Worker Co-operatives and Economic Development: Promoting Culturally Effective, Economically Democratic Development Tools in the Age of Globalization

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Introduction

In a coffee shop in the Skagit Valley, a young, indigenous woman from Mexico sits across from me, telling me her story. Mariana relays, and history shows, that prior to the 1990s when neoliberal economics took root through various domestic and trade policies such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), her community was thriving, and she and her family made a living from a culturally essential food for indigenous people in Mexico—maize, a specific kind of corn. After NAFTA, the import of corn at below market prices put many of them out of business. Additionally, the imported corn wasn't the same strain that they had produced, symbolizing a loss of an important cultural symbol. Corn imports through NAFTA ultimately put between 2 and 5 million Mexican farmers out of work. Some travelled north to work in Mexico's maquiladoras under terrible working conditions. Others kept travelling into the United States, and today, many of them work as migrant farm laborers. Because reporting labor violations could result in deportation, these migrants often work under worse conditions than do documented US workers.

I am quite interested in Mariana's story, and I bemoan her plight and the part the US may have played in it. In my professional life now as the director of a non-profit whose goal is to right the wrongs of globalization and trade policy, I have no problem admitting that as we built the global economy, it is clear we did not have developing countries' best interests in mind. If we truly had kept developing economies' interests at heart, we would not have built systems that force migration. Nor would we build global economic institutions and economic tools that prevent developing countries from managing decisions about their own development. For example, consider the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and its interference with structural adjustment programs (SAPs). Development workers should help build resilient economies in the face of globalization and economic collapses by stepping back from neoliberal approaches and using tools such as worker co-operatives that provide well-paying jobs and expendable income in addition to keeping decisions as local as possible in a world that pushes economic decisions outside local jurisdiction.

Some of the ideas presented in this paper may seem radical to development workers. They have grown from my own background and experiences. I grew up in an incredibly conservative home in one of the most conservative Congressional Districts in the United States. I attended a private, conservative, Christian college in Northwest Iowa. In 2012, I voted for Mitt Romney. In 2015, I moved to Chicago, Illinois, to work with a non-profit focused on building support systems for immigrants and refugees. During my time there, I began to ask hard questions about poverty and inequality and our responses to them—both from the charity and the systemic perspectives. When I realized that what we were doing was not working, I avoided any political or religious ideology and sought honest answers and tools that could successfully address the problems I saw Chicago communities face. This work ultimately led me to a graduate program, and the writing that follows reflects just one of the many honest answers to the questions I had asked. I offer this explanation because while these ideas may seem radical to some, I do not think they are partisan. If you're a development practitioner, feel free to take part of the ideas and reject other pieces. Building a more collaborative world doesn't have to be all or nothing.

For my thesis, I will build my argument by showing that the current approach to globalization causes problems for local economies, that community development theory stems from neoliberalism, and that co-ops are useful for developing local economies; then I will walk through three case studies and challenges to create a vision of a more co-operative future.

Globalization

Globalization means something different to nearly everyone. As Reverend Daniel Groody puts it, “To the political scientist, it signifies a new internationalism. To the economist, it connotes linking local, regional, and national financial networks. To the sociologist it entails the rich intersection of multiple societies and worldviews” (14). When writing about globalization, I will specifically address two pieces of it—governance and economics. While globalization has been effective at addressing some societal ills, the way we manage the global economy often leaves workers, the environment, public health, and food safety behind. Consequently, I will explain ways that globalization causes problems for local economies: I will outline the shift away from local decision-making, highlight why local decision-making is preferable, explore specific ways in which globalization builds fragile economies that are prone to financial destabilization, and make the case for economic resilience.

Globalization removed decision making from the local sphere which has caused problems for developing and developed countries alike. I will make this case by exploring how globalization has resulted in the creation of global governing spheres without any true, accountable global government and then provide examples of how this disconnect has played out in the global economy through Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) and the International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs).

Globalization came into frame in the 1990s as countries began to link their economies through trade agreements. As a result, each country sacrificed its own national sovereignty to participate in the global economy. This system created a set of rules between countries for how each country would behave economically on a global stage; however, few governing bodies exist at a global level to enforce the rules, a dilemma that Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz refers to as "global governance without a global government" (222). In the United States, different officials each have one vote, and together, they make decisions about the economy. Global economy decisions and decision makers are much less democratic. Today, the voices of the financial community typically dominate the global economic conversation because of ties between the IMF, the banks, and national governments (Stiglitz 223). Unsurprisingly, no one is proposing that we institute a global government with global elected leaders to fill the gap. As Anne-Marie Slaughter, one of the Directors of Policy Planning under the former President Obama's State Department, notes, "World government is both infeasible and undesirable" (285) because "we don't want the centralization of decision-making power and coercive authority so far from the people actually to be governed" (286). With a lack of global accountability and tension around the idea of creating a global government, it becomes clear that global economic spaces must protect decision-making in the local sphere if any governing body will make decisions in place of Trans National Corporations (TNCs). Because it has become such a problem, I will explore specific ways that global economics has pulled local decision-making out of the hands of people who then live with whatever is decided.

Next, to help explain this problem, I will outline how a trade agreement tool called Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) facilitates governance that is unaccountable to citizens. ISDS originated in German bilateral investment agreements, but it rose to become a global norm in the 1990s when it was added to the original North American Free Trade

Agreement (NAFTA). When it was signed, NAFTA created international arbitration systems that only trans-national businesses could use. For example, businesses could not use the system to sue their home-based country when these businesses thought that the home-based country's new legislation or regulations inhibited their ability to operate there. Most often, cases are heard by three business lawyers who operate outside the domain of any participating government's legal system, and the rulings cannot be appealed. Initially, the system was meant to apply specifically to direct expropriation. For example, if a country participating in the trade agreement nationalized its oil industry after another country had already invested there, the foreign company could receive payment for its investment. However, as the rulings were delivered and corporate rights were expanded in trade and investment pacts, the jurisdiction became broader and broader—including indirect expropriation as well. This broadening meant that if a nation wants to ban farming of non-native fish or ban fracking, a foreign company could sue for the profits it believes it would have made in the future. If the ISDS court rules in favor of the business, the country either pays the money the company would have made or overturns the law; and in some cases, the result is a mix of the two outcomes. Aside from being unaccountable and undemocratic, this tool incentivizes outsourcing jobs to countries that do not have strong labor standards or environmental regulations. ISDS lowers the risk of moving business to different countries and leaves communities powerless regarding their own economic wellbeing when a company decides to move jobs somewhere else.

For a better picture of how the system works, consider the following example: in 1997, Canada tried to ban Methylcyclopentadienyl Manganese Tricarbonyl (MMT), a known neurotoxin used in some gasoline as an additive. This additive was already illegal in the United States per the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Canadian government passed this measure aiming to protect public health. Ethyl Corporation, a US gasoline company that manufactures gasoline with MMT, sued against the Canadian government's new regulation. When Canada lost this case, the government paid 13.2 million in fines. Additionally, Canada had to overturn the law and publish advertisements saying that MMT was safe ("Investor-State Attacks: Health" 1). Using the ISDS panel, Ethyl Corporation successfully struck a law from the books and managed to get free and false consumer assurance that their product was safe for consumption. This system, created and enforced through international trade agreements, allows businesses benefitting from globalization to inhibit federal and state governments' abilities to legislate on behalf of the public interest or pass legislation that has wide public support. On *Last Week Tonight*, the host, John Oliver, examined the ways ISDS is being used to prevent developing countries from changing laws aimed at reducing cigarette consumption and providing consumers with health information about cigarettes. Because developing countries cannot afford the court fees incurred by ISDS, they sometimes strike laws they had sought to enact ("Tobacco: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO)"). Frustration with ISDS rulings that reversed laws or hung over legislative processes gave way to the European Court of Justice ruling in March 2018, that ISDS is incompatible with EU law. Unfortunately, many developing countries in investment agreements or trade agreements that include ISDS do not have the same financial power to push back on the system that prohibits them from regulating in favor of protecting their environment or public health. A growing number of developing countries have begun removing ISDS from their trade and investment agreements altogether (Growing Resistance 2).

Aside from trade agreements, the IMF also takes power from developing countries to determine their own economic fate. At its birth after World War II, the IMF had one goal: to "create economic stability for a world which had just been through the trauma of depression and the devastation of war" (Ellwood 34). One IMF responsibility was to handle emergency loans to countries short on cash. During the Bretton Woods meeting where the IMF was established, a well-known economist, John Maynard Keynes, proposed a working plan; "Keynes' idea was to set up an International Clearing Union which would automatically provide unconditional loans to countries experiencing balance-of-payments problems" (Ellwood 34). The loans would support demand within the country and maintain employment levels. Rather than accept his proposal, the Bretton Woods meeting accepted US Treasury Secretary Harry Dexter White's vision for the IMF instead (Ellwood 34). Based on White's vision, today's IMF allows borrowers to get money; in return, they must prioritize debt repayment over anything else. These programs are called Structural Adjustment Programs. Under SAPs, "Developing countries are using up to 80% of their national budgets to repay these debts and their insane interest rates" (Clawson 167). As James Vreeland notes, these loan programs can even "help determine whether roads, schools, or debt repayment take priority" (270). Often, these programs are the first to go when an SAP is put in place (Clawson 171). SAPs are another example of a global financial institution making it impossible for governments or local communities to meet the needs of the population even when the population would democratically support the reforms.

To better understand how this situation plays out, let's consider a couple of examples. In her book, *Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation*, Cynthia Moe-Lobeda writes:

> A child who wakes up in Mozambique did not borrow any money, but she pays the price for her country's heavy debt burden. Her country received loans packaged with the promise of development and immediate poverty alleviation but with conditions (established by lenders) that did not serve her people well. Often the loans were secured by corrupt leaders who pocketed or wasted much of the principal, but who are no longer around to be held responsible. Yet this child's creditors still demanded payment. (24)

This example shows the crushing personal and national inequity involved that leaves countries desperate for relief. In hopes of lessening their debt, some developing countries dangerously accept toxic chemical waste from the global North in return for debt relief—a phenomenon referred to by developing countries as "garbage imperialism" (Pellow 8-9). If a developing country's population could vote democratically on these measures, it is obvious that no population would vote to harboring another country's toxic waste. The countries choosing to accept toxic waste as well as cut health care and education programs do so out of desperation. If the global economy we have created forces countries to cut needed public interest programs, we need a different system. A new system must protect local governing bodies so that they can make decisions that protect their population.

Making policies that protect local decision making is incredibly valuable. To make this argument, I will explore national security problems. Then I will examine the distrust those communities have developed because globalization has removed local decision-making power from their sphere. Then we will consider two ways communities are trying to pull decision-making power back to the local level—through subsidiarity and re-localization.

First, let us consider the national security implications that come from removing local decision-making power. In the last section, I argued that the IMFs SAPs trap countries into using significant portions of their budget to repay loans rather than investing in healthcare, education, or domestic businesses. Clawson notes that "[n]ations where the government and economy are not stable enough to provide basic necessities for people (medical systems, access to food, education) often face higher levels of civil unrest" (179). For example, after Pakistan's economy fell apart, the country took loans from the IMF. Under their SAP, education was one of the government programs that received cuts. When a whole generation of children did not have access to education, the Taliban stepped up and created thousands of religious schools offering free housing for students who came to receive their education. In Pakistan's case, SAPs created a lack of funding for domestic programs. This funding lapse made it simpler for the extremist ideologies of the Taliban to grow (Clawson 179-180). Notably, then, the debt is not necessarily the greatest risk. Many developed countries have trillions of dollars in debt. For developed countries though, outstanding debt does not have the same requirements. The problem lies specifically with the SAP requirements for restructuring domestic economies and the resulting gap in resources the requirements leave for programs that people need to survive.

Working in the trade community, I can easily identify places where people think globalization disempowers them in making good decisions for their own financial wellbeing. For example, Washington State has lost thousands of manufacturing jobs since the original NAFTA was signed. This loss translates into an eroding tax base to fund our own community programs and families who cannot afford to live here. Additionally, even when government-run welfare programs are democratically supported, more recent trade policies have revealed an effort to freeze programs that are privatized through what is called a ratchet clause. This clause means that privatized programs remain privatized, and if a formerly public program becomes privatized, it cannot be returned to the public sphere. When states want to make subsidy programs to incentivize local movement toward green energy, those policies can be challenged by foreign corporations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) or through trade agreements. Using trade agreements to challenge democratically supported legislation breeds distrust of globalization. This uneasiness came out in full force during the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations when an unprecedented number of civil society groups joined to push back on the neoliberal approach for globalization that trade agreements offer. In 2016, Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders, and Hillary Clinton came out against the Trans-Pacific Partnership. A major tenet of both Sanders' and Trump's campaign platforms was to renegotiate NAFTA to make it better for workers. The same uneasiness US citizens feel is playing out throughout Europe right now as the Brexit process continues and as other countries elect extremely conservative leaders who favor protectionist economic policies. Because it's no longer feasible to de-globalize, our trade policies and methods of managing the global economy need to strike a better balance between global decision-making and local power. In an article titled "Has Globalization Gone Too Far?", Dani Rodrik suggests that part of this process requires taking "individual preferences for processes and the social arrangements that embody them seriously. In particular, by doing so, we can start to make sense of people's uneasiness about the consequences of the international economic integration" (247). Rather than cutting welfare programs and forcing entire nations to live under rules they did not vote for or agree to, global economic decisions must include protections for local decision-making.

There are two specific ways that communities have begun to pull decision-making power back into the local realm. Re-localization is one such initiative, and it promotes "a wide range of local experiments aiming to reduce consumption and increase production" (Pleyers 559). Communities re-localizing promote using bikes, reducing waste, strengthening relationships within communities, and promoting local cultural knowledge. These initiatives also present "small but concrete alternatives to corporate globalization and mass consumption" (Pleyers 559). Some communities are pushing a policy-related response that includes measures in trade agreements that support subsidiarity. As a concept, subsidiarity requires that "whatever decisions and activities can be undertaken locally should be. Whatever power can reside at the local level should reside there. Only when additional activity is required that cannot be satisfied locally, should power and activity move to the next higher level" ("A Better World Is Possible!" 589). Civil society groups focused on trade are seeing preliminary progress regarding subsidiarity. However, NAFTA limits many buy-local or buy-American procurement programs aimed at building local capacity for farming and manufacturing. While the new NAFTA has not yet been ratified, the agreement does not eliminate these rules from the original agreement.

In addition to addressing local decision-making power, it is important to consider how globalization is building fragile economies that are prone to financial destabilization. A central tenet of neoliberal economic policy is deregulation. We see it across all industries from the deregulation of food safety requirements to financial services to data storage to public health. The new NAFTA includes a chapter called "Good Regulatory Practices" which allows businesses a year's notice for any regulation that a participating government will consider. They get multiple opportunities to prove why the new regulations are burdensome or unnecessary before the governing bodies even consider adding the regulation. This system is designed to undermine a governing body's ability to regulate.

I would like to consider, specifically, the deregulation of the financial sector. Walden Bello, a member of the Filipino House of Representatives, notes, "The deregulated character of global finance has been responsible for much of the instability that has rocked our economies since the late eighties" (562). Regulations on finance worked incredibly well in China, Chile, and Malaysia (Bello 562). The deregulatory nature of globalization and free trade agreements allow the financial sector to make more risky investments that can end in situations such as the 2008 global financial crisis. After the collapse, former senior executive for the Reserve Bank of Australia, Malcolm Edey, notes that "considerable work has been underway on reforming financial regulatory policies…this work addresses an old issue: where (and how) to strike the balance between adequate government regulation that protects the economic system and allowing market innovation" (213). Notably, the United States' financial sector was the primary cause of the financial collapse, and the first rollbacks of the post-2008 regulations began in early 2018. Some free trade agreements specifically prohibit laws that would stop banks from being "too big to fail."

Cross border capital flows allowed by current methods of globalization also create instability for developed and developing countries. In the early 1980s, under pressure from Wall Street, governments began to remove controls on moving capital across borders. Once internet became available, it was possible for businesses to move money from market to market in an attempt to profit from currency fluctuation (Ellwood 92-94). As Ellwood puts it, the trouble with such movement often starts because "investors have few ties to bind them to the countries in which funds are invested. In the current global system, where liberalized financial markets are the norm, there are no constraints to prohibit investors from selling when they've turned a quick profit or exiting at the first signs of financial difficulties" (94). To illustrate the need for regulation and guidance, Groody writes:

> we are becoming more aware that we are travelling together through the cosmos on a common ship. While a few passengers have first-class suites on the upper decks, the vast majority of the earth's inhabitants are slaving along in the steam room as the vessel moves forward. The economy is the engine that is driving the ship; technology is fueling it; communications is steering it. It is not clear, however, who the captain is [or, if there is one at all], what nautical maps are being used, or where we are going as a human community. (20)

The global economy affects the well-being of us all. As citizens subject to these guidelines, we should require that our governments give us responsible management of the economy and of the financial sector that allows our communities to thrive.

Finally, I argue that people focused on global economics should consider borrowing the idea of resilience from the disaster relief field. Resiliency is the ability of a system to recover after a shock—whether the shock be related to public health, a natural disaster, or, I would argue, economic downturns. The spirit behind resiliency is that it is significantly less costly for us to avoid disaster than it is to clean up after a disaster has happened (Collins 254). Resiliency might mean changing building material to be flood or earthquake resistant or preventing a certain behavior that allows for disease to spread quickly. Everyone is interested in resiliency when it means improving public health or resistance to natural disasters; however, it gets trickier when we apply this concept to the global economy. It creates a clear argument for further regulation of the financial sector and other sectors that safeguard our economy rather than foster volatility. While there is hostility to this idea, some are embracing it. Malgorzata Markowska has developed an equation that can measure regional economies' vulnerability to financial collapse. In her equation, she considers regional statistics such as the GDP, salary rates, and employment rates, but she also considers household level statistics such as expendable income (Markowska 297). Finding ways to measure and promote local resilience and writing those rules into our global economics would help reverse the damage done so far. Collins writes, "Put simply, those who are not part of the solution through actions to conserve resources, avoid risky behavior and resolve conflicts, are part of the contribution to disaster risk" (253).

Neoliberalism

In addition to globalization creating problems for developing countries, neoliberal economics lurk behind much, though not all of development theory. The backbone of this economic theory supposed that if government kept its hands off the economy and let markets work everything out, countries would be better off, and development around the world would improve. However, by better understanding neoliberalism and its economic theories through the 70s, 80s, and 90s, developers can now assess its cultural implications and analyze their potential for the future of development. Specifically, two major concerns that lurk in neoliberalism's aftermath, widespread economic inequality and climate change must be foci.

To thoroughly define neoliberalism, we must understand its four central pillars. The first is privatization of public services which means turning once public services into for-profit systems. These services can include anything from roads, prisons, or education systems to well-known programs such as Social Security and Medicare. In my experience, privatization in this context applies specifically to the profits made from running public institutions while the risks of the systems are shared among all participants. The result mirrors the Tragedy of the Commons; a few benefit while many suffer. Neoliberal policies tend to socialize the risks a society or an investor may face and privatize all the profit and benefit. The second tenet of neoliberalism is deregulation—removing regulations at all costs regardless of the consequences to the environment, public health, food safety, or consumer safety. The third is globalization—using global supply chains and manufacturing systems to make goods as cheaply as possible and creating rules that give special privileges to businesses that operate internationally. Austerity—the last central piece of neoliberal economic policy— refers to reducing government spending in order to reduce budget deficits, often at the expense of public services (Rodrik, "Rescuing Economics from Neoliberalism" 1). Since their conception, these four goals have set barriers in place for development workers. Consequently, development actors and workers need to consider how these theories lead to policies and practices on the ground (Willis 26).

Prior to the 1970s, it was widely viewed that government had a legitimate interest in interfering in a country's economy. Famously, FDR's New Deal program in the 1930s helped the US recover from the Great Depression. Then, when President Lyndon B. Johnson took office, he announced a national War on Poverty by better funding Social Security and creating programs like Medicare and Medicaid (Feuerherd 1). While these programs had short-comings, the widely-held view was that government has the right to step in when the economy does not protect its marginalized and vulnerable citizens. Additionally, regarding global development at this time, most involved thought that developing countries needed protection from working in the global economy to allow their own, individual economic growth to occur (Willis 28).

That policy thinking changed in the 1970s as Nobel Prize winning economist, Milton Friedman, advocated for a free market system. This ideology fought the notion that government could and should intervene in the economy to protect citizens, the environment, or public health. He further explained his view that business had no real social responsibility when he wrote the following in a 1970 edition of the *New York Times*:

> there is one and only one social responsibility of business—to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud. (Friedman 9)

Friedman's economic theories gained traction in the 70s and eventually influenced the Reagan and Thatcher administrations in the 80s as they entered the world of public policy.

So, what influence did these policies have for the developing world at the time? It comes as little surprise that the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) occurred during this time period. Willis explicitly notes the following:

> the underpinning philosophy of SAPs reflected the market ideologies adopted by the Thatcher and Reagan administrations and their implementation demonstrates the ways in which policies developed in the North could be imposed on Southern nations. (56)

Through the 70s and 80s, many countries found themselves unable to repay their debt borrowed from global financial institutions. To continue receiving aid from the IMF and the World Bank, countries submitted to SAPs that had two policy goals. The first was to cut back the amount the government accepting the loans was spending in hopes of stabilizing the economy and removing the need for more loans. The second set of policies aimed at making long-term changes that would ostensibly "contribute to a more economically prosperous future" (Willis 56-57). These policies often included opening a country's economy to foreign investments, changing the tax system, and privatizing public goods and services. Initially, it seemed that using these programs to impose neoliberal economic policies on the global south held promise for development (Willis 56); however, in the end, the programs had grave consequences. Instead of development, SAPs lowered wages, increased poverty, and removed safety nets that assisted some of the most vulnerable (Willis 58).

The 1990s are what I like to refer to as the *attempted virtue* decade. While neoliberalism still lurked behind many 90s' economic decisions with phrases like *the Washington Consensus* and *there is no alternative* to an endless pursuit of market principles, this era presented new opportunities for businesses to discuss and act on the problems the economy and society were heading toward. Popularized in the 1990s, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) encouraged businesses to consider their social, environmental, and economic impacts. These strategies pushed businesses to engage with the Fair Trade community, stop using certain pesticides or growth hormones, consider the human rights impact of their work, and consider their greenhouse gas emissions (Vogel 1-2), and they laid the foundation for John Mackey, the co-founder of Whole Foods, to introduce the notion of conscious capitalism. Although the idea of CSR has gained popularity, it contains some fatal flaws. As Moe Lobeda puts it, "In some cases this approach serves the ends of equity and sustainability. In many others it betrays those ends" (284). For many businesses that use CSR as a means of bettering their public relations, the assertion is that if a business has a moral conscious, formal regulations and accountability are unnecessary (Moe Lobeda 285). In CSR, we again see the neoliberal push for de-regulation lurking behind what seems like an honest push toward progress on social and environmental concerns.

Meanwhile, what was happening in the developing world while higher GDP countries considered CSR and what they deemed a more conscious version of capitalism? In the 1990s, global financial institutions and countries that had promoted neoliberal ideals examined the world they were creating together. This examination led the IMF and World Bank to reshape SAPs to give more attention to the poorest members in a society. Additionally, the IMF moved away from a one-size-fits-all approach to adjustment programs (Willis 58). For instance, starting in 1999, to receive funding, countries had to write a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). This requirement's process involved encouraging the participating countries to create clear visions for their own national development (Willis 58-59). These new SAPs were renamed Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) (Willis 58), yet regardless of the name change and slightly different approach, "many argue that PRSs are little different from SAPs" (Willis 59-60).

A major cultural development obstacle for neoliberal economics is that it came from Western societies whose economies have an individualist cultural base. Hofstede et al. explore six different cultural indices, one of which is a deep dive into the differences between individualist and collectivist cultures. In their writing, Hofstede et al. note that "a minority of people in our world live in societies in which the interests of the individual prevail over the interests of the group" (91). They also write that when the collective interest prevails, a different kind of government and economic system take shape from what would happen if individual interests were more highly regarded (Hofstede et al. 125). Collectivist economies could be socialist or communist; however, capitalist economies that have embraced a higher degree of government intervention could qualify, too. Notably, on the Hofstede individualist and collectivist index, developing countries overwhelmingly land as more collectivist. If development workers want to make progress in building economic systems, it is imperative that they consider whether their development strategy accounts for the local culture's emphasis on either individualism or collectivism. For instance, micro-finance programs, however successful, aimed at financial independence for a single family might not be the best answer for a collectivist country. Neoliberal economics is philosophically contrary to the sharing nature of collectivist economies, and development workers should look elsewhere for answers on helping these economies to grow.

Neoliberal economic policies have a profound impact on development now and will in the future. The economic ideals set forth by neoliberalism in the 70s have had 50 years to build the world Milton Friedman envisioned. The question development workers and economists alike must ask themselves today is whether or not this free market world turned slightly more conscious has resulted in a world that addresses the problems it claims to address and whether or not it has built a world and an economy with which we are comfortable.

In a time when, for Americans at least, redistribution of wealth seems like a swear word, it is still easy to see that a massive redistribution of wealth has been taking place over the last half century; this redistribution has resulted in the siphoning of resources from the developing world to the developed world. Consider that in 1820, the distance between incomes for the richest and poorest country was 3 to 1. By 1973, however, that number had climbed to 44 to 1. In 1992, it was 72 to 1, and recent figures show the number nearing 100 to 1 (Moe Lobeda 32). Additionally, David Pellow, the Director of the Global Environmental Justice Project at the University of California in Santa Barbara, notes that "by 1997, the richest 20 percent of the world's population captured 86 percent of world income, with the poorest 20 percent holding onto a mere 1 percent" (41-42). This growth in inequality is staggering. Development workers and theorists must focus on it, especially as development practitioners turn toward the bottom billion—a label given by Paul Collier to countries whose economies he deems have fallen behind the development of others (Collier). Moreover, it seems nonsensical to develop countries' economies on the same principles that have produced record inequality in developed countries.

Aside from inequality, we must also consider the other major obstacle of our time—climate change. From the 1990s forward, we have become more and more aware of the impact human actions have had on the climate. While a number of global initiatives exist to address climate change, like the Paris Climate Accord, these initiatives are non-binding. Governments are generally hesitant to enact meaningful responses to climate change, instead preferring to take slower, incremental steps toward addressing climate problems. I argue that neoliberalism is one of key barriers to enacting meaningful solutions to climate change. If the accepted economic theory of our time promotes deregulation, addressing climate problems becomes almost impossible. Curbing climate change would require adding regulations to address greenhouse gas outputs, fuel standards for vehicles, electricity grids and more. While we see some states in the United States and some other countries enacting policies to move toward clean electricity, the overwhelming sense is that we are not doing enough to curb emissions. Despite business action through CSR, the environmental movements, and even the pillar of incremental approaches to solving climate change—the 2018 Paris Climate Accord, in October 2018, the UN wrote a dire report that gives humankind just 12 years to make massive lifestyle and environmental changes if we want to "limit global warming to moderate levels" (Irfan 1). Many world leaders' commitments to neoliberal economics stand in the way of meaningfully addressing climate change.

Many developed countries have the capacity, at least for now, to adapt to climate change; however, because developing countries have limited capital available for adapting to climate change, they will shoulder the worst effects of the crisis even though they have contributed least to the problem. I argue that these two globally-felt problems—inequality and climate change—constitute the major challenges of our time. At best, neoliberalism leaves us dismally unprepared to take them on, and at worst, neoliberal economic thinking lays the framework to argue against the solutions to either of these problems.

Global and domestic economies built on comfort for a few at the cost of the wellbeing, health, and livelihood of the many is not a world that development practitioners should be willing to accept. Development workers around the world address public health systems, food security, water access, and almost any other problem developing countries are facing. We can say that these policies do not affect our work, but to a large extent, the policies do define what is economically possible. These crucial questions remain: how can we build global and domestic economies that support these efforts rather than impede them? And, if the world we have spent the last half-century building is falling apart, what system should we embrace to right the wrongs and build the world we need?

Introduction to Co-operatives

With globalization certain to continue, it is imperative that we reconsider how to build economies that benefit people and pull power back to the local realm. The question is this: how do we create economically viable systems that still allow us to prioritize environmental stewardship, care for workers, and contribute to the community in ways that traditional businesses simply cannot? Because the US legal structure around corporate behavior requires corporations labelled as C Corporations to maximize return on the investment, traditional business is not capable of addressing concerns that B Corporations or S Corporations are legally capable of working toward (Friedenwald-Fishman 1). Co-operatives, however, address many shortcomings of the neoliberal globalization model that removes power from the local sphere, and they also address the economic problems present in traditional development theory. By pulling control back to the local realm, co-ops challenge the neoliberal model that has placed communities at the bottom of an overwhelming power structure, contribute to meeting some internationally recognized development goals, and set developing countries already using co-operative development strategies on a track toward building a strong, healthy, and equitable economy.

Co-operatives are democratically run businesses owned by their members. Though co-ops decide their own internal policies, co-operatives generally strive to operate according to the same six values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity; they also strive to work by the same seven guiding principles of voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; member economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training, and information; cooperation among cooperatives; and concern for community ("The Co-operative Solution" 1). This approach to business stands in contrast to the ways that most US businesses operate, because being democratically run and having concern for community remove the traditional business incentives to gain profits rather than contribute them in meaningful ways to the communities they serve. While co-operatives are not inherently capitalist enterprises, John Restakis explains that "in its own quiet way, the co-operative vision continues to thrive and hold the keys to the emergence of an economic model that is capable of remaking and humanizing the current capitalist system" (3). In addition to serving their members' needs, when a co-operative earns a surplus, each member receives a cut of it rather than dividing the surplus among stockholders ("The Co-operative Solution 2). In practice, co-op members elect the business's board of directors from their membership. One benefit to this plan is that, at least in principle, the board will not make a management decision that they cannot live with themselves.

Four different kinds of co-ops offer specific benefits to communities they serve: they work as consumer, producer, worker, or multi-stakeholder co-operatives. Consumer co-ops allow members to own their own businesses and provide needed community services. Some familiar consumer co-op forms are credit unions, food co-ops, housing co-ops, and electric co-ops ("The Co-operative Solution 2). In my current home in Seattle, Washington, a number of well-known consumer co-operatives are at work. One is Puget Consumers' Co-op (PCC), a food co-op that sells organic, natural, and sustainable food with an emphasis on supporting local agriculture when possible. While anyone can shop at the store, these consumers can also become members of the co-op. They make a one-time commitment of $60 to the co-op and gain a life membership. Members receive discounts on food and cooking classes the co-op holds, and the co-op uses the member dues to ensure local farmers have a market for their products and to educate consumers in their stores about food concerns and nutrition ("PCC Membership" 1-2).

Producer co-ops are owned by the producers of a specific product, and they "…cooperate to pool resources to afford the supplies they need, to own the production materials or processes, and/or to market or distribute their products" ("The Co-operative Solution" 3). During my field research in Havana, Cuba, I learned that some Cuban artists pooled resources and supplies to sell their art together as an art co-op (Gorry). Some well-known examples of producer co-ops in the United States are Florida's Natural Growers which has developed its own nationally-known juice brand, Land O'Lakes butter, Sun Maid raisins, and Blue Diamond almonds ("Types of Co-ops" 2).

Employee owned, worker co-operatives allow employees to vote democratically to determine the co-ops' compensation system, internal policies, and surplus distribution. The workers vote on their board of directors who are often also co-op employees ("The Co-operative Solution" 3). These co-ops can be grocery stores, construction businesses, bakeries, restaurants, or almost any other kind of profit-making enterprise.

Unlike the other kinds of co-operatives discussed here, multi-stakeholder co-ops' members are not just one group. A multi-stakeholder co-op (MSC) is made up of member groups that are members in the way that they interact with the organization. Employees are members as workers, consumers of whatever may be offered are members as consumers, community groups are members as community groups, etc., and all these groups help make the co-op run well by managing all of their interests together. They often have a much broader member base than other co-operatives and have more than one purpose for existing ("The What, Why, and How of Multi-Stakeholder Co-ops" 2). Often, citizens fail to realize how they participate in multiple ways in the economy, and MSCs are more capable of recognizing the many needs and priorities present in an economic system.

These four kinds of co-operatives meet various community needs. Using one of the structures listed above or some combination of the different structures, co-ops have moved into many different sectors. Now co-ops work on renewable energy, reduce the amount of waste sitting in landfills, help with elder care both in homes and in facilities, and create employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Additionally, co-operatives in very specific situations employ people who would not be able to work in other capacities—undocumented immigrants, felons who aren't eligible for other kinds of employment, and members of other marginalized groups. For example, workers in several countries have come together to create what are being called scavenger co-operatives. These co-ops provide workers in developing countries with an income through collecting recyclable material from landfills, as well as with safer work environments and a more regular payment routines (Gutberlet 172).

Finally, it's important to note the ways that co-operatives build an interlinked system of enterprises that prioritize local control. Similar to movements that encourage purchasing union goods or buying local food, built into co-operative values is the idea of co-operation between co-ops—encouraging them to build economic ties by supporting each other's work. For example, Union Cab in Madison, Wisconsin, buys its fuel from Landmark Co-operative and health insurance for employees from Group Health Co-operative. Additionally, some co-ops offer discounts on its goods or services to members of any co-op.

Globalization, managed under neoliberal economic policies, has put developing countries and communities at the bottom of a power structure both for access to goods and also for financial services. Co-operatives pull some of that control back to the local realm and create opportunities for prioritizing local needs and economic decisions over global ones. Restakis writes that “the most significant feature of the current stage of the co-op movement’s evolution is the rediscovery and reinvention of co-operatives in developing countries, often as a direct response to the destabilizing effects of globalization” (54). Co-ops address the challenges presented by a globalized economy in a couple of ways. For example, when Cuba began transitioning its economy over to co-operatives, one requirement was that a co-op must exist to serve the Cuban social good (Piñiero-Harnecker). Because one of the guiding principles of co-operative enterprise is to exist for the good of the community, it is not difficult to see why the government will want evidence that this goal comes to fruition. This goal also allows co-ops to focus on sustainable energy and organic food production, to promote local initiatives, and to participate in community projects that benefit schools or hospitals without facing the challenges entire countries would face under trade policy for prioritizing those social needs.

Another way that co-ops channel communities’ capacities is by being more capable of adapting than traditional enterprises. Co-op members shop, work, rest, and participate in life within communities of people, so they have at least some idea of the community needs. Because co-op members actively determine their business directions and management, they can alter the business model as community needs arise. For example, co-operatives in Japan formed to help consumers have an active voice in building their food systems. Initially, Seikatsu Club Consumer’s Co-operative Union, an association of consumer co-ops focused on providing milk that came from farmers the customers knew and milk that had a lower level of added hormones than other milk sold in the country.

Eventually, they moved on to numerous other staple products for Japanese families—rice, soy, eggs, and vegetables (Restakis 123-124). When genetically modified (GM) rice began making its way into Japan through a Monsanto project, the co-op did advocacy and even ran candidates for office to make sure consumers' voices were heard on stopping GM rice (Restakis 125-126). One could argue that traditional businesses change, too; however, it is important to note the ways that co-ops change specifically to bend to community needs even as those needs change.

Co-operatives contribute in significant ways to meeting development goals set out both by the United Nations in its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and also in solving problems community developers hope to solve on their own. The SDGs are a set of 17 goals the UN seeks to accomplish by 2030. They touch on economic development, but they also recognize that healthier economies and communities rest on clean energy systems, livable environments, good governance, public health, literacy, and a host of other topics ("Sustainable Development Goals" 1). An International Labor Organization (ILO) brief titled "Co-operatives and the Sustainable Development Goals" states that "though cooperatives were not actively engaged in the design and implementation of SDGs, they made significant contributions to the realization of the objectives of these goals" (2). The paper explores how co-ops contribute to 12 of the development goals, but I will consider just three: poverty reduction, ensuring food security and good nutrition, and achieving universal access to water.

Co-ops are the ideal enterprises for working toward addressing poverty reduction. It's important to consider the multi-pronged approached co-operatives take to addressing poverty:

> they identify economic opportunities for their members; empower the disadvantaged to defend their interests; provide security to the poor by allowing them to convert individual risks into collective risks; and mediate member access to assets that they utilize to earn a living. (“Co-operatives and the Sustainable Development Goals” 3)

Additionally, the financial backing from savings and credit co-operatives (SACCOs) give other co-operatives and their members access to capital they would not otherwise have (“Co-operatives and the Sustainable Development Goals” 3).

The agriculture sector uses the co-op model more than do other sectors and accounts for 32% of the global market share (“Co-operatives and the Sustainable Development Goals” 6). Co-operatives contribute significantly to helping secure healthy, safe food for the communities they serve. Communal land purchasing, skill sharing spaces, and opportunities for negotiating public policy decisions that benefit workers have helped make co-ops a valuable asset to food production (“Co-operatives and the Sustainable Development Goals” 6). In addition, co-operatives have protected food biodiversity for indigenous groups in Argentina and diversified the food sources available to families in Cameroon (“Co-operatives and the Sustainable Development Goals” 6).

Access to water relates to a number of other development goals. Across the globe, water co-ops have filled the gap when local governments have failed to provide functional water delivery services, and they have ensured that rural communities have had access to water. Co-operatives deliver water with one of Latin America’s purest quality measures to 1.2 million people in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. In both India and the Philippines, water co-operatives have provided communities water during shortages. Even in the United States, co-ops serve numerous rural communities ("Co-operatives and the Sustainable Development Goals" 7). These water services exist to benefit the co-op's local communities, but the co-ops also use their same guiding principles to assess other ways they can better serve the communities.

Aside from the SDGs, several global institutions link co-operatives to each other and significantly help co-ops in developing countries. LEGACOOP is one such institution, and it is made up of mostly Italian co-operatives but has a global reach. The organization specifically focuses on international development work and on determining ways to support links between Italy's co-op movement and the movements in developing countries (Ottolenghi). Additionally, LEGACOOP supports social co-ops that provide access to social services and health care. It also considers the roles of women and youth in decision-making processes in these relevant countries (Ottolenghi). It promotes gender equality, good governance, food security, and health services that other development organizations also promote. Another group, the CICOPA, is one of the branches of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) that focuses specifically on promoting worker, social, and producer co-ops involved in industry and services (Eum). This branch represents 48-member co-ops from 32 different countries; these co-ops represent different sectors including graphic design, social services, construction, transportation, health, and others. CICOPA emphasizes co-ops as benefitting marginalized and disadvantaged workers who are currently self-employed throughout the world (Eum). It also contributes to development work relating to poverty reduction. Each of these groups provide institutional backing, infrastructure, and training for co-ops in developing countries.

Various literature gives a fuller picture of different kinds of co-op projects popping up in the developing world. In Sonagachi and Calcutta, India, more than 16,000 women work in the sex industry (Restakis 141). While this work provides women with a small income, historically this work has been unregulated—resulting in widespread disease outbreaks (Restakis 141) and exploitation of women working in the industry (148). These female "sex workers" are there either because of poverty (Restakis 155) or because of sex trafficking (157). Indian banks have refused to give them loans, so instead, they take loans from moneylenders who charge 300-1,200 percent interest. This system has trapped sex workers in a cycle of indebtedness so that they cannot not save money, send their kids to school, or allow their daughters to marry (Restakis 146).

Numerous options were discussed to reset the system and help sex workers get out of debt. Strategies to lobby the banks were rejected as was a proposal to build a microfinance program for the sex workers. In the end, community leaders and members decided that a multi-purpose co-op would best respond to the problems sex workers faced. Getting approval for a sex worker co-op proved to be difficult, however, because members had to prove they were of good character, and sex workers did not fit this characterization in Indian society. The sex workers fought to remove that clause stating that their work was not immoral and after a long legal battle, the Indian government dropped the clause and allowed them to become a co-operative (Restakis 146-147).

USHA was the first co-op built of and for sex workers. The co-op's goals were to help sex workers generate a more sustainable economy, give them loans and credit, sell them necessities at reasonable rates, supply condoms, develop self-employment opportunities, and uplift them and their families (Restakis 147). From 1998 to 2010, the co-op grew from

200 members to 12,800. Workers have realized that the co-op provides economic power through financial services that allow them to refuse service, with no financial strain, to clients who seem dangerous or refuse to wear condoms. The government, though initially hesitant, now sees the project as valuable and invests in the co-op as well. The co-op started in Sonagachi, but it was so successful that other communities' sex workers have lobbied to expand their services (Restakis 147). To be clear, the co-op's goal was not to remove women from sex work or to cast some kind of moral judgment, the co-op was there to meet the needs of women who were in this position and whose children and livelihoods were suffering from it. The co-op did legitimize their work and bring it out of the shadows by providing economic security and a sense of community and connectedness between sex workers rather than leaving them alone and isolated (Restakis 157). This Indian co-operative is providing some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged workers in a developing country with financial opportunities and community.

Case Studies

Co-operative economies hold promise for the developing world if development workers choose to embrace this more communal model for building local economies. While there is no single economy that has completely embraced co-operatives, here I will detail an analysis of three successful such models: Cuba uses co-ops as a development strategy; Emilia Romagna, Italy, has used them as industrial strategies; and Japan has created a health care system around them.

Cuba: Co-ops as an Economic Development Strategy

In spite of being an American spoon-fed propaganda about Cuba since birth, I chose Cuba as the country for my fieldwork; my going there was surreal. I waited in the airport almost an hour for my luggage before actually going outside to find a taxi and go to my casa particular—a government-linked homestay program. Even though Havana's buildings and cobbled streets had seen more well-kept days, it was easy to see the elegance and beautiful architecture that had once marked the city. Seemingly ancient but well-cared-for cars lined the city streets—the kind of cars I, growing up in the US Midwest, would have seen only in car shows.

Historic Detail

The Cuban revolution began on July 26, 1953. Fidel Castro initially spent time in prison and once released, spent time in self-exile in Mexico. In 1956, he returned to Cuba to wage a 2-year war on the Batista government. On January 1, 1959, the revolution triumphed, and Castro became the leader of Cuba. Immediately, the new administration began to change widely disliked policies leftover from the Batista government. Agrarian reform returned land to the farmers rather than have it owned by mostly foreign interests and worked by peasant farmers. Healthcare and education became a guaranteed right of any Cuban who needed care or wanted to get a post-secondary degree (Wall text, Patria o Muerte). The new government, however, did not enjoy the support from Washington D.C. that the Batista government had known. In the fall of 1961, the US imposed an economic embargo against Cuba. As a result, Cuba forged new economic relationships—largely with the former Soviet Union. This plan worked well for Cuba until 1991 when the Soviet Block fell. Overnight, Cuba stopped receiving goods from the USSR. Cubans still talk about this night as the one when they went to bed rich and woke up poor (Piñiero Harnecker, personal interview). As I learned from interviews, people still had money; however, no longer were those necessary goods coming into the country. This dire change plunged Cuba into a decade-long period that Cubans call the Special Period. During my fieldwork experience in Havana, I clearly saw that this time of suffering in Cuba's history was still heavy on their minds. Middle-aged and elderly people told stories of eating rice and lettuce every day, losing weight, scavenging for materials to make shoes or clothing, and having no gasoline to fuel cars and busses or to use farm equipment to gather crops. They shared memories of having electricity only during certain hours of the day and having no control over choosing those hours. Today, younger generations tell stories about this time that their parents have passed down.

When the Cuban economy took another downturn after Venezuela destabilized in the Early 2000s, Cuba decided to revisit its economic strategy (Piñiero Harnecker, personal interview). The '50s revolution had done wonders for the Cuban people, but what would constitute a modern revolution? The country began the long process of transforming its economy to protect socialism while increasing efficiency.

In terms of the economic transition, the government recognized that after the fall of the Soviet Union and the destabilization of Venezuela, it needed a different strategy (Gorry). In 2005, Fidel Castro initiated a conversation with the Cuban people to identify what was failing and what was working in the Cuban economy. During this process, Fidel Castro became ill and his brother, Raul, took it over (Piñeiro-Harnecker, personal interview). In 2010, the national conversation about the economy became more focused through debates and a consultation process through which the Cuban government gathered two million opinions from citizens across the country. The debates happened in universities, work places, and neighborhood organizations. Out of this process, the government created several categories of what needed to be improved. For the most part, people wanted to be able to buy and sell their houses and cars. They wanted to be able to own a small business to improve their quality of life, and they wanted to have fewer travel restrictions. The vast majority wanted to keep universal healthcare, universal education, and the ration book that gives Cuban families 10-14 days a month of food. A draft set of policy guidelines incorporating all the input was then released to the people, who spent another nine months looking it over and responding. The Cuban government took that final feedback and incorporated it, releasing a final set of economic and social guidelines called Los Lineamientos in March of 2011 (Gorry).

The intention of the legislation was two-fold. The government would begin encouraging governmental bodies not directly tied to legislation to move into the non-state sector and give the Cuban people much of what they had asked for through the consultation process (Pineiro Harnecker, personal interview). The legislation created space for travel, international trade, small businesses, and new, non-farm co-operatives—building on the agrarian model. In 2011, the changes began to be implemented. In June of 2017, to fix some of the problems, deal with tax fraud, and make the system more digital, the government temporarily froze permits for new enterprises. On July 16, 2018, the government released an updated set of guidelines, publishing them in La Gaceta Oficial de la Republica de Cuba and planned to reopen permitting under these new rules in December 2018 (Gorry). Using this process, Cuba became the first country to embrace co-operatives as a national economic development strategy and set out to reach for a more ideal kind of socialism.[1]

Co-op Structure

[1] Parts of this section appear in a paper for Fieldwork.

From the public consultation process, the Cuban government learned that Cuban people wanted rights to own small businesses and better their quality of life. To satisfy this piece, the government created two options. One was to create small businesses, and the other was to form worker and producer co-operatives. Some of the co-ops were from individual proposals and others from formerly state-owned enterprises. Since the 1960s, Cuba has had state-owned farms and private co-operatives that were specific to agriculture (Piniero Harnecker, personal interview). Agriculture in Cuba was 80% managed through state farms and 20% managed through co-operatives. When the Soviet Union collapsed, these state farms were broken up into co-operatives, and overnight, the sector became 70% co-ops and 30% state farms (Holm 783). The economic transition allowed new co-operatives to be formed that were not just in the agricultural sector. As of 2015, 498 co-operatives "had been approved by the government; 385 are conversions from formerly owned state enterprises, and 114 are from individual group proposals" (Ranis 125).

The government also opened the door to some 200 new types of private businesses that ordinary Cubans could pursue. Because Cuba favors a more egalitarian economic model that discourages asset accumulation in the hands of privileged citizens, the government wrote legislation that ensures these new business operators remained small in scale and that favored co-operatives over small businesses. They did so by ensuring that co-ops have access to wholesale markets whereas small, private businesses must buy their goods at retail prices (Gorry). Additionally, Co-ops have access to government loans and can employ whatever number of people they want without facing governmental tax penalties. Small businesses can hire a maximum of five workers before they have to pay additional taxes to the government for the additional workers. The taxation system is graduated so the more employees a business hires, the more taxes the owners pay per person to have them on staff (Ranis 121). Thus far, the results of building this system that favors co-operatives have been astounding, and across the country, co-operative workers make 6-8 times the salary of the state workers (Piñiero-Harnecker, personal interview).

The co-operatives still deal with other concerns. For instance, one co-op value is to maintain a certain level of autonomy from the government. This value, added during the Cold War years as a slight of socialist and communist countries, is somewhat controversial in today's co-operative world. However, when I met with Isis Salcines, the director of an agricultural co-op called Alamar El Vivero, she explained the challenges that Alamar El Vivero and other agricultural co-ops have faced because they do not have autonomy from the government. For example, the co-op is not allowed to have bank accounts in the stronger of the two currencies[2]. When they need supplies, they have to ask the government for the funds. Since access to specific products in Cuba is unpredictable, by the time the check comes, the product sought is often no longer available (Salcines). Because the transition rules created separate categories for co-operatives, the autonomy concern is specific to the agricultural co-operatives.[3]

Early Indicators

In an interview with Camila Piñiero Harnecker, I got a clearer picture of the economic situation for Cuban families. Piñiero Harnecker, a professor at the University of

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[2] Cuba has two currencies. Both can be used in Cuba; however, neither are recognized internationally. Convertible Pesos called CUC (to pronounce, some Cubans the letters and some pronounce it as the word *kook)* are the stronger currency. CUC are largely used by tourists. Cuban Pesos (CUP) are the weaker of the two currencies and are largely used by Cubans. One CUC is worth 25 CUP.

[3] Parts of this section appear in a paper for Fieldwork.

Havana, worked on the Cuban economic transition. She noted that the average salary in Havana in the summer of 2018 when I was doing research was 181.25 Cuban pesos per month. In US dollars, that means about $7.25 for the entire month. At first, this fact was startling because I know that is not enough to live on in Havana. Camila gently reminded me that almost no one here pays rent or utilities. Public transportation is heavily subsidized—I paid 2 dimes to go across town in a collective taxi. Cubans don't pay for health care, nor do they have to worry about saving for college as these are "public goods." The biggest expense for Cuban families is food, and families receive 10-14 days per month of food rations in a book, the "libreta." At the same time, Havana citizens who work for co-ops make between 1,000-3,000 pesos per month. Camila noted that surely some make a little less, but those are the exception rather than the rule. At Biky, a bar/restaurant/sweets shop, Havana's most successful co-op, workers take home 500 Cuban pesos every day they work. This means that in one day, they earn twice the entirely monthly salary of a teacher. Teachers, like many Cuban workers, are technically state employees. Salaries of state employees in Cuba are determined by the government based on education level and with the goal of creating a more equal society in terms of inequality. That wage differential mentioned between teachers and the co-op workers at Biky shows the salary of the most successful co-op workers, but the majority of Havana's workers take home 4-12 times the amount that teachers make. Working at Biky or at other such establishments is not necessarily what people go to school for—it is food service. However, it provides families with the financial means they need.

Long-term Results and Usable lessons

While Cuba's non-agricultural co-operative development does not yet show long-term results, as the co-operatives are less than a decade old, the country's strategy offers a few valuable lessons to development workers. Notably, developers cannot draw many similarities between Cuba and other developing countries. The country is an island, faces aggression from a hostile Northern neighbor, and is deeply socialist. All of these factors set Cuba apart from other developing contexts; however, developers can learn one key lesson from the Cuban co-op enterprise: in choosing and favoring co-operatives as its development strategy, the Cuban government has made it clear that while the new economic model needed to create wealth it also needed to build in safeguards that kept that wealth low to the ground. Cuba's approach offers a sharp turn from neoliberal economics and globalization which favor wealth creation that moves assets away from wealth producers and into the hands of just a few at the top of the economy. In this system, the ones receiving the wealth are often not even members of the community or nation and are expropriating the wealth being created. While Cuba wanted to create new wealth, it also wanted to ensure that average Cubans felt the benefits of the new economic model, not the limitations of assets pulled out of their hands. In short, Cuba recognized co-ops' ability to fight the economic inequality that lurks in many of today's Western battles. As development workers aim to build economies that benefit actual people, we must strive toward tools that won't cause distributional problems for wealth created.

Emilia Romagna, Italy: Co-ops as an Industrial Strategy

In his writing about co-operatives being used to humanize capitalist economies, John Restakis provides a description of Emilia Romagna, Italy:

> The first thing that must be evident to anyone traveling across the region is how intensively developed it is. The rich, rolling fields of agriculture are everywhere interspersed with industrial buildings and plants, the landscape a dense matrix of urban and rural patterns in which orchards, and vineyards vie for space with the towns and factory buildings that blend seamlessly with each other. Unlike the languid, romantic vistas of Tuscany and Umbria, Emilia Romagna presents the no-nonsense landscape of a region built for work. (Restakis 73-74)

Historic Detail

Emilia Romagna has long been a heavily industrial region. In the early 1900s, the region led Italy in food processing and agriculture. Its success at agriculture and other cultural skills such as basket weaving and hand-making ceramic tiles eventually evolved into a number of other industries—hand-made tiles are now machine-made ceramics, basket-weaving skills evolved to success in textiles, and surgical equipment and vehicle parts have also formed industries in the region ("Humanizing the Economy" 75). Additionally, cultural businesses make up a huge section of the region's economy. In "The Emilian Model – Profile of a Co-operative Economy," John Restakis notes that "[t]he *artigianati*, or self-employed artisans, account for 41.5% of the companies in the region" (1). These businesses are incredibly small with over 90% employing 50 people or fewer. In the region, only five companies employ over 500 people, and two of them are co-operatives ("The Emilian Model – Profile of a Co-operative Economy" 1). Historically, different industries formed clusters of small firms in the region, and eventually, over 100 industrial clusters working on specialized products formed to export Emilia Romagna's goods domestically and globally ("Humanizing the Economy" 75).

This economic strategy became clear after the 1976 election—the first in the country's history where each of the 20 regions elected officials for regional governments. This election put Emilia Romagna's regional government in a leftist party's hands. Early on, the new government established an agency responsible for strategically planning the region's economy. The organization, the ERVET, was essentially a group of service centers run as co-operatives that existed to help make the industrial clusters more productive and to strengthen linkages between firms in the industrial district in hopes of making the whole system stronger ("Humanizing the Economy" 77-78). The service sectors got funding from ERVET and elected representatives from the firms to manage it all to ensure that the centers met real needs of the involved firms ("Humanizing the Economy" 78). Additionally, funding for research and development for new products was granted only to firms that had committed to work together with other firms. Using this strategy, firms built technology that no individual firm could offer alone, and as Restakis puts it in "Humanizing the Economy," "[O]ver the next 20 years, ERVET and the service centers became a major institutional force behind the rapid rise in the region's economic performance" (78). What became known to co-operative advocates as the Emilian Model was born from this Italian system.

Co-op Structure

Several structural components make this system successful. First, the ERVET co-operative service centers constantly seek beneficial industrial information from around the world. This model allows small, local firms access to global industry information ("The Emilian Model…" 3).

Next, when many of the small firms co-operating to build the industrial base needed initial funding, a number of small, regional, co-operative banks offered them low-rate loans. Because the default rates on these loans are so low, the larger, national Italian banks have attempted to get into this market for several years but with very little success ("Humanizing the Economy" 80-81).

A central piece to the system functioning well is the industrial clusters or networks. Essentially, in the cluster system, one of the network firms secures a contract. Then that firm contracts various pieces of the production process to other firms that specialize in them. For example, if a small firm that specialized in the wood-cutting phase of cabinet making secures a contract for a set of cabinets, it contracts the design phase, finishing phase, and packaging phase to other firms that specialized in those phases. Because individual firms work only on their own phases, they have the time and expertise to make specific alterations throughout the production process, alterations that larger firms machine producing a set of pre-designed cabinets for sale could not ("The Emilian Model…" 4). However, it is not without risk. For example, in "Humanizing the Economy," Restakis notes that "[a] reputation for quality, reliability, and flexibility were indispensable if a firm hoped to survive in the cluster system, for if one link in a production chain fails, the entire system is affected" (81). This observation explains that even though co-operation is central to this system, competitiveness still exists between the firms providing similar services.

Notably, while some of the small firms and all of the service centers were initially run as co-operatives, ("Humanizing the Economy" 83), nothing requires that every firm in a cluster be a co-op. Still, for different reasons, many co-operative advocates find this system unique. Most notably, however, these firms operate in a capitalist system that requires their economic viability to be bound together and in ways that promote co-operation.

Long-term Results and Usable Lessons

The beauty of co-op systems is that they are unique to what local needs and infrastructure already look like. The Emilia Romagna model is unique to its regional interests and economic history, and its long-term results have been staggering. In "The Emilian Model – Profile of a Co-operative Economy," Restakis writes the following:

> In 1970, Emilia Romagna was near the bottom of Italy's 20 regions in economic performance. Today, it ranks first. The region also ranks 10th of the European Union's 122 economic regions, and its unemployment rate is lower in only 7 other European regions. Its per capita income is 30% higher than the national average and 27.6% higher than the EU average. (2)

Development workers can take valuable lessons from this model: resiliency, global reach, and the usefulness of government support for the co-op system.

One crucial test of the effectiveness of the Emilia Romagna model was the 2008 financial collapse. After the collapse, other sectors laid off workers. The co-operative sector largely did not have layoffs, and some of the businesses were actually able to hire employees ("The Italian Region Where 30% of GDP Comes from Cooperatives" 2). Italian law allows for workers to get three years of unemployment benefits if they create a co-op together. Some workers laid off in Emilia Romagna joined forces to create new co-operatives—resulting in an increase in regional co-operative employment during the collapse. These signs indicate that co-operatives contribute resilience to local economies as they bounce back from volatile market effects ("The Italian Region Where 30% of GDP Comes from Cooperatives" 2).

One unique piece of the Emilian Model is that small, regional firms working together have managed to sell their products globally. A frustrating globalization factor for many small firms is that trade policy allows loopholes and backdoors that give TNCs access to global markets and ignore or challenge local rules. The Emilian Model service centers, however, ensured prior to their dismantling that local firms had access to the same industry knowledge that TNCs do, and that access allowed the smaller firms to compete at a global level. In short, they worked together to produce their best possible goods and use the same industrial knowledge as did the larger firms.

While the relationship with the government looks entirely different for Italian co-operatives from that of Cuban co-operatives, the Emilian Model proves that the right kind of government support facilitates co-operative success. The Emilian Model was successful because of its regional government involvement, but the Italian constitution's article 45 actually requires that the government support co-ops ("The Italian Region Where 30% of GDP Comes from Cooperatives" 2). In Emilia Romagna, since 1976, the regional government has been Communist or has been a combination of Communist and Social Democratic leadership. These administrations were responsible for the early decisions to create ERVET and were active in finding ways to evaluate and improve the region's industrial capacity ("Humanizing the Economy…" 77). At the same time, the government was ultimately responsible for the switch to neoliberal economic policy in the 1980s and 90s that led to privatizing and eventually to dismantling most of the service centers.

Regardless, without the initial support from the regional government, the Emilian Model would not have been nearly as successful.

Japan: Co-ops as a Public Health Strategy

In an entirely different cultural context, John Restakis provides more ethnographic detail from his time studying Japanese co-ops:

> Nothing really prepares a visitor for their first encounter with Tokyo. The entry from the highway leading from Narita International Airport is a descent along twining ribbons of concrete and steel suspended 10 and 20 stories above the teeming city. At night, the effect is like drifting through canyons of glass and light. A walk along the glittering commercial districts of Shibuya or Shinjuku is an excursion into the heart of some colossal, pulsating virtual reality panorama. It is impossible to believe that such a world, fitting only to some future time, should exist now, erected in a scant 50 years from the ashes of the old city consumed in the fire bombs of World War Two. ("Humanizing the Economy…" 117)

Historic Detail

Japan's first co-operatives appeared in 1897 ("Humanizing the Economy…" 119), but the foundations for its co-op movement were laid long before. Throughout the country's history, Japanese neighborhood communities have enabled co-ops to succeed. Some co-operative advocates look back as far as Japan's feudal period to mutual aid groups, the *Yui,* as the foundation-layer for the current co-op movement. Yui were at the center of the agricultural system of the time and were responsible for rice cultivation. Central to this system was the ostracism that uninvolved villagers received if they did not participate ("Humanizing the Economy…" 120-121). Others credit the establishment of Han neighborhood groups—five or ten families each—for the co-op movement growth. In 1948, Japan passed a law, the Consumer Co-operatives Act of 1948, which sought to improve quality of life. The co-ops created through this legislation were handled through the Han. This system ensured that co-ops represented the needs of specific members and also created space to address economic, social, and cultural changes within Japanese society ("Humanizing the Economy…" 120). Throughout the entire country during World War Two, neighborhood groups of 10-15 families were created and referred to as *Tonarigumi*. These groups existed for social control during the war, and they were abolished by American forces in 1947. However, some also credit these organizations for the success of the co-op movement because they later grew into a movement for democratic values in post war Japan ("Humanizing the Economy…" 121). These groups were ultimately responsible for founding the Japanese co-op movement that has contributed significantly to Japan's development and has created one of the world's best co-op health systems that, today, provides both preventative healthcare and also an elder-care system.

Co-op Structure

Throughout the last 30 years, Japanese consumer co-ops have created 120 health co-ops with 3 million members across the country. These co-ops include more than 13,000 beds and employ over 1,600 doctors and 21,000 other staff. The Han are the system's base, and because personal health is seen as essential to healthy communities, these co-operatives provide a preventative approach to healthcare ("Humanizing the Economy…" 130). Han community groups representing the co-ops act as a warning system for health problems because they "conduct a variety of health checks at regular intervals within the community…they analyze urine and stool samples, measure weight and muscle mass, take blood pressure and conduct tests for diabetes" ("Humanizing the Economy…" 131). Doctors review the results of these tests at health co-ops, and if the data indicate a problem, they can alert the community ("Humanizing the Economy…" 131). Additionally, the Han run seminars and distribute information about health topics such as cold prevention and nutrition. They also provide a social framework that allows community members to participate in group exercise and cooking classes. The health co-op lobbies offer fresh produce, dietary information, and information on Han social and cultural activities. Because this approach to health care demands a different type of training, the co-op has played a central role in training nurses, doctors, and other health care workers ("Humanizing the Economy…" 131-132). These co-ops provide the make-up for a community approach to nutrition, health, and healthcare.

The resulting health care system is funded in different ways. Community bonds plus health plan and health system funding from the Japanese government fund the co-op hospitals and clinics. The co-ops do collect member fees; however, when the clinic or hospital provides services, the fees collected go toward absorbing the costs of co-op visitors who are not able to pay for services ("Humanizing the Economy…" 131).

The co-op is also well-known for its elder care. Health co-ops run "senior" rehabilitation centers hoping to return seniors to their own homes and communities so as not to isolate them from normal society. Many of these centers are worker co-operatives as well as consumer co-ops, so the workers can also receive the benefits of being part of the co-op system. Aside from these health co-ops, Koreikyo is a worker co-op of senior citizens with two main foci: keeping seniors in their own homes and providing them work to ensure they are financially stable and can still contribute to the community ("Humanizing the

Economy…" 132-133). The co-op is run democratically and contains pieces that resemble both a worker co-op and a consumer co-op. Members pay an initial fee of roughly 50 USD and an annual fee of around 30 USD (Marshall 1). In return, Koreikyo provides several services to its 100,000 members—home helpers, transportation to medical appointments, home repair, clothing alterations, hobby groups, volunteer opportunities, and reading and discussion circles. Typically, Japanese elders have lived with their families; however, fewer and fewer families are continuing this tradition ("Humanizing the Economy…" 133-134). This cultural change means that Koreikyo and the Japanese health co-ops are essential as they seek to fill in the gaps of Japan's shifting social norms.

Long-term Results and Usable Lessons

The Japanese health care co-ops reveal two lessons for co-operative development advocates. The first is to provide health services in places where other infrastructure may not be in place to do so. Many development professionals work on health-related concerns. Whether the relevant country suffers from an IMF structural adjustment plan that has removed its allocated health care funds or it needs a more local, community focused health care system, co-ops give development workers a chance to meet those needs and build more preventative health care systems. Additionally, in the case of the elder care facilities, social co-operatives can effectively include otherwise marginalized social groups. Just as co-ops employ and create space for the Japanese elderly, they could also employ members with disabilities to work in the community or to provide services to people with disabilities.

Challenges

Because the development field has not embraced co-operatives as a model, implementing a co-operative development strategy regardless of the type of co-op or its economic or social goals presents challenges for development workers. Some of these specific challenges include the following: finding government officials willing to work alongside the co-operative strategy, identifying ways to control the changes well when co-ops begin to globalize, finding ways to address cultural characteristics like a country's relationship to power distance, and discerning meaningful methods to inform people about co-ops when they think co-operatives look socialist or Marxist.

Government partnerships are not an entirely necessary component of co-operatives. Many co-ops do business and work with their communities without the explicit and direct support of local or national government; however, many other thriving co-operatives enjoy governmental support. For some co-ops, their only governmental support is from small subsidies for equipment, training, or other specific co-op needs. This small support was the case for Argentina's Piqueteros (Ranis 58-59). Japanese co-ops, however, have helped elect candidates who supported co-ops and who represented the co-ops in their government ("Humanizing the Economy" 127). Using both the subsidies and the election process has empowered co-ops to act in their own behalf to receive funding and benefits they might not otherwise have been able to secure. These options show that co-ops can gain some level of support regardless whether governments embrace them, but that it is almost always beneficial for co-op success when governments do support them.

When co-operatives also operate in other countries, they often need help to meet various needs of the workers and communities in both countries. These challenges arise often because, to be competitive in market systems, co-ops are attempting to globalize. For instance, a team of Spanish researchers have studied the 300 largest co-operatives and have found that 90% of them are operating internationally. When trans-national corporations (TNCs) operate internationally, often they begin globalizing in hopes of offshoring their jobs to countries where employees work for less money. This approach to globalization breeds distrust in communities where it can destroy peoples' livelihoods. Bretos et al specifically investigated the challenges that Mondragon, a very large co-operative in the Spanish Basque region, has faced through its process of operating internationally (Bretos, et al. 2-3). Bretos et al. note that co-ops typically avoid this type of business globalization (10). Instead, co-ops exist to benefit communities, not to force workers to compete for jobs by offering fewer benefits or lower wages. The problem surfaces when the two models converge: when Mondragon sets up subsidiaries, they are often nestled in capitalist firms that do not share the co-operatives' social and economic goals. Workers do not have any say in their management or the distribution of profits (Bretos et al 11). Some in the co-op world argue that the labor forces in the foreign subsidiaries are technically owned by the member owners of Mondragon. This is a contradiction in general of what co-ops strive for. Additionally, foreign subsidiaries of co-ops do not have the same level of autonomy of a national, parent co-op (Bretos et al 12). Consequently, while it remains strategic for co-ops to attempt to broaden their global influence in different industries, they also need to consider how best to further the democratic and worker-owned pieces of their mission.

In addition, one challenge for co-ops is specific to countries that have a high-power distance rating on Geert Hofstede's cultural indices. Power distance relates to how people in a society see and manage the fact that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede et al.

61). For example, many US workers have close or casual relationships with people who supervise them which indicates that the United States has low power distance. For countries and work places where workers view superiors more as authoritative and less as friends, power distance ratings are higher. While co-ops have leadership that makes decisions, members are expected to participate in democratic structures. For countries with higher power distance, the thought of having a say in a decision that would traditionally be a leader's job to make could present a cultural challenge for the success of the co-op. Co-ops in these countries need to account for that as they plan how different structures within their co-op will operate.

Lastly, one ideological pushback on implementing worker co-operatives is that they look like socialism—an ideology with which Westerners traditionally have little comfort. Arguably, with socialism, co-ops do share worker ownership of the means of production. One challenge to the link between co-ops and socialism is that co-ops still engage a capitalist economic model. The key argument, then, is that co-ops balance between their communal economic ideology and their profit-making to benefit the social and economic well-being of their member-owners. It seems problematic to promote a more capitalist based economic development strategy in countries that embrace more communal economics. In worker co-operatives, the class divisions largely disappear because the wage differentials are smaller—usually the highest paid employee makes around 9 times what the lowest paid employee makes. It seems problematic to subject developing economies to the same struggle of financial inequality that many capitalist economies are facing.

A Vision for a More Participatory Economy

Much of development theory focuses on individuals rather than on fostering improved economics through co-operative, democratic, and wealth-sharing institutions. A more co-operative and collaborative world would use community centered economic development and re-envision the role of global financial institutions. If these were our goals, the following 9 characteristics would mark the economically democratic world we hope to build. These characteristics stem from ideas I have gathered both through my job working on trade policy and through my field research.

Holding businesses accountable to communities where they hire and sell.

Businesses move away from using only their own assessments and market financial numbers when helping developing countries; instead, they give priority to communities themselves to determine economic decisions for their own communities. The relevant institutions are for-profit, and they profit-share so that economic inequality stays low. Workplaces will run democratically, and workers will vote on suggestions as they arise. Local economies are collaborative, dependent on each other, rather than on Trans-National Corporations for goods, labor, and resources. If a business decides that moving to a new community is financially beneficial, it first has to consider the needs of the community it will leave behind and contribute to helping meet the needs that its absence might create.

Requiring transparent and democratic public policy decisions.

Public policy making strives to be transparent and democratic. The public will hear about and discuss pieces of legislation prior to their taking effect at the local, state, and federal levels. A democratic process includes a public consultation period and opportunities for citizens to view text and make editorial suggestions prior to implementation. Governments exist to protect, develop, and listen to communities' needs and to help meet those needs.

Maintaining community control over foreign investment.

Communities have a say regarding what foreign investments come into their community, how they use investment money, and how they deal with any attached stipulations. For example, stipulations might address social, environmental, or economic equity goals. Structural adjustment programs have no place in this better world. It is central that capital control prevents investors from pulling money overnight from a developing economy.

Prioritizing community control over food systems.

Farmer co-operatives and local communities collaborate to grow local food that meets both the nutritional and cultural needs of a population. Farmers own the land they work collectively, and they are allowed to save seeds from year to year to preserve local strains of a given crop. The process of producing this locally grown food reduces carbon emissions, decreases waste from packaging, and ensures that Monsanto and other seed distributors have less say in what a community eats than the actual community does. Countries will reconsider export and import based food systems and prioritize growing food for their own people. Since subsidizing agriculture and shipping it abroad causes problems for other markets, programs for subsidized food will require that the food stays inside a domestic economy. Global economic policy no longer controls or challenges local food systems; however, a database allows farmers access to new methods or best practices for various crops so that food systems benefit from global wisdom.

Using global knowledge to inform local health care.

Robust health care systems are a priority rather than a luxury. Doctors have access to a database in which they can document and share medical/health information. Healthcare becomes more preventative and less reactionary. Communities have some control over their own healthcare and medicine costs. The pharmaceutical industry prioritizes local needs and acts as a support system for preventative care rather than simply taking a community's money for drug costs and research.

Restructuring the global financial institutions.

Financial institutions such as the World Bank, World Trade Organization, World Economic Forum, International Monetary Fund, and others will more democratically represent member countries and prioritize needs of civil society groups over businesses. For example, rather than basing votes on amount of money contributed, each member country could receive one vote. If these collaborative spaces refuse to become more democratic and representative of all peoples' interests, they will have no purpose and will cease to exist in a world that prioritizes co-operative and democratic economic development.

Mitigating the effects of climate change.

Co-operatives and governments work together to set goals for climate change that meet their needs and set forth policy initiatives. Restructured, democratic global institutions support tackling climate change and create a fund to help developing countries with adaptations and transitioning to green energy initiatives. Ensuring adaptive capacity as effects of climate change worsen is a priority. Local co-ops control and maintain the clean energy systems.

Using globalization to promote a race-to-the-top.

Trade agreements protect human rights, set ambitious environmental standards, and help protect local industries and cultural goods, essential to the communities involved. Communities negotiate any policies affecting them and make textual suggestions. Trade negotiators make allowances in trade agreements to protect key local industries, essential cultural goods, and local livelihood.

Journal Excerpt from the author's future self:

As I wrote this section, I thought it might be helpful for readers to be able to see what a world on its way toward these principles would look like. Below, I crafted a journal article written from the perspective of my senior citizen self to one of my grandchildren outlining the differences between the world we live in now and the one she fictitiously grew up in as the world changed and moved toward more democratic processes. Additionally, I attempted to include many of the major crises facing my own generation in the next 50 years.

March 23rd, 2070

Today, I had a long conversation with my granddaughter, Harper, and her wife about the ways the world has changed since I was her age. Harper asked me to document some of it here to preserve sections of what we shared.

Her world began and grew in many different ways from my world in the early 1990s. She was welcomed into a world with a healthy economy, a world that was prepared to support her, and one in which her voice mattered. However, between 2035 and 2060, previously unimaginable changes began to take shape. Governments around the world suffered a legitimacy crisis when it became clear that global financial institutions and big businesses were making decisions that the populace of a given country should have been making. Additionally, after years of warning signs, climate change's effects truly began creating catastrophic problems for developing and developed countries alike. Increased rainy seasons and longer hot seasons killed plant and animal life and caused challenges for food systems as growing seasons changed. These realizations and the following political instability forced financial institutions to democratize and restructure and forced communities to seriously consider rebuilding their food systems. Consequently, my granddaughter grew up buying her food from the agricultural co-op down the street from her school rather than from unfaced, greedy businesses that exploited global workers and their land but gave them little in return. The co-op provided a community garden on the school's property and taught kids that skills in farming and food production were essential to their lives. Regenerative agriculture has been essential to this new world not only because we looked for ways to better care for soil needed for food production but also because healthy soil mitigates climate change by storing carbon.

The hospital where my great-grandson (Harper's son, Nolan) was later born is also run collaboratively. As Harper grew up, and prior to having a child, her doctor did regular, preventative testing to ensure that she was growing properly. Once a year, she met with a nutritionist to better understand her own dietary needs. The hospital co-op works to keep down the cost of medicine, and it gets its funding from membership fees and state-run health care plans. They even send someone over a couple days a week to make sure I, decidedly a senior now, am getting along okay. This system stands in stark contrast to the visits I made as a kid to see my grandparents in retirement facilities. I make my own food, live with my partner, and do most of my own housework. The co-op is there to ensure that we retain our ability to live on our own as long as possible.

In the 1990s, we were just coming to understand climate change. Now, expense-neutral (because all profit gets funneled into maintaining the co-op, returning wealth to workers that produced it, or doing community projects) co-operatives run our energy grid. Through a consultation process, we convinced our state to switch to renewable energy and help fund transportation alternatives that lowered the community's carbon emissions. Harper's wife works with the electricity co-op that is responsible for maintaining the city's 100% clean energy grid. Our cars and busses are 100% electric; they use zero fossil fuels. It came about because we brought in an outside co-op that specialized in manufacturing electric cars. Through a public consultation process, our city determined an early plan that required the incoming co-op to build in a special "leaving" fund so that if it moved away, it had the funds to help our community recover from losing any jobs the co-op had provided. Also, as part of its city contract, the co-op had to use the metal from old oil pipelines when building the electric vehicles. This consultation process and business accountability was unheard of in the 1990s or early 2000s.

As with the local, so goes the international. When the World Bank and International Monetary Fund became democratically run, leaders of the new financial institutions and participating countries ensured that countries enjoying surpluses partnered with developing countries to help meet their needs, too. On the national level, when a state produces a surplus of a crop, it sells the surplus to places whose crops haven't done as well. Harper works on the international stage making sure that the money from those surpluses is used for appropriate development projects—a much more reasonable solution than putting a country under structural adjustment in exchange for meeting development needs.

To the world I was born into, these changes seem radical, but to the populations that underwent the chaos neoliberalism and climate change brought, the reforms were simply practical and necessary. The world we have built through the reforms is imperfect, but we have created collaborative and democratic spaces that allow ideas to flow. I have faith that Harper's generation will help the growth of a more financially non-volatile, economically democratic, racially just, and environmentally sound future.

Conclusion

At the start of my thesis, I shared Mariana's story and opened the topic of neoliberalism's damage to her family's security and to others. Throughout this paper, I have shown that while globalization and neoliberalism cause problems for developing economies, co-ops can definitely help the relevant countries take control of their own economic destiny. As development practitioners, it is our job to build practical, life-changing programs and strategies that will help people in the developing world create societies that can support the population financially, with functioning health and nutrition systems, and with education. These programs must be designed with local economies and communities in mind rather than with the West's economic goals in mind. Co-operatives are capable of supporting many of these goals in developing countries and where they will not work, emphasizing collaborative values must still be a priority. If I were to continue my research now, it would largely focus on building a guide to help development workers better implement the different kinds of co-operatives in their work and outline ways in which various successful development projects using this model have addressed problems that have surfaced. The majority of this information already exists, but it needs to be compiled and explained through a development lens. As I argued earlier, if development practitioners are not interested in embracing co-operative values in their totality, they can still work to add more democratic decision-making to projects and work places and strive to do a better job at emphasizing local values. Development workers can participate in many different ways to reach their program goals without using the ideas presented here in their entirety. However, it is only through spaces of shared information, conversation, time, and wealth that we can solve many of the problems facing developing countries.

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