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Alternatives to Sustainable Development: What can we Learn from the Pluriverse in Practice?

Fight and build: solidarity economy as ontological politics

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Abstract

This essay explores the potential of solidarity economy (SE) as theory, practice, and movement, to engender an ontological politics to create and sustain other worlds that can resolve the existential crises of ecological destruction and historic inequalities. We argue that such a politics is necessary to go beyond the world as it is and exceed the dictates of a dominant modernity—capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy—that positions itself as the only singular reality—or One World World (Law J (2011) What's Wrong with a One World World. Heterogeneities. http://www.heterogeneities.net/publications/Law2011WhatsWrongWithAOneWorldWorld.pdf). What is needed are alternatives to development in contrast to alternative developments. Over the past decade, the SE movement in Massachusetts has advanced a fight and build approach, which has reframed economy as a matter of concern, as something that communities can, and already do, shape themselves—and that powerfully disrupts the reality of a singular capitalist economy. At the same time, the heterogeneous elements of SE are caught up in and assembling political projects with multiple orientations: modernist, social justice, and ontological (Escobar, Pluriversal politics: the real and the possible, Duke University Press, Durham, 2020). SE movement can remain stuck in a modernist politics of growing and scaling businesses and jobs. Even though a social justice approach attends to power and is more amenable to a relational view of reality where things only exist in interconnection, it too can remain mired in One World World liberal politics of redistribution and market 'solutions'. How SE movement might actualize an ontological politics is a matter of care, an attunement to how relational worlds are coming into being and maintained. As an ontological politics, SE is not about economy qua economy at all, but about creating and sustaining worlds, pluriversal realities where we can be in solidarity with other people, beings, and planetary life systems.

Keywords Solidarity economy · Ontological politics · Pluriverse · Fight and build · Social justice · Massachusetts

Fight and build

In the Spring of 2018, we participated in an event on building solidarity economy in a local union hall in downtown Boston. It was hosted by the newly formed Center for Economic Democracy (CED) and allied community-based organizations who, over the past few years, were engaging more deeply with solidarity economy ideas and practices, learning and organizing together as part of the Solidarity Economy Initiative (SEI). The day began with workshops on worker cooperatives, collective healing and well-being, divestment (from extractive economies) and reinvestment (in communities), and alternative housing and land. The lively workshops were filled with well over a hundred racially diverse participants, including long-time organizers, members of community groups, educators, and students. Some were familiar with solidarity economy, and some were learning for the first time. The promise of an economy ripe with values and practices that could put 'people and planet over profit' was palpable.

As a board member of CED and advisor to SEI, Penn helped to organize the day, and led one of the workshops. Boone had brought a group of college students to the event

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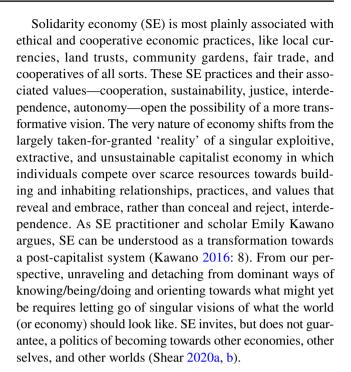[2] University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst, USA

who had been engaging with SEI leaders and other solidarity economy organizations that spring. Two days earlier, both of us—along with about 50 organizers, activists, and educators—were 90 miles west, in Springfield, Massachusetts, having initial conversations about developing a statewide solidarity economy network. Both of these events—as well as two others in Amherst and Worcester—prominently involved Kali Akuno, a prominent movement leader, intellectual, and co-founder of the renowned Cooperation Jackson in Mississippi, who had been brought to Massachusetts to engage with the growing numbers of people and organizations involved in solidarity economy activity.

A buffet dinner followed the workshops, and the hall began to fill with hundreds of community members. A postdinner panel featured community leaders from working class communities of color who discussed how solidarity economy connected with organizing political campaigns, fighting against gentrification and for affordable housing, and empowering communities. Akuno presented last, bringing forward ideas and learnings from Cooperation Jackson. Towards the end of the evening, Akuno asked, "do you have a shared analysis…of where you want to go and a shared program and strategy of how you are going to get there?"

In social justice movement spaces in the United States, analysis typically refers to a type of 'power analysis' that assesses the relations of power among decision makers, local institutions, community members, and perhaps flows of capital. It is a type of analysis that community organizing groups in Massachusetts have been quite adept at (e.g., Loh and Erlich 2021; Pastor et al. 2010), gaining significant victories by confronting the state through campaigns to redistribute resources, create more equitable opportunities, and fight environmental and social injustices. This kind of analysis and politics, oppositional and largely aimed at incremental policy reforms, emerges from a mode of opposition and resistance to the features and impacts of systemic and structural violence. What James Ferguson (2009a, b) refers to as a politics of the "antis" (e.g., anti-capitalism, anti-racism, anti-gentrification) can often remain wedded to and, thus, naturalize the very projects it seeks to oppose.

Akuno and Cooperation Jackson brought an example of how this type of fight in the world as it is, could be strategically joined with building transformative, solidarity economies that could as Akuno explained, help to move us beyond "the protest model that we had been invested in for the past 30 years." Indeed, from our perspective, Akuno's provocation involves a more fundamental analysis, one that is not only about political strategy in the world as it is, but an attunement to and political orientation towards worlds that might yet be—a politics attentive towards other worlds already in the making. How this type of ontological politics is emerging, and how it might be deepened and advanced, is precisely what we are concerned with in this essay.

Solidarity economy (SE) is most plainly associated with ethical and cooperative economic practices, like local currencies, land trusts, community gardens, fair trade, and cooperatives of all sorts. These SE practices and their associated values—cooperation, sustainability, justice, interdependence, autonomy—open the possibility of a more transformative vision. The very nature of economy shifts from the largely taken-for-granted 'reality' of a singular exploitive, extractive, and unsustainable capitalist economy in which individuals compete over scarce resources towards building and inhabiting relationships, practices, and values that reveal and embrace, rather than conceal and reject, interdependence. As SE practitioner and scholar Emily Kawano argues, SE can be understood as a transformation towards a post-capitalist system (Kawano 2016: 8). From our perspective, unraveling and detaching from dominant ways of knowing/being/doing and orienting towards what might yet be requires letting go of singular visions of what the world (or economy) should look like. SE invites, but does not guarantee, a politics of becoming towards other economies, other selves, and other worlds (Shear 2020a, b).

Overview

In this essay, we explore the potential of SE as theory, practice, and movement, to engender an ontological politics—a politics that seeks to uncover and/or advance ways of being that are unrecognized or actively suppressed by the dominant reality (Lyon-Callo and Shear 2019). We are particularly interested in a politics, in line with Escobar (2018, 2020) and others, that advances the conditions from which deep relationality[1] and interdependence might be imagined, desired, and practiced (Akuno 2017; de la Cadena and Blaser 2018; Gibson-Graham et al. 2014; Miller 2019; Roelvink et al. 2015). We argue that what is needed in the current conjuncture is a politics that, following Escobar, operates as an alternative to development (in contrast to alternative development), that rejects the ontological dictates of the dominant reality of modernity—white supremacy, patriarchy, the imagined inevitability of growth, hierarchy, individualism, progress, development, etc.[2] As part of this special issue "Pluriverse in Practice" (Akbulut et al. 2022), we are interested in the potential for SE to enable and assist communities to fight for, organize around, and assemble

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[1] By relationality we mean the condition that beings do not exist independently of other beings. When referring to relational practices or ways of being, we mean to indicate a recognition of and efforts to embrace this condition of interdependence.

[2] We are not suggesting rejecting the possibility of any of these features, only rejecting the inevitable reality of them.

autonomous relational worlds, which we will discuss later as 'fight and build'.

We begin by clarifying what is at stake in this work and why an ontological politics, from our perspective, is of existential importance. While much of life is under 'ontological occupation' by a dominant reality—what John Law theorizes as the One World World (Law 2011), it is full of slippages, ruptures, and unravelings. The colonial project of modernity is always re-articulating and re-assembling itself, even as it expands. And, perhaps, it is now, more than ever, losing its coherence. We then turn to SE, sketching out some of the history and meanings ascribed to the movement. Drawing on over a decade of engaged research in Massachusetts, we show SE functioning in multiple registers. We pay particular attention to the emergence and instantiation of SE with social justice efforts in base-building community organizing groups, particularly among Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and front-line communities. We show that SE has helped to expose economy as a "matter of concern" (Latour 2004), something that is assembled and in the making, rather than an essential entity or force that exists prior to relations. Making visible and opening possibilities for SE helps to create conditions for, but does not guarantee, a form of politics that escapes the taken for granted, hegemonic sensibilities of the One World World (OWW).

As Audre Lorde (1984) famously said, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." However, we also find synergy with Walsh and Mignolo (2018) who suggest that transcending, in addition to dismantling, is an important stance to take. In the case of SE organizing, some of the "master's tools"—e.g., state policies, philanthropic funds—can be used and assembled in place to build the conditions and spaces for communities to collectively make and remake themselves beyond OWW, in ways that embrace and cultivate solidarity and interdependence rather than deny them or enact separations through violence and domination. Approaching this assembling in a pluriversal way is, as we will posit, a matter of care, an attunement to how worlds are coming into being and maintained (also see Akbulut et al. 2022). As Blaser and de la Cadena (2018: 5) put it, "the pluriverse is not a matter of fact or a matter of concern but rather an opening toward a possibility that needs care—a matter of care as conceptualized by Maria Puig de la Bella Casa." As an ontological politics, SE is not about economy qua economy at all, but about imagining, building, fighting for, and defending the conditions from which we can realize and embrace our interdependence with other people, beings, and planetary life systems.

Assembling research and politics

To ground the discussion, we want to briefly situate ourselves and our work. We have been involved in SE organizing and broader movement politics in Massachusetts for almost four decades combined. Penn's networks emanate from the Boston area with social, economic, racial, and environmental justice groups. Boone's relations are the thickest in western and central Massachusetts, working with community organizing groups, activist organizations, and community development nonprofits. Both of us have taught about, connected students and resources to, written for, and been researchers of and for the organizations where we also serve on boards, committees, and the like. We are interested in advancing the work in all these spaces.

More formally, we find methodological resonance with the approach of activist anthropology (Hale 2001; Lyon-Callo and Hyatt 2003). We align ourselves in social and symbolic space with the communities and organizations that we research. And, as members of these organizations, we treat our own experiences, emotions, and understandings as research, along with that of our "subjects"—friends, collaborators, colleagues, comrades. Through this dynamic, we engage in a dialogical politics at multiple levels, intended to open up space for conversation, transformation, and becoming.

Perhaps, a more direct way to describe our engaged approach is that our research is not at all sacrosanct or separate from our teaching, writing, learning, organizing, and activist activities. Instead, these are all overlapping strategies—subsumed within a broader politics—intended to help defend, support, and advance more egalitarian and sustainable worlds. In the case of solidarity economies, we aim to help advance conditions from which ways of being beyond the dominant reality might emerge and flourish. We understand our efforts as a "methods assemblage" (Law 2004; and see Shear 2019) intended to locate and amplify other worlds.

The limits of ontological occupation

Much of life on earth is operating under ontological occupation (Escobar 2020; Blaser and de la Cadena 2018). The One World World (OWW) claims itself as the only, singular reality—the objective world out there that pre-exists interrelations, which can be discovered through science. Instead of realities being produced through constitutive relations between things, OWW ontology is comprised of the familiar western dualisms that create separation and dominance between subject and object, people and nature, us and them, and many more. Bodies and minds, practices and relations, are subjected by and assembled into an onto-epistemic order

that shapes what is desirable, actionable, and possible, forming the terrain on and limits through which social change takes place. Sustainability projects, such as scaling up solar energy, can stay enmeshed in relations of capital accumulation and overconsumption, rather than do away with extractivist visions altogether.

Moreover, the existential crises of ecological destruction and historic inequalities upon us (shared, but divergently produced and experienced) goes well beyond moral failings, government inaction, lack of knowledge, or the interests of the elite. Woven through the fabric of reality itself are centuries of colonial violence, capital accumulation, patriarchy, and white supremacy, leading to the epochal destruction of the Anthropocene/Capitalocene/Plantationocene (Haraway 2015; Moore 2016; Tsing 2015). We cannot simply grow or develop our way out of these crises (no matter how "sustainable" this development might be). Indeed, the colonizing power of modernity is conducted not only through the brutal destruction and re-assembling of worlds into a singular movement of progress, growth, and development. It also relegates different ways of being/knowing/doing that resist incorporation—that fall outside the dominant order—to mere beliefs, to be either dismissed or tolerated. Breaking out of the OWW is not an easy proposition as it involves more than a shift in belief or subjectivity and something deeper than an ideological struggle. It involves rejecting and breaking free of the ontological features that set the terms of struggle.

Just as importantly, however, by understanding and reframing modernity as a historicized, collective experiment (Kimmerer 2020), rather than the given reality, we can understand it clearly as an imposed fiction. Though it appears and seeks to provisionally "fix" reality (Miller 2019), it is simply one possible way to organize and practice relations, one possible mode of life (way of being/doing/thinking). It is becoming increasingly clear that this mode of life cannot go on. Progress has "stopped making sense" (Tsing 2015: 25) for many people in many ways, even in thickly assembled centers of modernity, like the United States. As Blaser and de la Cadena put it, "the world of the powerful is now sensitive to the plausibility of its own destruction in a way that may compare, in at least some ways, with the threat imposed on worlds sentenced to disappearance in the name of the common goods of progress, civilization, development, and liberal inclusion" (2018: 3).

As the OWW loses its coherence, the edges and foundations of other worlds—already here or still on the horizon—are becoming more visible. Imaginings and desires for more relational ways of being—both big and small, fractured and coherent, and at the level of the individual and community—are continually escaping, evading, and constructing other worlds even as the OWW seeks to fold in, exclude, or eradicate. In the US, they can be clearly seen in indigenous struggles to protect sacred relations from enclosures and extractions (Whyte 2017); the calls by climate justice activists to 'change everything' (Klein 2014); the ongoing cooperative survival practices and liberation strategies (Nembhard 2014)—the freedom dreaming (Kelley 2002; Love 2019)—of front-line communities; the efforts of community organizers to invoke relational and emergent practices (Brown 2017; Sandler 2019); and the abolitionist intersectional struggles for Black lives (Gilmore 2021). They are brought into being through powerful social ruptures, such as the explosion of mutual aid in the COVID-19 pandemic. They emerge in relation to the increasing number of depressed young people, whose alienated bodies are rejecting the narratives and promises of the OWW (Lyon-Callo and Shear 2019; Shear 2017, 2019). And they are growing through the proliferation of transition discourses (Escobar 2018; and see Lang 2022) and movements for autonomy (Piccardi et al. 2022; Maldonaldo-Villalpando et al. 2022). As the Zapatistas have expressed it, these desires for more autonomous and relational ways of being are a desire for "a world in which many worlds fit." Instead of a singular OWW, there are multiple worlds that make up a pluriverse.

As we will discuss, SE can begin to orient away from the ontological occupation of the OWW and operate as an alternative to development[3]. But it can also remain tethered to the OWW, as an alternative development that ostensibly seeks to redress the impacts. Whether and how SE movements might orient towards and practice pluriversal politics is a primary question we explore. Here, we find helpful Escobar's heuristic distinguishing among modernist, social justice, and ontological politics. Modernist politics can be found in strategies that embrace growth and capital accumulation as paths towards well-being, such as enterprise zones designed to attract investment and create jobs. Social justice politics recognizes and attempts to address the negative consequences of modernist projects, often aiming for more equality and inclusion, for example hiring preferences for underrepresented "minorities" or inclusionary development policies that require affordable housing. Social justice politics often align with modernist projects, as in the above example, and remain tethered to the OWW, but because of a recognition of the violences of modernity, a social justice politics can create openings for ontological politics. Ontological politics involve projects that avoid, unsettle, or reject the constitutive foundations and features of modernity (growth, individualism, capitalist development, and so on). They are alternatives to development. They seek to engender conditions

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[3] See Franzen 2022, Naylor 2022, Kasi and Saha 2022, and Schöneberg et al. 2022 for illuminating explorations of the complex, contradictory ways that development and post-development ideology are organized around and through.

from which communities are able to truly imagine and desire ways of being/knowing/doing and begin to make themselves beyond the discursive limits and constraints of modernity including realizations of radical interdependence. According to Escobar, a pluriversal politics would engage "all forms of politics in the same, though diverse, movement for civilizational transition" (Escobar 2020: xvi).

SE operates in and through each of these three political orientations, often bringing them into tension and sometimes contradiction. SE proponents sometimes evaluate or promote their success in terms of growth or number of jobs created (a modernist politics). Sometimes, SE is situated as an alternative development project that aims for more equitable development (as in our 2015 essay). And at other times, SE is directed towards the possibility of organizing around and advancing other worlds, where becoming other in relation to each other becomes a driving orientation. How SE projects might operate as a vehicle for an ontological politics that relativizes and aims beyond the OWW, as we contend below, is a matter of care. Before laying out how SE can operate as both a matter of concern and matter of care with multiple political orientations, we review SE's recent history to show its heterogenous elements and meanings.

A brief overview of solidarity economy movement

Contemporary SE theories and movements are often traced to Latin America (Allard et al. 2008; Miller 2006) and Europe (Laville 2010), where communities struggling against the impacts of capital accumulation and neoliberal restructurings organized forms of exchange and production to survive and build collective power—bartering and gifting, alternative currencies, cooperatives, and commoning practices. Though SE as a named movement might be relatively new, marginalized and oppressed communities have long organized survival strategies and liberation struggles through cooperative and diverse economic practices (Bledsoe et al. 2019; Nembhard 2014). Today, SE projects, institutions, and movements flourish across the globe. At its center, SE is an effort to privilege the needs of people and planet over profit. Beyond this premise, there are a range of views, projects, interests, and understandings that are projected onto SE (Akuno 2017; Borowiak et al. 2018; Matthaei 2018; Miller 2006; Safri 2015; Satgar 2014; Shear 2020b), which serves as a sort of "boundary object" (Star and Griesemer 1989) for non-, anti-, and post-capitalist imaginaries.

SE can describe a coherent alternative economic system that would replace capitalism or refer to cooperative economic practices that already and always have existed. For some it indicates economic reform and for others radical transformation. SE in some locations is institutionalized

and recognized by the state but in others also points to civil society and informal practices. Common to all SE efforts is a politics that engages with economic difference and possibility, as a means to advance relations, institutions, and practices that embody rationalities and values that put people and planet over profit—"things like cooperatives… community land trusts, alternative currencies, time banks, and so on—that privilege cooperative rather than competitive, behaviors, that are democratic rather than hierarchical, that seek to bring together rather than individualize, and that reveal rather than conceal sociality and interdependence" (Shear 2019). For example, in contrast to exploitation intrinsic to capitalist enterprises, in worker-owned cooperatives' decisions, workers collectively appropriate and decide what to do with the surplus value they produce.

SE movements have a much shorter history in the United States and in Massachusetts, which has now become a hub of SE activity. Prior to the 2008 economic crisis, SE as a theory or discourse was largely absent from community development, organizing, and activist circles. However, in response to deepening inequalities, the urgencies of ecological destruction, and a recognition of the limits of liberal and progressive politics—in response to an unraveling of the OWW—SE has exploded over the past decade along with cognate projects: new economy, community economies, cooperative economy, economic democracy, just transition, regenerative economies, and so on[4]. Formal, self-identified SE movements are active in diverse locations like Humboldt California, Jackson Mississippi, New York City, and Chicago[5], to name a few.

The 2007 US Social Forum marked an important event in the history of SE in the United States, bringing together engaged academics and activists, resulting in the formation of the U.S. Solidarity Economy Network (USSEN). USSEN has held space for SE imaginings, pushed forward SE epistemology and theory, convened discussions with academics and activists, helped to forge relationships across geographies and communities, and has linked SE in the United States to international efforts through the International Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy (RIPPESS). Along with USSEN, the New Economy Coalition emerged in 2012 and has built a national SE network of over 200 organizations.

In the early 2010s, SE activity began to pop, spread, and thicken in different ways across Massachusetts (see Loh and

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[4] For example, see https://neweconomy.net/, https://www.communityeconomies.org/, https://www.usworker.coop/home/, https://www.economicdemocracy.us/, https://climatejusticealliance.org/just-transition/, https://peoplesaction.org/regenerative-economy/.

[5] For example, see https://cooperationhumboldt.com/, https://cooperationjackson.org/, http://solidaritynyc.org/, https://www.woodsfund.org/news/the-movement-building-for-racial-justice-fund.
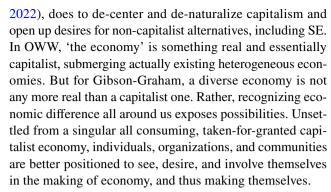
Shear 2015). In Worcester, MA, a network of community groups, students, academics, and activists organized statewide conferences around SE that brought together people from across the state, many of whom remain active or have become leaders in SE movements. Local groups identifying with/as SE have formed in western, central, and eastern Massachusetts. And conferences, workshops, working groups, and formal and informal relationships with SE efforts across the country and internationally have brought further conversation, and deepened and entangled relationships amongst SE activists and practitioners. Most significantly, and as described in the introduction, SE has been brought into social justice movement spaces, centering the needs, desires, and epistemologies of front-line communities. Through all this activity, numerous SE enterprises and efforts have emerged, existing efforts have begun to identify with SE, and a statewide SE network has formed with the intention of advancing the movement.

There is much at stake in how this movement assembles and advances. What and who does it include or exclude? How and by whom are decisions being made? These questions of politics are bound up in ontologies that can go beyond and/or remain bounded by the OWW.

From a matter of concern to a matter of care

To explore how SE movement might move towards an ontological politics, we find it useful to see how it is manifesting in two registers. First, SE exposes the (presumed capitalist) economy as a matter of concern (Latour 2004). In this register, SE works as a difference attractor, making visible diverse economies and possibilities, in variant ways, to differently positioned individuals and communities. However, SE's actual practices and how it makes relations are left open, operating in and through multiple political orientations. In this first register, SE can remain trapped in OWW, articulating into and advancing either modernist or a delimited social justice politics. In a second register, SE becomes a matter of care (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017), attending to how relations and values are enacted and maintained. In this register, SE can orient towards an ontological politics, in which the goal of building a particular 'economy' is submerged within a more fundamental effort of organizing around and assembling the conditions from which communities can enact well-being through solidarity, autonomy, and relations of interdependence.

In the first register, SE transforms economy from a matter of fact—an object with a particular, concrete essence—to a matter of concern (Latour 2004), a thing is actively made in and through difference. This shift is precisely what Gibson-Graham's diverse economy framework (Gibson-Graham 2006; Gibson-Graham et al. 2014; and see Naylor

2022), does to de-center and de-naturalize capitalism and open up desires for non-capitalist alternatives, including SE. In OWW, 'the economy' is something real and essentially capitalist, submerging actually existing heterogeneous economies. But for Gibson-Graham, a diverse economy is not any more real than a capitalist one. Rather, recognizing economic difference all around us exposes possibilities. Unsettled from a singular all consuming, taken-for-granted capitalist economy, individuals, organizations, and communities are better positioned to see, desire, and involve themselves in the making of economy, and thus making themselves.

Invoking diverse economies weakens the discursive control of capitalism and reveals economy as a matter of concern. These moves within the first register are important and necessary, but insufficient for SE movement to orient towards an ontological politics. There are a variety of ways that SE can remain bound by OWW. One is an over-emphasis on SE economic enterprises that practice alternative modes of production, exchange, ownership, and finance. These institutions, such as worker-owned cooperatives, have received a lot of attention because they are presumed to embody SE values and principles. And, indeed, non-capitalist institutions and relations can privilege, invite, and enable different logics, principles, and rationalities more than capitalist ones (Byrne and Healy 2006; Cabana and Linares 2022; Cornwell 2011; Ferguson 2009a, b; Graeber 2010; Mauss 1990; Morris 2022). However, solidarity around and through relationships of cooperation and interdependence do not automatically happen in cooperatives or other SE institutions but must be worked on and continually made. As we have argued elsewhere, participation in cooperatives does not necessarily lead to any particular identification with or desires for particular values, ethics, or political orientation (Shear 2020a engaging with Mulder 2015).

In a recent essay discussing the responses to the COVID pandemic of a well-known food cooperative in New York City, Hudson (2020) shows how the actualization of SE values can be neglected. Park Slope Co-op, in complying with pandemic distancing rules, suspended members from working in the store and hired employees instead, reducing one of the ways that mutuality and solidarity are practiced and shifting its large and economically diverse membership base more into the role of a consumer. Recent critiques of the community land trust (CLT) movement portray how some have become more of a tool for individualist home ownership and affordable housing production, than building community and changing relations between people and land (DeFilippis et al. 2019, 2018).

Another way that SE can stay within the grips of a modernist politics is by over-focusing on growing, connecting, and scaling up of SE institutions and value chains. As Hudson (2020: 172) writes, "today, much of SE organizing is focused on building long-term and 'scalable' formal

institutions (Casper-Futterman 2019). However, often over-looked in this process is building the actually existing solidarity between practitioners that can fortify that infrastructure." Indeed, scale and growth, within a modernist politics, is about neglecting actual relationships and practices. As Tsing describes, "scalability requires that project elements be oblivious to the indeterminacies of encounter; that's how they allow smooth expansion" (2015: 38). Pursuing scale, perhaps at the expense of enacting SE values and relations, can also leave the SE movement vulnerable to being coopted by the state (Sutton 2019) or even multi-national corporations (RIPESS 2015).

Avoiding these pitfalls, then, brings us to the register in which SE can be approached and embraced as a "matter of care." While thinking of things as matters of concern exposes them as heterogeneous assemblages that are in the making, how things come into being and how they maintain themselves or change, is a "matter of care" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017). Care involves an attention to an arrangement and doing of all the things necessary to maintain, transform, or cultivate particular worlds. Thus, an ontological politics might ask, what worlds are being cared for and cultivated through solidarity economy politics and practices, and what might yet be cared for? And what are the politics necessary to enable and enact this care? These questions, along with the extent to which subjective and relational transformations are occurring in different places, cannot be evaluated in the abstract, but have to be understood, negotiated, and practiced in concrete circumstances where multiple and entangled political projects and histories are encountered. We now return to our SE movement experiences in Massachusetts, where we are seeing a move from SE as a matter of concern to a matter of care.

Fight and build: solidarity economy movement in Massachusetts

Our SE research and practice is located in Massachusetts, a wealthy state with some of the highest levels of inequality and racial segregation in the US. The efforts we are involved in have strong bases in Boston, Worcester, and Springfield, the three largest cities in the state. Each has neighborhoods with high concentrations of people of color and immigrants, with much higher rates of poverty and unemployment. Boston considers itself a world class city and hub of innovation and knowledge creation and has a dense network of non-profits, funders, community groups, and social movement infrastructure. Worcester and Springfield are, to varying degrees, post-industrial cities that have been struggling with conventional economic development and have relatively less extensive networks of nonprofits and movement infrastructure than Boston.

We begin with the story of how economy became a matter of concern during a statewide green jobs campaign, revealing possibilities for building cooperative and alternative green enterprises and relations. This was the beginning of a fight and build approach, which has garnered much traction in US SE movements. Fight and build can suggest a dual orientation towards two worlding projects: attending to the world as it is (the OWW) and an ontological politics towards relational worlds in the making. Importantly, a discourse of fight and build has centered the needs, interests, and knowledge of front-line communities, bringing a social justice politics to the SE. However, it by no means guarantees an ontological politics. We are not suggesting a neat binary that separates and maps "the fight" onto a politics in the world as it is, on the one hand, and "the build" onto worlds in the making, on the other. Building collective power (the fight) and SE initiatives and relations (the build) can both be contained within the OWW (modernist or social justice variants), without attention to and care for both fighting for and crafting relational worlds.

We then describe the emergence of the Solidarity Economy Initiative (SEI) in Boston, bringing social justice base-building groups and funders together to develop vision and strategies around SE. SEI has opened up space for engaging in SE as a matter of care, advancing conditions for, embracing, and enacting solidarity and interdependent relations. We show how participants are actively rejecting the dictates and coordinates of OWW, while also experiencing its tensions and contradictions.

We conclude with the Boston Ujima Project, which was launched by SEI participants to build a local SE ecosystem, including a democratically controlled investment fund. In this project, we see an intention of being other, while also mobilizing and incorporating elements of the 'master's tools'—such as philanthropic and private capital—into different ways of being/doing/knowing that transgress and help move beyond the OWW.

Green Justice Coalition

We trace the emergence of SE movement in Massachusetts to the Green Justice Coalition (GJC), which was convened in 2009 and through which the authors first met. Over several years, this statewide alliance of community, labor, and environmental organizations fought for and won state policies and public investment in energy efficiency and green jobs. At the time, Penn was director of an environmental justice group in Boston (Alternatives for Community and Environment—ACE) that had helped launch the coalition. He and others brought a social justice politics to the coalition, wanting to ensure that new jobs generated by the policy wins would pay living wages and be accessible to community residents. Shear was working as an organizer with

and learning from the Alliance to Develop Power (ADP), a coalition member based in Springfield that had gained tenant ownership of several housing developments. ADP's solution to local hiring and livable wages was to create its own jobs through worker and community-owned construction and landscaping businesses. ADP had already formed such a venture to meet the maintenance needs of its housing developments. The idea of building community-controlled businesses to do the work resulting from winning demands from the state was a revelation for Penn and other coalition members, who dedicated most of their efforts to policy campaigns. ADP served as a model for fight and build, framing their efforts as building community economy (Graham and Cornwell 2009). Economy opened up as a matter of concern, as something that could be made and an arena for imagination and action.

As the coalition waged the policy campaign, ACE convened a series of workshops with community partners to learn about cooperative green enterprises. Penn remembers the excitement of many younger participants in hearing about these ideas for the first time, as well that of a veteran activist who said it was about time that these strategies they had pursued in the 1960s and 70s were finally coming back to the fore. Out of these workshops, ACE and two other community partners set out to develop their own community and worker-owned energy efficiency company (see Center for Social Inclusion 2012). Though the effort stalled after a couple years at the stage of raising startup capital, the vision of creating jobs and our own green economy persisted.

Prior to these efforts and events, the economic development arena had been heavily critiqued by social justice base-building organizations as reformist and ineffective and something to oppose, but largely ceded to private sector businesses and to a neoliberalized community development sector. Seeing economy as a matter of concern generated new learning initiatives, relationships, and desires. Over the next several years, both of us worked with practitioners, activists, academics, and students to learn about SE theories, practices, and movements from across the world. Both were part of separate delegations to visit the Evergreen Cooperatives in Cleveland, which was inspired by the Mondragon cooperatives in the Basque region of Spain. And both were involved with a series of annual statewide conferences in Worcester held by a newly formed Solidarity and Green Economy Initiative (Worcester SAGE) that brought together SE activists and practitioners throughout the state to deepen connections, showcase what existed, and plan, critique and navigate SE efforts.

SE opened up green economy and economic discourse to new understandings and possibilities for transformation. For example, a labor organizer with the Green Justice Coalition (GJC) radically changed his beliefs and feelings about worker cooperatives. During the initial GJC organizing, he would laugh off the role that cooperatives could play, sarcastically deriding them as "so revolutionary." A little over a year later, he understood cooperatives to play a significant role in building power in movement politics, attributing this shift to conversations with divergent activists and organizers. Aaron Tanaka, who at the time of the GJC was the director of an unemployed workers organization in Boston, understands SE as a vehicle for the movement to intervene directly in economic development. Prior to the emergence of SE activity, communities, Tanaka relates, had been very adept at redistributing wealth through policy campaigns, but SE and worker cooperatives enable communities to build power through ownership.

Similarly, for another organizer, SE has shown how to bring together movement politics and economic development through a fight and build approach. Amethyst Carey, while serving as Co-Op Organizer with the Center for Economic Democracy, had seen the fight as separate and disconnected from the build. As she described, "I was involved with co-ops, and I was involved in movement work. I experienced very little connection between the two until I learned about Cooperation Jackson and the solidarity economy movement. As someone who experienced a lot of burn out in my organizing work, the idea of uniting our resistance work with building alternatives to the systems and structures that aren't working for us was so exciting—and just made sense."

In these early years of SE movement in Massachusetts, a social justice politics, which had mostly been in fight mode, became inspired by economic possibilities. Seeing economy as a matter of concern and learning about diverse economic practices in other places propelled us to begin fighting for and building them.

Solidarity Economy Initiative

Key SE leaders and projects in Massachusetts, including the Solidarity Economy Initiative (SEI), emerged in the years following the green economy efforts, a time which coincided with the Great Recession, the subsequent Occupy movement, and the emergence of Black Lives Matter movement. SEI's experience shows how SE politics have been evolving from a framework that exposes economy as comprised of difference, including values and principles beyond the market that can be matched onto cooperative and alternative economic institutions, and towards an ontological politics of care, of recognizing and attending to all of the relations, practices, and forces that produce and reproduce worlds. SEI began as a deliberate effort to join the fight with the build into a SE movement. In late 2014, eight community base-building organizations in Massachusetts (mostly in Boston) came together with several progressive funders to envision

and develop strategies towards SE. Over a year-long learning and design process, the cohort held quarterly half-day sessions to build "shared analysis around the need to drive political, economic and cultural transformation in tandem, in order to move towards a shared vision for an equitable and abundant future that does not replicate capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy."[6] Over the past five years, the grassroots cohort has grown to nearly a dozen, and the quarterly sessions continue. SEI member groups have launched various SE projects, including the Boston Ujima Project, as well as the Chinatown Community Land Trust, the Greater Boston Community Land Trust Network (GBCLTN), and the Center for Cooperative Development and Solidarity (CCDS) supporting Latinx immigrant-led cooperatives in East Boston. In 2019, SEI also convened a learning group of nine funders who desire to transform their practices to support SE movements.

SEI has an explicit social justice politics, in contrast to some SE formations that lack a justice orientation and/or depoliticize their efforts. It is grounded in social justice movements with roots in liberatory traditions of the US and beyond. For SEI, the fight for equal access and opportunity and redistributing wealth is a moral and material necessity. But SEI's social justice politics includes a desire for a negotiated collective care, for a relationality that exceeds the liberal individualism at the heart of capitalist modernity. SEI understands its change work in three dimensions: shifting consciousness, building power, and creating economic alternatives (Loh and Jimenez 2017; Loh and Agyeman 2019). As we discuss in more detail elsewhere (Shear 2019), these three dimensions are intended to work together to "carve out ideological [and material] space for negotiated community control and determination".

SEI's experience shows how a social justice politics can be assembled into and help advance an ontological politics. The first step has been to understand economy as diverse, changeable, and in the making, which for SEI meant being explicit about talking about capitalism and alternatives. Lisa Owens, Executive Director of City Life Vida Urbana (an SEI member) describes how SEI participants first had to confront their fears of talking about economy. Too many leaders had the attitude that "you leave that to the experts. You leave that to those people out there who know more than me. This has nothing to do with me." But through dialog and learning together, "we have moved beyond the place where we're afraid to think about the economy. We know that it's okay for us to do that. And that it's right for us to do that now." Then, the challenge becomes how to "confront a pessimism about what is actually possible," says Owens. This unmasking of economy then led to further learning and inquiry into how

to advance SE, how to assemble in ways that would not be bound by OWW.

SEI was deliberately set up as a learning space, prompted by recognition, on one hand, that grassroots organizing strategies for policy change, were limited in achieving significant transformations. On the other, there was acknowledgement that if SE was intended to create relational, autonomous communities, SE could not be only about growing or building cooperative or alternative economic institutions. As CED Executive Director and SEI co-founder Aaron Tanaka has often stated, "we can't coop our way out of capitalism." Just building cooperative businesses is not enough to transform the conditions subjugating working class communities of color. Jeff Rosen of the Solidago Foundation, a funder member of SEI, goes a step further by rejecting development altogether and emphasizing the importance of working towards community autonomy: "we're not interested in economic development at Solidago. We're not interested in job creation. We're interested in that being a tool for building power… How does having more independent economic power give you more independent political power?"

Luz Zambrano, one of the founders of CCDS (an SEI member), draws a distinction between coops and their desire for cooperativism: "To us, cooperativism has always been beyond the business. We want what emerges from that economic piece, but it's the development of our community and the social and cultural aspect. That's why the work is much slower." This more relational approach to cooperative ways of being and creating the conditions and spaces for solidarity beyond economy qua economy has emerged as a theme not just for SEI projects but as a central purpose for SEI itself. The grassroots cohort members, many of whom spend a lot of time with one another in other coalitions and alliances, value the opportunity to deepen their relationships and care for one another in SEI. Monique Tú Nguyen, Executive Director of Matahari Women's Worker Center (an SEI member), says that my "personal relationships with other leaders have deepened, even though that's not explicit. It's like I see you and see what your aim and intention is to create a different world. That's a different level of respect and care beyond just the transactional coalition spaces."

This move towards accounting for and attending to the relational conditions and practices that we are embedded in—has been explicit and taken several forms. Healing and transformational leadership have been an integral part of SEI's work from its inception, seen as a necessary component to address the historical violence and trauma inflicted on communities of color. For example, SEI supported its members to attend annual healing retreats for women of color. Healing and relational practices have also been infused into SEI spaces. Each quarterly cohort meeting starts with a circle check-in around an altar, where participants are invited to share objects that hold personal and spiritual

significance. These opening sessions can often take an hour or more of the half-day sessions as participants make themselves vulnerable to each other, sharing troubles, feelings, and desires, and practicing (and creating) relations of trust and openness.

The practices that embrace relationality and center relationships are opening space in SEI for ontological politics, helping members transgress the individualism and growth imperatives of capitalist logics and white supremacist culture that SEI organizations are subjected to and navigate. As described by Matahari's Nguyen, "SEI helped us think about the whole overall, to build an alternative ecosystem. When we joined, it was just about the childcare coop" that they were supporting their members to form. She explains that "before, we were beholden to the people who make decisions… SEI helped me deepen my belief and commitment to alternatives. Even when we lost funding, since we decided not to be part of a campaign on our legislators, I've been pushing the childcare cooperative and alternative forms of childcare." Liliana Avendaño of CCDS describes how SEI is a space in which they can say that cooperativism "exists and [they can] defend it as real."

This space of deep relationship and radical imagination in support of world building can be simultaneously thrilling, unsettling, and challenging. Nguyen describes how SEI is filling the "heart space" and "practicing patience and community." But she also thinks that "SEI needs to figure out how to get out of posturing ourselves when we are going around in circle, instead of being real. Posturing is what we do all the time as nonprofits with our funders." One SEI funder cohort member believes that "we cannot be wedded to these past constructs" but that moving into new ones can feel like "you're barreling down the highway with no guardrails."

The COVID pandemic has shown how the deepening relationships and shared values that have been cultivated in SEI can create conditions for new projects that do not feel as enclosed by the OWW. Owens of CLVU says that "sometimes it [our SE work] can feel amorphous. It may take a long time to come together. And then something like COVID happens, and things explode." With emergency aid from the City of Boston Resiliency Fund, six SEI members (along with three other community partners) formed a consortium to assemble wellness kits for families with COVID-positive members across Boston. This mutual aid project took shape quickly, as groups mobilized to respond to immediate needs. When they wanted to obtain 2500 masks for the kits, the consortium looked to the sewing cooperative that CCDS had been supporting in East Boston. Consortium members helped to source donated materials for the masks and paid the sewing cooperative for their labor. Even though Zambrano had known some of the other leaders of this effort for years, she says that "this connection was so natural and

organic." She goes on to say that from this mask order, "the idea was created that they [the sewing coop] could do something bigger," and they have now legally incorporated as a worker cooperative called Puntada ("stitch" in Spanish).

At the same time, an emphasis on relational practices has come into tension with a growth mindset of producing SE projects. SEI was initially conceived as a 3 year incubation process, where the first phase was a learning process designed by the grassroots cohort and the second phase was developing SE projects. The third phase would then be investments to 'scale up' the projects. Alexie Torres, Executive Director of Access Strategies Fund, a co-founder of the SEI, says that some SEI funders are still asking "where are the coops." Jasmine Gomez of Access Strategies frames the challenge as "what does it mean to actually lean into new ways of being, and not just orienting towards new and different kinds of goals and what are we producing or creating, but the process in which we engage it."

Another challenge for SEI is the struggle of their organizations and people to survive, as they resist threats from political regimes and economic forces of the OWW which are trying to enclose their very existence. SEI groups are simultaneously involved in resistance and reform efforts as well as imagining, fighting for, and building solidarity economies. They are fighting for immigrant and workers rights, while supporting members to form worker coops. They are fighting for more affordable housing and against gentrifying developments, while building community land trusts, which take land out of the market and open other possibilities for collective use and re-envisioning relations. They are operating in the OWW to reform capitalism, while at the same time working to birth and sustain other worlds.

For SEI groups, which are all nonprofits, using the master's tools means navigating the nonprofit industrial complex (Incite! Women of Color Against Violence 2007), in which they are tethered to and potentially constrained by their funding sources. Their efforts to birth cooperative businesses face the same exigencies of all small businesses in capitalist markets to compete and be efficient. Yet, winning incremental reforms can create resources for further building SE worlds beyond OWW, what we might describe as "nonreformist reforms", reforms that create spaces of different logics and rationalities than those of the dominant formation (Akuno 2017, citing Gorz). For example, the GBCLTN is leveraging the political pressure generated by anti-displacement organizing into more public resources and preferences for CLT land acquisition. This political strategy was, in fact, how Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (an SEI member) first won control over land in the 1980s and established its CLT, which now owns 30 + acres (Medoff and Sklar 1994).

SEI has been sustaining spaces for collective reflection and dialog about how to join up fight and build in ways to assemble other worlds that can transcend the master's house.

SEI is approaching and embodying solidarity economy as a matter of care.

Boston Ujima Project

Perhaps, the clearest example of pluriversal politics to emerge in Massachusetts is the Ujima Project. Led by and for working class and front-line communities of color in Boston, Ujima is an effort to assemble a local SE ecosystem centered around a democratically controlled investment fund. Ujima—a Kwanzaa principle meaning collective work and responsibility—is assembling an array of enterprises, democratic decision-making, philanthropic resources, cultural and education efforts, and relational practices to enact SE. Ujima is attending to creating other realities while also incorporating elements of the OWW.

Ujima's first large public event was held on a Saturday in August 2016, where more than 150 people gathered for a day-long Solidarity Summit. These participants were among the 185 people who had contributed to a pool of $10,000, along with $10,000 in matching funds from several institutional funders, to invest in Black and immigrant-owned community businesses. Participants heard pitches from five local businesses in the morning and then voted at the end of the day for those they wanted to provide loans to. Over lunch catered by a local business and in various small groups and tabling sessions throughout the day, people were encouraged to get to know one another, engage with local businesses (including ones that were not pitching), get involved with community projects, and discuss standards they would like to see community businesses meet. A live text voting session resulted in all five businesses being granted their loan requests. The day closed with a group song.

Ujima's founding members included a diverse array of individuals and organizations with various ideological leanings. They included City Life/Vida Urbana, a housing justice organizing group with an explicit anti-capitalist stance; Boston Impact Initiative, a local impact investor; CERO, a Black and Latinx worker cooperative that came out of the green jobs campaign; and NAACP Boston, which was established in 1911 as the first chartered branch of this national racial equity organization.

Nia Evans, now the Ujima Director, was serving as the volunteer chair of the NAACP branch's economic development committee when she was first introduced to Ujima in 2015. What attracted NAACP Boston to Ujima, according to Evans, was that participants had an opportunity to both invest in a development fund and vote on how it was allocated. NAACP members had been frustrated with how development decisions were made in Boston, such as around the City's bid for the 2024 Olympics. Evans said, "communities of color were nowhere to be found in these conversations until much after the fact when it's time to do the check-off-the-box community engagement." For her, the Summit was an example of Ujima's transformative approach to "just be differently with each other, and with that being, offer an invitation for others to be differently as well."

In the five years since that Summit, Ujima has reached its goal of amassing an investment fund of $4.5 million and has a full time staff of six and more than 700 members and 280 investors. Currently housed at CED, it intends to become its own independent organization. Ujima is building what it calls an "ecosystem of innovative strategies for change"[7] that includes the fund, a good business alliance, a time bank, and arts and culture-based organizing. Ujima says it is "challenging poverty and developing our communities by organizing our savings, businesses and customers to grow local wealth and meet our own needs"[8] and that "another Boston is possible."[9] Ujima's founders describe it as "robustly grounded in a reparations frame" and a "collective experiment" (Tanaka et al. 2021: 444).

The Boston Ujima Project appeals for varying reasons to different sectors. The capital fund attracts those interested in ethical investing. The democratic process speaks to those interested in building collective control and power. The good business alliance and opportunity to access the capital fund brings together locally owned businesses and entrepreneurs of color.

Ujima's decision-making and governance structure are a critical part of how it is trying to assemble another world. While the capital sources include impact investors, philanthropic investments, and individual solidarity investors, these providers do not make decisions for Ujima. Rather, governance of the fund and Ujima itself is reserved for members that self-identify as being from working class neighborhoods of color in Boston (Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan). In-person assemblies and smart-phone voting campaigns allow these members to make shared, ethical decisions around an expanded economic imaginary. They have developed and ratified a set of 36 community standards for local businesses and nominated 140 businesses to apply to Ujima's business alliance and become eligible to receive loans and investments from the capital fund.

Ujima is attentive to how relationships are being built and deepened amongst its members in all of its work. According to Evans, "we're not going to just recruit members just to say we have a bunch of members… Our focus is on what's the most fulfilling experience for members." One of the ways Ujima focuses on the member experience is through arts and culture organizing, which Evans explains is meant to "create experiences that tap into all of the different ways we receive

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[7] See https://www.ujimaboston.com/.

[8] See https://necessary.systems/possibility.

[9] See https://www.ujimaboston.com/.

information." She goes on to elaborate that "someone changing their world view or changing a belief system isn't going to come just because we had a meeting and we talked about what it was and it sounds super exciting. It's going to come by people having multiple and different types of experiences with us, so then wanting to continue to be in community with us." Evans believes this experience needs to be more than just about the fight, which can feel "dry and hard all the time." However, Ujima does encourage members to join the campaigns led by its base-building partners and has its own advocacy agenda for supportive government policies and resources.
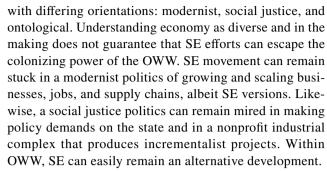
Ujima's focus on relationship building also helps to bridge ideological differences amongst its stakeholders. Ujima intentionally offers "a welcome to outsiders," says Evans, as part of an effort to articulate, assemble, and orient difference into an ontological politics. An example is where Ujima has cultivated a relationship with a Black developer engaged in conventional economic development. According to Evans, "we share Blackness … So even if we might look at economics differently, … that allows for interaction and that allows him to be exposed to what we're doing."

Evans describes Ujima explicitly in ontological terms, as a world-creating project. She says Ujima is "what's next because we're doing it. We're trying our best to create the future. What's next is different and better than what we are fighting against right now… It's a reality in which there's more energy going to carrying out what we want our communities in our world to be and less energy going towards fighting." The non-capitalist, cooperative, and participatory institutions that Ujima is advancing address injustice and embrace interdependence; they enable people to be with each other in new ways through economy qua economy. But for Ujima, attending to the relations and relationships *outside* of their spaces is also essential for their ecosystem (other world) to become more durable and expand.

Concluding thoughts

The solidarity economy (SE) movement has rapidly emerged and evolved over the last decade in Massachusetts. This movement began with a joining of social justice efforts around green economy with community green businesses. SE, and the fight and build approach, reframed economy as a matter of concern, as something that communities can, and already are, part of shaping themselves. SE powerfully functions to disrupt the reality of a singular capitalist economy. It exposes economy as diverse and changeable, an assemblage in the making—in which practices, values, relations, and institutions beyond capitalism might be enacted.

At the same time, the heterogeneous elements of SE are caught up in, and assembling multiple political projects

with differing orientations: modernist, social justice, and ontological. Understanding economy as diverse and in the making does not guarantee that SE efforts can escape the colonizing power of the OWW. SE movement can remain stuck in a modernist politics of growing and scaling businesses, jobs, and supply chains, albeit SE versions. Likewise, a social justice politics can remain mired in making policy demands on the state and in a nonprofit industrial complex that produces incrementalist projects. Within OWW, SE can easily remain an alternative development.

The central question for actualizing an ontological politics, for advancing an alternative to development, is how SE elements are brought into being, assembled, and advanced. Addressing this question, we have argued, is a matter of care. It requires attention to and care for all the ways that worlds are being created and in process, as a politics of becoming (Biehl and Locke 2017; Gibson-Graham et al. 2001; Miller 2019; Shear 2019, 2020a), and reproduced in particular times and places. In Massachusetts, SE movement is being advanced through social justice politics and practices of care of base-building organizations that center the needs and experiences of front-line working class communities of color. Following Escobar, we see this social justice politics as amenable to an ontological politics, because of its attunement to the contradictions and violence of the OWW. Similarly, non-capitalist institutions and practices that are associated with SE have different sets of rationalities than capitalist relations. As a result, they have the potential to enable and more readily embrace and activate subjective transformations, relationality, collective autonomy, and ethics and values beyond market exchange.

As we have shown, SEI and Ujima are, in their own ways, advancing an ontological politics, though not without tensions and challenges. It is a tricky matter to use some of the master's tools to dismantle and/or transcend the master's house and assemble worlds in a pluriverse beyond OWW. There is no predetermined route that can guarantee an ontological politics. How particular values are being actualized and the extent to which subjective and relational transformations are taking place cannot be evaluated in the abstract, but has to be understood, negotiated, and practiced in concrete circumstances where multiple and entangled political projects and histories are encountered.

SEI groups have created spaces for learning about, discussing, and practicing solidarity and advancing SE projects. Yet, they are still nonprofit corporations, in part dependent on the grants provided by SEI's funding partners. They face immediate threats and battles to meet basic needs in their communities, such as food and housing. Yet, SEI has helped its participants begin to name and reject some of the ways of being/doing/knowing that are stuck in OWW, such as fighting endless defensive policy battles and adopting

productivist growth strategies. Their care for each other and their communities is creating new grounds for assembling diverse public, private, nonprofit, and community resources towards meeting needs in the pandemic. Ujima is creating spaces and relationships across partners in community organizing, impact investing, and community development. Through democratic practices and relationships of care, participants are opening to new desires and ways of being/doing/knowing.

That the OWW is losing coherence and fracturing in different ways is creating even more attention to and opportunities for SE movement. But the grip of the OWW is still strong. The embrace of pluralism as a principle by SE networks (internationally and in the US) shows a desire to not have a "one-size fits all approach".[10] Yet, pluralism, even a post-capitalist pluralism, is not necessarily pluriversal. A pluralism embedded in OWW still allows for the objectification and abstraction of SE as a singular economy with forms and structures that pre-exist relations.

We conclude with a few thoughts on how SE might be approached to evade the dictates of the OWW and enact an ontological politics to assemble pluriversal worlds. First is the importance of attending to and caring for actual practices and relationships in place, in trying to enact and embody values of solidarity and interdependence everywhere, all the time. Second is a rejection of rigid OWW separations between object and subject, so as not to confuse form with function. Structures (such as cooperatives) do not exist beyond the relations (cooperative or non-cooperative) that enact them. Third, because OWW is always in a process of becoming as well, there are continual slippages and ruptures. These can be exploited to break OWWs hegemonic grip and to create more pluriversal desires and practices. Finally, there is much to do to follow, support, and learn from the worlds that are already existing beyond OWW. Deeply embedded practices and cultures of relationality, autonomy, and interdependence have persisted among and through struggles for black liberation, indigenous sovereignty, and cultural survival in BIPOC and front-line communities.

Solidarity economy institutions, organizations, and initiatives can help to constitute an alternative to development; they can be essential components of pluriversal, ontological politics. Non-capitalist formations like cooperatives and community land trusts more readily embrace, but do not guarantee, values and practices beyond the OWW. Ultimately, our account of solidarity economy movement is not about economy at all, but about the potential for solidarity economy to be part of a politics that can fight for, assemble and advance the conditions through which communities can remake themselves.

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[10] See https://ussen.org/solidarity-economy/.

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