

# Transcending Capitalism through Cooperative Practices

# Transcending Capitalism through Cooperative Practices

Catherine P. Mulder

palgrave  
macmillan



TRANSCENDING CAPITALISM THROUGH COOPERATIVE PRACTICES

Copyright © Catherine P. Mulder 2015

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2015 978-1-137-33987-4

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission. No portion of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission. In accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, Saffron House, 6-10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS.

Any person who does any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

First published 2015 by  
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

The author has asserted her right to be identified as the author of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of Nature America, Inc., One New York Plaza, Suite 4500, New York, NY 10004-1562.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

ISBN 978-1-349-57936-5  
E-PDF ISBN: 978-1-137-33709-2  
DOI: 10.1057/9781137337092

Distribution in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world is by Palgrave Macmillan®, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Mulder, Catherine P.

Transcending capitalism through cooperative practices / Catherine P. Mulder.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Social classes.
2. Capitalism—Social aspects. 3. Social action. I. Title.  
HT608.M86 2015  
305.5—dc23

2015015305

A catalogue record for the book is available from the British Library.

*For Pops,  
(Henry R. Mulder)  
with much love and inspiration*

*And as always to my two terrific nephews, with love,  
Leo Kray, Jr.  
and  
Corporal Paul Henry Kray, USMC*

*In memory of Stephen A. Resnick,  
mentor, scholar, teacher, and friend  
October 24, 1938–January 2, 2013*

# Contents

Acknowledgments	ix
1 Transcending Capitalism through Cooperative Practices	1
2 The London Symphony Orchestra: Still Afloat	29
3 Capitalism's Triumph: The Case of the Lusty Lady	47
4 New Era Windows Cooperative: From a Sit-Down Strike to a Worker Cooperative	69
5 A Worker Self-Directed Enterprise in State Capitalist Cuba! The Case of Organopónico Vivero Alamar	87
6 The Green Bay Packers: "A Love Story between a Community and a Team"	101
7 What's Next for Capitalism? Can We Transcend It?	125
Appendix A: NFL Teams, Stadium Name, and Capacity	141
Appendix B: Green Bay Packers Gate and Corporate Sponsors	143
Appendix C: Packers Charitable Organizations	147
Appendix D: NFL Team Owners—Also Known as the Billionaire's Club	153
Appendix E: 1935 Green Bay Packers' Stock Certificate	155

Appendix F: Green Bay Players' (Workers') Salaries	157
Notes	161
Bibliography	169
Index	179

# Acknowledgments

This research project stretched six locations and 36 months, and given the length of time it required and all the places I visited, my acknowledgments are many—I hope I don’t forget anyone; if so, please know that it took more than a village and that I thank all who have been there for me with this project.

Firstly, this book would not be possible without the theoretical approach developed by my mentor and his dearest friend and colleague, Richard D. Wolff and the late Stephen Resnick. Rick and Steve both serve(d) as mentors, scholars, teachers, and friends to many; we have lost Steve but he will live forever through his contributions to our profession, his students, and through Rick. Their approach is now taking on a life of its own, and it’s known as the “Amherst School of Thought” to many. Additionally, I would like to thank all the other members of the Association of Economics and Social Analysis (AESA) who amplify the richness of their lifelong endeavor.

I would like to thank Palgrave Macmillan for publishing this work, particularly Leila Campoli and Sarah Lawrence in their New York office. They have been generous and patient with me throughout this entire process.

There have been many family, friends, students, workers, and colleagues who have supported this endeavor, but some need special mentioning. Foremost, I want to thank my mother, Maureen Butler, whose ceaseless love and support, both psychologically and financially, have helped this book come to fruition. I also thank my father, who was my inspiration for this book, Henry R. Mulder, is a hardworking man who owns an eighty-year-plus-old family plumbing business that is now in its fourth generation.

His hard work and dedication made me look at the labor process in a way that had not crossed my mind in the past. It also made me look at how the “American Dream” of owning/running your own business can often be difficult and stressful, and that is why this book is dedicated to this honorable man.

My sisters Jeanne Mulder and Carol Mulder Kray, whose love gives me a sense of confidence, I thank you both immensely. I also thank Carol and her husband, Leo Kray, for giving me my two wonderful nephews. Their eldest son, Leo Kray Jr., who is now finishing his plumbing school education and continuing the family tradition, and his brother, Corporal Paul Henry Kray, USMC, who is currently serving our country—I am proud of you both.

Thank you to the two people that make my parents very happy—my father’s wife, Judith Mulder, and my mother’s husband, Dominick Caccamo. You made our families whole. I would be remiss in not mentioning how important my aunt Patricia Butler Corso is to my mother and our family. Aunt Patsy is mother to my cousin Mark, and grandmother to his wonderful kids Mark Jr., Stephen and his wife Jamie, and my goddaughter AnneMarie Lowrie, all of whom make me very proud. Moreover, though it has now been more than 11 years, we all still miss and think about my late grandmother who always had fun no matter what, Catherine Powell Butler.

My colleagues and friends in the economics department at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY), really gave me the big push to complete this book, particularly my former chair, Joan Hoffman, and my current chair, Jay Hamilton. But no less of a push came from Geert Dhondt, whose friendship for the last six years has been immeasurable. Thank you also to Ian Sedarizzary, Mathieu Dufour, Rita Taveras, and my new colleagues J.W. Mason, Joseph Rebello, and Michelle Holder, and particularly to my dear friend who we lost in the summer of 2014, Caroline McMahon—I think of you every day and I still cannot walk past your office without hesitating. It warms me, though, that you are now with your son Sean.

I thank Judy-Lynne Peters, Ned Benton, Chuck Nemeth, Patrick O’Hara, Marilyn Rubin, Adam Wandt, and Jessica



Gordon-Nembhard, my John Jay College colleagues who are always there for me. I also thank many of my students at John Jay College for reading and giving me their input on various chapters, particularly Urata Blakaj, Simone Smilie, and Claudia Reyes.

In addition I thank my colleagues/friends and coeditors of the soon-to-be-published *Marxian Economics Handbook*, David Brennan, David Kristjanson-Gural, and Erik Olsen, who all showed patience when I missed a meeting or some other faux pas; we'll produce a great handbook together.

Susan Feiner and Bruce Roberts deserve my special gratitude since they were instrumental in so many ways in helping me develop ideas, share their Maine camp with me, but most of all for their friendship and humor. I also thank Elaine Bernard, the director of the Harvard Trade Union Program and another mentor of mine. Elaine is a woman who is truly dedicated to her students, workers, and justice.

Another special thank-you to Evelyn Gort-Friedman for always making sure I had lunch and/or dinner during the crunch time as I finished this book. She and her husband, Steve Friedman, are truly good friends and neighbors. Whenever I needed something from the store or whatever, Evelyn was happy to help! Also to my dear friend Marylou Amarosa who was always there to listen, go out for a meal, offer unquestioning support, and—best of all—be my companion at numerous Broadway shows for those “downtimes.”

A special shout-out of thanks to Shellie Gallagher, whose phone calls from Indiana always kept me laughing and/or feeling very special. Additionally, though so far away, Reshela DuPuis always had my back. Moreover, if it weren't for Brenda Shelley-McIntyre, this book would still be in my head and certainly not on paper.

Thank you to some colleagues and friends from other institutions who were kind enough to read, write letters of support for my work, and be a constant source of support: Antonio Cal-lari, Richard MacIntyre, George DeMartino, Drucilla Barker, Suzanne Bergeron, and David Ruccio. And to Serap Kayatekin and Marcus Green, editors of *Rethinking Marxism*, for all their kindness and support.

Because I visited every site written about in this book, I have some extra thanks to my hosts. By chapter:

2. The London Symphony Orchestra: A special thank-you to archivist Libby Rice who filled in many blanks and became my friend while I was in London. I also thank all the LSO headquarters staff and any of the musicians I met. I also want to mention that, while in London, I went to quite a few LSO symphonies and other events—it made my research enjoyable.

3. The Lusty Lady: I visited San Francisco at a very stressful time—indeed it was the beginning of the end of this first unionized cooperative in the sex industry. While these are pseudonyms, I do thank Fred for her input on the union, and Princess Pandora and Delinqua for helping me understand the Lusty in a very unexpected way.

4. The New Era Window Cooperative: When I asked Armando Robles why he was so willing to speak openly with me, he said quite frankly that he wanted his grandchildren to read about what he had done and to be proud of him. I didn't ask Ricky Maclin the same question, but he let me know in no uncertain terms that he too was taking these risks because of his 6 children and 16 grandchildren. Thus, I dedicate this chapter to the Robles and Maclin grandchildren. Thank you, Armando and Ricky and all your colleagues at New Era who took the time to speak with me, at UE, and The Working World, particularly Brendan Martin.

5. Organopónico Vivero Alamar: I thank all of the workers and our hosts who were present during our visit to this unique urban farm in Havana, Cuba, which truly exemplifies how cooperation is not only possible, but also successful. Our group received such a wonderful education about organic farming and the post-Soviet era changes.

6. The Green Bay Packers: When I began thinking about including the Packers as a case study, I thought that it would be difficult to gain access to their organization. Happily, I was wrong—given the welcome by their public relations director Aaron Popkey and his colleague Sarah Quick—no one could have asked for better hosts. They invited me onto the field for the annual shareholders' meeting, gave me tours, and set up a

meeting with CEO Mark Murphy, who was more than amenable. In addition, I want to particularly thank one of the board members, Ms. Susan Finco, who helped me further understand the affection Green Bay has with its Packers.

7. Syracuse Cooperative Federal Credit Union: I would like to acknowledge one of my favorite people and dear friend Sharon Moran. Sharon is an associate professor at SUNY College of Environmental Science in Syracuse, NY. Sharon, at the time, was a member of the Syracuse Cooperative Federal Credit Union's board of directors and was instrumental in giving me access not only to the treasurer and to the operation, but also to one of their fundraising events where I met and spoke to donors, board members, and loan/grant recipients. I truly thank Ron Ehrenreich for all the time and information he provided me.

Last but certainly not least, this book would not at all be in the form it is in if it were not for the tireless editorial assistance of Judith Chien. Judith and I have been working together for many years, but there is no better editor. She is extremely patient, understanding, and really one of the sweetest people I have ever met. Her professionalism and efficiency are second to none.

Parts of this book were financially supported by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice's Economics Department's travel funds, as well as a PSC-CUNY Type B grant and the CUNY Faculty Fellowship Program. I thank all my colleagues in the latter for their input and support, particularly Thomas Volscho.