Community Economic Development: Improving the Lives and Livelihoods of Women Through Socially Transformative Practice

by
Sarah Amyot

Undergraduate Thesis, Women's Studies Program, University of Manitoba

and

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Supervisor: Susan Heald

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Introduction

Community Economic Development (CED) is a particular form of community development, the goal of which is to improve the lives of marginalized populations in a way that utilizes community strengths and assets to address priorities set out by that community. Although CED is a form of community development originally conceived of as a response to locally based development issues, CED work with groups of people who have been economically marginalised based on demographic characteristics such as: race, class, ethnicity, ability or gender is growing increasingly popular. Accordingly, CED as a strategy to improve the lives of economically marginalized women is also gaining support.

Despite the growing recognition of CED with women as a viable community development strategy, there remains relatively little written about its theory or practice. There is even less in the literature that points to successful models or best practices for CED with women. However, this paper does not take the attitude that the absence of successful models or case studies is a signifier of the failings of CED as a strategy. In fact, this paper seeks to avoid recreating what has been a tendency in research to either wholesale celebrate, or "trash and burn" NGO`s and other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). This paper sees CED as a particular form of community development that can be utilized as one tool by which we can improve the lives and livelihoods of economically marginalized women. This paper is an attempt to contribute to a fuller understanding of CED with women and CED in general as a process and a developing practice, the effectiveness of which is constrained or supported by a variety of external and internal forces, social actors and histories.

Section One: Method, Methodological, and Epistemological Considerations

> By what processes have men's actions come to be considered a norm, representative of human history generally, and women's actions overlooked, consigned to a less important, particularised area? (Scott 1993, pp. 242)

> The goal of critical social research is to work toward human emancipation. (Esterberg 2002, pp. 17)
>
> We should be wary of trying to answer political questions with 'scientific data'. (Murdock 2003, pp. 508).

As the opening quotes suggest, research is an inherently political, and socially constructed arena in which histories are constantly being written and contested. History, to this point has by and large excluded the stories of women. And although the exclusion of women's voices from various discourses is not the main focus of this paper, it is a recurrent theme for the literature and the respondents themselves, and motivating factor for my focus on this topic. This paper does not seek to construct men and women's interests as necessarily different by positioning women's CED in comparison to men's. What this paper does do, is attempt to ensure that women's voices are included in the research on, and discourses of, CED.

The way in which we approach research on civil society organizations is complicated by a series of political and epistemological concerns that warrant some exploration here. The first factor to consider is that there has been a tendency among researchers of CSO´s to view these organizations as fixed entities "divorced from the particularities of history, culture or even individual experience." (Murdock, p. 508). As the women interviewed for this project demonstrate many ways in which their work is constrained, shaped and altered by the "particularities of history, culture or even individual experience", this research tradition is a problematic one. In particular, the women often note the competing demands they feel from community members, their Boardx of Directors, agency funders, and the pressures and practical realities that result from operating in a market economy. In particular, this research approach has been problematic because it obscures the ways in which CSOs are in a constant state of negotiation and identity (re)formation with outside actors that allows them to continue functioning in a constantly shifting context. Thus, "our job as researchers may not be to ask whether they are ´doing good´ but rather to ask what are the constraints and affordances under which they

attempt to ´do good´ as they define it." (Murdock, pp. 508). In this regard I take a slightly different approach than Murdock, believing that it still remains important for people to continue to ask organizations if they are indeed, ´doing good´. However this inquiry needs to be tempered with sensitivity to the social, political and economic contexts in which CSOs operate and in which research will be produced, read and applied.

Secondly, it is not possible or desirable for us to act as a fictional objective researcher. As researchers and social beings we always bring to research our own social and political histories. One of the ways in which this becomes problematic is in regard to research on civil society organizations when we attempt to answer "political questions" with "scientific data" (Murdock 2003, p. 507). According to Murdock, "the tendency has been to let our own convictions guide our research and to moralize and stereotype NGOs according to often unacknowledged criteria." (2003, p. 508). This can be particularly dangerous given the highly politicised environment in which NGOs and CSOs are forced to compete for often-scarce resources. In this climate our falsely objective research has real, practical implications for the entire spectrum of people involved with the work of CSOs and NGOs. Let me be clear here that this is not an attempt to be self-important or to view the impact of this research as more than it is. What this is, is a note of caution, a warning for us as researchers, students, workers, and social beings to constantly bear in mind the "real- life" implications of our actions. In short, this is a call for socially responsible research, and in this regard I must state again that the goal of this paper is to offer some critical insight into the theory and practice of CED with the idea that CED is a valuable tool for social transformation. Thus, I am positioning myself in this paper as an "ally" offering constructive criticism with the goal of mutual benefit[1]. Given this, it is important that I acknowledge the worldviews that shape and impact on the ways in which I will be presenting research on these organizations.

[1] Mutually beneficial, in that I position myself as someone who is interested in, and committed to goals of social transformation and as someone who believes that CED is one tool by which we may achieve this goal.

This paper has been informed by the conviction that in the current economic system large segments of the population are, and will remain, under this system, marginalized. In this regard, my own thinking has been informed by a "conflict model" of society. Conflict theorists believe that society is in a constant state of conflict over limited resources and power. To the degree that a society reaches an apparent equilibrium this is because certain groups have achieved domination over the other, marginalized groups. Thus, a conflict interpretation of CED looks at the ways that CED challenges the systemic reasons for the marginalization of peoples. As such, I am interested in looking at the ways in which CED can offer a challenge to the current economic order by exploring new understandings of the ways that people as individuals and members of communities relate to the economy.

This project has been developed as a result of my participation as a Research Assistant, and student with the Manitoba Research Alliance on Community Economic Development[2] in the New Economy. Throughout the duration of this project I have struggled to find methods and methodologies that are appropriate and honest. As such, the methods and type of analysis utilised are a synthesis of many different research methodologies. In particular the work of Kristin Esterberg has been helpful in developing a method of analysis (2002).

As per University of Manitoba guidelines, I submitted an Ethics Review Application to the Review Committee under the direction of Dr. Susan Heald. Once notice of ethics approval was received I began to contact potential respondents.

Potential respondents were selected via two search methods. Respondents were selected using previously existing lists of organizations that were said to be engaged in CED work in Manitoba. These lists were the result of a project completed for the Manitoba Research Alliance on Community Economic Development in the New Economy by Carly Duboff. The second way by which potential

[2] I would like to take the opportunity to thank the members of the Research Alliance, in particular Dr. Susan Heald, Dr. Parvin Ghorayshi and Heather Graydon for sharing their knowledge, expertise and patience with me. And to Heather in particular for struggling with me through the new experience of writing these research papers and testing out our newfound knowledge with each other.

respondents were selected was on the advice of members of the Research Alliance, who were asked if they "knew of any one, or any organization that I should speak with who was doing work, or had knowledge about doing CED with women?"

A second screening mechanism was employed to further narrow down the list of potential respondents. All potential respondents were phoned and asked if "they, or their organization were currently or had in the past done any work, or offered any programming that focussed, even partially, on women?" Those respondents who indicated that they had, or continued to engage in work with women were then sent a letter introducing the project and myself. At this point interviews were set up with respondents from the organizations receiving the letter. The interviews were conducted with the Executive Director or Coordinator of the organization, except in the case of North End Women's Centre which employs a CED coordinator who was selected as the respondent. Although these methods served their purpose in that I was able to develop a list of respondents that was large enough to satisfy the requirements of an undergraduate thesis, but not so large that the project became unmanageable, this method was at times unsatisfactory. The reasons for this lingering dissatisfaction are outlined below.

On occasion organizations were excluded from the paper based on their response to the above questions, despite the fact that I felt that the research would benefit from their participation. An example of this was an organization that was contacted that helps to market Aboriginal, Métis and Inuit art and handicrafts in Winnipeg. Despite my own interest in this group, and despite their apparent contribution to economic development for both women and men, when they replied that they had no programs specifically for women, the decision was made not to include this organization to preserve the integrity of the selection method

However, this dilemma leads me to question the method of respondent selection that segregates work by gender. In particular, it seems that method is not culturally appropriate for groups

that tend not to divide social justice struggles along gender lines. Thus, in limiting the scope of this project to only projects that have elements with a gender focus, this project overlooks some of the ways in which women are involved in CED. On a more epistemological level, the particular selection methods that I have employed are reflective of some of my personal conceptions about how feminism is acted out as a Westernist ideology in non-profit NGOs. This concept will be explored in further detail later on in the paper. By adopting a method that is reflective of this one view of feminism it can be argued that I am recreating a type of feminism that is informed by "white middle class values" at the expense of excluding those who do not fit into this demographic.

A second shortcoming of the methods employed for this project is in regards to the definition of CED that is (re)created in this project. In particular, women's CED is often of a different scale, scope and focus than the more traditional CED approach, and accordingly is has often not been recognized as CED but rather thought of as community development work, or even more commonly as 'just what women do'. The exclusion of women's work from the CED tradition has been documented by scholars such as Conn (1994) Stall (1996) and Stoecker (1997). Thus, in employing CED as the central concept was I simply reproducing the same areas of oversight? After discussing these concerns with Dr. Susan Heald, I made the decision to add some women's groups with whose work I was familiar, and whose work contained an "explicitly economic" component. For example, Wolseley Family Place, a group that was not mentioned in either the list of CED initiatives provided by Carly Duboff or by members of the Research Alliance, was added to the list at this point, because they host a catering program that offers some training and casual employment to the women who participate. This is not to suggest that Wolseley Family Place does not identify their work as CED, rather the suggestion is that their work is not widely recognised as CED for the reasons outlined above. However, the tension around which groups to include and those to exclude is still one that remains troublesome.

In total 11 women representing 10 organizations were interviewed.[3] During the interviews, which lasted in duration from approximately 25 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes, the respondents were asked to respond to three basic sets of questions. The first set of questions dealt with the work of the organization represented in the interview. This set of questions was designed to help develop a sketch of the organization, the work that they were doing, and how the need for their work was established. The second set of questions dealt with the successes that the organization had experienced, and some of the barriers to achieving these successes that the women interviewed had experienced most commonly in their work. In some cases respondents were asked to differentiate between what they considered to be successes achieved by the organization, as an employee, and personally. Lastly the women were asked to explain if they thought of the work they were doing as CED, and what this term meant to them.

While these questions informed the structure of the interviews, I opted to conduct the interviews in a very open ended manner. That is, I used the interview questions primarily as a checklist to make sure that we had addressed all of the points that we set out to address, but allowed for significant flexibility and dialogue throughout the interviews. According to Kristen Esterberg "feminist scholars have argued that these [semi structured interviews] are a particularly good way to study women and other marginalised groups. Because women have historically been silenced, they have not had the opportunity to tell their own stories." (Esterberg 2002, pp. 87). Semi- structured interviews are seen as a way to let women be in control of the telling of their stories. I also opted for this approach because I

[3] At the request of one of the respondents, the women interviewed are not identified at any point by name in the paper. Also, given the small scope of the project, the relative size of the community and the uniqueness of some of the women's comments, the decision was made not to identify the organization that was represented in each of the comments.

felt that it best suited my own learning needs, and because it helped to address the power and learning differential based on age and experience that existed between the respondents and myself.

The interviews were audio taped and transcribed over a period of several months. I then set to work reading, grouping and analysing the material that these transcripts provided me. This particular method of data analysis has been referred to as "grounded theory" (Esterberg, 2002). This process involved, first, reading through and grouping the content into three general themes. These themes loosely followed the interview questions themselves. Using an "open coding" process, I read through the material again, noting any points of interest or resonance (Esterberg, pp. 158). In doing this, several sub themes began to emerge within each theme. The material was then grouped and analysed according to these sub themes.

Throughout the course of analysis, several areas of potential critique arose based on the themes the women discussed and on material available in the literature. The presence of the respondent's voices is not as strong in the sections in which I develop these critiques. There are several reasons for this. First, my critiques have developed over several months and as such, when I submitted ethics application and carried out the interviews, the questions used in the course of the interviews had not been designed to explore these topics. This leads me to suggest that future research is needed into these areas at a later date. Secondly, the pressure to compete for funding, the practical pressures of working in NGO'S and the pressures to adopt a 'developmentalist feminist' approach to CED is enormous for women working in this field (Appfel-Marglin 2002). The concept of "developmentalist feminism" and the implications of it's current popularity will be discussed further in the section of this paper entitled **CED, Developmentalist Feminisms and the Autonomous Economic Being.** Accordingly, the luxury of envisioning alternatives is often ruled out as many of the women in the non-profit sector struggle to keep their projects afloat.

In this paper I attempt to highlight some of the areas of commonality and divergence within the respondents' understandings of their work while remaining true to the voices of the respondents by providing ample space for their stories, priorities and areas of concern. I hope to present this work in a way that accommodates my own priorities with those of the women who have participated. My hope is also to present the voices of the respondents in a way that allows them to remain clearly present and intact while still allowing room to explore my own perspective. This paper is being written with the goal of improving the practice of CED for women; this would not be the case if the voice of the respondents were not clearly forefronted.

This report is organized into five sections and one Appendix. The first section consists of this introduction and method/ologies section. The purpose of this first section has been to provide the reader with a "road map" that will help the reader to navigate the paper by laying bare my own epistemological and methodological perspectives. This section is an attempt to locate my beliefs, my goals and myself in this paper. The second section entitled "Theory and Practice: The state of the literature and the realities of 'doing good'" provides the reader with a review of the state of the available literature on the topic of women's CED. It should be noted that I have often found the overall state of the literature on this topic to be unsatisfactory and have attempted to supplement it with the voices of the women interviewed for this project in the writing of this paper. The third and fourth sections, respectively entitled "Conflict, Consensus and CED" and "CED, Developmentalist Feminisms and the Autonomous Economic Being" offer some critiques into the theory and practice of women's CED. These sections are written with the belief that there is the potential for CED to be a socially transformative strategy that can improve the lives of marginalised populations. However, these sections adopt the perspective that to do so, CED must challenge some of the systemic reasons for the economic marginalisation of entire segments of the population. Thus, the critiques offered should be viewed as theoretical insights that may be able to improve the practice of CED generally. The fifth and

final section offers conclusions and suggestions for future areas of research that have developed throughout the writing of this paper. Lastly, an appendix is provided that contains background information about each of the organizations interviewed. The purpose of this section is to provide some context as to the type of CED work that is currently be undertaken with women in Winnipeg.

Section 2: Theory and Practice: the state of the literature and the realities of "doing good".

This section sets out to familiarize the reader with some of the ongoing areas of discussion amongst those interested in the study of CED with women. I do so by providing a brief discussion of the state of the literature as a developing area of study, and secondly by providing some insight into how the main points of the literature relate to the experiences of women working in CED in Winnipeg.

The term CED has come to mean a great number of things to a number of different people in recent years. The term CED has been used to refer variously to: job training programs, microcredit schemes, alternative budgeting processes, housing and safety initiatives, neighbourhood asset inventories, capacity assessments, money literacy training, self esteem and leadership training, parenting classes, the development of CDC´s (community development corporations), CBO´s (community based organizations) and many other initiatives (Bustamante et al. 2000; Douglas 1995; Shragge 1993; Stoecker 1996). Often times the only thing that these projects have in common is their focus on community (understood throughout this paper to refer to communities of interest or of location). The wide ranging nature of these examples has been a mixed blessings for the practice of CED, in general. On the one hand, a diversity of strategies is important if we are to find solutions that work for equally diverse communities. On the other hand though, the absence of a clear understanding of the CED concept and its theoretical underpinnings has left the term open to co-optation by parties more interested in off loading governmental responsibility than community empowerment. Frustration at the absence of a coherent definition of CED is reflected in some of the responses of the women

interviewed for this paper. According to one respondent, "... I've been a member of CED groups for many years and there are times I when I wonder what this is all about." This response begs the question: how do the women interviewed understand the relationship between their work and the CED concept?

The women interviewed for this paper express a wide range of understandings of the meaning of CED as a community development strategy. For some of the respondents, CED is a very straightforward approach to community development that is about "providing community women with employment" or "providing them with skills." Others state, "economic development for women in the community" and "I would say the money earned in the community stays in the community to help the community quo [sic], that's my definition of economic development in the community." And others yet, "helping the community develop some assembly [sic] of earning money" and "being aware of possibilities the people in the community could take advantage of, to earn an income." Despite the diversity of activities undertaken by each of these organizations, the focus, in this particular form of community development, for most of the women interviewed, is clearly on the provisioning of income generating opportunities and economic development (the implications of such a focus are discussed later in the paper).

In discussing local development discourses in three small Andean communities, Laurutsen and Mathiasen note, that although local development discourses can be found that are in some ways unique to each community, these local discourses can be linked together under the banner of one general discourse--that of "Westernist modernity" (Lauritsen and Mathiasen 2003, pp. 37). Similarly, the parallels between the women's responses suggests that there is one overarching discourse that unites the localised expressions of CED. In the same vein as is argued in regards to the Andean communities, I believe that the overarching discourse of CED is that of economic liberalism. Other respondents however, had a less tightly focused understanding of their work, for example one respondent stated,

"CED is the gestalt … what happens when you bring social development and economic development together, it's synergy, the sum which is greater than the parts of those two things." And others rejected the term altogether stating rather that their work was about a "community trying to rebuild."

All of the women interviewed explained that the character and direction of their work has been heavily influenced by the availability of funding. The problems associated with short term project funding have been well documented in the literature on the non- profit sector, and are echoed by many of the women interviewed here (Gracey 1999, Shragge 1993). All of the women interviewed discussed some of the problems associated with funding. However, among the participants there was variation about the specific concerns relating to this issue. For some there have been constraints placed on the project as a result of "cobbling" together funding from a variety of sources, all of which have different parameters and expectations. According to one respondent " …the difficulty I think has always been the funding, …each one [funding opportunity] had specific criteria around it, that makes it difficult and each one came in for different time zones and I think that there's not one group that you would talk to in this area that has not voiced the same concern, that funding is always an issue."

Funding also limits the ability of women's organizations to conduct their work in another, more pervasive way. This is in the way funding, and the struggle to obtain funding, has the ability to alter the mindset of those working in the field. According to one respondent, despite an organization's best efforts to listen to, and actively address the needs of the community, no matter "how much people say that they listen to the people there must be a certain level of um, money." This respondent also expressed the way that some of the women interviewed are able to challenge the degree of control the struggle for funding has over the core of their work. For many organizations the struggle is to determine "Where the funds are, how can you adapt the funds that are out there?" However, the ability of organizations to determine the philosophy of their work is becoming severely constrained by the influence of funders and governments as organizations are encouraged to take on more and more

elements of services that were once provided universally by the government. According to one respondent ´"It's hard to not become the institution."

For some, this history of unstable funding has even contributed to the lack of trust on the part of residents for CED projects, explained by one respondent as a "once burnt, twice shy" syndrome. Despite slight variations in their responses, the lack of core or operating funding remains the single most cited barrier to success for the women interviewed for this project.

However, the problems associated with funding were markedly different for one of the organizations interviewed. This organization was the only that had received core funding from any level of government. For the respondent, the problems associated with funding were associated with the very character of the organization. According to the respondent, "Sometimes it comes off looking like we're a lapdog of the province". Clearly, current funding models create many difficulties for the women involved in the work of CED, most often by limiting the scope and duration of CED projects with women but occasionally, by appearing to co-opt the work of the organizations involved. In many ways, the dilemmas created by funding difficulties limit the abilities of women's organizations to effectively challenge their major funder, the government.

In her study of women's CED initiatives in B.C, Melanie Conn found that all of the projects had accessed funding at some point in their venture, and most remained dependent on some form of funding throughout the course of the venture (1988). Bustamante et al. support these finding in their study of women working in American community development organizations (2000). In fact according to Eric Shragge almost all CED initiatives are reliant on outside funding (1993). Some of the impacts of funding shifts in the non profit and civil society sector have been documented in a report on the state of the 'charitable' sector in Canada. According to Brenda Zimmerman and Raymond Dart:

> Its [the charitable sector's] resource base has been reduced as governments at all levels, have focused on deficit reduction. Governments have historically provided almost two thirds of the total revenue of the charitable sector in Canada, and that portion is now in widespread decline. At the same time the concept and value of 'charity' and 'service' has

> also been challenged by a change in the Canadian mindset. It is now common to hear that charities should behave more like a business, and, overall, there is a sense that corporate values and decision metrics have become much more central to our sense of how all organizations should be managed (1998).

According to one respondent "…the government wants simply for us to do the things that they would do only for 50% of the cost and they don't want us to pay benefits to our workers." Many of the organizations interviewed for this project have felt the pressure to adopt more business- like elements in their organization. For some this pressure has resulted in the development of programs that have not been sustainable and have even detrimentally impacted on the ability of the organization to function. According to Chriss Tetlock, founder of the North End Women's Centre (NEWC), in discussing some of the reasons that they entered into a business venture that would eventually cause great difficulties for the organization and lead them to reconsider the types of ventures they would undertake in the future, "All the funders kept talking about sustainability; it became the new buzz word. So our board considered the possibility of the sociobusiness being able to eventually contribute back to the NEWC. It is one of our attempts make a funded social service sustainable" (Gracey, p.8).

Despite the pressures to focus on shorter term project based funding, some of the women interviewed include as part of the role of CED in improving the lives of women, advocacy for policy changes as well as project-based work. According to one respondent "Changes in policy are something that has to happen eventually and they've already been defined by the woman as a need, but you know, how do you get them in place". This theme comes up most often in regards to CED initiatives in what are considered 'pink collar ghettos', in particular with regard to initiatives in the childcare industry. I will explore this theme in further detail later in the paper.

The women interviewed for this paper represent a wide variety of backgrounds, understandings of the term and motivations for their involvement with CED initiatives. Some have been motivated by personal religious or spiritual beliefs, others by connections to a local situation of economic crisis, others have been motivated by their own marginalized position. Some have come together as a result of

a shared history of community organizing and others still have received professional training as practitioners of CED. Despite their diverse backgrounds and understandings of their work, what they all share is a belief that the work that they are doing is benefiting their community.

The diverse ways in which the respondents express their understanding of the term CED reflects the state of the literature and practice of CED more generally. Wading through the countless examples of initiatives that fall under the umbrella of CED is indeed a daunting task. However, within the vast body of literature there are common themes that can be identified.

According to Joan Newman Kuyek, CED is a "departure" from the current economic system that focuses on reclaiming economics and creating "self reliant communities, that are not dependent on outside investment" (p. 118.) In this model CED has some specific characteristics that include:

> CED values the informal economy: the work and production that goes on that does not show up in the gross national product: childcare, gardening, volunteer work, doing our own repairs, driving each other around, looking after the sick, the aged, the young, and so on.
> CED is concerned about retaining wealth in a community: CED asks " where does the money go" as much as "where does it come from".
> CED is concerned about creating viable communities for our grandchildren as it is for ourselves. ….
> CED is as concerned about getting local control over business, not trying to get another branch plant or franchise established.
> CED is about development that does not displace the poor or depopulate rural communities.
> CED is about redistributing the wealth and services in a community so they may be shared equally by all.
> CED is about creating good work: work that is healthy, satisfying and secure. It is about improving and diversifying the skills of community members. (Kuyek pp. 119)

Occasionally the assumption is made that CED is an inherently feminist practice because of its focus on empowerment and participation. However, the exclusion of women from much mainstream community development history and the tendency to ignore women's economic concerns in favour of what has traditionally been thought of as CED projects, has demonstrated that there is a need for models of CED that are uniquely feminist. According to Melanie Conn, in her article entitled "Community

Economic Development in Canada from a Woman's Perspective," "women have a version of economic development that is like conventional CED but in many ways surpasses it (p. 2)". According to Conn, there are four aspects that make up a ¨feminist perspective on CED: women's role in the economy, social accounting, the participation of women in the economic planning process and the potential for long term change" (N.D., p. 2). Each of these aspects is discussed in detail below.

Women's Role in the Economy:

This issue forms the context for the practice of most, if not all feminist CED. Economic activity, as measured by conventional means, has generally been thought of as the exchange of goods and services for money. This particular definition of the economy and economic activity has been understood to marginalize women as economic actors. However, this definition obscures the reality that women are active in the economy in many ways, as paid workers and as contributors to the invisible or informal economy. Women have traditionally been those primarily responsible for the work of "domestic production", or care giving; for the organization and support of most community work, such as voluntary work, carpooling and ensuring the health and support of other members of the community (Conn, N.D.). In practice, it is the work of women that supports the community during times of economic hardship or downturn.

This type of "women's work" also supports the functioning of the formal economy. It has long been recognized by feminist and women activists that the formal economy simply would not be able to function without this work of women. Several attempts have been made by these women to see this work valued in conventional accounting by assigning dollar values to it. Most notable among these has been the work of Marilyn Waring (1999). However, even this approach has proved problematic. For example, how does one assign a dollar value to the things that many people believe we most value as a society- the care and nurturing of others? Some feminist economists, such as J. Nelson and K. Rankin have suggested the need for a conceptual shift from an understanding of economics as encapsulated in

market transactions to an understanding that assigns economic value to each of the acts that helps to provide for life for oneself and for others (2000). Despite debates about how best to recognize the work of women, or even how to define "economy," the recognition of the importance of women's unpaid and unrecognized labour forms the basis of most feminist CED initiatives.

The focus on the role and importance of unpaid labour is an important piece to the practice of CED. However, according to Conn, this is an element of CED that continues to often be overlooked in favour of larger scale CED projects, ´that involve a transfer of power more than a shift in values.´ (N.D., p. 3)

Social Accounting

According to Melanie Conn, social accounting is an element of CED that particularly attracts women to the field. Social accounting is the practice of taking into account all of the benefits and consequences of economic decisions; this includes social, political and environmental factors. According to some, what has been thought of as women's role as caregivers for the earth, for families and society has made them, 'quality of life experts' (Conn, N.D). In particular, it is argued that because women are most often the ones who are left to deal with the consequences of economic downturns and the side effects of economic strategies that have depleted resources, destroyed the environment or resulted in changing societal structures, women are best positioned to vision a new form of economics that includes a "multiple bottom line."[4] Many feminist economists have long argued for a revisioning of the concept of economics to one that includes the social as well economic costs and benefits of economic decisions. It is argued by those from this school of thought that, in addition to broadening the understanding of the field to include a real accounting of the costs and benefits of economic decisions, that such a discursive move would also force a reconceptualization of the ´rational economic

[4] The concept of the "multiple bottom line" refers to the practice of social accounting for economic decisions. Rather than focussing only on what has traditionally been thought of as the bottom line--financial outcomes--factors such as social, environmental and political costs and benefits are considered in economic decisions.

man´ as the only recognized economic being. The practice of social accounting in CED also emphasizes the interconnections between economic, social, cultural and political decisions. The emphasis on interconnections has the potential to call into question some of the assumptions of economic individualism which is one of the pillars that supports the current neoliberal economy.

Participation of Women in Economic Development Planning:

Feminist CED seeks to improve the participation of women in economic planning processes. However, this participation cannot only be measured in numbers of women who participate (although numbers are important too). Feminist CED looks at the ways in which people are able to, or restricted from, participating in meaningful ways in planning processes. Thus, a feminist model of CED seeks to examine the gender power dynamics that have traditionally limited women's participating in economic development planning. The attention to the meaningful participation of women in the economic development process is demonstrated in a number of ways ranging from: micro level strategies aimed at improving women's participation in meetings to broader initiatives such as economic literacy campaigns that attempt to provide women with the tools to participate in the planning process. The commitment to meaningful participation means that feminist CED initiatives may rely on ways of organizing, such as in collectives, that require patience and the commitment to the uneven development of projects as all members struggle to get on the same page. However, as I will discuss later the focus on participation at the expense of broader change can limit the ability of CED to be a truly socially transformative practice.

Potential for Real Change

Conn notes that feminist CED has the potential to create real change in the lives of many people. Yet, she notes that this potential is constrained by social and political realities that impact on organizations' ability to implement their vision of what change would look like. The potential for real change is important to bear in mind, lest we forget that CED is not meant to simply be a "micro development" strategy, in the way that development has traditionally been approached. CED has the potential to

create real change. However, for it to do so, we need to reflect on what some of the elements of this change would look like, and design CED strategies that can accommodate this change. As I will argue later in this paper, two elements of CED as a socially transformative practice are that it takes into account the systemic reasons for the marginalisation of certain populations and that CED must avoid the tendency to undertake "micro development" that recreates liberal ways of thinking about the economy and community development.

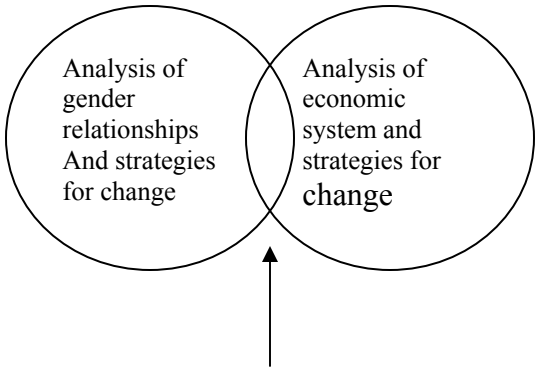
In order for us to understand the potential of CED to create real change, we must look at the ways that the available writings on, and historical practice of, CED understands the dynamics of gender and economic marginalization.

The literature on CED primarily deals with women's participation as the unit of focus rather than on gender as only one of the factors that has contributed to the economic marginalization of women. The literature on CED tends to deal with women as an isolated group, rather than a group that is part of, and impacted on by the dynamics of gender and economics. In CED literature and in what has been common practice the focus is primarily on improving women's access to resources and economic participation. While women's economic participation is an important area of focus, participation alone does not guarantee any real improvements in the economic position of women as a larger group. While participation and access to resources may improve the lives and livelihoods of a handful of individual women, it does not change, in a meaningful way, the situation of women as a larger group and a marginalized population.

Thus, the shortcoming seems to be that CED literature that deals with women focuses solely on the importance of their membership in a gendered group, at the cost of pushing for broader changes in economic systems in which gender is a characteristic that has been used to isolate and oppress women. I believe that for CED to be socially transformative it must simultaneously address the marginalization

of women, *and* the very reasons for the marginalization of large groups of people, including, but not limited to, women.

Thus, the focus needs to be simultaneously on two interlocking dynamics that have resulted in women's marginalized status in society: that of gender and that of economics. For, participation in a flawed system simply displaces the locus of marginalization to new ("other") groups in society. In fact, the marginalization of large groups of people, I believe, is an inherent feature of the current economic system. An example may help to clarify here. Documented CED initiatives with women have tended to focus on ways to improve women's economic participation by providing childcare subsidies and the like to women, or they have created work for women in fields such as catering and childcare that are traditionally viewed as women's work and have, therefore been socially and economically devalued. Thus, in viewing the issue of 'women' in this way—as only an issue of participation (measured in numbers) CED initiatives have attempted to address one aspect of gender relations that have marginalized women (i.e. women's limited participation) but have failed to challenge the system that maintains this marginalization as necessary.



Feminist CED

(diagram courtesy of Dr. Susan Heald)

According to Marilyn Callahan feminist community organizing differs from community organizing in general. Callahan summarises the feminist practice of organizing in the following ways:

> What distinguishes feminist community organizing from other approaches is its insistence that all activities must be informed by an understanding of gender (and race and class) and modified on the basis of this analysis. It is also characterised by its commitment to a social movement and by its attempts to connect local efforts to those taking place in other jurisdictions and at other levels. It differs from feminist organizing in general because of its concern with place, with helping women in a geographical space define their needs… it enriches the feminist movement by grounding it in the realities of local women and local solutions. (1997, pp. 183).

I believe that for community economic development to be feminist it must be, as Callahan notes, informed by an understanding of both the complexities of gender and of locality. Similarly, I believe that feminist CED must be rooted in an understanding of its work as part of an attempt to create broad changes to the worldviews that serve to marginalize groups of people.

In practice however, the women interviewed for this project seem to support yet be constrained in their ability to create/vision/implement an understanding of CED as feminist in their work. For example, one of the organizations interviewed recognised that the catering program run by that organization would most likely never provide a sustainable income to the women involved. However, the woman interviewed for this project consistently expressed her desire to challenge the economic systems that ghettoized certain groups of people. The same organization ran other programming whose stated goal was to "challenge isms", such as sexism and other factors that contribute to the devaluation of women's work. However, the availability of funding for programs that challenge, rather than recreate the dynamics of gender and economic marginalization was considered by the respondent more difficult to obtain than funding for programs that simply function as job training or other skills-building programs. Much of the pressure to recreate pink ghetto jobs with low wages can be attributed to strict funding parameters that often allow for organizations only to pay the participants extremely low wages.

The relationship between feminism and CED is a complicated one. It is often asserted by practitioners of CED that, because of its emphasis on participation and empowerment CED is

inherently feminist. However, as discussed later, the ways in which the literature discusses the practice of CED represents only a limited view of feminism in which individual empowerment and access to resources are given precedence over societal or community level change. Callahan notes that feminist community organizing has remained on the periphery of community development because it raises questions about ¨the contradictory nature of communities and the gendered nature of community work¨(1997 pp. 185). Callahan cautions the reader to avoid the tendency to stereotype women's organizing in what has often been portrayed as the only two available conceptual categories-- that of the dedicated charity worker, or the radical feminist. These stereotypes, argues Callahan have been used to weaken women's ways of organizing for change. As such it is important that we look at the ways in which women involved in CED challenge our assumptions and existing models of community development. Numerous authors including Callahan, Stoecker and Stall have pointed out that women and in particular feminist women have been notably silenced in the discourses of community organizing, because many of the question that they raise about the concept of community, of development and of economics have been uncomfortable for those committed to the field of community development and thus not received warmly. As a result, the field of community organizing, as it has traditionally been understood has appeared to be male dominated (Stall and Stoecker, 1998, Callahan 1997). In practice however, the women interviewed express (explicitly or via the philosophies that can be seen to inform their work) many different understandings of feminism and its relationship to CED.

Lastly it is important to note that CED remains a relatively young field of study and, as such, the depth of the available literature remains limited. The available literature on CED is not as 'developed' as what could be considered its sister body of work, that of women and international development literature more generally. In fact, it seem that the literature on CED does not draw on, reference or contest many of the debates that have been, and are currently being, carried out in the

literature on international development. Despite this, much of my own analysis comes directly from development, and 'post development' literature. Additionally, my analysis also draws on feminist theories and economics, participatory development, and sociological writings about the nature of community.

Section Three: CED, Conflict and Consensus

In this paper I argue that women's CED as it is currently practiced in Winnipeg represents a strategy that has the capability to improve the lives and livelihoods of women, if only in some areas of their lives, and only in the interim. CED is this regard can be viewed as an economic 'coping' strategy. This paper stops far short of accepting CED as an effective and socially transformative strategy that can improve the lives of women and other marginalized groups over a sustained period of time. This, as I will later argue, is a result of a combination of several theoretical and practical factors that complicate the practice of CED as an effective socially transformative strategy.

Community Economic Development (CED) has its roots in two distinct conceptions of community work—that of the grassroots tradition of community organizing, and alternatively an understanding of community work and community development, as put forth by the state and funders. The former has traditionally taken the form of advocacy and activist based groups while evidence of the later approach can be found in the proliferation of state funded non profit organizations and Community Development Corporations (CDC's) (Stoecker, 2000) . While none of the work of the women interviewed for this project fits neatly into one category or the other, a discussion of the two approaches will provide one of the necessary tools to evaluate the effectiveness of CED as a socially transformative strategy.

CED as it is currently practiced in Canada combines aspects of both a community organizing perspective and of a community development, or community building perspective. However according

to Randy Stoecker, these two perspectives on community work are anchored in two fundamentally different conceptions of how society functions (2001). The organizations interviewed demonstrate elements of each of these models of community work. Oftentimes organizations also demonstrate the tensions that result when the different parties involved with their work do not share the same perspective on the organization of society.

According to Stoecker community organizing has a much longer history in a North American context that does what is formally recognized as community development. Its roots can be traced in recent history to the Civil Rights and Suffrage movements, the tenant movements in urban centres of the U.S. and Canada, and most famously to the work of Saul Alinsky in the 1930´s. Despite women's involvement in community organizing their work in this field has often been overlooked, and at times has been antithetical to the most popularly known models of community organizing. Despite women's exclusion from the history of community organizing there are important lessons for CED with women, to be learned from this model. Community organizing is based on an understanding of society as inherently conflict based and often referred to as having a zero sum understanding of power. This model shares much with a Marxist interpretation of class conflict. In particular, a conflict model of society states that society is based on conflict over limited resources; to the degree that a society reaches an apparent equilibrium this is because one group has achieved domination over the other, marginalised groups. Thus, a community organizing model is better suited to address the structural and systemic factors that have created a system in which vast numbers of people and entire communities are poor.

In the community organizing model the strength that marginalized communities have is in their ability to work collectively to create change. The community development model has been characterised by the creation of organizations (in particular CDC´s) that are charged with the task of acting as a broker for marginalized communities by providing them access to government funds and support. Community development is premised on the belief that if people are provided with adequate

training and support (in other words, adequate opportunity and access to social capital), they will be able to improve their lot in life. Community development is based on the belief that this approach can also work to improve the conditions of entire communities. Evidence of this approach is found in numerous CED initiatives focussing on training, neighbourhood safety initiatives, housing and the like (Stoecker, 2001). Women in particular, are prime targets for social capital based approaches, usually initiated by outside actors, and encouraged by current funding trends. Oftentimes women's CED focuses on improving women's personal self conception, such as self esteem and interrelationship building, leadership training and the like, or alternatively on improving women's access to resources (for example to credit services). What these examples share in common is the belief that for women to succeed at improving their lives, one only needs to provide them with opportunity and access. However, what this theory obscures is the reality that what marginalized groups need is access to power, not just opportunity. This model defines the problems as lack of self esteem, of jobs, of housing—without looking at the reasons why these very real problems exist in the first place. According to Stoecker "what happens in the community development model is that people's need for a transformed economy...becomes replaced with training programs for people to compete for an extremely limited good job pool." (pp. 3). The focus in this model is internally focussed on improving the skills set or self esteem of individuals or groups of individuals, rather than externally focused on changing the systems in which the lack of opportunities for certain groups exist. It is my belief that for CED to be an effective force to improve the lives of marginalized populations it needs to contain elements of each of these approaches.

According to Stall and Stoecker, 'women centred organizing' combines aspects of both the community organizing and the community development, approaches (1998). "The women-centred organizing model emphasizes relationship building that is not rooted in self interest but in an understanding of mutual responsibility. And while it does see a structural division in society that holds

women back, it also emphasizes that power is infinitely expandable rather than zero sum" (Stall and Stoecker,1998). Elements of this hybrid model are evidenced in organizations such as the North Point Douglas Women's Centre that have been able to successfully build on that community's history of community organizing to create an institution that can support the needs of women. Many of the women currently involved in the Centre were previously united against the presence in the neighbourhood of a problematic business that had been accused of exploiting the poverty of residents in the community. According to a speech that discusses the choice of location for the centre, "Brother's Grocery store had been known to have a problematic impact on our community and had been picketed on several occasions for allegedly selling solvents. So replacing this store with a women's centre would not only rid the community of this problem it would also send a very positive message to the community" (Speech given at Fall AGM, 2003). This history of community organizing provided the impetus for the women of the Point Douglas neighbourhood to come together to take advantage of funding that was made available to the community. However, rather than sustaining the struggle against Brother's Grocery Store in the Alinsky style tradition, the women of this community have chosen to build an institution in the women centred model of community organizing. The work of the centre combines the historical relationships that were borne of community organizing with a more community building approach that focuses on self-development and skills building. The respondents interviewed for this project also demonstrate some of the ways in which women involved in CED are combining the work of community organizing and community building. For example, one respondent notes that "you could attribute all this [current problems in the community] systemically to some pretty clear times in history especially in the aboriginal history…so, um it just starts with one community trying to rebuild." Thus, this respondent combines the analysis of systemic factors contributing to marginalization with a community (re)building perspective. Another respondent noted that if she could, "I would get rid of all this [the current economic system] and then we could go back to some type of

thing where we really did work for the community." However, this respondent also noted that her desire to challenge the current system is not reflected in CED as it is currently practiced.
Many of the other women interviewed also demonstrate the ways in which their work combines elements of both a conflict and consensus models of society, thereby demonstrating the limitations of each of these models.

The shifting role of governments in the provisions of social welfare for a population and the resulting growth and professionalization of NGO´s has impacted the ability of women's organizations to continue the work of community organizing. For feminist organizations doing advocacy and organizing work, the shift has been felt as they are required to take on more elements of community development work (Stoecker, 2001). As community organizations are encouraged to take on more of the work of community development, and ´corporate values´, their ability to continue the work of community organizing, a practice that addresses some of the issues of power that maintain the marginalized position of certain communities, is constrained. According to Benno Galjart, "NGOS appear to have become less radical or revolutionary. Since the promotion of income-generating activities had to be based on specialization of labour and market exchange, it implied some acceptance of the prevailing economic order. Successful projects effectively incorporated groups into that order, contradicting NGO efforts to imply that the economic order was unjust and had to be changed." (Galjart 1995, pp. 17). When asked about whether the CED that is currently being promoted by government agencies represented a challenge to the current economic system, one respondent stated "they don't challenge capitalism, they don't challenge any of that…it's about how do we drive the economy so that everybody's off welfare."

The ability of CED to challenge the current socio economic system is also discussed by Shannon Rebolz, in her undergraduate thesis regarding CDC's (Community Development

Corporations) and Arts led economic development. According to Rebolz the ability of CED to affect meaningful change is constrained by the fact that the ´real´ power often exists outside of marginalized communities. She states, "Sceptics argue that local residents cannot mobilize enough resources to 'fix' depressed urban neighbourhoods because the real sources of poverty and neighbourhood decline exist outside the community, in powerful institutions that CDC's are unable to challenge. In order to revitalize a community, existing power structures and resources must be redistributed. As long as CDC's rely on federal, state and local government leaders, as well as private businesses, critics argue that these authorities will never relinquish their influence or control in order to serve the community. (2003, p. 35). Some of the participants interviewed also struggle with the ability of CED to create meaningful change in a society where power often lies outside of marginalised communities. In particular some respondents discuss the struggle to define a place for CED in the New Economy, characterised by the concentration of power in the hands of a growlingly small number of transnational corporations. One respondent states "how can you compete with Wal Marts. Big box stores …you know it would have been better, long time ago when we had the community stores, people knew people in the community."

Thus, CED as a socially transformative practiced is constrained by its hesitancy to challenge dominant ways of thinking of the creation and maintenance of marginalized communities. This hesitancy is a result of the adoption of a theoretical framework that promotes the belief among practitioners that one need only to provide the opportunity for marginalized groups to succeed—an approach that, in short, overlooks the dynamics of power that affect a group's social position. One of the reasons for the pervasiveness of this approach to community development has been its popularity among governments and other funders. This approach has been particularly detrimental for women because in order for CED that is meant to improve the lives and livelihoods of women to be effective, it needs to challenge these very relationships as it has been social relationships organized through a

system of patriarchy that have been used to oppress and marginalize women. However, the women interviewed for this project demonstrate some of the ways that women's CED both adopts and challenges these concepts and the ways that women involved in the work of CED navigate some of the tensions that have resulted form complex relationships to funders and governments.

Section Four: CED, Developmentalist Feminisms and the Autonomous Economic Being

> The key is to perceive the need for collective community solutions to the problem, instead of individual solutions, and to work together to plan and build projects and structures that we know we want." (Conn, ND, pp. 4)

> I think we need to develop community economic development plans that are based on a vision of community that is different. Entrepreneurships says find your market niche and build on it. I think that's self defeating, in terms of the person themselves and in terms of the kind of communities we want to build. I think as a society we have a responsibility to raise children, . I think we have a responsibility to share wealth. I think we have a responsibility to look after people. I can't see that entrepreneurship programs that encourage women to go off mother's allowance so that they can work 40 hours a week plus look after their kids on almost no income are any kind of advance. (Kuyek, 1988)

> Many feminist scholars are concerned about the limits of the modernist, liberal framework for achieving political, social and economic justice. The rhetoric of liberalism argues for a division between the so-called civic and political spheres, and between economics and politics. (Naples 2002, pp. 271)

This section looks at the question of whether or not CED is truly based on a "vision of community that is different", or if CED utilizes and therefore, recreates a concept of community that is rooted in a "modernist, liberal framework" (Kuyek, 1988; Naples, 2002). This section also explores the impacts of these constructions of the concept of community on the potential for CED to be a socially transformative practice. The concept of community is a problematic one: popular culture pundits have marketed it, political leaders invoke it, and scholars have debated it—all for different, and often contradictory purposes. These invocations of the term have occurred to the point that the only thing these interpretations share is that they evoke a "warmly fuzzy feeling" in the reader or consumer (Mayo,

2000). In fact, a belief in the goodness of community is one of the few things that proponents of CED can be said to share.

However, women and feminist scholars and activists have been among the first to point out that 'the community' has not always been a good space or place for women. Geographic communities and communities of interest or, of identity all carry with them social norms and traditions that impact on women's lives in a diversity of ways, both negatively and positively. Furthermore, the concept of community is often employed in ways that can silence or censor women (for example, keeping them from speaking out against abuse). Communities can function in problematic ways for women in other ways too. Communities not only regulate behaviour between those who are members of the community but can also be employed to exclude 'others' from it. For example, women in academia have traditionally been excluded from many aspects of this community. In looking at the concept of community in these ways we can begin to dispel the myth of community as a "warm, fuzzy feeling" (Mayo, 2000) and rather begin to understand the concept of community as a political and epistemological creation. Thus, by exploring the ways in which the concept of community is understood and employed in the practice of CED we can begin to assess whether or not CED as a particular form of community development is, as the term is currently employed, a transformative practice.

Community, as the concept is understood within a liberal economy, is an entity that is made up of autonomous individuals, each acting in a manner that satisfies their own best interest. In fact the unit of primary importance within a neoliberal framework is this individual, and most social, political and economic institutions and relationships are centred on this individual. According to Appfel- Marglin and Sanchez, the epistemological creation of the individual enclosed by the body, arose in the Western world throughout the 19th and 20th centuries alongside the "deployment of capitalism" (p. 166). This is an important fact to note because the primary function of the individual has been to act as the

proverbial ´rational economic man´ in the neoliberal economy. Furthermore, according to Appfel-Marglin and Sanchez, the "individual's sense of self renders other ways of being in the world invisible or illegitimate, thus establishing itself as a universal norm. This universal concept of the individual is violent by nature, as evidenced in the ravages of colonialism, imperialism, sexism and the violence unleashed on the more than human world" (p. 175).

Much development work, both international development and community development, has adopted this framework as the way to improve the lives of women. Development literature by and large has focused on the importance of women's involvement in local decision making processes, access to resources and empowerment. However, these goals all remain rooted in the concept of the *individual* woman. The focus of the individual is present also in many feminist writings on development. In their discussion of the implications of the adoption of this model under the label of "developmentalist feminism", Appfel- Marglin and Sanchez note that, "such a discursive move [the creation of the individual woman] is at once creative and destructive, the female individual citizen emerges from the destruction of the communera (female member of a native community) and of her world" (p. 162). Furthermore, they arguesthat "[the women] are being prepared to be individuals and citizens, with their own autonomous access to ´resources´, decision making, services, education, their bodies, etcetera—in other words, to relate autonomously to the market"(p. 162). CED with shares this tradition. CED initiatives with women, in particular, are replete with examples that demonstrate the adoption of such an understanding of community and community development. The majority of programs offered by the organizations participating in this project treat community development as something that can be accomplished via individual women. Thus, in this way there can be a tendency to view women as the vehicles of community development rather than as an integral component of community and therefore community development. This phenomenon has been documented by Poster and Salime in their article entitled "The Limits of Microcredit." The authors note that microcredit schemes focus almost

exclusively on women, not because women benefit the most from them (as in fact, this is often not the case) but rather because women are seen as less of an investment risk, and because it is thought that women will spread any income earned among members of the community. While such an approach is not inherently problematic, it calls into question the idea that such community development strategies really are meant to improve the lives of women. Rather, the idea seems to be that women are seen as a way to improve the lives of those in the community. However, the reliance on the individual as the economic producer in the community does seem to have real negative impacts on the community as a whole.

According to Shelley Feldman the growth and development of NGO´s can be seen as a symptom of the adoption of the Neoliberal agenda by governments interested in relocating the locus of responsibility for social welfare onto the individual.. "NGO´s represent a shift from state supported redistributed initiatives or social welfare to individual income earning activities and self reliance, an approach to poverty alleviation that sustains the move from employment promotion to income generation. This shift aligns well with neo liberal initiatives that centre responsibility for social sustenance squarely in the hands of the individual producer" (2003, pp.15). The role of women's CED in supporting or challenging neoliberal aims is one that needs to be further problematized by those interested in the subject.

The dependence of CED on (neo)liberal concepts, such as that of the individual and therefore, social capital, has meant that it fails to question the structural inequities that are inherent in current economic and social systems and thus fails to challenge the underlying belief that poverty, and the escape of poverty is the responsibility of the individual. According to Feldmen

> One consequence of a focus on meeting the practical interests of the poor is the goal of improving people's participation in the marketplace and, within the logic of individualism and self-reliance, establishing new commodity exchanges that are assumed to enhance economic security. Here, the objective is to restructure responsibility from the state to the family and community and to promote initiatives that view privatization as the cornerstone of economic reform. This devolution represents a new but potentially insidious path to development because

> when accountability lies with the individual, it can often obscure the structural constraints of a competitive global capitalism that limits the long term viability of individualized sustainable livelihoods (Feldmen 2003, pp. 22).

I believe that there is evidence of this approach in CED strategies with women that focus on job training, self esteem building, access to credit and the like. If one accepts that neoliberalism, as a economic paradigm has not worked to equally benefit all peoples, and has in fact created a situation in which it is a necessary feature to the functioning of the system that certain groups do not benefit from the system, then it is clear that we need to develop strategies that, rather than attempting to bring more people into this system, work to challenge it and create new forms of organization. Despite the many ways in which women's CED seems to operate within a neoliberal framework, I believe that the roots of a challenge to this system can be heard in the voices of several of the respondents. One respondent, for example, identified a photojournalism project that "put together a whole package looking at isms and trying to figure out a way that they can eliminate those isms", as part of the work of CED. This respondent also challenges the notion of economic individualism, in relaying a conversation with project funders by saying "economically independent of what? I'm dependent upon a pay cheque". Thus, further exploration of the ways in which women working in the CED field challenge ideas about economic liberalism and individualism would be beneficial for our understanding of the potential of CED to be a socially transformative practice.

Conclusions

CED is a particular form of community development that seems to be emerging in the West. It is important for us to remember however, that CED is only one of many ways to approach the sizable task of development. Recent experience in Nicaragua has reminded me of this fact. While on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua I had the opportunity to meet with Elizabeth from the Indigenous Women's Movement (AMICA). When speaking about an ecotourism project of AMICA, the question was asked, "how many jobs had been created by this project?" The answer however, was that the goal

of these CD projects was not to create *jobs*, but rather to create *work* for the community. The distinction here is that jobs, in this context, are income-generating activities that belong to an individual, whereas the term work does not specify ownership of the benefits of the activities. Accordingly, the proceeds from this project are not paid out to individual community members, but rather deposited into a community fund from which the community can draw out money for collective projects. In a community where necessity and tradition have resulted in ways of living that may be more communal, such an approach to CD may reflect the needs and history of the community better than traditional forms of development that have been criticized for imposing Western development ideas on communities.

The tendency in critical development literature has been to criticise development as a practice that exports Western values, ideologies and models of community development onto 'non-Western' communities. However, when considering CED as one of many possible forms of community development it is important that we not limit our critiques to the ways in which development practice imposes values on 'other, less developed' communities. For to do so, can be considered a form of 'imperialism through the back door,'[5] in that such an understanding erases the agency and validity of different forms of community organization and development. Rather, we must also look at the ways in which we can learn from different understandings of community and community development to challenge and improve our own practice of development.

Thus this paper ends as many do, with suggestions for areas for future research. In order for us to improve CED as a socially transformative practice it is important that we continue to ask questions that challenge our understandings of the individual as the primary unit of development. Better understanding of the ways in which women in this western development context understand the

[5] The idea of 'back-door imperialism' is being developed by Susan Heald, in her work in Nicaragua. Personal communication, July, 2004.

concept of community is also needed. Thus, research that explores the ways in which women involved in CED challenge Westernist Liberalism through their work seems the logical next area for research.

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Appendix A

Tall Grass Prairie Bread Company: Tall Grass Prairie Bread Company is best known around Winnipeg for its focus on whole grains and holistic business practice. Tall Grass was started by a group of friends who were involved in Grain of Wheat, a Christian community, one of whom was from a small farming community. According to an article written about the company the founders began by asking themselves "Is it possible to have 'just food?' Is it possible to have food that is good for the whole circle- for the people who grow it, prepare it, eat it, and for the earth itself?" (Making Waves, Vol 12, No. 3- pp. 21-23)

According to the respondent from this business, the motivation to get involved with a CED business was a mix of personal, social, and sometimes religious reasons, combined with a sense of community responsibility. She stated "..she and I had a pipe dream of starting a restaurant together and we talked about it on and off for a long time, but Grain of Wheat wanted to go further with this, they wanted to be able to work together, they wanted to be able to involve their children and the rest of the community and they wanted to be able to do something that was a benefit to the, a larger number of people." Further explaining her motivation to get involved in the project, the respondent stated "it was decided that we could probably make this into a business that would be a benefit both to the community, the small community and the community at large, …. all of us wanted to do this, some of us as a, really as a religious experiment and some of us as a social experiment and all of us a sort of a, as a really of combination of that".

For the women of Tall Grass the decision to develop the business was further motivated by a personal connection to the larger economic context. According to the respondent the bakery was seen as an intervention into an economic climate that was spiraling out of control. She said, ".. at that time there was a farming crisis, farmers were receiving, sometimes receiving less than $2 a bushel for their grain, which was less than it cost them to plant it, farm suicides were up and [a partner] knew some of

the people that killed themselves over this crisis and she desperately wanted to find a way to make some kind of a link between food as it's grown and food as it's processed.

In reflecting on her experiences in setting up a community business, the respondent described the process of starting up the bakery as an organic one that involved sharing ideas and views that motivated the participants to come together, regardless of their sometimes-differing motivations, and achieve consensus about what was at the crux of the desire to open the bakery. "We wanted to see if we could, if we could form a business and run it on an ethical basis in the climate of profit as the only bottom line and avoid that and still make an ethical piece of bread and out of good product and sell it at a reasonable price and be able to make our living doing this".

However, despite their intentions of setting up a well run, viable ethical community business, Tall Grass is the only organization interviewed that was unable to access start up funding. According to the respondent they were even turned away from CED promoting organizations.

Tall Grass currently operates two locations in Winnipeg and is able to provide a sustainable income to 45 people including the owners and owners' children, many of whom are employed in the business. Tall Grass is also able to support one grain grower, one flour producer, and to partially support a number of other Manitoba based organic farmers.

North End Women's Centre (NEWC): The North End Women's Centre was founded by Chriss Tetlock—a single mother, and resident of Winnipeg's North End. Tetlock, according to the respondent, was "a mother on welfare, and she had needs, and those needs weren't being met, and she looked at how she could contribute to helping other women who were in the same boat as her…" (NEWC, p.1). The North End Women's Centre is a resource centre, the mission of which is "to assist women to gain control over their lives, to break the cycles of violence, poverty, isolation, or dependency that may affect them, and enable them and their families to achieve independence and

quality in their lives. The NEWC works toward the goal of equality for all women" (Gracey, p. 11).

According to the respondent from the NEWC, the centre grew out of a community meeting in 1984 where women were invited to discuss what services they would like to see in the North End. The centre was originally conceived of as a shelter but as the project developed the women involved realized that there was a greater need for a resource centre. For the respondent from NEWC, a sense that women from the North End of Winnipeg shared an identity as well as economic and social situations was a motivating factor in the development of the project.

NEWC has grown considerably since it first opened its doors in 1985 and now offers a wide variety of programming and services that have grown out of the needs of the women who were using the centre. The services of the Centre now include counseling services, information sessions, drumming groups, computer services, a free phone and coffee, a drop in area, and a variety of CED initiatives including: the Up Shoppe—a second hand business clothing store, the Opportunity Shop and 'Money and Women' workshops.

In October of 2002 the NEWC decided to hire a CED Coordinator for the Centre. This position was created in response to the reality that "there are training programs and education programs out there that a lot of our women don't I guess qualify for in that they do not have the necessary personal assets to feel confident in accessing a lot of the programs." According to the respondent from the centre, the NEWC is "like a pre-pre- training program."

The NEWC, as an organization, has gone through significant growing pains over the years. One of the first forays into CED for NEWC was the development of a clothing club into the Northern Star Worker's Co-op—a company that makes traditional star blankets. According to the respondent in describing the development of the Northern Star Workers Co-op "…before they sold the clothes, the women used to sit around and sew them and mend them and whatever, sit around and talk and socialize and the quilting grew out of that and it grew and grew and grew. … It was our first real true

economic development; those women were in the system, on welfare, disability, whatever, most never worked before."

Despite its growth, the NEWC had significant difficulties in setting up an maintaining the Northern Star Co- op. According to the respondent "we as an organization did not have the experience necessary to deal with everything that went on during North Star Collection … a manager was hired for it, and his dreams were even bigger. And it almost ate up this organization, it became like, so big for, that it was a threat to our organization…it was a really hard thing for the board and the staff to, to grasp, this was 10 years ago, you know CED as a terminology probably didn't even exist." In other regards too, the NEWC's experiences with the Northern Star Co-op were a mixed blessing—for the organization and for the participants in the project. According to the respondent, "…[women] that had multiple barriers to employment, that had no skills, are working. They may not be working full time quilting because that business won't support them now. So these women are successful, the project did create employment". However, the respondent goes on to say that most of the participants in the Northern Star Worker Co-op still work other jobs so that they can support themselves while still working in the Co-op.

According to the respondent, the experience of NEWC with the Northern Star Co- op has taught them the necessity of approaching new CED initiatives with caution. According to the respondent NEWC now only engages in social enterprise, stating that "we don't plan to grow it [referring specifically to the Op Shoppe] into a for-profit business, we don't plan to sell it to the employers once it's reached a certain point.... we will always retrieve ownership, if it is highly successful, all monies will be going back into either that business or into growing another program that there's a need for". The respondent from NEWC concludes by highlighting one of the many issues facing non-profit organizations engaging in CED initiatives. "There was, that was for a lot of the disparity, the disagreement came in when they wanted to take it further and we couldn't. The NEWC owned all the

assets, we're a non-profit centre, how can we give half our assets away." The NEWC currently exists and plans to remain, in the words of the respondent as a "resource centre that does CED."

North Point Douglas Women's Centre: The women of the North Point Douglas neighborhoods share a tradition of community organizing in defense of their neighborhood. Many of the women currently involved in the North Point Douglas Women's Centre (NPDWC) project were once united against the presence of a merchant in their neighborhood who was accused of exploiting the poverty of those in the area. According to one board member "Brother's Grocery store had been known to have a problematic impact on out community and had been picketed on several occasions for allegedly selling solvents. So replacing this store with a women's centre would not only rid the community of this problem it would also send a very positive message to the community" (notes from Fall 2003 AGM). This history of organizing together has helped the women of the community to come together to form what is now the North Point Douglas Women's Centre.

The North Point Douglas Women's Centre was developed as a result of funding that was made available in 1999 for community development in the area. A survey of women in the area revealed that the issues of primary importance to women in the community were poverty and poverty-related conditions that were contributing to the instability of the community and hindering women's ability to fully participate as citizens in the community. According to respondents from the Centre, women in the neighborhood "wanted a place for women to be able to gather and there weren't really any kind of meeting places in the community other than the community center …we wanted a place that was ours, a women's center, a place that the women could call their own and where they'd feel safe." The women involved in the development of the North Point Douglas Women's Centre were further motivated by the social and economic situation of poverty in the neighborhood in which they lived. This situation, according to one of the respondents from the Centre affected "[the women's] personal space."

The mission of the Centre is to "create opportunities for women in North Point Douglas to develop their potential and to engage fully as citizens in the neighborhood and in the broader community." (Promotional Brochure) According to one participant of the Centre " There is a need for women to do more than sit around not knowing what to do. Women need to learn from each other." (Quote from Promotional Brochure)

The Centre offers a variety of services to women of the North Point Douglas neighborhood including a community phone and computer, a lending library, free tea and coffee, a parenting group, arts and crafts, and computer classes. The Centre is looking at developing a community kitchen and garden, literacy programs and budgeting workshops, and a craft collective. One of the goals of the Centre is to ensure that the resources are available to women who choose to pursue employment or education, and to create a "cottage industry setting" to help women of the neighborhood develop and supplement their incomes.

West Central Women's Project: According to organizational materials, the West Central Women's Project is a "self- directed project by the women of the West Central Community" whose goals are to address neighborhood issues from a women's perspective. This project works within a "capacity building framework" that seeks to empower women so that they can help to determine local priorities (Voices: A monthly Newsletter of the West Central Women's Project, Aug 2003).

Similar to the development of the North Point Douglas Women's Centre, the West Central Women's Project was also created as a result of funding that was made available to the community. However, according to the respondent from the Centre, funding was made available in this case "to start a grass roots type project, to address it right at the base level which is the woman in the home." Individuals in the West End were approached through the Social Planning Council about the existence of available funding and, once the initial contact was made, the funders then undertook to canvas the community

about their perceptions of needs within the community. As the respondent from the project explains, the priorities that were determined via the survey were not always the same as what the funders had expected, for example the priorities that were voiced by women in the area were the need for spaces and places for recreation for the family as well as concern for the image of the community whereas the funders had assumed that the priorities for the women in the area would have been food security and safety concerns.

According to the project's mission statement, the WCWP "is a community based project that addresses issues at the neighbourhood level from the women's perspective. The women's project is based on the capacity building framework that emphasises processes to empower women to participate in determining local priorities. This ensures that the women's perspective is considered in service planning, programming and implementation of community programs. The overall goal of the women's project is to continue to build upon existing networks between women in order to create opportunities for shared experiences, support and to foster new learning. The goal of the women's project is to improve the quality of life in the neighbourhood, individually and collectively. The principles of the women's project include local control, inclusion of all women, participatory processes, social equity, skill development and individual and agency partnerships with the local neighbourhood and the broader community."

Wolseley Family Place (WFP): Located in Winnipeg's West Broadway neighbourhood, Wolseley Family Place is a resource centre that takes a holistic approach to family health and community development. Wolseley Family Place offers a variety of programming that encompasses a broad understanding of these terms including: a photojournalism workshop for youth, a community kitchen, gardening club and catering business, health and daycare services, crisis intervention and a parenting group.

For the respondent from WFP, cultural awareness and attention to the "ism's" that impact on, and often restrict women's lives is an important factor in their work. WFP operates from what the respondent considers a "strength based approach" to community development, valuing what the participants themselves bring to the centre and adopting a policy of employing the participants wherever possible.

The work of WFP is informed by feminist principles that guide decision making about the centre. In particular the respondent from WFP noted the importance of making decisions about the centre as a group.

Oyate Tipi Cumini Yape: Literally meaning "where the community lives, sharing and recycling" (Dakota), Oyate Tipi is an organization that accepts used furniture and household items and distributes them to "women and children who are trying to better themselves by escaping poverty or abusive situations" (www.oyatetipi.com). Oyate Tipi was formed in recognition that financial barriers are often one of the greatest for women leaving a violent relationship. Out of this recognition developed Oyate Tipi as an attempt to make best use of the resources that already exist in Winnipeg for women leaving these situations. As such, Oyate Tipi is partnered with ten service agencies around the city that refer women to Oyate Tipi for items as they need it. In this way Oyate Tipi is attempting to be a piece of a chain of continuous care for Winnipeg women.

According to the respondent from Oyate Tipi, one important piece of the work that they are doing is the fact that they are "very community based, we're very flexible to the needs of the community… I find the work places are more like families, it's very grassroots here, and there is very little politics. It's just, it's just people who are working for the people at the people's level."

North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC): The North End Community Renewal Corporation acts as an umbrella organization and coordinating body for development in Winnipeg's North End. According to the respondent from NECRC the organization "began about four years ago working on a mandate for the social, economic and cultural revitalization renewal of the North End of Winnipeg and uh the mandate emerged simultaneously from two sources on a community level, particularly community organizations were saying there's not enough big picture time for us, everyone was working away in their corner as hard as they can and frustrated by the lack A) the lack of time to do sort of strategic planning and B) lack of opportunities for joint effort and you know it was nobody's mandate to do that and so this organization was formed to do that and particularly to do that on a CED layer."

The NECRC was initiated by three partner corporations: SEED Winnipeg Inc, Community Education Development Authority (CEDA), and the Mennonite Central Committee in 1998.

The NECRC works on CED development over a five-year period in four strategic areas including: housing, employment development, business development, community development that includes safety and culture.[6]

[6] The organizational profiles for SEED Winnipeg and the Spence Neighbourhood Association have not been included in the Appendix, as information from these interviews was not included in the final report.