

Institution: University of Roehampton
Unit of Assessment: Panel C, UoA 19 Business and Management Studies
Title of case study: Sustainability Transitions
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Molly Scott Cato's ongoing research in the field of Sustainability Transitions has had an international influence on reframing global debates on green policy in three interlinked areas. First, she has made a major contribution to conceptualising the 'green economy' in work that can be demonstrated to have global reach through gathering formal evidence or informing policy advice. Secondly, Cato's work on relocalising and reclaiming ownership of provisioning systems — conceptualised as the 'bioregional economy'— emphasises land as the key economic resource. These insights have led to policy changes in the UK and in Wales specifically. Thirdly, Cato's work in the field of co-operative studies has influenced economic development policy in Wales. Through this work Cato is influencing public discourse on a broad scale.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Molly Scott Cato (Professor, January 2012 to date) is an internationally leading 'green' economist. In the context of global environmental concerns, there is a significant growth in sectors whose production processes and products can demonstrate more efficient use of resources and energy. This is generally referred to as the 'green economy'. Problematically, because the hegemonic ideology of neoclassical economics is immanent in this green economy, it is unlikely to engender a transition to a sustainable economy if, as many economists now suggest, the structure of the neoliberal economy that neoclassical economics underpins is itself inherently unsustainable.</p> <p>Cato argues that, for sustainability to be achieved, there is a need for alternative understandings, concepts and principles to effect structural change. Cato uses her own participation in and experience of existing alternative economic practices to explore empirically, analyse and synthesise understandings of sustainable futures. This was achieved in her well-received and widely-cited book <i>Green Economics</i> (2009), which provides a coherent framework for enacting sustainability transitions through policy and praxis. This praxis-oriented work is complemented by a theoretical paper in the <i>Cambridge Journal of Economics</i> (2012) developed whilst at the University of Roehampton in 2012.</p> <p><i>Green Economics</i> leaves the reader with a vision of the future which is materially limited. In order for such prospects to appear attractive, and therefore viable in policy terms, it is necessary to offer the prospect of non-material compensations, such as the deepening of social relationships between people and their natural environments. To respond to this, Cato's book <i>The Bioregional Economy</i> (2012), completed in summer 2012, challenges the assumption underpinning the global economy that the ownership and control of resources does not relate to geographical sites or the people and species who inhabit them, and explores alternative sources of identity and satisfaction. In such a locally embedded economy, the question of land use acquires enhanced salience and policy relevance. Complementing this conceptual work, Cato works on the increasingly salient question of local provisioning, particularly the local food economy, which she theorizes as part of a resilient, sustainable economy of the future.</p> <p>Formerly a director of the Cardiff Institute for Co-operative Studies, Cato is recognised as a leading theorist of the co-operative economy and is currently a member of the Co-operative Commission in Wales. In 2012 she guest-edited a special issue of the <i>Journal of Co-operative Studies</i> on the co-operative green economy, featured at the Rio+20 conference and circulated via research networks of the International Co-operative Alliance. Cato has used this theoretical work to explore how enterprises owned by producers or consumers (or a combination of both) can offer a more sustainable and resilient approach to food production. This work is reflected in her book chapter 'Your Caring Sharing Co-op'. She undertook a study of farmers' markets as part of the Making Local Food Work programme funded by the Big Lottery Fund (£10,000), and is active in the core group of Stroud Community Agriculture, a local cooperatively owned farm with 200 member households. To facilitate local economic exchange, Cato has supported—both theoretically and</p>

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practically—the development and discussion of local currencies, including in her paper on the *Stroud Pound*.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- 2012 *The Bioregional Economy: Land, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness* (London: Earthscan).
- 2012 ‘Green Economics: Putting the Planet and Politics Back into Economics’, *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 36(5): 1019-1032. REF2.
- 2012 *Journal of Co-operative Studies* special issue on Green Economy, commissioned and editor, 45/1.
- 2012 ‘Stroud Pound: A Local Currency to Map, Measure and Strengthen the Local Economy’, under review with *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, 16 (D) 106-115, with Marta Suarez. <http://ijccr.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/ijccr-2012-scott-cato-suarez.pdf>
- 2012 ‘Your caring, sharing co-op: women’s work, ownership and sustainable livelihoods’, in *Gender and Sustainable Livelihoods*, ed. Wendy Harcourt (Houndsmill: Palgrave Macmillan).
- 2009 *Green Economics: An Introduction to Theory, Policy and Practice* (London: Earthscan). REF2.

Key Grants:

Molly Scott Cato (with Jan Myers, Gloucestershire), ‘Evaluation of the Making Local Food Work Collaborative Farmers’ Markets Programme’, grant from the Plunkett Foundation/FARMA, January-July 2012. £10,000.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Conceptualising the ‘Green Economy’:

Cato’s research on green economics has made influential contributions to public discourse around the understanding of alternative economic models, and has directly influenced the policy of the Green Party in the UK, and at a European level. This work has had international reach: Cato’s book *Green Economics* has been translated into Greek and Chinese and she has received media coverage in the USA, Latin America, China, India, Lithuania, Finland, and Canada.[1] This has shaped public discourse globally about the economics of sustainability and challenged existing norms of economic success. This work has also contributed to reframing what is meant by economic sustainability.

Cato engages with policy debates at the national level through her role as Economics/Finance Speaker for the Green Party. She advises party leader Natalie Bennett [2] and acts as a consultant in the writing of policy proposals and documents. She has helped to influence government policy through written and oral evidence given to the Inquiry into the Green Economy by the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee and written evidence on their Inquiry into Green Finance [3] – evidence that drew on her theorization of a green economy. At the European level, Cato has influenced the Green European Foundation and the thinktank Green House in developing a Post-Growth project [4], an attempt to reframe understanding of the green economy based on her theoretical work about the need for a green economy to respect planetary limits.

Arising from her own experience of community-level processes to facilitate the transition to a sustainable economy, Cato has taken a leadership role in pioneering sustainable communities and is part of a movement to develop an alternative economic model known as ‘the bioregional economy’. She has also been a key actor in the development of local currency initiatives, helping

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to design the Stroud Pound, which drew on her study of the work of Silvio Gesell and other monetary theorists, and launching the Totnes Pound [5]. She has spoken in numerous Transition Towns and to other community groups supporting the growth of the green economy, such as West Midlands New Economics Group in Birmingham and the Small is ... Festival. Her theoretical work is used to support the approach of a number of grassroots organisations committed to education for sustainable development, including the Centre for Alternative Technology, through her convening of training courses and workshops.

Economics Embedded in Land and Place:

Cato's work on the bioregional economy focus on land ownership, taxation and use, has influenced and contributed to policy changes in a range of contexts. She has a longstanding commitment to the campaign for a Land Value Tax including writing for the Tax Justice Network and speaking at conferences of the International Union for Land Taxation in July 2013. She advised Caroline Lucas MP, who put down a bill on Land Value Taxation in 2012 [6]. At the invitation of Mark Drakeford AM, she spoke to senior Welsh policy-makers at Ideas Wales about the potential of Land Value Tax; he is now campaigning for such a tax at Welsh Assembly level [7]. In July 2013 Cato was interviewed for a film called *The Taxing Question of Land*, which was launched at the Royal Society of Arts in September 2013 with the participation of Business Secretary Vince Cable [8]. The Liberal Democrats have since expressed public commitment to land as a source of tax revenue.

This work has also shaped public discourse on a more local level. Cato has been invited to present her idea for a bioregional economy to a range of audiences including Cambridge Carbon Footprint Group [8], Swindon Climate Action Network, and the Co-operative Congress Women's Challenge Event in Cardiff in June 2013. The reach of this work has been complemented by interviews for the Lithuanian magazine Eurozone, the Montreal Review, the Shanghai Bund magazine and the UK magazine *Resurgence*.

Self-Organised Resilient Local Provisioning:

At the annual conference of the International Co-operative Alliance in Mikkeli, Finland in 2011, Cato gave a keynote address explicating the theoretical link between co-operative economics and sustainability, which was later published as part of the special issue of the *Journal of Co-operative Studies* that she guest edited. She has been a member of the Welsh Government's Co-operative Commission since December 2012, where her theoretical work is being used to inform the Commission's work and report [9].

As a result of her expertise in food co-operatives, she undertook (with Myers) an evaluation of the Plunkett Foundation/FARMA £1m Making Local Food Work Collaborative Farmers' Market project. The research involved a qualitative exploration of ten markets in different regions and settings. The conclusions focused on the ability of the MLFW programme to maximise incomes of local producers and thus support the health of rural economies. This has achieved impact directly through the research, as conversations with stallholders, and those food experts who work with them, have influenced the way they perceive their role as part of the local economy and intensified their focus on maximising the retention of value by producers [10].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. <http://www.bestwise.com.tw/book.aspx?no=3003&bno=5118>
2. Testimonial: Leader of the UK Green Party.
3. EAC references: Evidence to the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee inquiries into Green Economy and Green Finance:

<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/tso-pdf/committee-reports/cmenvaud.1025.pdf>

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http://www.greenhousethinktank.org/files/greenhouse/admin/1Green_Finance_EAC.doc

4. 'Europe Beyond Growth: From Material Excess to Human Flourishing', panel discussion organized by Green House and the Green European Foundation, 19 December 2012, 14-27 minutes:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsowumq1nzc&list=uujoywzxzimvho1qhx7olwfcg&index=1>

5. Testimonial: Founder of the Transition Towns movement.

6. Corroboration: Green Party MP.

7. <http://ideaswales.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/a-land-value-tax-for-wales.pdf>

8. <http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/News/The-Taxing-Question-of-Land/>

9. 'The Bioregional Economy', talk to Cambridge Carbon Footprint, 15 November 2012:
<http://cambridgecarbonfootprint.org/blog/an-evening-with-molly-scott-cato/>

10. Testimonial: Chair, Welsh Co-Operative and Mutuals Commission

11. Corroboration: Director of the Plunkett Foundation.