

The Take: Occupy, Resist, and Produce

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The social economy is a very important player in today's economy. It provides goods and services to those who are neglected in our mainstream economy. We are lucky we are not in the position where our lives depend on social economy, but there are some people who depend on them. The third sector blends self-help with mutuality to work for the common good. They try to include anyone that is excluded. In this essay I will talk about why the social economy is important and beneficial for people all over the world based on the documentary "The Take". We living in the west part of the world, the world see us as a developed country. However this title may not be entitled to everyone, we can still see homeless people on the streets of downtown. Many more who needs emotional treatment and are going through hard times. Even in developed countries, we can see there are always people in need. In third world countries, it will be no better. I personally believe in the "social economy", because it can help people around the world, where citizens cannot gain government support or they lack the economic ability to purchase goods for survival in the marketplace. The social economy takes action. So I believe that social economy institutions are active all around the world. In my opinion there isn't a day where their work can be finished. There are always people in need of help.

In my opinion , the developments in the global south or the west are all people orientated. Individuals in the society run to a crisis and they come up with ways to tackle the problem. Every nation faces different problems within their economy, and different cultures have different methods to approach problems. We can see this from the Argentina factory workers, when their factories were closed because the owners were in debt and left them, the workers started to occupy and run the factories themselves. These occupancies were turned into social economy institutions because they were ran by the members of the factories and the businesses hierarchies became flat. I think the attempts to take back the factories gave the

workers a chance to grow and learn more about the workplace. This was a hard time for them, however, without the businesses going bankrupt, they couldn't have experienced this otherwise. This is also an example of social exclusion, where the workers are not in the private or public sector during the start of the occupy. This is also an example of how social economies are born out of a crisis. Different actors can play varying roles. The recovered companies show that the social economy can solve many social and economic problems that occurred in capitalism. This is a good example of how social economy institutions are developed from their own countries. It was completely organic and it benefitted the workers in the factories.

Financially, In the west we have credit unions that are unlike traditional banks. They provide financial services for individuals in the community. In the developing countries there are more micro finances than credit unions. They are all here for the same purpose, however their scale of operation may be smaller than the credit unions. This is an example of different cultures having different needs from the social economy. Apart from that, there are also social economy institutions that are run globally , such as Unicef, for children. I worked closely with them during my high school. They provided support by donating resources and materials to the children in need. These INGOS are active throughout the world, INGOS are headquartered in the west but have branches in the developing world as well. It's a great example of humanity united as one. Without their help, a lot more children could be suffering. Children are the worlds fortune, they're the ones who are going to continue our society, that's why supporting children is very important.

Cooperative Economies Involved In "The Take"

The film teaches us how factory recoveries have usually begun when enterprises have been sued by their creditors, the Department of Justice has declared them bankrupt, or their

owners have simply abandoned the plants because they can not pay their debts. When the workers have taken over the plants, the Department of Justice has recognized their right to operate them. While the old owners have at that point lost power over the plants' operation, they have retained ownership. The workers in recovered factories do not own the premises and machinery, but simply have legal authorization to use them. In the few recovered firms where this legal process has not taken place, the workers have rented plant and equipment from the old owners for a fixed monthly sum. In a few other cases in and around Buenos Aires (Argentina), the government has taken away the factories from the owners and turned them over to the workers, who have two years to pay for the machinery. All recovered firms are managed by the workers themselves, and within the factories, all workers have the same rights and responsibilities, though some may do administrative work, others work on the production line, and still others may do less-skilled work. Everyone receives the same monthly salary, which a general assembly of workers sets based on the firm's net revenues. (This means that salaries vary from month to month, depending on the firm's performance. At most companies, salaries fall between \$110 and \$160 per month.) So far, the recovered firms have been able to pay wages, but have not shown profits. This means they have not been able to buy new equipment or modernize the plants. In most cases, the workers are given two years to pay back creditors. During the first two years, recovered factories face a series of difficulties. First, workers need to rebuild the confidence of suppliers and customers swindled by the old owners. They also need to acquire management and marketing expertise, since in many cases, managers leave along with the owners. Finally, recovered enterprises have trouble investing enough to develop and compete. Together, these challenges prevent the factories from being as productive as they could be. The recovered sector, although socially significant, represents a tiny portion of the Argentina's economy. More than 12,000 workers

are employed in the recovered sector, but measured in relation to an economically active population of 13.7 million, recovered enterprises employ scarcely 0.08% of the labor force. From the start, managers of recovered enterprises understood the need for their factories to complement each other-whether by jointly purchasing raw materials and other inputs to secure better prices, or by producing inputs for one another to increase production and ensure lower prices. Nonetheless, today, recovered enterprises have not developed economic relations with one another for reasons that the workers themselves are unable to explain. But 55% of recovered enterprises' output is used as inputs by other businesses (41 % is destined for consumers), which has led to some research on the ways that recovered enterprises might complement each other and increase the overall size of the sector. Despite the obstacles they face, the recovered factories are able to pay wages and meet their variable costs-raw materials, energy, and so on. None of them, however, is working at full capacity, and their development is limited by a lack of capital, by an inability to make technological changes, and by legal difficulties in accessing export markets. For the time being, they are just trying to maintain the job base. Nonetheless, the recovered enterprises are not in danger of failing; and if any of them do fail, it will not be for the workers' lack of ability, but because of potential legal decisions that could hand the factories and machinery back to the failed owners. Owners create the possibility for workers to learn about the production process in sectors currently growing due to import substitution or competitiveness on the world market. They also break down hierarchical labor relations and establish horizontal decision-making structures: recovered factories hold assemblies where all workers can contribute to decisions.

COOPERATION, WORKERS' CONTROL, AND CLASS STRUGGLE

I've learned that workers do not mean to bring about revolutionary change, but simply

aim to ensure steady employment for themselves, the state and employers' organizations have made their own proposals for the recovered factories. Their idea is to limit the workers' claim to one of establishing cooperatives to maintain employment. A claim of this scope does not challenge the private property system or employers' power in the economy; it assimilates factory recoveries into capitalism. As part of their effort to defuse the threat of recovery initiatives, employers and the state want to see that the factories-if they must stay in the hands of workers-exist in forms similar to regular commercial enterprises, whether as nationalized firms controlled by bureaucrats, or as cooperatives that may redistribute income but do not redistribute knowledge and power within the workplace. The state has also tried to present recovered enterprises as part of its own labor policy, and to show off the peacefulness and legality of the recoveries. These strategies aim to prevent the factory recoveries from rekindling a debate that surged in Argentina during the 1970s about the best strategy for working-class organization and resistance under capitalism. On one side were the promoters of a politics of workers' control, and on the other side were the defenders of cooperativism. Each proposed a different way of dealing with the fact that under capitalism, workers are formally deprived of understanding and control of the production process, the product of labor, and the proceeds from the sale of this product. For Marxist economist, under the cooperative form of organization, which supposes voluntary association and self-management, the workers gain a source of work, a more egalitarian distribution of income, and productive gains that come from the logic of self-management. Supporters of cooperativism typically point to two models to emulate: the Argentinean factory Zanello and the Mondragon cooperatives in the Basque region of Spain. Zanello, which manufactures tractors, is a single factory. When its Italian owners-attracted to the country in the 1990s by the neoliberal promise of low wages and labor "flexibility"- decided to abandon it, the

workers were able to come to an agreement with several interested parties. They formed a corporation in which 33% of the factory remained in the hands of the workers, 33% of the power went to the firms that market the tractors and provide the capital, 33% went to the top technical personnel of the factory, and the remaining 1% went to the City of Villa Maria, where Zanello is headquartered. The organizational model chosen, the corporation, is one of the principal forms of the capitalist firm. Mondragon is a utopian example taken as a model by the MNER, and workers at recovered factories often refer hopefully to it. Almost 50 years old, Mondragon is now the largest business group in the Basque region and the seventh largest in all of Spain. It includes more than 150 cooperative enterprises and 60,000 workers, and has over 8 billion euros in working capital. Mondragon may be the most successful example of cooperative enterprise within a capitalist economy.

In conclusion, I think the social economy really benefits everyone in the society, the world is like a huge biscuit, everyone should have access to it, what we own now is because we got it from someone else, the products we use and wear, are mostly made by people from the developing countries, that's also a reason I feel connected to them. There are only so much resources in the world. The social economy tries to balance this by supporting those in need. We should all take a step forward and think, how we can help the social economy to help those in need. If it wasn't for the social economy, who is going to help them?

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