worst, and an intensification of social conflict at best" (De Angelis & Harvie, 2014, p. 289). That is why De Angelis and Harvie call this approach "capital's commons fix" (2014, p. 290).

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[1] In her work, Ostrom focussed on the concept of common pool resources (CPR) and "on how humans interact with ecosystems to maintain long-term sustainable resource yields" (Wikipedia, 2015).

An important difference between the commons *à la Ostrom* and the views on the subject voiced by De Angelis and his colleagues lays in the perspective on the social practices that underpin and enable the prolonged existence of the commons. Ostrom elaborated eight 'design principles' that in her view are fundamental to sustain the commons over time,[1] and that should guide communities in properly managing a given 'common pool resource' (CPR):

> "clearly defined boundaries […] congruence between appropriation and provision rules and local conditions […] collective-choice arrangements […] monitoring, graduated sanctions […] conflict-resolution mechanisms […] minimal recognition of rights to organize […] nested enterprises."
> (see Ostrom, 1990, pp. 90–102)

For De Angelis and Harvie, the way Ostrom conceptualises the government of the commons only puts emphasis on what rules are needed to prevent a common resource from being overused and avoids acknowledging that when people come together in order to communally administer, care for, and cultivate a commons, there is also the potential for other social practices to develop that "put constraints on, and push back, practices based on commodity production and capital accumulation" (Federici & Caffentzis, 2014). Instead, in Ostrom,

> "struggle is conceptualized only as competition among appropriators; that is, a struggle within the commons, not also as a struggle *of* the commons vis-à-vis an outside social force – capital." (De Angelis & Harvie, 2014, p. 291, authors' emphasis)

Therefore, when designing for the commons, on one end of the spectrum we have an interpretation of them that is instrumental to a pressing refurbishment of the capitalist economy, while on the other end we have an anti-capitalist interpretation, built on commoners' desire to transform the social (and economic) relations between humans (and, one may add, the relation between humans and non-human others) and to thus create economies that function as alternatives to capitalism. This means that when designing from a perspective of eco-social transformation, we continuously need to ask what it takes for our interventions to be more than just buffers against the destructive impact of neo-liberalism and more than the communal management of resources (Federici & Caffentzis, 2014). We might ask who is involved in the production of the commons and who is excluded? Who can decide on the process of commoning and who cannot? Who benefits from them, directly or indirectly? What are the effects of a specific process of commoning locally and translocally?

Commons-based production and diverse economies – a shifting of viewpoints

So how can we as designers and engaged earthlings more specifically activate our skills, time and resources in order to foster non-capitalist, eco-socially just practices and economies? For Federici the answer lays in the creation of new commons-based modes of production that weave together the many struggles around the world in which commons are created,

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[1] This may have prompted Federici and Caffentzis to elaborate a list of what we consider six 'counter-criteria' for starting to constitute anti-capitalist commons (2014).

defended and fought for. However, she also sees the practical exploration of such an answer hampered by the overall discourse on the commons, which

> "is mostly concerned with the formal preconditions for the existence of commons and less with the material requirements for the construction of a commons-based economy enabling us to resist dependence on wage labor and subordination to capitalist relations." (2010)

In grappling in practical terms – from a position located in the global North West – with how to create economies that allow to resist absolute dependence on wage labour and subordination to precarising capitalist relations, but also how to "begin to de-link our reproduction from the commodity flows that (…) are responsible for the dispossession of millions across the world" (Ibid., 2010) we find it especially useful to put the striving for commons in dialogue with the diverse economies framework elaborated by feminist Marxist geographers J.K. Gibson-Graham (2006a, 2006b). In their work they argue that manifold non-capitalist economic activities are already and always enacted everywhere and for us some of these can pave the way for the production of justice fostering non-capitalist commons.

In a feminist and poststructuralist tradition that emphasises fluidity and open-endedness, J.K. Gibson-Graham foster a vision of the economy as a realm that is far from being as monolithic as many would want us to believe. In their framework the economy is constituted by a rich multitude of economic practices, whose capitalist part is "but a small set of activities by which we produce, exchange and distribute values in our society" (Community Economies Collective, 2015). The rest of it is populated by economic modes that – to a greater or lesser extent – escape the logics of capital, and are therefore – in a more or less politicised, direct, or effective way – challenging them. To illustrate their interpretation of the economy and to explain what they call the "diverse economies framework", Gibson-Graham use an inventive visual metaphor of an 'economic iceberg'. The iceberg as a whole represents the economy, the part above the water represents what we usually recognise as "the economy" – that is, essentially, *capitalism* and *wage labor*, *production for a market in a capitalist business* – while the much bigger submerged part represents the 'invisible'[1] part of the economy – including *in schools*, *on the streets*, *in neighborhoods*, *within families*, *illegal*, *volunteer*, *gifts*, *barter*, and *non-capitalist firms*[2] (Gibson-Graham, 2006a, pp. 68–72).

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[1] Invisible not because we generally cannot see it (admittedly, parts of it are actually invisible to the majority of us while most are not), but because we don't consider it to be part of what we generally regard as "the economy". For another feminist elaboration on the iceberg metaphor and hidden economies see the work of Maria Mies (1986, 2007).
[2] Interestingly, the original version of the iceberg diagram doesn't feature "slave labour" as part of the submerged part, something that was integrated in later versions of the drawing.

Fig.1 The iceberg image drawn by Ken Byrne featured on the website of the Community Economies Collective and the Community Economies Research Network. Source: http://www.communityeconomies.org/Home/Key-Ideas (accessed: 15 August 2015)

As designers we find it empowering to align ourselves with their approach to the economy as it emphasises that both the present and the future depend primarily on the actions we (collectively) take in the present – enacting a kind of prefigurative politics where alterity is practiced "through word and deed, and making value statements" (Mason, 2014). We find it empowering that they avoid promoting apolitical and/or crisis-riddled visions of the present as something inevitable we need to simply adjust to or get prepared for. In fact, they continuously underline that they want to contribute to undo "the economy" as a naturalised "realm of objective, law-like processes and demands", recognising it – via Callon (2007) and Mitchell (2008) – as a "historical, discursive production rather than an objective ontological category". This in turn fosters a vision of economy not as "a separate sphere of human activity, but instead as thoroughly social and ecological" (2015, p. 8), and therefore as a field in which we have the power to intervene and that we can mould by making new economies in the here and now: "our economy is what we (discursively and practically) make it" (Gibson-Graham, 2006a, p. xxii). Through such a framing, they also undo the *passé* Marxist idea of a millennial future revolution which will bring about equality – which in its *grandeur* unfortunately nullifies any attempt to undertake steps in the present towards changing the current state of things – and promote the idea that we can move towards an eco-socially just world by "queering capitalism" through (economic) place-based practice wherever we are (Ibid., 2006a, p. xxi and xxii).

J.K. Gibson-Graham's and the Community Economies Collective's vision of economy is thus encouraging and enticing for socially and politically engaged designers as it allows for the mobilisation of design skills away from market-driven demands (the top of the iceberg) towards a mobilisation that is actually in line with what the anthropocene/capitalocene requires as an adequate response to contributing to a good life for all on this planet. If, for example, we go back to the etymology of the word "economy" (from *oikos*-habitat and

nomos-negotiation of order), Gibson-Graham encourage us to understand this realm as a theoretical entry point through which we can begin to explore the diverse specificities of livelihood creation. Economy, in other words, is a conceptual framework to understand how a "population (members of the same species) or a community (multi-species assemblage)" arranges and negotiates different elements in order to sustain the livelihood of its members (Gibson-Graham & Miller, 2015, p. 12). Like this, one of the aims of conceiving "economy" as a radically diverse realm is to break up the dichotomy capitalism vs. alternative economy, where 'alternative' denotes that which is usually seen as being idealistic, inferior and powerless:

> "If we displace this view of the economy with one of radical difference then we open up many more spaces of action without prejudging their transformative potential." (Gibson-Graham & Roelvink, 2011)

In formulating their thought on how we can cultivate new "economic subjectivities", based on diversity rather than on unquestionable claims of universal truth and objectivity, Gibson-Graham take a great deal of inspiration from second-wave feminism, a struggle – a movement – that has "transformed and continues to transform households, lives, and livelihoods around the world to different degrees and in different ways" (Gibson-Graham, 2002) without needing to "scale up" in the traditional sense – that is, requiring an overarching formal organisational structure, coordinated actions and alliances, or global institutions. For Gibson-Graham, the great strength of the movement was that it "offered new practices of the self and of intersubjective relation that enabled these new discourses to be inhabited in everyday life", in a decentralised, uncoordinated and place-based way across the globe – myriad women performing feminist value-practices in myriad places 'authorised' by the slogan "the personal is political", and "linked emotionally and semiotically rather than primarily through organisational ties" (2006a, p. xxiii and xxiv).

Therefore, what Gibson-Graham want to contribute to is a widespread challenge of the capitalist status quo operated by a multitude of decentralised economic practices "connected through webs of signification" (2006b, p. xxvii) and operating at the scale of place. As second-wave feminism was built around a wide-reaching change in the subjectivity of women, also the idea of a global decentralised struggle of non-capitalist economic practices determined to overcome capitalism calls for a process through which new economic subjectivities are formed that push against our capitalist subjectivities. Quoting Colectivo Situaciones, for Gibson-Graham

> "combating capitalism means refusing a long-standing sense of self and mode of being in the world, while simultaneously cultivating new forms of sociability, visions of happiness, and economic capacities." (2006a p. xxxv).

They thus see their contribution to this process of resubjectivation as a making visible of "the hidden and alternative economic activities that *everywhere* abound, and [connecting] them through a language of economic difference" (2006a, p. xxiv, author's emphasis). Gibson-Graham's response is thus a call for recognising non-capitalist economic activities as in fact prevalent and for actively building on them in order to transform our local economies.

However, non-capitalist economic practices face a problem not only of invisibility but also of inter-connectivity (see also Müller, 2006). As in the case of second-wave feminism, this may in theory be overcome alongside and via a reorientation of the economic subjectivities of the people involved in such practices, something where as designers we can play an enabling role: both discursively as well as materially, as we can design to make these practices visible and to invite experimentation, exploration and interconnection. We can support people in recognising their activities as deviating from the prevalent capitalist logics and support a deeper level of politicisation and practical engagement in overcoming the kind of social relations dictated by capital and the values and value-practices connected to it. We can support people in finding out about each other's work and we can contribute to interlink them so that they can form growing webs of everyday economic non- and anti-capitalist spaces. By fostering the creation of such webs of experimentation and support we can thus contribute to have 'non-capitalism' lose its connotations of negativity by transforming it into a multitude of economic activities and relations, while capitalism loses its abstract, overwhelming singularity which despite its eco-social destructions often seems inevitable.

Community economies – practical 'vectors' to be mobilised

Considering the potential of the commons and the diverse economies frameworks when designing towards eco-social justice, we finally propose that the life-line extended through their concepts, values and value-practices can be drawn together by designing for what Gibson-Graham call "community economies" (Gibson-Graham, 2006a, pp. 78–97). In community economies, social interdependency (an economic being-in-common) as well as ecological interdependency (a being-in-common with all of earth others) is acknowledged and respected. Thus, when designing with community economies in mind

> "we negotiate: what is necessary to personal, social and ecological survival; how social surplus is appropriated and distributed; whether and how social surplus is to be produced and consumed; how a commons is produced and sustained." ("Community Economies Collective," n.d.)

This in turn means that by designing with and through these negotiations we contribute to the production of new kinds of economic subjects, subjects who have the desire but also the social, conceptual and material means to sketch out in practice prefigurative responses to pressing questions of eco-social justice. We can mobilise our design skills to foster values and support as well as creating value-practices that challenge neoliberal capitalism with the multiple forms of oppression and exploitation it relies on.

We can design – in always specific and locally relevant ways, but never losing sight of globality – for the commoning of knowledge, skills, resources and labour that moves us away from the maximisation of profit, environmental destruction and individual gains. We can share the fruits of our collective or individual work by experimenting with multiple forms of wealth distribution and we can join forces and create productive alliances with other human and more-than-human commoners to create interlinked instances of non-capitalist practice. Through designing such instances we can create community economies that effectively allow

us and others to "reclaim control over the conditions of our reproduction" (Federici & Caffentzis, 2014) and to form multiple and diverse bases from which to increasingly disentangle our lives from the precarising forces of the market and the state. But most importantly, we can learn from and be transformed by all of this experimentation and feed it back to what we desire and design next, because the movement towards eco-social justice is a constant work in progress, the understanding of which will continue to shift as the power relations around us are being transformed.

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