

Rethinking the Factors of Production for a World of Common Ownership and Sustainability: Europe and Latin America Compared

Review of Radical Political Economics
2016, Vol. 48(1) 36–52
© 2015 Union for Radical
Political Economics
Reprints and permissions:
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/0486613415586981
rrpe.sagepub.com


Molly Scott Cato¹ and Peter North²

Abstract

The classical economists bequeathed us an understanding of the nature of economies in terms of three factors of production: land, labor, and capital. If we are to transcend the unsustainable and inequitable economy we live with today, an intellectual reinterpretation of these three factors is a vital first step. In this paper we provide such a liberating reinterpretation with examples from European and Latin American praxis.

JEL classification: B59, J80, P48

Keywords

factors of production, commons, solidarity economy, social economy

1. Introduction

Although neoclassical economics presents the market system as a universal model of human effort existing in a continuous present, careful anthropological studies have demonstrated that this is far from the case. Smith's caricature of an essentialized human proclivity for "barter and truck" has been challenged by those economists and anthropologists who took the trouble to study in depth the relationship between people, states, and economies in human societies in space and/or time (Hart 2001), most famously the studies of Karl Polanyi ([1944]1980) and of Marshall Sahlins (1972). What these authors argued was that the processes of acquiring the means of subsistence, sharing material goods, deciding what surplus should be generated and shared, and how that forms the basis of study of the discipline of economics have varied widely and continue to do so.

This has important implications for the project of creating an economy based not on individualized competition but on democracy and on various types of commons. The false assertion that

¹Roehampton University, London

²University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK

Date received: December 29, 2013

Date accepted: December 10, 2014

Corresponding Author:

Peter North, Department of Geography and Planning, School for Environmental Sciences, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, L69 7ZT, UK.

Email: p.j.north@liverpool.ac.uk

aspects of the design of capitalism such as private ownership, competition, the division of labor, and the extraction of surplus value are natural, universal principles rather than contingent historical constructs in place and time limits both our ability to visualize and to design economies according to principles that might facilitate living prosperously, convivially, and democratically within planetary limits, and to achieve a high degree of social equity. The purpose of this paper is not to revive the findings of anthropologists about how other societies have tackled the essential economic problem about the creation and distribution of resources, but rather to attempt a re-theorization of this process using contemporary examples that challenge predominant neoclassical conceptions of optimal economic processes and forms, and of the profit-maximizing, self-interested individual as the driver of market-based economies. We do not focus on individual goods or commodities but rather on what Polanyi (1944) called the “fictitious commodities” of capital, land, and labor that, within classical and neoclassical economic theory, provide the basic resources that are used to produce the goods and services that are ultimately bought and sold in markets and upon which we all depend for our livelihoods. Can they be brought into common ownership and control, “commoned”?

It can be easier to think of land as being suitable for management in common than can capital or work. However, in this paper we show that processes of “working in common” are more widespread than might be thought in more pessimistic analyses of processes of neoliberalization, privatization, and the destruction of the planet (Harvey 2005; Kovel 2007). In this paper we examine examples of the “commoning” of these resources – capital, land, and labor – as active processes whereby subaltern organizations and groups of people identify and take control of resources and manage them in common, *i.e.* democratically and collectively, not privately or in an exploitative manner. We argue that what we call “commoning” needs to be guided by how those engaged in this process want to live well, by the resources they have to hand, and by the limits of the planet to absorb wastes.

This fundamental challenge to neoclassical economic theory is important in building a convivial and democratic commons-based economy because, if we accept the individualist and privatized model of conceptualization of the most basic resources within an economy, it will not be possible to create systems of just allocation and common ownership further down the path in more complex economies. To create a framework within which a commons-based economy can be created, we have to begin by going directly to the heart of the problem: the understanding of the basic “factors of production” in terms of private, not common, ownership and control. In this article we will both challenge the conceptualization of land, labor, and capital as “factors of production,” exploring Polanyi’s idea of a “fictitious commodity” in a contemporary context, and provide examples from praxis that might foreshadow a rethinking of these basic productive resources in a communal perspective as a contribution to a reformulation of market-based economies on democratic, convivial, and inclusive – or common – as opposed to privatized, competitive, and individualistic, lines. Our examples are drawn from contemporary emancipatory practice in Europe and Latin America.

This project is inspired by the work of cultural economic geographers such as J. K. Gibson-Graham (2006a, b). We argue that totalizing conceptions of one monolithic exploitative “Capitalism” creates a monster that we feel inadequate to confront such that many of us can more easily envisage the end of the world as a result of climate crisis than the end of capitalism. To counter this we argue for a process of resubjectification, for a proactive project of thinking through the diversity of ways in which people make ethical choices about how to interact with each other to make a living within the limits of the planet to sustain those choices, irrespective of formal conceptions of rational profit maximization as the driver of economic decision making. We need to create new visions of how we might live, and engage in the patient work of building and creating alternatives through our economic practices, seeing problems not as insurmountable barriers, but as issues to grapple with. We need to think more about “how,” and suggest that “not

yet” does not mean “never” (Gibson-Graham 2006a). We need to work more on developing our power to act, and focus less on what constrains us, a focus that can too easily lead to passivity and powerlessness (Holloway 2002, 2010). Our objective here is to help move towards an economy for the Anthropocene: that period in geological time that we currently inhabit, one where humans have changed the physical nature of the planet to such an extent that the atmosphere is heating and vital ecosystems are being depleted to the extent that the viability of humanity in large numbers across large swathes of the planet’s surface is under threat (Gibson-Graham and Roelvink 2010). How can we live, work, use land, and create dignified, vibrant, and convivial livelihoods for ourselves in ways that do not destroy the capacity of the planet to maintain life (Barkin and Lemus 2014)?

The paper includes three sections that deal directly with each of the classical factors of production: capital, labor, and land. In each case we provide some critical discussion of the theory of the factor before providing examples of how it is being differently conceptualized as a form of commons in practice, and could be further reconceptualized and reworked through new emancipatory practices. To illustrate the argument we draw on examples from the literature, from our own research, and from research we undertook together between 2012-12 examining social and solidarity economy practices in Europe and Latin America. Here we examined social and solidaristic economic practices which put meeting human need, thinking about how we want to live with others and to what end, and how we might live sustainably before conceptions of profitability, efficiency, and how to engage with global economic circuits of production (Amin 2009). Before embarking on this central part of the paper we include a purely theoretical section which addresses what is meant by a factor of production and how this definition is affected by the expansion of the economy to meet planetary limits and by the near-exhaustion of some of the basic resources upon which our contemporary economy depends.

2. Why the Non-human World Is Not a Resource or Factor of Production for Humans

It seems immediately apparent to those who would engage in the production of goods that resources have been conveniently and unproblematically made available in abundance by nature to provide his/her raw materials. Initially, through the discovery of the use of such minerals as copper and tin and then through a synergistic and mutually stimulating relationship between technology and geographical discovery, the vast abundance of natural resources that form the earth’s bounty have been exploited with increasing speed and intensity since the beginning of the Bronze Age. This process has both assumed and implanted a particular kind of relationship with the non-human world; a relationship of clearly stated exploitation that troubled and continues to trouble peoples who have a closer, more respectful, and often reverent attitude towards nature and her bounty (Galeano 1971). Sale (2000) caricatures this cornucopian, anthropocentric view:

the natural world is essentially there for our benefit, our use, our comfort. The Colorado River is there to provide water for the people and farms of Southern California, needing only the technology of a Boulder Dam to complete what nature forgot to do; the Northwestern forests are there to provide lumber that the growing populations of the carelessly sprawling suburbs need to build their rightful houses; the Hudson River flows purposefully to the Atlantic so that human wastes and industrial poisons such as PCBs can be carried away, out of sight and mind, to the sea.

It was such a perspective of the early Enlightenment that gave rise to the fundamental idea that the natural world could be divided up into a number of physical resources, rather as the carcase of a dead cow can be divided between sirloin and rump, as though neither the earth nor the animal

had any rights or independent existence beyond use-value for humans as factors of production. Although we will use the terminology of factors of production throughout this paper, we will do so with the understanding that the parcelling out of nature and people into resources and work units is problematic in our attempt to build a holistic and respectful alternative economy. We also understand that elements of the non-human world are not “resources” or factors of production until humans need them. Changes in socio-technical systems can mean that what is at one time a resource ceases to be so at a later date; here we can cite the nineteenth century reliance on guano before the invention of nitrate fertilizers, and the relative uselessness of oil before the invention of the internal combustion engine. Thus what are resources or factors of production is socially constructed at specific times and places, and changes over time (Bridge and Le Billon 2013).

To conclude these introductory remarks, then, we should make it clear that the concept of a “factor of production” assumes a particular view of the natural world that we do not share. Although we use this conceptualization as the basis for our discussion in this paper, we do so from a fundamentally critical stance. Before continuing our discussion we clearly assert our own position that the non-human world, what we call nature, exists in and for herself, that humans are one species amongst many, and that the non-human world is not a store-chest open to raiding at the whim of humanity. Each human and non-human life has an intrinsic value that the conceptualization of a person as a rational, utility-maximizing, egocentric unit of labor denigrates.

3. Commoning Capital

Taking forward our non-totalizing conceptualization of discourses of “capitalism,” in our dissection of the three factors of production of classical economic theory we begin with the one that seems to have the least claim on being a natural resource and yet appears most subject to socially constructed conceptions of constraint and of limits. Capital is simultaneously the most abstract and obviously socially constructed (since the end of the gold standard, at least) of the three factors of production (North 2007; Ingham 2004), yet it also plays a very concrete role in putting labor together with the physical assets necessary for production. We focus on how money can be “commoned.” By this, we mean ways that money can be changed from something “out there,” created by banks and governments perhaps from or as a fiat proxy of natural resources like gold, to something that is created and used by subaltern groups to facilitate bringing the economy into democratic, common ownership and control (North 2007).

Economists often use the word “capital” confusingly to refer to different things, of which the idea of fixed or manufactured capital—the machinery and tools that productive enterprises need to make the goods they will ultimately sell—is the most common. Others, either critically in Bordeau’s case (Bordieu 2005), or through an economistic attempt to quantify and appropriate other elements of life as an integral element of processes of neoliberalization, inappropriately label other social and cultural phenomena social or cultural “capital” (Fine 2001). The definitional confusion regarding “capital” in neoclassical economics may well be intentional on the part of those who promote this paradigm, since the obfuscation of the difference between purchasing a machine and having the power to create money helps to distract attention from the crucial power of the latter in any capitalist economy. Polanyi considered money to be “merely a token of purchasing power which, as a rule, is not produced at all, but comes into being through the mechanism of banking or state finance” (1944: 76). While Polanyi is right to define money as a “token,” his “merely” is somewhat confusing, as is his equation of “banking” with “state finance” (particularly for our purposes in this special issue) as it is precisely the location of the power to create finance that will enable or retard if not destroy any attempt to create an economy based on common ownership. Guevara understood this most clearly, which is why much of his most intense work following the Cuban revolution in 1959 was to construct a system of exchange using money that avoided the exploitation inherent in a capitalist money system (Yaffe 2009).

Chavez had also drawn this conclusion from the recurrent debt crises in Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s; hence his attempt to introduce mechanisms of direct exchange between the countries of the Bolivarian South, and to create the sucre, a currency that enabled trade within the Mercosur area without the need to have any contact with the dollar or its sphere of influence (Mathur 2010). The realization that vast quantities of valuable resources were leaving the countries of Latin America with only paper or debt coming in the opposite direction led to a generalized revulsion against what Eduardo Galeano ([1971]1997) colorfully called “the open veins of Latin America,” the metaphor through which the vampiric behavior of capitalist finance was understood and was rejected. Thus the sucre is a tool for developing a commons among Latin American nations.

Since our focus is on a productive economy we will not be considering “capital” in the form of the 97 percent of all financial transactions that are speculative, forms of arbitrage, or those innovative “casino” financial products bought and sold as products in their own right and which have no contact with and make no contribution to the productive economy (Mellor 2010; Leyshon and Thrift 1997; Strange 1986). Such transactions would have no place in a sustainable economy based on a commons. Rather, we argue that we can reconceptualize and develop our understandings of capital. How can money be brought into collective ownership and control, and used as a tool for extending the commons? How can money be used as a tool to help us think about how we want to live, and about the economic practices we engage in to enact our economies? What forms of capital do we value and reward, within sustainable ecosystems? For the purposes of this paper we are seeking solutions based on common ownership of capital, seen as multiple and socially constructed, appropriate and useful at some times and places, not others (Zelizer 1997, 2005) rather than universal, and state sanctioned and enforced.

Emancipating money has become one of the most vibrant responses to the global financial crisis. North (2014a) has divided the currently existing forms of alternative, grassroots-created currencies into three types: networks based primarily on exchange using community-created currencies that are not convertible with state sanctioned money, for example local exchange trading (or LETS) schemes; systems of exchange based explicitly on time such as time banks or Ithaca Hours (see more in section 5, below); and paper based exchange systems relying on reserve currencies for their credibility and convertible with them (the most well-known being the transition currencies [see North 2010] or the *Chiemgauer* [see North and Weber 2013]). Given that they rely on the resources and commitment of grassroots actors rather than by reference to state-backed money, the first two offer the most positive basis for facilitating exchange within an economy based on common ownership. North (2007) also provides a theoretical account of possibilities and limits of the role of alternative, grassroots-generated finance in building convivial solidarity economies through which environmentally minded, anti-globalization, and anti-capitalist activists create models of community-generated and managed money as a critique of globalized capitalism, and as “mobilizing” or “everyday” utopias (Levitas 2010; Cooper 2003). This money, activists hope, prefigures and generates the sort of sustainable, egalitarian commons-based economy that activists normatively value, and which they would like to see existing in more robust forms in the future. He points to examples of this in the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, France, Germany, and Hungary.

In Brazil, Banco Palmas offers an example of community-generated finance that is supporting the development of a solidarity-based economy (de Moraes 2010). The Conjunto Palemeira is a rural town of 30,000 people in northeastern Brazil which has traditionally suffered from high unemployment. Although the town did have small-scale manufacturing, the products were sold in nearby cities and much of the value was lost to middlemen. Communal activity in the town developed as a result of demonstrations against the poor state of infrastructure; the town had no facilities for sanitation, clean water, electricity, or other public services. From the early 1980s an “Association of Inhabitants of Palmeira Neighborhood” was established and in turn this group set

up the Banco Palmas, which issues its own currency without being backed by the national currency. There are currently around 30,000 palmas in circulation (more than \$15,000). The bank has six paid employees, who receive 20 percent of their salary in palmas. Banco Palmas makes small loans to local people which only circulate within the neighborhood. With these loans local people create small businesses, thereby generating an income and enabling them to pay the loans back. The creation of currency has enabled the strengthening of the local economy and the creation of more than 1,000 jobs.

In the Global North there are different but related problems. The city of Bristol in southwest England has branch offices of large financial corporations, generating many jobs for the city both directly and in the associated service sector. However, as in Palmeiras, much of the profit associated with the financial services industry does not recirculate through the city as many times as it could before it is extracted to head offices in London or globally, with the result that many locally-owned businesses do not feel they benefit from the existence of the sector as much as they could. Pockets of spatially concentrated severe deprivation also continue to exist in the city. To ensure that wealth generated in Bristol circulates more effectively in the city, a group of local environmentalists established the Bristol pound (£) in the summer of 2012.¹ By the summer of 2014 some 680 businesses accepted them and the organizers were on track for seeing £25,000 in circulation. Here, in both towns the commons in terms of the local economy is strengthened using a currency created and used by the community.

Progress in Bristol has been good, but, as with the nearby Stroud pound (Cato and Suarez 2012) and the other UK “transition currencies” (in Totnes, Lewes, and Brixton; see North [2010]) local currencies in developed economies tend to find it difficult to compete with a powerful national currency as many ask “why change money you can spend everywhere into money you cannot?” Others encounter cultural difficulties associated with a long history of individualist capitalist activity, wanting the cheapest rather than most ethically produced goods. The downsides of cheap commodities produced in the Global South through exploitative labor practices, unequal terms of trade and resource extraction, and environmental degradation are occluded by distance. Consequently, these currencies have yet to move from a tool for facilitating exchange between subaltern groups who feel themselves to be part of a commons to a method for generating new, ethical forms of production and a deeper commons-based economy (North 2014b).

Others have experimented with new forms of commons using state-created money. One of the most damaging consequences of the financial crisis in the Global North has been the failure of the circuits of investment capital for small businesses. There has been a virtual mutual response in the form of investment circles, of which the largest and most well-known is Zopa.² This funding club effectively creates a commons composed of direct virtual relationships between lenders and borrowers in a way which excludes the banking intermediary and the value that it has historically extracted (Kupp and Anderson 2007). This system alone has facilitated the borrowing of more than £200m since it was founded in 2005 (Moulds 2012). Paradoxically, it may be that re-imagining uses for pre-existing forms of financial infrastructure and state-sanctioned money in innovative ways is a fruitful tool for constructing convivial economies supplementing – perhaps more effectively – the wholesale creation of new forms of exchange from below through complementary or alternative currencies (North and Longhurst 2013). Commoning capital is a process, the full potential of which has yet to be exhausted. This may especially be the case outside those places where quite sophisticated grassroots currencies have been created such as Bristol, Ithaca, and Bavaria.

¹See <http://bristolpound.org/>

²www.zopa.com

4. Commoning Work

How profit should be generated, shared, and used in the first place is a key element of commoning. For some time, working people have become subjected to precarious working conditions in increasingly casualized economies. In the Global South this has traditionally been in the form of subjection to Western capital and to resource extraction (Galeano 1971), whereas in the North it takes the form of increasingly precarious and deskilled employment in a world where restructuring manufacture has created a workshop for the world in East Asia with the result that in the Global North the industrial working class is largely surplus to requirements (Harvey 2004). Even formerly secure groups like university graduates can be part of the new “precariat” (Mason 2012). Commoning work in this context means the emancipation of labor from wage slavery and its replacement with democratic control over the labor and production process in a commons of work-sharing.

Across Latin America, activists have shown that “another production is possible” (de Sousa Santos 2006) by developing a sector of horizontally self-managed enterprises through what are called processes of *auto-gestion*. *Auto-gestion* literally means self-management, but has a deeper meaning which nods more towards collective self-generation or autonomous creation (Sitrin 2012). The UK has a similar tradition of “worker-managed firms” which is part of the wider cooperative movement (Cornforth 1983). In cooperatively managed workplaces those who carry out the various productive tasks take the important decisions about everyday working conditions in common. This can mean prosaic decisions about what clothes can or cannot be worn at work, when lunch and refreshment breaks should be taken, what music should be played or decoration should adorn the workplace, how people should be spoken to, and higher level decisions about strategy and finance. What shall we produce? How hard shall we work? How much will we sell it for? How will we organize our enterprise? Collectively with everyone taking every decision (Latin Americans would say horizontally), or with a supervisor or management committee elected to take those decisions? Will we make a profit, and if so, what will we do with it? What will we forgo in favor of future investment? How do we pass on the investment to future generations? How do we create and maintain that which we need to share in common: clean environments, an infrastructure, a socially cohesive society?

Enterprises run collectively or cooperatively can arise in a number of different ways and this can have important implications for their future trajectory. In the UK during the 1970s some 200 enterprises were occupied by their workers (Coates 2003; Sherry 2010: 119-128). More recently in the Global South, workers have responded to restructuring by occupying and running 130 recovered enterprises themselves (Lavaca Collective 2004; Ness and Azzellini 2011; Ruggeri 2013). Sometimes, as in the case of most of the recovered factories of Latin America and with most of the “phoenix” cooperatives in the UK in the 1970s, formally profitable capitalist firms went bankrupt, giving employees the opportunity to acquire their assets. After their liberation they still faced the same difficult market conditions that had caused the failure of the capitalist firm and many struggled to become successful cooperative businesses, not least through a failure to access necessary finance capital in difficult economic circumstances and the inexperience of the workers in terms of managing the enterprise (Cornforth 1983; Lima 2007).

Not all failed, and there have been many successes where “phoenix” or recovered cooperative enterprises have later prospered. A prominent example of a successful “phoenix” style cooperative is the Tower Colliery in South Wales, which was bought by the miners with a combination of their redundancy money and a bank loan and which operated profitably for 13 years until the seam of coal was exhausted (Cato 2004). In Brazil and Argentina, central, state, and local government, trade unions, and local residents have rallied round recovered enterprises ensuring their longevity and the generation of more than precarious employment for their members (Lima 2007). For example, the formerly state-owned Campichuelo printing cooperative we visited in Buenos Aires, Argentina, had been slated for privatization in 1992. The workers occupied the plant and won the

right to continue as a cooperative providing a livelihood for 42 current staff and pensioners. 70 percent of the cooperative's work comes from government contracts. At other times the state has been supportive in terms of judicially ruling against the former owners who abandoned their businesses and wrote off their assets in difficult times, but who later wanted them back into private ownership once the sweat equity of their former workers had returned the abandoned property to profitability. In the case of the IMPA cooperative of Buenos Aires or Zanon of Nequen, the support has been from community members who have helped supplement income from production by turning unused parts of the factories over for alternative forms of use value (an art gallery and barter market at IMPA, a rock venue at Zanon) (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2013). Here we nod towards labor connecting with alternative forms of money (a mixed economy of money and labor flowing through the enterprise) and alternative uses of the land the factory is on to build a new commons. Why not production, culture, and community use of the same space in common rather than the capitalist expropriation of assets for private control by the owner?

In other cases worker-managed firms arise as a result of the problem of succession, when the entrepreneur who started the firm wishes to retire and transfer their assets in the firm to the workforce. The most famous example of such a cooperative in the UK context is the Scott Bader Commonwealth. Using the cooperative principle of cooperatives trading preferentially with cooperatives, Baxi is now supplying boilers to the 10,000 homes owned by the Welsh housing mutual RCT Homes, and paying a proportion of the value of sales to the company's regeneration fund Meadow Prospect, to enable further enterprise development in a highly deprived area of South Wales, demonstrating the greater social potential of a mutual or commons-based approach to enterprise.³ A third type of worker-managed firm is one that begins its life as a cooperative due to the political and social commitment of the founders. In the UK context two prominent examples are Loch Fyne oysters and Suma Wholefoods. Suma was set up in 1975 as a wholesaling operation to service wholefood shops in the north of England; it now employs around 150 people and delivers UK-wide. It is still owned by its members, who rotate work tasks including management roles and specialist jobs such as accounting and van driving (Cannell 2006). These politically-committed cooperatives frequently achieve longevity and continue to take democracy seriously, but (like many conventional SMEs) can struggle to be comfortably profitable (Cornforth 1983).

Phoenix, endowed, and ideological cooperatives are all examples of workers coming together to gain control of their working life in common and rethinking labor within firms. They take decisions collectively about how they wish to work, how much profit they will make, and what they will do with it. Their experience counters what the left has often discounted as what one set of socialists in the 1970s condemned as "misguided attempts to find ways to employ ourselves rather than overthrowing the oppressive system itself" (see the proposals from Forbundet Kommunist [1979] and Albury's [1979] scathing reply). A contemporary version of this argument comes from the British Marxist newspaper *Socialist Worker*: Molineux (1994) argued that it is not possible under capitalism to create permanent havens of alternative ways of living.

It could not be done by Robert Owen and the utopian socialists of the 19th Century. It could not be done by the hippy communes in the 60s or by workers' cooperatives in the 70s. ... Such alternative communities are never a practicable option for a large majority of working class people, and even for the minority who join them they are seldom viable in the long term. The pressures of the capitalist economy are too strong, too pervasive and too insidious to be resisted indefinitely this way.

We would cite Marx and Engels against this pessimistic reading. Marx and Engels lauded the utopian Robert Owen (who we discuss below) and the cooperative movement:

³<http://www.meadowprospect.co.uk/towerfund/default.htm>

as one of the great transforming forces of the present society based on class antagonisms. Its great merit is to practically show, that the present pauperising and despotic system of the subordination of labour to capital can be superseded by the republican and beneficent system of the association of free and equal producers.

But they also went on to argue:

Restricted, however, to the dwarfish forms to which the individual wage slaves can elaborate it by their private efforts, the co-operative system will never transform society. To convert social production into one large and harmonious system of free and co-operative labour, general social changes are wanted, changes in the general conditions of society, never to be realised save by the transfer of the organised forces of society, viz. the state power, from capitalists and to the producers themselves. (Fernbach 1974)

Although these examples of worker-managed firms are inspiring, like other SMEs they can struggle to compete on price alone with more rapacious competitors. They may provide precarious employment for many years, with less remuneration for the workers than that provided by conventional businesses. The democratic credentials of some cooperatives can be skin deep, with managers finding it difficult to involve the workforce in decision taking as much as they would like, with the workforce simultaneously struggling to do more than “think like workers,” doing what they are told, uninterested in wider management questions. In particular, they could struggle to take the hard decisions necessary to establish the cooperative in difficult times, although, conversely, where the workforce did make the leap from worker to cooperator, their ideological commitment and hard work bore dividends. In Brazil and Venezuela some cooperatives can be little more than an illicit attempt of conventional business owners to access the tax breaks and other forms of support cooperatives can get in Latin America (Lima 2007).

Section 3 has already outlined the direct response of many communities to the situation of wage slavery: to create their own currencies. However, only if the commitment to solidarity amongst those who trade in the new currency is strong can work be commoned in this way as the way that some skills and trades are considered more valuable than others, leading to differentials in hourly pay, can be hard to overcome. To avoid this problem some have attempted to common the labor process by establishing a medium of exchange and a reward for work that is directly related to the time invested in production rather than the demand for the product. This was the theoretical insight of Robert Owen who had come to doubt the justice of a work-system that required the many to work extremely hard to generate profits for the few. He saw cooperatives as one solution, but also believed that a more fundamental reconfiguration of the monetary system was the other crucial requirement for achieving economic justice (Cole 1925; Donnachie 2000). He established “labor exchanges” where the medium of exchange was the “labor note,” which related directly to time, so that people were trading in terms of the time they spent making items, equating use value and exchange value. During 1833 the exchanges caught the imagination amongst the 1,000-odd artisan producers who used them (Cato and Bickle 2008) although in time a number of issues (for more see North 2008: 43-50) meant that eventually the exchanges failed.

The early gap between hopes and experience notwithstanding, many of the contemporary LETS and time money schemes discussed above and North American hour-based paper currency notes like Ithaca Hours (Jacob *et al.* 2004) have had more success rewarding work with a currency denominated in time. These currencies can work well where there is a commitment to rewarding work equally from the community that uses them, less well when there is not (North 1999). They struggle to value goods: how many hours for a fridge (Maurer 2003)? Consequently time-based currencies are not widely used outside places that attract large numbers of ideologically-minded people committed to working together in convivial, inclusive, and egalitarian ways, and they have not made the leap into generating new forms of production. Consequently

pessimists would call these spaces “ten square miles surrounded by (capitalist) reality” (North 2014b), unable to challenge what Marx and Engels called the “heavy artillery” of cheap commodities produced in exploitative ways in the majority world. They can thrive or struggle depending on their place in global production flows and systems of domination and exchange that they do not control, such that for some cooperators “where you work” (in global networks of production) is more important than “what you do” or “how you do it” (Lebowitz 2006). We prefer a more hopeful reading. We would argue that in these early steps we see a range of attempts to common the work process and labor as a commodity. In Latin America in the recovered factories and in processes of *auto-gestion* we see – and applaud – an attempt to challenge the peripheral location that the global capitalist division of labor assigns working people in the majority world.

5. Land and Liberty

Although land was always the primary factor of production to classical economists, neoclassical economists have downplayed its importance. Their argument relies on the particular way that they define land: as including all the resources contained within or beneath it. These resources, they argue, can always find substitutes, so that if they become scarce their price will rise, and producers will seek an alternative input to their production process. In the past few years, however, we have seen evidence that this poorly conceptualized approach to resources is changing, both in the corporate discourse and in the practice of corporations which are now acquiring land in a process that threatens not just potential commons-based economies, but also the livelihoods of the world’s remaining peasants and the urban working poor who depend on cheap food.

The clearest evidence of the shift in discourse is found in the report from global consultants McKinsey (Dobbs *et al.* 2011) which provides a number of striking graphics indicating that, as environmentalists have been arguing for several decades (Meadows 1974; Meadows *et al.* 2005), there is indeed a scarcity of some of the global economy’s most important resources. They conclude that the decline in the price of commodities relative to GDP during the past century is coming to an end and identify the beginning of a new era with a multiplicity of “resource-related shocks” and rises in commodity prices that will offset the declines in those prices as a result of increased efficiency of extraction. Most importantly from the perspective of this special issue, their prescription is that the most efficient way to use the remaining limited resources is to privatize them, since the technical and managerial methods available to the global corporations will solve the challenge of inefficiency posed by traditional economies in the areas of the world where resources are still available. While it is made clear that “action will be necessary to ensure that sufficient capital is available and to address market failures associated with property rights, incentive issues and innovation” (Dobbs *et al.* 2011: 3), no mention is made of ownership of resources except as a barrier to be overcome. These arguments are exact parallels to those made in England during the period of displacement of peasants from their common land during the 17th century. For example:

It is an undeniable maxim that everyone by the light of nature and reason will do that which makes for his greatest advantage. ... The advancement of private persons will be the advantage of the public. (Joseph Lee, *A Vindication of a Regulated Enclosure*, 1656; quoted in Tawney 1998: 232)

As Polanyi so clearly pointed out (also see Thompson 1981) the reality of these ‘enclosures’ was that systems of farming that maximized profit and rent extraction eliminated the small-scale livelihoods of commoners and peasants.

Thus global elite players, following McKinsey’s advice, are already engaged in a rapid process of land-grabbing. Evidence about exactly how much land is being acquired and how rapidly is extremely poor (World Bank 2010), but what is clear is that corporations, as well as

governments, are rapidly acquiring land for the production of food, fuel, or fiber crops for the purposes of export and to ensure food and fuel security for their own citizens rather than to promote a more equitable use of resources (De Schutter 2011).

The most obvious first step towards a more common approach to land ownership that challenges the political economy of the resource land grab is to undertake a policy of land reform making land distribution more equal, and land enjoyed by and used by ordinary citizens for their own use or consumption rather than by elite landowners for profit and/or speculation. In the Global North the reverse policy is followed and industrial farmers are subsidized on a grand scale, making Southern farmers “uncompetitive.” These subsidies constitute vast amounts of public spending; from 1998 to 2004 U.S. farmers received an annual average of \$17bn. (Kirwan 2009), whereas the EU Common Agricultural Policy involved transfers to farmers of about €55bn. annually (European Commission 2008). Land remains in the ownership of those who cannot use it profitably, while others who could provide for their own needs directly from that land cannot gain access to it.

Land reform is often undertaken following decolonization or in response to an excessive concentration of land ownership. With the creation of Czechoslovakia following the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian empire in 1918, the vast estates of the aristocracy were divided between village communities (Cornwall 1997), many of which still enjoy common access to forest and arable land today. In many parts of the Global South land reform is an active policy with significant reallocations of land taking place in the Philippines, South Africa (Wily 2000), Bolivia (Sikor and Müller 2009), Brazil (discussed below), and Zimbabwe (Scoones *et al.* 2011). A detailed empirical study of the latter, based on ten years of research of land reform in Masvingo Province, indicates that media stories of gross inefficiency following land reform are misleading since there was no evidence of widespread food insecurity nor a collapse in productivity (Scoones *et al.* 2011).

Michael Lipton's (2009) research covers the land reforms during the 1950s in Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, as well as in West Bengal in 1969-84. In all cases his study indicates that the weight of evidence is that smallholders produce more per hectare than large-scale farmers. Some of the explanation for the poor economic assessment of output following land reform is that much of what is being produced is used for direct consumption, rather than being traded in a market, and hence does not feature at all in conventional economic measures. This is an important point to note in general when commons systems are compared with market systems, and suggests the importance of new systems of economic measurement as well as conceptualization of economic productivity and resources (Anderson 1991).

The most renowned example of popular action to common land access is surely that found in Brazil, one of the most unequal societies in the world. Brazil's inequality is exacerbated by the pattern of land use in which 1.6 percent of the population who are landowners control nearly half of the nation's farmland and 3 percent of the population own two-thirds of the arable land. This inequality can, however, be challenged. Article 184 of the Brazilian constitution requires the government “to expropriate for the purpose of agrarian reform, rural property that is not performing its social function.” This clause has been extensively used by the Brazilian rural landless peasants movement *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (MST) in their settlement of the land of absentee landlords (Fernandes 2005; Wolford 2004, 2005; Branford and Rocha 2002). MST, now the largest social movement in Latin America with an estimated membership of 1.5 million people and a presence in 23 of Brazil's 27 states, organizes the occupation of unused land which is then farmed cooperatively, alongside the construction of houses, schools, and clinics.

Drawing on a history of peasant struggle for land during the 1950s and 1960s such as the Ligas Camponesas or “peasant leagues,” in October 1983 a large group of landless peasants from across the state of Rio Grande do Sul in southern Brazil occupied a 9,200 ha. cattle ranch which was owned by an absentee landlord, and the MST was born. Over the following eight years the MST staged thirty-six more occupations alongside protest rallies, marches, and hunger strikes.

They eventually succeeded in settling 1,250 families on their own land. The campaign has led to the redistribution of nearly 30 million hectares of land; today some 45 percent of Brazil's agrarian settlements are connected to the MST, which has achieved title to land for more than 350,000 families and another 180,000 are waiting for the title to the land they have occupied.

Commoning is central to the praxis of MST. After initially mimicking intensive agriculture on the land gained through their occupations, the MST has begun to experiment with alternative forms of agriculture and has produced the first organic seeds in Latin America (Branford and Rocha 2002: 211-239). David Featherstone (2013) argues that an important context for the MST's experiments with alternative forms of agriculture has been a shift in terms of the "enemy" of the MST from "the old latifundiários" (landowners) to "environmentally unsustainable" global agribusiness (Stédile 2007: 198) such that through the land it occupies it has sought to provide actually existing alternatives to exploitative modes of industrial agriculture. Joao Rockett, a self-educated agronomist who was involved in helping the MST produce organic seeds, has argued for forms of land utilization that have social and environmental benefits:

For instance, we're cultivating three varieties of wheat - one that's good for noodles, another for bread and another for biscuits. The other day a settler came back with an old variety of wheat that produces excellent straw for hats. Imagine a multinational company letting you grow wheat for that! But people love it. It fosters their sense of community. (Rocha 2002)

Allies of the MST such as the Confédération Paysanne and Via Campesina have backed alternative proposals for rural development based around "solidaristic agriculture" (Herman and Kuper 2003: 106-107). For example, Via Campesina argued:

La Via Campesina believe we must implement new initiatives aiming at changing the model of production. Local production and people based protection of resources should be encouraged because it uses less fossil energy and it maintains livelihoods and local communities. Small farmers around the world defend food sovereignty as a way to overcome the climate crisis. It is the people's right to define their own food policies, with a priority to local food production and sustainable small scale agriculture. (Quoted by Featherstone 2013: 52)

Others have struggled to defend common access to water, with Bolivia's "water wars" against the privatization of previously commonly-accessed water as perhaps the paradigmatic example (Olivera 2004). In Naples and Berlin recent citizen-led struggles attempted to municipalize water and electricity respectively. In other examples, in both the Global North and South choices have been made over the use of land collectively for open space, as woodland, for food production, or for living. Scotland is following Brazil's example in legislating for the right of tenant farmers to buy the land they farm and a community's right to buy abandoned or neglected land irrespective of the landowner's willingness or otherwise to sell, and for one million acres of land to be in community ownership by 2020 (Webb 2014).

One example from our research illustrates the commoning of land, this time in a peri-urban environment. In Buenos Aires we visited the *Cooperativa Consumo y Vivienda* ("consume and live cooperative") in Quilmes, in the industrial southeast of Buenos Aires Province. The housing cooperative was established in 1983 on swampy, mosquito-infested land which the first pioneering families bought for 70,000 pesos. They raised the money to buy the land, build the first houses, and put in the infrastructure together through fund raising parties to supplement individual contributions. Thirty years of hard work later, the cooperators we spoke to in 2013 were very proud of what they had achieved. They had established a cooperative bakery which supplied many local cafés, a metalwork studio which made window fixings, and a sewing works which supplied the local police with their uniforms. They ran a café and nursery, and had organized a place for the kids to play inside and on computer games when they are older. The local microcredit project has

an office there. Their football pitch is used by all the local leagues. All this had been achieved with no help from the state at any time over the past thirty years; in fact the state had objected that their houses, designed by a community architect, did not fit building regulations.

The residents continue to manage their affairs in common through an assembly which elects a rotating committee which in turn takes decisions by consensus. After the financial crisis of the early 2000s it would have made economic sense just to buy houses in the nearby town as they were so cheap rather than continue to reclaim the land, put in the infrastructure, and build new houses, but they wanted to continue their experiment. The nature of the cooperative has evolved over time. The first residents did grow food, but now many of them continue to be members of the cooperative but work elsewhere. Now, being more prosperous, like most Argentine families they prefer to cook and eat together as a family, at home. Consequently, as the cooperative developed they felt that a better use of the land would not be to grow food, but to use it for more houses so more families could participate. All this suggests processes of commoning land which cannot be lightly dismissed as “dwarfish.”

5. Conclusion: Sustainability Requires a Commons-based Economy

In this paper we have offered a reconceptualization of the theoretical notions of “factors of production” to explore how we might rethink the resources that are used in production to support the evolution of an economy based on commonwealth rather than profits for an elite. We have offered contemporary examples of processes whereby these resources are rethought and commoned from Europe and Latin America that most closely approximate to this ideal. In conclusion we wish to argue that to achieve a just and sustainable future economy we need to take seriously the issue of the proprietorship of resources and to consider new patterns of resource management and control that most closely resemble the commonly held and communally managed access-based and usufruct systems that typified most of human history prior to the revolutionary advance of capitalism in the 18th century.

In concluding we would stress the fundamental theoretical link between social justice and environmental sustainability in the economic sphere. The reasons for this link have been rehearsed at length (see Mellor 2012; Cato 2012), but we would like to reiterate them here to challenge the idea prevalent in Latin America – regularly recounted to us in our research – that the North’s focus on the need for sustainability to avoid dangerous climate change may be another, the latest, move in the long game of post-colonial exploitation. This discourse holds that the Global North has heated the planet through 200 years of capitalist exploitation, and now holds that the South should pay the cost by foregoing the development the North has enjoyed. Although we can understand how this idea has arisen as a result of the corporate cooption of the sustainability agenda, and particularly that of the Rio +20 conference, we would suggest that the pressure on resources and the need to address the issue of a fair and equitable standard of living is the most effective contemporary force exerting pressure on the capitalist model of economic life. We concur entirely with Hazel Henderson’s (1988: 101-2) suggestion that:

An economy based on renewable resources carefully managed for sustained yield and long-term productivity of all its resources can provide useful, satisfying work and richly rewarding life-styles for all its participants. However, it simply cannot provide support for enormous pyramided capital structures and huge overheads, large pay differentials, windfall returns on investments, and capital gains to investors.

The environmental crisis is the focus of today’s radical struggle for emancipation and for control of resources and production. If the workers’ movements of the 20th century were about

conditions of work, those of the 21st century will be about access to resources and how we want to live within the limits of the planet. The priority for those of us who would favor an approach to economic life based around commons is to base our arguments for justice around claims on the control of and access to resources for humans and non-humans planet-wide to develop a new economy for the Anthropocene.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

We would like to thank the British Academy for their funding for this project: LA110160 “The Solidarity Economy North and South: Energy, Livelihood and the Transition to a Low Carbon Economy.”

References

- Albury, D. 1979. Alternative plans and revolutionary strategy. *International Socialism* 2: 85-96.
- Amin, A., ed. 2009. *The social economy: International perspectives on economic solidarity*. London: Zed.
- Anderson, V. 1991. *Alternative economic indicators*. London: Routledge.
- Barkin, D., and B. Lemus. 2014. Rethinking the social and solidarity society in light of community practice. *Sustainability* 6: 6,432-6,445.
- Bordieu, P. 2005. *The social structures of the economy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Branford, S., and J. Rocha. 2002. *Cutting the wire: The struggle of the landless movement in Brazil*. London: Latin America Bureau.
- Bridge, G., and P. Le Billon. 2013. *Oil*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Cannell, B. 2006. Employment law vs democracy: How Suma is governed and how this may be threatened by statutory employee rights. *Journal of Co-operative Studies* 39: 66-70.
- Cato, M., and R. Bickle, eds. 2008. *New views of society: Robert Owen for the 21st century*. Glasgow: Scottish Left Review Press.
- Cato, M. S. 2004. *The pit and the pendulum: A co-operative future for work in the Welsh valleys*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Cato, M. S. 2012. The green economy: Why ownership and control matter. *Journal of Co-operative Studies* 45: 61-68.
- Cato, M. S., and M. Suarez. 2012. Stroud pound: A local currency to map, measure and strengthen the local economy. *International Journal of Community Currency Research* 16: 106-115.
- Coates, K. 2003. *Workers control: Another world is possible*. Nottingham: Spokesman Books.
- Cole, G. D. H. 1925. *Robert Owen*. London: Benn.
- Cooper, D. 2003. *Everyday utopias: The conceptual life of promising spaces*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Cornforth, C. 1983. Some factors affecting the success or failure of worker co-operatives. *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 4: 163-190.
- Cornwall, M. 1997. National reparation? The Czech land reform and the Sudeten Germans 1918-38. *Slavonic and East European Review* 75: 259-280.
- de Moraes, N. 2010. *Conjunto Las Palmeiras, Fortaleza, Brazil: Banco Palmas*. Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights, UCLG. United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).
- De Schutter, O. 2011. How not to think of land-grabbing: Three critiques of large-scale investments in farmland. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 38: 249-279.
- de Sousa Santos, B., ed. 2006. *Another production is possible*. London: Verso.
- Dobbs, R., J. Oppenheim, F. Thompson, M. Brinkman, and M. Zornes. 2011 *Meeting the worlds' energy, materials, food and water needs*. Chicago: McKinsey Global Institute.
- Donnachie, I. 2000. *Robert Owen*. Phantassie, East Lothian: The Tuckwell Press.
- European Commission. 2008. *The common agricultural policy explained*. European Commission Agricultural and Rural Development.

- Featherstone, D. 2013. The contested politics of climate change and the crisis of neo-liberalism. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 12: 44-64.
- Fernandes, F. M. 2005. The land occupation as a form of access to land in Brazil. In *Reclaiming the land: The resurgence of rural movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, ed. S. Moyo and P. Yeros, 317-340. London: Zed Books.
- Fernbach, D., ed. 1974. *Karl Marx: The First International and after*. London: New Left Review.
- Fine, B. 2001. *Social capital versus social theory*. London: Routledge.
- Forbundet Kommunist (Sweden). 1979. Revolutionaries and 'alternative production.' *International Socialism* 2: 115-123.
- Galeano, E. [1971]1997. *Open veins of Latin America: Five centuries of the pillage of a continent*. New York: Montly Review Press.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. 2006a. *The end of capitalism (as we knew it): A feminist critique of political economy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. 2006b. *A post capitalist politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K., J. Cameron, and S. Healy. 2013. *Take back the economy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K., and G. Roelvink. 2010. An economic ethics for the Anthropocene. *Antipode* 41: 320-346.
- Hart, K. 2001. *Money in an unequal world*. London: Texere.
- Harvey, D. 2004. The 'new' imperialism: Accumulation by dispossession. *Socialist Register 2004: The New Imperial Challenge* 40: 63-87.
- Harvey, D. 2005. *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Henderson, H. H. 1988. *The politics of the solar age: Alternatives to economics*. Indianapolis, IN: Knowledge Systems.
- Herman, P., and R. Kuper. 2003. *For the Confédération Paysanne. Food for thought: Towards a future for farming*. London: Pluto.
- Holloway, J. 2002. *Change the world without taking power: The meaning of revolution today*. London: Pluto.
- Holloway, J. 2010. *Crack capitalism*. London: Verso.
- Ingham, G. 2004. *The nature of money*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Jacob, J., M. Brinkerhoff, E. Jovic, and G. Wheatley. 2004. HOUR town: Paul Glover and the genesis and evolution of Ithaca Hours. *International Journal of Community Currency Research* 8.
- Kirwan, B. 2009. The incidence of US agricultural subsidies on farmland rental rates. *Journal of Political Economy* 117: 138-164.
- Kovel, J. 2007. *The enemy of nature*. London: Zed Books.
- Kupp, M., and J. Anderson. 2007. Zopa: Web 2.0 meets retail banking. *Business Strategy Review* 18: 11-17.
- Lavaca Collective. 2004. *Sin patrón: Stories from Argentina's worker run factories*. Chicago: Haymarket Publishers.
- Lebowitz, M. 2006. *Build it now: Socialism for the twenty-first century*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Levitas, R. 2010. *The concept of utopia*. London: Philip Allan.
- Leyshon, A., and N. Thrift. 1997. *Money space: Geographies of monetary transformation*. London: Routledge.
- Lima, J. C. 2007. Workers' cooperatives in Brazil: Autonomy vs. precariousness. *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 28: 589-621.
- Lipton, M. 2009. *Land reform in developing countries: Property rights and property wrongs*. London: Routledge.
- Mason, P. 2012. *Why it's all kicking off everywhere: The new global revolutions*. London: Verso.
- Mathur, S. 2010. Venezuela pays for first ALBA trade with Ecuador in new regional currency. *Venezuela Analysis*: <http://venezuelanalysis.com/news/5480>.
- Maurer, B. 2003. Uncanny exchange: The possibilities and failures of 'making change' with alternative money forms. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21: 317-340.
- Meadows, D. H. 1974. *The limits to growth: A report for the Club of Rome's project on the predicament of mankind*. London: Pan.
- Meadows, D. H., J. Randers, and D. Meadows. 2005. *Limits to growth: The 30-year update*. London: Earthscan.

- Mellor, M. 2010. *The future of money: From financial crisis to public resource*. London: Pluto.
- Mellor, M. 2012. Co-operative principles for a green economy. *Journal of Co-operative Studies* 45: 5-14.
- Molineux, J. 1994. Lifestyle - is it enough? *Socialist Worker*: 9.
- Moulds, J. 2012. Are peer-to-peer lenders the future of banking? *The Guardian*. London: <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2012/jun/10/peer-to-peer-lenders-future-of-banking>
- Ness, I., and D. Azzellini, eds. 2011. *Ours to master and to own: Workers control from the commune to the present*. Chicago: Haymarket.
- North, P. 1999. Explorations in heterotopia: LETS and the micropolitics of money and livelihood. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 17: 69-86.
- North, P. 2007. *Money and liberation: The micropolitics of alternative currency movements*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- North, P. 2010. *Local money*. Dartington: Green Books.
- North, P. 2014a. Complementary currencies. In *The Routledge companion to alternative organization*, ed. M. Parker, G. Cheney, V. Fournier, and C. Land. London: Routledge.
- North, P. 2014b. Ten square miles surrounded by reality? Materialising alternative economies using local currencies. *Antipode* 46: 246-265.
- North, P., and N. Longhurst. 2013. Grassroots localisation? The scalar potential of and limits of the 'transition' approach to climate change and resource constraint. *Urban Studies* 50: 1,423-1,438.
- North, P., and K. Weber. 2013. The alternative economy at the regional scale?: Lessons from the Chiengau. In *Alternative economies and spaces. Space for alternative economies*, ed. S. Hilebrand and H.-M. Zademach, 43-69. Bielefeld: Transcript.
- Olivera, O. 2004. *Cochabamba! Water war in Bolivia*. Boston: South End Press.
- Polanyi, K. [1944]1980. *The great transformation*. New York: Octagon.
- Rocha, J. 2002. On the frontier. *The Guardian*, June 26.
- Ruggeri, A. 2013. Worker self-management in Argentina. In *Co-operatives and socialism*, ed. C. Harnecker. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Sahlins, M. 1972. *Stone age economics*. Chicago: Aldine Athlerton.
- Sale, K. 2000. *Dwellers in the land: The bioregional vision*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
- Scoones, I., N. Marongwe, B. Mavedzenge, F. Murimbarimba, J. Mahenehene, and C. Sukume. 2011. Zimbabwe's land reform: Challenging the myths. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 38: 967-993.
- Sherry, D. 2010. *Occupy! A short history of workers occupations*. London: Bookmarks.
- Sikor, T., and D. Müller. 2009. The limits of state-led land reform: An introduction. *World Development* 37: 1,307-1,316.
- Sitrin, M. 2012. *Everyday revolutions: Horizontalism and autonomy in Argentina*. London: Zed Books.
- Stédile, J. P. 2007. The class struggles in Brazil: The perspective of the MST. *Socialist register 2008*, ed. L. Panitch and C. Leys, 193-216.
- Strange, S. 1986. *Casino capitalism*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Tawney, R. 1998. *Religion and the rise of capitalism*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.
- Thompson, E. 1981. *The making of the English working class*. London: Penguin.
- Webb, M. 2014. The twilight of private ownership in Scotland? *Financial Times*, August 1. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/c7c0e662-133a-11e4-8244-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3I7UBWuzT>
- Wily, L. 2000. Land tenure reform and the balance of power in eastern and southern Africa. *ODI Natural Resource Perspectives* 58, June.
- Wolford, W. 2004. The land is ours now: Spatial imaginaries and the struggle for land in Brazil. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94: 409-424.
- Wolford, W. 2005. Agrarian moral economies and neoliberalism in Brazil: Competing worldviews and the state in the struggle for land. *Environment and Planning A* 37: 241-261.
- World Bank. 2010. *Rising global interest in farmland: Can it yield sustainable and equitable benefits?* Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Yaffe, H. 2009. *Che Guevara: The economics of revolution*. Hounsmill: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Zelizer, V. 1997. *The social meaning of money*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Zelizer, V. 2005. *The purchase of intimacy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Author Biographies

Molly Scott Cato is Professor of Green Economics at Roehampton University, London, and Green Party member of the European Parliament for South West England and Gibraltar.

Peter North is Reader in Alternative Economics in the Department of Geography and Planning at the University of Liverpool, UK.