

The Human Economy

A Citizen's Guide

Edited by

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The global financial crisis has renewed concern about whether capitalist markets are the best way of organizing economic life. Would it not be better if we were to treat the economy as something made and remade by people themselves, rather than as an impersonal machine?

The object of a human economy is the reproduction of human beings and of whatever sustains life in general. Such an economy would serve the needs of whole persons and communities, not just a narrow individualism. It would express human variety in its local particulars as well as the interests of all humanity.

The editors have assembled here a citizen's guide to building a human economy. This project is not a dream but one based on knowledge of existing ideas and social practices found everywhere, from Latin America to Scandinavia.

Over thirty original essays address topics that range from globalization, community participation and microcredit to corporate social responsibility and alternative energy. Each offers a critical guide to further reading. Taken together, they provide a new language to help us express our common desire for a better world.

The Human Economy builds on decades of engaged research to bring a new economic vision to general readers and a comprehensive guide for all students of the contemporary world.

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Building the human economy together

Keith Hart, Jean-Louis Laville and Antonio Cattani

We have just been through a prolonged social experiment in which markets and money were left to find their own way around the world without much political interference. This experiment has been called “neoliberalism”, at one time “the Washington consensus”. The freedom of these markets was mainly for those with lots of money. The rest of us had to adjust; and society became much more unequal as a result. One victim of neoliberalism was certainly democracy in any meaningful sense. Then came the financial crisis of 2008 which provoked massive intervention by the most vulnerable governments, using taxpayers’ money to save the banking system from collapse. No-one knows whether capitalism, the winning side in the Cold War, will recover without fundamental change or if a major shift is taking place in its prime location, to China and other “emerging markets” like India and Brazil. Neoliberalism has been wounded, but it is not yet defeated. In the meantime, what can we, the people, do about it? Surely the time is ripe to consider other possible ways forward?

Neoliberalism was and is at its core an Anglophone phenomenon. The Italian finance minister was only half joking when he said that his country’s banks were in reasonable shape because their managers didn’t speak English! (They are not, by the way). The United States and Britain gained most from the credit boom and lost most when it went bust. The rest of the world had been told to join the neoliberal revolution or get used to life in the dustbin of history. The “French social model” epitomized the lingering failure of post-war social democracy when strong states built up their economies by investing heavily in public services and enterprises. The relative attractiveness of the

two models looks rather different now. But we are not here just to celebrate another swing of the pendulum from state to market and back again. It is time for the people to have their say in economic matters.

We want to bring to the attention of English readers some currents of economic theory and practice that have flourished in non-Anglophone countries over the last two decades, particularly in France, Brazil, Hispanic America and Scandinavia. To these we have added significant work by English-speaking authors that was sidelined during neoliberalism's heyday and deserves to find a wider audience now. We have brought these strands of new thinking together under the umbrella concept of "the human economy" which refers to an emphasis both on what people do for themselves and on the need to find ways forward that must involve all humanity somehow.

For in the second half of the twentieth century, we formed a world society – a single interactive social network – for the first time. It was symbolized by several moments, such as when the 1960s space race allowed us to see the earth from the outside or when the internet went public in the 1990s. This world is massively unequal and voices for human unity are often drowned. But now at last we have means of communication adequate to expressing universal ideas. Anthropologists and sociologists have shown that *Homo economicus* -- the idea of an economy based on narrow self-interest, typified as the practice of buying cheap and selling dear -- is absent from many societies and does not even reflect what is best about ourselves. We ought to be able to do better than that by now. But ideas alone are insufficient. Emergent world society is the new human universal – not an idea, but the fact of our shared occupation of the planet crying out for new principles of association. The essays assembled in this volume are intended as a contribution to that urgent project for our species.

Economics after the crash

The failure in September 2008 of the New York investment bank, Lehman Brothers, triggered a financial collapse whose ramifications are still with us. Predictions of the outcome of the ensuing global economic crisis vary widely. Following a sustained equities rally in 2009, some commentators argued that the recession that followed Lehman's demise is already over and the free market ready to assume its inexorable rise, while others talk of a double dip recession, a sovereign debt crisis and a recovery that could take 25 years. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, it was claimed that the world had entered a new stage of economic evolution to which all countries would eventually have to conform, where money flowed without political restriction and the market penetrated everywhere. There were a few doubters, of course, who identified the shaky foundations of the boom long before it crashed. But it took courage then to go against the prevailing orthodoxy that all was best in the best of all worlds. What happened next did change a lot, if not everything.

Economic growth can now be seen to have been sustained by a regime of cheap consumer credit, especially in the United States; many banks and other financial houses, notably the insurance giant AIG, exposed themselves to unacceptable levels of risk, particularly in the new market for credit derivatives; these became "toxic assets" which were bought by taxpayers at huge cost in order to preserve the banking system as a whole; access to loans dried up overnight, despite these government subsidies; the leading exporters of manufactures, such as China, Germany and Japan, suffered massive reductions in demand for their products; the newly "liberated" Eastern Europeans went into free fall, as did countries like Ireland (hitherto a "Celtic tiger") and Spain, not to mention little Iceland; despite governments printing money like there was no tomorrow, the threat of deflation was real; business bankruptcies and rising unemployment contributed to the economic

malaise in rich and poor countries alike.

The economy, which had been represented as an eternally benevolent machine for growth, was suddenly pitch-forked into the turmoil of history. The chattering classes rediscovered the 1930s. The market was now seen to require massive state intervention if it were to have any chance of surviving. The financial “masters of the universe” quickly brought out the begging bowl and in some cases had to suffer nationalization. Anglophone governments who once claimed to be leading the world to a free market future, desperately embraced remedies they called “Keynesian”, incurring the risk of hyperinflation if the bond market collapsed. The global shift of economic power from the West to Asia has probably been accelerated by these events. It is all rather murky, but even at the best of times the present is like that.

Whatever place the financial crisis eventually finds in economic history, one certain victim has been free market economics. It is impossible any more to hold that economies will prosper only if markets are freed from political bondage. Attacks on the economists by politicians and journalists have become commonplace. Even Queen Elizabeth asked publicly why none of them saw it all coming. The ideological hegemony of mainstream economics, especially since the 1980s, has been holed below the water. This is not to say that the free marketers have been silenced, but public acceptance of the notion that the economy is social, institutional and in need of political guidance is now commonplace. And Karl Marx, after being sidelined for decades, is once again a best-seller. All of this suggests to us that the crisis has opened up a new terrain for thinking about the economy.

For millennia, economy was conceived of in domestic terms as “household management”, usually a manorial estate with its slaves, livestock, fields and orchards. Then, when markets, money and

machines began their modern rise to social dominance, a new discipline of political economy was born, concerned with the public consequences of economic actions. For well over a century now, this discipline has called itself economics and its subject matter has been the economic decisions made by individuals as participants in markets of many kinds. People as such play almost no part in the calculations of economists and they find no particular reflection of themselves in the quantities published by the media. The economy is rather conceived of as an impersonal machine, remote from the everyday experience of most people. The idea that we put forward here of a “human economy” is intended to remind readers that the economy is made and remade by people in their everyday lives. We hope to identify some of its principles and to provide instances of how it works. So what is it?

Why a human economy?

There are two prerequisites for being human: we must each learn to be self-reliant to a high degree and to belong to others, merging our identities in a bewildering variety of social relations. Much of modern ideology emphasizes how problematic it is to be both self-interested and mutual, to be economic as well as social, we might say. When culture is set up to expect a conflict between the two, it is hard to be both. Yet the two sides are often inseparable in practice and some societies, by encouraging private and public interests to coincide, have managed to integrate them more effectively than ours. One premise of the new human universal will thus be the unity of self and society. If learning to be two-sided is the means of becoming human, then this lesson is apparently hard for some to learn, and economics as we know it makes it impossible to do so.

The project of economics needs to be rescued from the economists. The mask of neoliberal ideology has been half-ripped from the politics of world economy. It is up to us to propose an

effective replacement. In order to be human, the economy must be at least four things:

1. It is made and remade by people; economics should be of practical use to us all in our daily lives.
2. This means that it should address a great variety of particular situations in all their institutional complexity.
3. It must be based on a more holistic conception of everyone's needs and interests.
4. It has to address humanity as a whole and the world society we are making.

You may well ask where this human economy is and how it might be created. The human economy is already everywhere. People always insert themselves practically into economic life on their own account. What they do there is often obscured, marginalized or repressed by dominant economic institutions and ideologies. Thus in the twentieth century, society was supposed to be impersonal: life was organized by state bureaucracy, capitalist markets and scientific experts. Not surprisingly most people felt estranged and powerless in the face of all this. But they did not sit on their hands: they expressed themselves in domestic life and organized informally in the cracks of the economic system; they made associations for their own protection, betterment and recreation. Whenever we speak of "capitalism" or "socialism", we are referring to just part of what goes on in an economy, perhaps to the part that makes it historically distinctive. But there is lot more going on than is highlighted in this way and economies in practice are a lot more like each other than superficial contrasts might suggest.

Any program to make an economy more human is thus not in itself a revolutionary exercise. It builds on what is there already and seek solely to gain recognition and legitimacy for what people do

for themselves. In this book we try to show how a new direction and emphasis for the economy can be based on many initiatives which are already established, but which could do with more room to grow. This means that our approach is “bottom up” and “gradualist” initially. We want to encourage readers to try things out for themselves in a piecemeal way. There is a tension between any movement’s aspiration to universalism and its appeal to specifically local interests. Our emphasis is mainly on the second of these and what we offer here is very much “work in progress”. At the same time, the potential of all that we propose, when taken together, *is* a revolution. There is no knowing how far we could go if the principles outlined here took off. In the end our human predicament is global and requires global solutions. If we imagine taking many small steps now rather than one waiting for one great transformation later, this is not for lack of ambition. It is more an acknowledgment of what we have achieved so far. Once more people engage with the economy in a different way, who knows what they will conclude about the need for broader systemic change?

The object of an economy was always the reproduction of human life and beyond that the preservation of everything that sustains life. In the modern era, it is supposed to serve the common good and in that respect has shifted from a preoccupation with material survival to meeting a wide range of cultural needs. But for some time now the object of economy has been to make money through producing and selling things, with human life secondary, a means to that end. Economics, which ought to be a science for human emancipation, has become a dehumanized expert ideology remote from people’s practical concerns and from their ability to understand what to do.

Traditional African societies supported economies whose object was the production of life embodied in human beings. Hence for many of them money took the form of cattle used to secure the reproduction of kin groups through marriage. Modern capitalist economies have as their object

the accumulation of money through the production of inanimate things for sale. But in recent decades, the fastest-growing sector of world trade has been in cultural commodities, services such as entertainment, education, media, software and information, along with explosive growth in financial and transport services. These trends make the economy more about what people do for each other than the physical objects that go into making up their material livelihood. It may be that, after the early phase of industrialization, the predominant focus of the world economy will revert to the production of human beings. There is no limit to the stories we can tell each other or to the pleasure we can derive from watching performers excel at what they do. The world's largest television audiences are for sporting events like football's World Cup and the Olympic Games men's 100 metres final.

Humanity is a collective noun – all the people who have ever lived, live now and will live in future; it is a quality of kindness, of treating all people as if they were like ourselves; and it is a historical project for our species to assume stewardship of life on this planet, since we are the part of life that can think, the frontal lobes of the biomass. Any such project must find its own social forms, but it is likely that these will include installing democracy as a universal political principle and valuing science as a means of acquiring the knowledge needed for that task. The idea of economy is likewise central to the project of installing truth and justice in the world. It took its modern form from the eighteenth century enlightenment that gave birth to the modern democratic revolutions. This classical liberalism culminated in the late work of Immanuel Kant on moral judgment, cosmopolitics and anthropology. We must renew that revolutionary project for our own times.

Our world is much more socially integrated than two centuries ago and its economy is palpably unequal. The task of building a global civil society for the twenty-first century should be compelling.

One source for such a project may be found in the work of the great intellectuals of the twentieth century's anti-colonial revolution, such as the Caribbean writer-activists, Frantz Fanon and CLR James, and above all, Mohandas K Gandhi. This movement was driven by peoples forced into world society by western imperialism a century earlier who aspired to make their own independent relationship to it. They did not repudiate the legacy of the Enlightenment, only its perversion by Empire as a system of racial exclusion. In the process they made the original project more inclusive, more human. And we take our lead from them.

What we propose here is a new “new institutional economics” to be formed out of anthropology, sociology, political economy, economic philosophy and world history. Marcel Mauss and Karl Polanyi, who pioneered such a synthesis, argued that we must rely on practical experience for information and analysis, in other words, start from the “real economic movement”. This is a concept of social change as self-expression, of change which is, in Mauss's words, “by no means committed to revolutionary or radical alternatives, to brutal choices between two contradictory forms of society” but which “is and will be made by a process of building new groups and institutions alongside and on top of the old ones”. Rather than make an abstract appeal to an alternative economy, Mauss and Polanyi showed us a concrete road to “other economies” based on the field of possibilities already open to us.

One of Mauss's key modifications to Durkheim's legacy was to conceive of society as a historical project of humanity whose limits were extended to become ever more inclusive. The point of his famous essay on *The Gift* is that society cannot be taken for granted as a pre-existent form. It must be made and remade, sometimes from scratch. How do we behave on a first date or on a diplomatic mission? We make gifts. Heroic gift-exchange is designed to push the limits of society outwards. It is

liberal in a similar sense to the “free market”, except that generosity powers the exchange, self-interested for sure, but not in the way associated with *Homo economicus*. No society is ever economically self-sufficient, least of all small Pacific islands. So to the need for establishing local limits on social action must always be added the means of extending a community’s reach abroad. This is why markets and money in some form are universal, and why any attempt to abolish them must end in catastrophe.

Polanyi drew attention to how economic institutions organize and are in turn organized by a plurality of distribution mechanisms that, in the modern world, affect the lives of millions of people who participate in them, without being granted any measure of control. This led him to highlight the inequality created by these institutions, as they swing between the poles of market and state, of society’s external and internal relations. In the current crisis, the immediate reaction is to turn to a variety of government institutions, flipping the coin from tails to heads as it were, instead of insisting that states and the markets have to work together in less one-sided ways than before. To this end, Polanyi’s call for a return to social solidarity, drawing especially on the voluntary reciprocity of associations, reminds us that people in general must be mobilized to contribute their energies to the renewal of society. It is not enough to rely on impersonal states and markets.

The human economy is an elastic idea, a vision more than a social recipe, or rather many social recipes articulated by a unifying vision. It embraces at once what each of us does in daily life and what all of us might become as a species. Some might find that indeterminacy less compelling than a sharper alternative vision. We embrace it because there is an intrinsic connection between these poles and economy ought to be capable of spanning them in a fluid way. Even so, it is reasonable to ask what a political program with the human economy in mind might look like.

Some political principles

Two great lessons may be drawn from the history of the twentieth century. First, market society sustained by a concern for individual freedom generated huge inequalities; then submission of the economy to political will on the pretext of equality led to the suppression of freedom. These two solutions called democracy itself into question, whether in the form of totalitarian systems or, with a similar result, through the subordination of political power to that of money. If we reject both of these options, it is then a question of developing institutions capable of guaranteeing a plural economy within a democratic framework, exactly what is compromised when the rationale of material gain without limit has a monopoly. To answer this question, we must seek out new institutional forms anchored in social practice; these will point the way towards the reinsertion of democratic norms in economic life. Any return to the old compromises is doomed to failure and any reflection on how to reconcile freedom and equality, which remains the goal of democracy in a complex society, can only make progress by taking into account the reactions of people in society.

Another way of putting our case is to express it, in Jürgen Habermas's words, as the need to resolve "an irreducible tension between capitalism and democracy". Far from guaranteeing prosperity for all, the deregulated economy unleashed by neoliberal policies threatened to dissolve the social fabric to a point where it might pave the way for authoritarian regimes, as market failure did in the 1930s.

While the market economy is legitimate, a market that knows no limits poses a threat to democracy. This book examines the essential question of what form the post-crisis economy might take and of the preconditions for the emergence of a truly human economy. We base our approach on three principles.

The idea of reason has animated economics from the beginning. Who could argue with the aim of putting our common affairs on a rational footing? What was originally conceived of as a specifically human capacity for discernment has gradually been reduced by the modern discipline to a purely formal concept: in order to be rational, choice is nothing more than the maximization of individual utility. This anthropological definition of human beings as calculating machines has the effect, among other things, of over-estimating the market's ability to allocate resources. We can all now see its consequences: while wealth when measured in terms of commodities increases, natural resources are wasted at an ever-increasing rate and there is a dizzying increase in inequality. This is not sustainable in either ecological or social terms.

Our second principle is thus the need for solidarity within and between generations. We might call this horizontal and vertical solidarity. We must reduce inequality for those who are alive now and protect the living conditions of future generations. The hardest question is whether a new importance may be granted to solidarity while adapting to the existing system. Our authors differ quite widely in how they might answer that question. We will say here only that if rationality consists in the means replacing the ends of economic actions, the answer must be no. But we reject an over-determined view of our societies as being merely "capitalist" in nature.

People everywhere pursue ends of a very different nature, be they political, cultural, environmental or whatever. We look to their initiatives for democratic ways of building solidarity in the human economy. So our third principle is methodological. Theoretical and practical work must be closely articulated. This was acknowledged at the 2009 World Social Forum in Belém, Brazil, where activists and researchers came together to discuss how the goals of democracy and science might be combined more effectively.

An institutional approach to the economy is one where economic activities are defined by rules of various kinds (not just state-made laws) that are debated and enforced by political means. The recent attempt to “naturalize” the market was a species of “utopian capitalism” that inevitably provoked a many-sided social movement in response. This experiment was reductive in at least two senses: the market was withdrawn from the domain of political action (even as public life was invaded by the market); and the modern economy came to be confused with capitalism. While modern society has been shaped by modes of reasoning (notably economics) that are indeed an expression of capitalist economy, it is not reducible to it. We hold that contemporary politics also sustains economic inventiveness based on a premise of democratic solidarity. The present volume is an exploration of that premise.

We know now that society will not become democratic unless we can find ways of democratizing the economy. This will not happen just by developing a new model for the ideal society. Rather we must look at actual experiments that have been made around the world. If we are to advance further in the direction of a human economy, we must recognize activities that have non-economic ends. We should also try to avoid the two major pitfalls of progressive politics. The centre-left, having swallowed claims that the market is the only source of wealth-creation, has adopted neoliberal economic policies, moderated only by less restrictive social policies. The far left wants to break with capitalism, but has no definite programme for the transition. A revolution in that sense is an illusion.

Building a human economy presupposes renewed public engagement. Regulation by the political authorities must be balanced by the public expressions of a civil society focused on attaining the common good. The social rights of citizens must be consistent with encouraging forms of self-

organization where solidarity has a greater economic role. Market contracts are not the only way of delivering equality and freedom. These also come from people living together, from the mutuality and egalitarianism of everyday life. At the other extreme, there is no getting round the need to curb the power of the capitalist corporations. This requires a new alliance of grassroots movements, harnessing the voluntary reciprocity of self-organized groups, and public policy aimed at regulating capitalism and coordinating redistributive institutions. One challenge of course is to identify the appropriate levels of political association in a world that can no longer assume a national monopoly of politics. Above all, whatever principles we identify here must have demonstrable consequences for action.

About this book

Each of the essays that follow combines an account of ideas and practices that our authors have been personally involved in developing with their guide to the most important and accessible literature in that field. The editors have not tried to impose a standard theory or style on them, beyond some limited formalities. Each author is responsible for their own entry. Taken together, this volume is the product of an extended international collaboration, remarkable in itself for the unusual range of those who have taken part. *The Human Economy* is the first expression in English of a project that began a decade ago at the first World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil as part of a strong counter-movement that took root in Latin America and Europe. Much of this theoretical and practical work is unknown in the English-speaking world. But the economic crisis has surely generated political conditions ripe for convergence.

A series of publications before this one involved a creative mix of academic researchers, political activists and social networks (both national and international) who supported the project in various

ways. *A outra economia* was published in Brazil in 2003 and edited by Antonio David Cattani with the support of an interuniversity network, Unitrabalho. It was soon translated into Spanish through the RILESS network and published in Argentina. Some of these Latin American entries along with new Francophone contributions were used for a volume, *Dictionnaire de l'autre économie*, edited by Jean-Louis Laville and Cattani, published in Paris and aided by the EMES and CRISES networks, based in Belgium and Quebec respectively. An abridged version was published in Italian as *Dizionario dell'altra economia*.

Another version in Spanish, *Diccionario de la otra economía*, was edited by Cattani, Laville and José Luis Coraggio; and a Portuguese edition, *Dicionário internacional da outra economia*, edited by Cattani, Laville, L. Gaiger and P. Hespanha, was published in 2009. An expanded French paperback edition was published in 2006 and sold 6,000 copies in its first year. Keith Hart wrote an enthusiastic review essay about the *Dictionnaire* which led to our present collaboration. Our authors are drawn from Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Britain, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Norway, Peru, South Africa, Switzerland and the United States. This is impressive enough, but the absence of Asia suggests where this road show ought to be heading next.

This English edition draws on updated translations of several entries from earlier books and on newly commissioned pieces by Anglophone authors. It differs from the others in content, in its thematic organization and perhaps in placing more emphasis on continuities with existing practice, however heterodox, and less on a search for alternatives. But the enterprise rests squarely on its predecessors' achievements. The human economy is not a dream. It exists theoretically and practically, but this existence has been obscured by the economic models and approaches that dominate both the media and the universities. We hope to make our knowledge of these phenomena

more widely available, so that a new audience, with English as its first or second language, might use what we have discovered to build a better world.

There are five sections. We start with ‘World society’ since thinking concretely about our common humanity is both urgently necessary and difficult for us, given our habit of thinking in national terms. This is followed by ‘Economics with a human face’, where we explore several approaches to the economy with people more in mind than the mainstream discipline allows for. Politics has been ideologically excluded from the market economy (but not in reality) and this goes with a similar exclusion of morality. Yet people want to be good, to pursue the good life, so we next examine their integration as ‘Moral politics’. The longest section, ‘Beyond market and state’, brings together a number of distinct but overlapping attempts to articulate ways of making the economy explicitly social. Here, terms that are often debated individually come together as an incipient language for building the human economy. Finally, we address ‘New directions’ in some strikingly different ways. The movement of the book is therefore from our common predicament in today’s world, through thinking about the human economy as a moral and political project, to attempts to build a new institutional synthesis in practice, while always being open to imagining a better world in future.

Part One starts from ‘globalization’, the current expression for the making of world society, primarily by means of finance, information technology and transport. The idea of ‘public goods’ has been in retreat recently; yet concern for the planet’s well-being brings them sharply into focus at the global level. World governance is strikingly defective, but we next examine the record of the “international organizations”, especially those like the IMF, World Bank and WTO who claim responsibility for managing the world economy. This world is desperately unequal and “development” has been the name for evolving relations between rich and poor countries. The

picture is not pretty, especially over the last three decades. A remarkably successful network of social movements has arisen to challenge the prevailing global (dis-)order. This now goes by the name of “alter-globalization”, not *against* one world but *for* a different way of organizing it.

Part Two provides a vision of the “plural economy” taken from institutional economics, one that cannot be imagined as either “the market” or “capitalism” alone. This entry develops several ideas already expressed here in this introduction to the volume. “Ecological economics”, while aiming for an environmental synthesis at the planetary level, is inspired by a “small is beautiful” philosophy that keeps people very prominently in mind. Economics is a strongly male-centred discipline, but, as throughout the social sciences and humanities, feminists have made an important contribution to opening this field up to the interests of men, women *and* children or, in Julie A Nelson’s terms, to an *Economics for Humans*. “Fair trade” is an idea with limited resonance in the rich countries, a minor ethical gloss on shopping, but here two Latin American authors show how it might be expanded to become a principle of regional development with implications for global economic justice. In a departure from the gradualist perspective generally adopted here, we next consider what a “labour economy” might look like, conceived of as the antithesis of the “capital economy” that is currently dominant. For many people, economics with a human face is epitomized by “microcredit” schemes such as Bangladesh’s Grameen Bank. Here we take a critical look at micro-finance in general. Finally, the idea of an “informal economy” has run for the last forty years as a popular counterpart to the world of governments and corporations whose principles are addressed by macro-economics. Whatever it lacks in theoretical rigour is compensated for by its focus on what people really do.

An impersonal approach to politics is often justified in terms of the higher interests of society. In Part Three we revive Kant’s programme of seeking to ground world politics in the moral judgments

that each of us brings to living in society. The most powerful of these is “citizenship”, a term which is made more complex by persisting inequality in our world and by growing confusion over where political association might be most effectively located. This is reflected in the idea of “corporate social responsibility” which seeks to redraw the lines of governance between states and corporations and reveals the latter as super-citizens capable of eclipsing the rest of us. The welfare state underpinned post-war social democracy not least through its redistributive policies; it has been radically undermined by the recent drive to privatize the public sector. Against this statist perspective, we then consider three bottom up approaches. The gift offers a rich imaginative field for building alternatives to conventional politics, one that has inspired an active cluster of engaged intellectuals in France. “Moral economy” has become a diffuse expression for popular conceptions of the good life coming out of the experience of early industrialism, peasant society and indeed market economy at all times. “Communism” is of course closely associated with state socialism in the twentieth century and with utopian alternatives throughout history. Here we explore “everyday communism”, a common human propensity for sociability that, with some redirection of emphasis, might serve as grounds for non-capitalist economic organization.

Part Four takes off from a review of the “third sector”, the attempt to find a middle ground between public responsibility and private gain in the voluntary or non-profit activities of a wide variety of organizations around the world. The idea of an economy built on solidarity is already well entrenched in Brazil and France as *économie solidaire*, but it is gaining ground in the Anglophone countries where it is known, somewhat awkwardly, as “solidarity economy”. A third way between market and state often invokes the notion of community and especially the active connotations of “community participation”. This is sometimes linked to privileging “local development”, where people may be expected to participate on the basis of occupying a given place. It can also open up a

space for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) over a wide range of locations, but here we focus on NGOs in the field of international development. The idea of “social capital” has enjoyed a vogue of late, not least at the World Bank. We trace the history of the concept in policy-making circles and the popular imagination. Finally, “social enterprise” or “social entrepreneurs” have become important designations for many attempts to combine economic and “non-economic” approaches to the provision of public and private goods. We offer two complementary readings of this phenomenon.

In Part Five, we relax our focus on what exists to imagine some future possibilities, but still with our eyes firmly fixed on the past and present. Given the importance of money for our world, it is unsurprising that “community and complementary currencies” (the less cumbersome French term is *monnaies sociales*) have seen some potentially far-reaching experiments in making alternatives to national money. The internet is a site of rapid and radical innovation at all levels of economy and society. Here we explore three approaches to the formation of a “digital commons” against the forces of corporate privatization. The contemporary world is marked by hyper-mobility. We examine the history of this movement and consider various scenarios when the cheap oil on which it is based runs out. Climate change, when combined with a prospective shortage of fossil fuels, gives added impetus to the search for “alternative energy”, here reviewed with considerable attention to science and technology. But where would we be without dreams of utopia? In “worlds of emancipation” we trace that dream through Europe’s twentieth-century political history in particular. Humanity is and always will be inspired by visions of a world fit for us all to live in. This world has been fought for concretely on innumerable occasions.

If sceptical readers doubt what concrete difference these instances of “the human economy” might

make to the world, we invite them to consider the essays assembled in this last section, each of which addresses a theme of huge significance for our economic future: new approaches to money, digital democracy, mobility after cheap oil, renewable energy and the struggle for emancipation from inequality and repression. *The Human Economy* is a work of reference that has come out of a dialogue between successful social experiments in many parts of the world and theoretical reflection on them. The resulting synthesis is an invitation to advance knowledge along the lines we have begun and to dare to build a better world.

Further reading

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