

Book Review

Reviewed by Jack Reardon

Email: Jackreardon864@gmail.com

Economy Studies: A Guide to Rethinking Economics Education
by: Sam de Muijnck and Joris Tieleman
Published 2021
by Amsterdam University Press
Amsterdam, Netherlands, 465pp
ISBN: 9789463726047

John Adams, one of the more illustrious of the USA's Founding Fathers, and second president of the USA, when it came to writing his thoughts and comments as he was reading, "was the greatest marginalist of the founding fathers...as pungent as he was copious" (Brookhiserm, 2006). The more thought-provoking (good or bad) a book was, the more marks in the margins. If Adams were alive today, he would have marked up his copy of *Economy Studies* as much as I did mine, and perhaps even more. But upping Adams, mine is a three-colour mark-up¹ – one colour is simply not enough to mark the different degrees of provocation (and all good!)

Probably no book has affected me more (in a positive sense) than *Economy Studies*. It is both a validation and an extension of my work to make economics more pluralistic, realistic, and open; a task that I began in the early 2000s when my pluralistic colleagues were few and far between (although thankfully, inexorably increasing!) As a matter of fact, this is a book that could not have been written at that time, or even a decade ago, because so much groundwork had to have been laid for the authors to even conceptualise such a book. This is not to denigrate their achievement – in fact, throughout this review I will be singing their praises. And I have to say this right off the bat, that the authors are quite lavish in acknowledging others and quite praiseworthy in discussing their influence; a striking humility is part and parcel of the authors' modus operandi, manifesting itself throughout the book.

Given that *Economy Studies* weaves together the recent² contributors in the vast movement to reconceptualise and rethink economics, it is fitting that the authors chose to upload it onto the collective commons. In fact, this seems like a natural, logical extension, reflecting a genuine thanks for the collective effort. Doing this myself with my *Rebuild* (Boyd and Reardon, 2020), I know first-hand that such a decision is difficult as one must juggle lost revenue on the one hand with greater exposure and more visibility. So hats off to both authors (although neither one wears one, except in the winter when Amsterdam can get a tad nippy).

This is probably one of the best, most complete books on economics education (and even economics for that matter) that I have read in a long, long time. So much so, that it is hard to see any book in the near future competing with it. The authors literally wrote the book on the subject and set the bar high for years to come.³

While the authors generously note that much has been written on reforming economics education, missing, however,

“... is an integral approach for constructing economics curricula and courses. This book aims to fill that gap. We bundle the ideas and materials of renewal and reform onto a coherent multi-level vision for economics education... We also provide the concrete building blocks for this in terms of academic content, including detailed overviews of teaching materials and practical suggestions. Finally, we translate these to the level of actual programs and courses, providing a wide range of practical tools for implementation.” (p.10)

The authors admirably have succeeded. Incidentally, while you and I will call it a book, it is much more:

“On the website, we offer an extended versions of some of the chapters... We also provide background material on each of the economic approaches described in this book, as well as neighboring sub-disciplines. In addition, we provide a more complete overview and discussion of research methods, coordination and allocation mechanisms and the history of economic thought and methods. Finally, we offer much more extensive lists of teaching materials for each of the building blocks.” (p.16)

Please take advantage of the wonderful resources provided on their website. Indeed, this collection is a treasure to be savoured and admired like a fine meal, well at least initially and then to be actively used and reused – so much for the fine meal analogy. The authors have done their homework and then a lot more.⁴

This book is divided into three parts: Part one lays out the foundation for constructing a real-world economics education. Part two introduces ten building blocks, all critical components in constructing an effective real-world economics curriculum. Part three introduces seven tools to implement the ideas and blocks presented in the first two parts.

Part one: foundations

After an introduction, Part one consists of six foundations (each presented in a separate chapter) or exhortations as I prefer to call them, for that is what they are. Specifically: real-world economics education must be pluralist; it must focus on the real world; it must include values; it must decolonise and recognise the contributions of groups that have long been disparaged and excluded; and finally, rethinking how we teach is as important as what we teach. As founding editor of the *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, with several books on reforming economics education under my belt, these foundations are close to my heart. And by the way, I found it hard to implement only one (or two) separately, for they come together in a cohesive whole (i.e., the benefit of systems thinking).

Rather than summarise each foundation, I'll harp on a few and offer my two cents, so to speak.

The authors do a good job of explaining the reasons for pluralism, why it is necessary, what pluralism is and is not, and how it can be used. No original research here, but that is OK, since the (immense) value-added is compiling the literature into one usable heap (if I may use the word). Nevertheless, they cover all the bases. Novices can certainly learn a lot and even the expert can learn something. There is nothing controversial here, nothing that I can quibble with. Only the nuts and bolts of pluralism. Well done.

Most pluralists argue that ‘not everything goes.’ While pluralism must show respect for different views, at the same time there are limits as to which views can and should be acceptable. Most of us who call ourselves pluralists agree, since:

- 1 economics as a social science has boundaries which need to be respected in order for the discipline to survive and prosper
- 2 in economics, as with every discipline, there are views that are too extreme and too out of bounds.

While I do not disagree, at the same time, I worry about the power of the majority to stifle anything new and innovative which can coincide with ‘extreme’ or out-of-bounds. I also worry about a pluralist majority imposing its muscle on a minority of views that have not been proven or even tested. Will this stifle the very diversity that we want to gestate? But what is the alternative? It is a real concern, and I invite you to share your views.

To argue that that the curriculum must be about the real world underlies what is what wrong with economics and economics education, but other scientists are amazed (but probably not surprised) that such statements must be made. Students flock to economics courses to learn about their economy, but instead get hit with an onslaught of simplistic, anti-empirical, and ahistorical models. As a physics major who switched to economics I was and (still am) amazed at the reluctance of many textbook authors to enthusiastically engage with the actual economy as it is. Instead, we focus on abstract firms in abstract industries, utilising a discredited theory of human behaviour as to how consumers behave,

“The danger of this approach is that students gain knowledge and develop skills that are of little or no use in their future career and life. For instance, calculating the market equilibrium of a fictitious market using abstract numbers is an interesting mathematical puzzle. But for most students it does not lead to much additional insight or intuition for economic mechanisms. Nor will most students use this skill in their subsequent working lives. Such exercises crowd out other valuable knowledge and skills, such as practically applying and effectively explaining economic concepts and critical independent thinking.” (p.432)

If textbook writers were to conspire to deliberately make economics education as uninviting and boring as possible right off the bat, they could not have picked a better topic than the production possibilities curve. This overemphasises that economics will be about technique rather than about the economy. Changing this emphasis is a constant theme of this book, since it is the best (and only) way to get students hooked with economics. The time invested is well worth it,

“We are convinced that by helping students to continuously build the bridge between day-to-day events and economic theory and data, professors can engage the long-term interest of many more of their students, thus ensuring themselves of a far more involved audience throughout their program. When students can see how the theoretical knowledge from their classes helps them to understand the world around them, they are also far more likely to internalize this knowledge, to genuinely understand the theories and models that they are taught, rather than merely memorizing them. The time to get students interested repays itself many times over.” (p.86)

In my 36 years of teaching, I have yet to see a student jump up and down at the chance to immerse in technique, at least right off the bat.

It also is critical to link economics education with real world knowledge given that,

“Less than 3% [of our students] will become academic economists, the rest will work inside government agencies, policy institutes and think tanks, (central) banks and other financial corporations, private sector and not-for-profit companies, NGOs and campaign groups, and journalistic entities. As such, they will work on tackling practical and real-world problems... so confront your students with the messy and complex real world.” (p.445)

And, even if economics pedagogy focuses on the three percent (which it should not) this is still good advice. The specific focus on abstract, deductive thinking does not do anyone any good.

Probably the most misleading and disingenuous statement (alas, there are many⁵) in traditional economics textbooks is that economics is and should focus on positive elements while eschewing the normative, relegating the latter to politicians. In introductory physics we learn that such a statement is not only a quaint paean to a bygone 18th century way of thinking but a dangerous ignorance of how the observer affects the observed, and that a binary demarcation of positive/normative does not exist except in the minds of neoclassical economists. As a student, I used to feel that such a statement was used as a front to justify a highly ideological semester with focus on mythical firms in mythical industries, praising the benefits of a 19th century pre-industrial world.⁶ Rather than ignore values, as the authors say, let's bring them on. Hallelujah! Not to do so is to proselytise.

The ‘Diversifying and Decolonising Economics’, foundation is critical as the authors write,

“The current focus of the discipline, which is on the types of topics and approaches to which the more privileged groups in society have most affinity, could certainly explain why women and minorities feel less drawn to economics. However, were the discipline redefined to its original definition, as being the science of human provisioning, there need be no reason for a bias towards the interests of white men. This would require a serious reorientation. It would imply bringing in topics that are too often neglected... and [emphasizing] non-western ways of organizing economic processes.” (p.112)

We certainly have a lot of work to do. Unfortunately, this is only the tip of the iceberg:

“It is well-known that economics is notorious also among other disciplines, for being particularly combative, arrogant, authoritarian, and having infamously aggressive seminars... While this relatively harsh culture affects everyone in the discipline, it has a disproportionate impact on women and minorities.” (p.116)

This discussion also highlights one of the nice features of the book: rather than just highlighting a problem the authors provide practical suggestions for tackling it.

Part two: building blocks

I was told that when I was younger, I was (unusually) fascinated by blocks and water hoses (not sure of the connection between the two). I had since forgotten until I started reading Part two, and then seeing an overview of ‘playing’ with blocks (p.145). Memories that I thought were tucked away for good in the recesses of my mind exploded.

Part two, 'The meat and bones of the book' presents ten thematic areas of knowledge and skills in economics, i.e., blocks, "each covering an area of knowledge or skill considered essential for the education of future economists" (p.142). They are: introducing the economy, know your economy, economic history, history of economic thought and methods, economic organisation and methods, political economic systems, research methods and philosophy of science, economic theories, problems and proposals, and economics for a better world. The authors masterly rationalise the need for each.

Here, my goal is not necessarily to summarise but to offer comments/remarks/suggestions that strike my fancy.

Blocks one and two: I personally do not know any other way to teach economics, especially at the introductory level. Or any level for that matter. Students want to learn about the economy; after all, they are living in it now – the economy is all around them – and they soon will be active participants. That economists need admonishment for such a no brainer, underscores how much our discipline desperately needs reform.

The authors suggest that

"Before embarking on a wide range of theoretical and methodological abstraction... students might start with gaining a concrete image of at least one economic sector, as a tangible point of reference. This could be coupled with a broad grasp of the other sectors making up the economy as a whole." (p.170)

Beating the authors to the punch, I have been doing so with the energy sector for many moons and it really works. Especially important, since economics is all about provisioning. To provision we need energy. What type of energy are we using? And where do we get it? Students are well aware of the once-in-a-lifetime weather events becoming all too frequent that are linked to fossil fuels and our current energy consumption. What does this mean for our goal of becoming net zero by 2050? What are the obstacles in achieving it and who holds the power? I find this a wonderful way of introducing students to the importance of economics and how it directly affects them.⁷ And by doing so, topics like market forces, price determination, elasticity, and power naturally follow; it also renders digesting necessary theory more palatable.

Another pedagogical tragedy is the movement away from the history of economic thought, making students ignorant of the evolution of their own discipline, while implicitly sending the message that economics is teleological, i.e., that the economics today is all we need. But the discipline of economics has not evolved linearly; earlier contributions are especially interesting and relevant. From studying the evolution of the history of economic thought, we learn the reasons why theories were developed and to question their relevance today, especially when presented in the same original form.⁸ We also learn that the presentation and then acceptance of ideas is not just on merit, but,

"Occurs as a result of a power struggle between competing forces, a history of economic thought that shows how ideas clash, how schools of thought compete and how the winner is not always the most useful or insightful one. Politics, personalities, and pure luck play a large role in this, as any good historian of economic thought will make abundantly clear." (p.190)

Not to mention pure discrimination. Since the incipient years of our profession, the ideas of women have been excluded from the citadel, and women have been shunned from our universities to learn about economics and how it can be used to help all provision.⁹ This is a travesty which demands immediate redress.

While neoclassical economics exclusively focuses on markets and for-profit firms, there are alternative systems and alternative types of firms that students should become familiar with (although I would add that neoclassical economics does not even do this job satisfactorily. It has long been ignorant of how actual firms act and operate in actual industries.) A helpful resource of the myriad types of firms consistent with democracy, sustainability, and the transition to net-zero, is my own book, *Rebuild* (especially pp.360–340).

Of course, it is important to discuss political systems. Capitalism, which currently dominates, is predated and currently exists with other systems such as kin and reciprocity; not to mention socialism which presents itself as an alternative to capitalism. Although capitalism has shown itself to be extremely adaptive, it is unclear if it can comport with the goals of sustainability and net zero. But only students well-versed in the different isms can understand and help contribute to this debate.

The necessity of learning about different political economic systems should be obvious, and just calling to do so highlights what is wrong with economics pedagogy. Here, interestingly, the authors also suggest:

“In addition to direct experiences and academics material, it can be helpful to expose students to popular material. There is a vast catalogue of art, literature, movies, and music that deals with political-economic systems... These are likely to enhance students’ understanding of political economic systems in different ways and speak differently to them than textbook materials do.” (pp.231–232)

As a novelist, I really appreciate how fiction can help us understand reality (or parts of it) even better than factual description. Here at the *IJPEE*, we have published our fair share of such helpful resources.¹⁰

It is intellectually dishonest and a quaint paean to 19th century intellectual thinking to tell our students from day one that economics is value-free, and as good economists we leave normative decisions to politicians. On the contrary, value judgements are ubiquitous and are continuously made. After graduation, students will be flooded with values and their existence, and they must understand how to work with them. Hence,

“[Our job] is not about teaching students what is right, [but] about teaching them how to clearly see where and how value judgements are being made throughout the analysis... Learning the habit of looking at the normative choices of people can help students to realize the range of value judgements that may exist.” (p.290)

Part three: tools

The purpose of Part three is “to put everything into practice while the rest of the book mixes practical advice with elements of philosophy, ideas, topics, teaching materials, considerations and overviews” (p.298). The authors provide seven tools covering a wide range of topics. This section is very interesting and should be read in its entirety. If interested in achieving a certain goal then you can zoom for more depth, while taking advantage of the copious website resources.

So for example, in constructing my new course on the 2024 election (which embraces the book’s main themes of pluralism, real world economics and values), I found Tool #4: ‘example courses’ very helpful, especially pp.384–385, along with Tool #7: ‘learning objectives’.

Speaking of learning objectives, the authors write

“when designing a course, it is key to start with the learning objectives. Based on these ... teaching materials, exercises, and assessment forms can subsequently be chosen and not in the reversed order... Learning objectives require teachers to think critically about what the ultimate goals are of the course and be concrete and transparent about it to students and other faculty members.” (p.432)

But for those of us working in universities where the department writes the learning objectives, then “teachers should not start from their own knowledge or current research, but from what students need to fulfill their future societal roles, thereby ensuring curriculum alignment” (p.432).

Many of us are or will be engaged in curriculum review where the goal is not to develop a new curriculum from scratch but to “indicate what is missing in the current program and what might be ways to improve it” (p.365). The authors provide really helpful guides, and to ground the discussion in reality the authors use the undergraduate economics curriculum at Harvard.

Tool #6 ‘courses for non-economists’, gives helpful hands-on advice for how to structure such courses. The authors also discuss teaching courses for high school students. These are important endeavours given the eventual impact of economics education on future citizens, and that ‘everyone participates in the economy’ (p.408).

Teachers committed to teaching pluralism, and who are at least cognisant of the plethora of different theories might be overwhelmed as to how to approach and which theories to select. Too often we feel the temptation to introduce all the views, but this is a recipe for madness, for both student and teacher. The authors recommend (Tool #1) ‘pragmatic pluralism’ which selects the most relevant theories for each topic. And, as usual, going one step beyond, the authors provide a matrix listing 13 topics from governments to households to inequality, along with 16 perspectives ranging from feminist to institutionalist to neoclassical. For each topic the authors present the main opposing perspectives, a complementary perspective, and additional perspectives and insights. Like dining at a fine restaurant, the wait staff recommending pairing this wine with this course; it really works.

The obvious problem with using Tool #1 effectively is that it requires teachers to be willing and able to teach different theories, and just as importantly, that they are aware of such different theories. Neither requirement is a given; and taken together underscores the importance of economics education and that our job is far from over.

Tool #2 ‘adapting existing courses’, will be of interest to most of us who are committed to the values professed in this book, yet, rather than change the whole curriculum, we would like to change our courses (for the better) incrementally. The text discusses four of the more popular courses: micro, macro, public economics, and finance while the website discusses ten additional courses such as econometrics, labour economics, etc. (I’m just loving this!) For each course the authors discuss the typical content of existing courses, followed by suggested additions and changes, all with copious teaching materials. Most importantly, what to take out. Since we cannot add without taking out the latter is critical in reforming the curriculum. From my own experience this is the most cogent criticism made by even committed authors: ‘I’d love to add this, but that means I have to take this out.’ The authors advise and return to this point many times:

“To create space for the ... suggested additions, we advise to focus more on the key ideas and intuitions behind the models and devote less teaching time to their technicalities and mathematics. As teaching students to reproduce and work through mathematical models often takes up a large part of the teaching time, this would give the teachers the opportunity to devote more time to practical knowledge, the relevance of institutions, and history. Furthermore, a more even balance between neoclassical economics and other economic approaches could be achieved by decreasing the number of neoclassical ideas and models that are taught.” (p.347)

The authors are point on in rearranging our teaching priorities by teaching less neoclassical stuff and more of other approaches:

“Reduc[e] the teaching time devoted to neoclassical theory. Studies indicate that roughly 4/5 or more of economic theory courses are devoted to neoclassical economics. With [pragmatic pluralism] ... about 1/5 of teaching time would be devoted to neoclassical economics. This means that there will be more need to focus on the most relevant and important insights of neoclassical theory, and in turn spend less time on the technicalities of its models.” (pp.262–263)

This is good advice and needs to be implemented across the board. The goal is not to expunge neoclassical economics from the curriculum, nor to disparage it, but to give other theories time upon the stage. It also relates to David Colander’s (and others) exhortation that if you are writing a textbook and it deviates more than 15% from the standard than it would not be accepted. This is rubbish designed to uphold and perpetuate the status quo. I was glad that the authors noted that “our book clearly breaks this rule, and proposes more far-reaching and fundamental changes in most chapters” (p.331). By the way, so does my book *Introducing a New Economics* (Reardon et al., 2018), first written in 2018 and still going strong, but in need of an updated revision.

Tool #5 ‘example curricula’ discusses how entire economics programs (i.e., curricula) can be structured based on the major themes of the book, while utilising the ten building blocks. Central here, and a key argument in the whole book, is that there is no one true/ideal curriculum, and thus “it is possible to design a wide variety of programs with [the ten] building blocks, and it is our hope that they will be used for this” (p.389). Four examples are presented in the text with three more on the website. While I am not one to use superlatives, these are really, really great resources!

The authors end the book with ‘calls to action’. One such call is asking students to ‘be critical of what you are learning’ (p.444). No better testimony of the need for reform.

While reading the book and preparing my review, I was fastidiously looking for faults and negative elements. To be honest I could not find any, although I tried! I obviously like the content. I like the style of writing, the authors’ command of the literature, and how their stuff is presented. I like the opening quotes for each chapter. And I like the physical attributes of the book: its cover, binding, font, etc. (people really do judge a book by its cover). Perhaps my only criticism is a lack of an index. As an author I enjoy constructing one, since it gives me an idea of what my book is about and whether I left anything out; and as an editor I enjoy reading one (yes, reading!) to see what type of story the authors will tell, and the stories they will not tell.

Conclusions

When I wrote my first book on economics education (Reardon, 2009), I naively assumed that the argument for pluralism had been made and accepted, and that we could get on with the busy work of implementing pluralism in the curriculum. But I quickly realised how wrong I was. And how formidable the obstacles were to implementing pluralism (Fullbrook, 2010), so much so that most of my effort was going back to square one exhorting and cajoling the benefits of a pluralist education. Even today, not everyone is receptive to reconceptualising the curriculum, saying that it is fine as is, while we have to touch up the edges a tad. I do believe that this book will push us over the edge and make pluralism a reality sooner rather than later.

This book is meant to be read and re-read. Show it to your economist friends (and even your non-economist friends). Then read it again and show it to more friends. If you run out of friends, make some more. For this is a book to be read, savoured, and shared.

At home I have a ton of books – literally! In my economics bookcase I have my top shelf of the classics, Mill, Ricardo, Smith, Say, Veblen, Marx, Keynes, Minsky, etc. I'm happy to say that I just made room for my newest top shelf book: *Economy Studies*, by Sam de Muijnck and Joris Tieleman.

References

- Andrews, T. (2019) 'EconFilmMaking: an experiential, problem-based, multimedia project for microeconomics', *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, Vol. 10, No. 3, pp.288–302.
- Bohanon, C.E. (2012) 'Haiku, art and economics: a pedagogical exercise', *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp.424–436.
- Bose, F. (2020) 'Using Kollywood (South India) movies to teach economic development', *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, Vol. 11, No. 4, pp.343–358.
- Boyd, G. and Reardon, J. (2020) *Rebuild the Economy, Leadership, and You: A Toolkit for Builders of a Better World*, Evolutesix, London.
- Brookhiserm, R. (2006) 'John Adams talks to his books', *The New York Times*, 3 September [online] <http://www.nytimes.com>.
- Chu, S.Y. (2014) 'An assessment of teaching economics with *The Simpsons*', *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp.180–196.
- Cleveland, J., Holder, K. and O'Roark, B. (2016) 'The economics of *The Hunger Games*', *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp.152–169.
- Diesing, P. (1982) *Science & Ideology in the Policy Sciences*, Aldine, Hawthorne, New York.
- Fullbrook, E. (2009) 'The meltdown and economics textbooks', in Reardon, J. (Ed.): *The Handbook of Pluralist Economics Education*, pp.17–23, Routledge, London.
- Fullbrook, E. (2010) 'How to bring economics into the 3rd millennium by 2020', *Real-World Economics Review*, 27 September, No. 54, pp.89–102, <http://www.paecon.net/PAEReview/issue54/Kessler54.pdf>.
- Lee, F. (2009) *A History of Heterodox Economics*, Routledge, London.
- Madden, K. and Dimand, R.W. (2019) *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Women's Economic Thought*, Routledge, London.

- Mateer, G.D. and Vachris, M.A. (2017) 'Mad Max: travelling the fury road to learn economics', *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp.68–79.
- Raehsler, R. (2013) 'The use of popular music to teach introductory economics in a live and online environment', *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp.78–92.
- Reardon, J. (2009) *The Handbook of Pluralist Economics Education*, Routledge, London.
- Reardon, J. (2015) 'The teaching commons: using a short story to discuss capitalism, property rights, public goods, power, justice and class', *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp.100–104.
- Reardon, J., Madi, M. and Cato, M.S. (2018) *Introducing a New Economics*, Pluto, London.
- Rhodes, R. (2018) *Energy: A Human History*, Simon and Schuster, New York.
- Roberts, G.D. (2003) *Shantaram – A Novel*, St. Martin's, New York.
- Vachris, M.A. and Bohanon, C.E. (2015) 'Special issue: economics and the novel', *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, Vol. 7, No. 2.
- Yu, F-L. (2009) 'A human agency approach to the economics of international trade', *The International journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, Vol. 1, Nos. 1–2, pp.22–36.
- Ziliak, S.T. (2009) 'Haiku economics: little teaching aids for big economic pluralists', *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, Vol. 1, Nos. 1/2, pp.108–129.
- Ziliak, S.T. (2014) 'The spontaneous order of words: economics experiments in haiku and renga', *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp.219–229.
- Ziliak, S.T. (2015) 'Why we made the economics rap video', *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp.6–11.

Notes

- 1 Somewhat of a play on the name of the American rock band *Three Dog Night*, where in the Australian outback, people would sleep with their dogs to keep warm, and the coldest nights were known as a three-dog night. Well, my review is a three-coloured review.
- 2 Any work, and especially one of this magnitude, must set out the basic parameters: when to start and when to stop. Given the extensive literature, the authors chose to begin their analysis in 2008, which is fine. Although, as I was reading, I could not help but wonder if there were any antecedent influences of earlier waves of pluralism (Lee, 2009).
- 3 As many of you know, I am a novelist, publishing *Swimming Backwards* in 2022. I also have been fortunate enough to travel to India and wanted to write my second novel set in India. But after reading *Shantaram* by Roberts (2003), I realised that there was no way I could compete with his craft, never mind top it.
- 4 The initial draft for the book was presented at a workshop in January 2019, which then saw the book go through several fruitful and critiquing rounds, followed by an intensive eight months to flesh out the draft. This is evidenced by the authors' superior command of the literature on display throughout the book.
- 5 See Fullbrook (2009).
- 6 Dising's (1982) analysis is apropos here, "If all political positions wish to change the present order of things toward a better one, then each position has its own utopia, or imagined better society" (p.323) and "Neoclassical economics locates its utopia in the 19th century before the Industrial Revolution fully was underway. For those perspectives whose utopias are located in the past, perform an ideological function. They do this by hiding the actual exercise of power and by idealizing some existing institution projected into the past" (p.327).

- 7 Helpful is the book by Rhodes (2018).
- 8 One example (among many) is David Ricardo's 'Theory of comparative advantage', see Yu (2009).
- 9 See Madden and Dimand (2019).
- 10 For example, see Andrews (2019), Bohanon (2012), Bose (2020), Chu (2014), Cleveland et al. (2016), Raehsler (2013), Mateer and Vachris (2017), Reardon (2015), Vachris and Bohanon (2015) and Ziliak (2009, 2014, 2015).