

Land Seizure, Land Grab

A: ‘istilā’. – F: accaparement des terres. – G: Landnahme. – R: priobretenie zemli. – S: acaparamiento de tierras. – C: yòng zhímín fāngshì, zhànlǐng tǔdì
用殖民方式, 占领土地

Landnahme, inadequately translated into English as “land seizure” or “land grabbing”, is a metaphor for capitalism’s expansive dynamic. As a social science term, the L theorem states that capitalist societies cannot reproduce themselves endogenously, which is why they depend on the persistent occupation of a non-capitalist Other. Each growth spurt can be described as a phase of specific L on the part of the expanding industrial and market-based section of the national and world economy (Lutz 1984, 62). The L theorem is related to concepts such as *valorisation*, *real subsumption*, *colonisation*, and *imperialism*; it always addresses the non-linearity and finiteness of capitalist development. Ultimately, the dynamisation and self-stabilisation of capitalism is impossible without the appropriation and possibly ‘active creation’ (Harvey 2003, 141) of a non-capitalist Other.

The history of the L metaphor can be traced back as far as the *Old Testament*. As a Biblical motif, the concept thematises the departure of the tribes of Israel from Egypt and the L in Canaan. Archaeologists and historians have interpreted this journey through the desert and subsequent settlement in terms of conquest or revolt, or they have read it as a case of migration-driven penetration. As used by historians, the term L refers to the appropriation or settlement of a territory by peoples or social groups. More specific, currently common variants of the category (*land grabbing*) refer to practices associated with global agribusiness. Corporations and states purchase agricultural land on a large scale, sometimes in cooperation with private investment funds, in order to produce food or bio fuels. One consequence of this is that peasant forms of land usage are displaced in favour of industrial monocultures. This polyvalence of the term is indicative of a basic motif common to different concepts of L. L always concerns expansion, as well as the occupation and appropriation of ‘land’, though ‘land’ must not necessarily be understood in the literal sense. Another current within the discussion on L makes reference to Lenin’s conception of capitalist development within agriculture and his distinction between the Prussian and American developmental paths, both of which are associated with forms of L (CW 13/esp. 238 et sqq.).

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L is to be distinguished from *land grabbing* in the narrow sense and from the discourse on the genesis and development of agrarian capitalism. In Marxism and the social sciences, L is used in a wider sense to analyse capitalist modes of development. Within this context, the L theorem provides a specific analytic perspective that addresses the exchange relations between capitalist and non-capitalist territories, modes of production, ways of life, classes and social strata. Apart from **Marx**, thinkers as diverse as **Rosa Luxemburg** and **Hannah Arendt**, the industrial sociologist **Burkart Lutz**, and the Marxist geographer **David Harvey** have worked on the L theorem. More recently, political scientists (**Streeck** 2009), heterodox economists (**Bellofiore** 2009, 666; **Special Section** 2010), sociologists (**Dörre/Lessenich/Rosa** 2009) and exponents of feminist political economy (**Madörin** 2007, i.a.) have adopted the concept within the context of a diagnosis of the times, as a way of capturing the crisis-driven metamorphoses capitalism has undergone since the 1970s. All of the writers mentioned focus on and interpret specific developmental stages of capitalism.

1. *Primitive accumulation.* – While **Marx** does not himself use the expression L, he did pen an early analysis of the basic structure of capitalist L (*C I*, 873–942 [23/741–802]). He ironically compares ‘so-called primitive accumulation’ with ‘original sin’ in the garden of Eden (873 [741]). Capitalism does not come into the world by itself and it is by no means the result of a particular way of life or some pronounced drive toward thriftiness on the part of asset owners. The midwives of capitalism include the state and political coercion, as well as accumulation through violent expropriation (peasant clearance), the spoliation of church property, the abolition of collective ownership of communal land, colonisation, and slavery. The separation of the producers from the means of production is a precondition for the emergence of doubly free wage labour, and thereby of capitalism; it is ‘written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire’ (875 [743]).

Marx describes the transition from feudalism to capitalism as a violent process. He does so in order to be able to address the prospect of a ‘negation of the negation’, or of the restoration of individual property on a different, non-capitalist basis (929 [791]). Notwithstanding the discrepancy between it and our present historical knowledge, the construct of ‘primitive accumulation’ can be used as a heuristic device by which to reconstruct the dimensions and core structure of capitalist L: first, the historical parallelism of capitalist and non-capitalist modes of production; second, the imposition of new property and class relations as a prerequisite for and condition of capitalist accumulation; third, the deployment of extra-economic force (the use of feudal ‘blood laws’ against the expropriated rural population); fourth, laws by which wages are

lowered and the workforce is disciplined in the interest of the new capitalist mode of production; fifth, the outward expansion of capitalism as driven by finance, credit, and force (colonisation, the international system of slavery).

L in the Marxian sense denotes the expansion of the capitalist mode of production within a non-capitalist environment that remained dominant for centuries. A distinctive feature of primitive accumulation that Marx emphasises is that it is, from the outset, a political process. Neither the transformation of property relations nor the expropriation of the rural population or the disciplining of the “liberated” workforce in the interest of the new mode of production would have been possible without state intervention. Thus laws originating in feudal times were repeatedly used in order to impose a general compulsion to work and so as to politically regulate wages. The ‘agricultural people [...] turned into vagabonds’ were ‘whipped, branded, tortured by laws grotesquely terrible, into the discipline necessary for the wage system’ (899 [765]). Capitalism was never a pure market economy, not even when it first developed. The disciplining deployment of political power helped ensure that not only the emergence of the market, but also that of the new mode of production occurred in the context of structurally asymmetrical power relations.

Marx assumed that the use of political coercion, to the point of open violence, would remain an episode of capitalism’s early history. In the course of history, he argued, there develops a workforce ‘which by education, tradition, habit, looks upon the requirements of that mode of production as self-evident natural laws’ (899 [765]). Extra-economic violence is then only resorted to in exceptional cases; in the normal case, workers can be left to the ‘natural laws of production’. The ‘silent compulsion of economic relations sets the seal on the domination of the capitalist over the worker’ (899 [765]). However, Marx qualifies this claim in *C III*, identifying the causes of processes that counteract the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, such as the intensification of exploitation through the lowering of wages below the value of labour power, the resistance against the more or less comprehensive subordination of labour under capital and machine work that results from the existence of a ‘relative surplus population’, and the possibility of surplus profits that foreign trade provides advanced countries with (*C III*, 342–46 [25/245–49]). However, Marx considers these counteracting factors to be no more than temporary obstacles to capitalism’s full self-assertion: ‘All fixed, fast-frozen relations [...] are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air’ (MECW 6/487 [4/465]). There is no systematic discussion of the significance of non-capitalist modes of production, classes, social strata, and ways of life for the developmental dynamic of capitalism in Marx’s work.

2. *Imperialism*. – This is the starting point for Rosa Luxemburg's main work *The Accumulation of Capital*, published on the eve of the First World War (1913/2003 [GW 5, 5–412]). While Luxemburg does not speak of L either, but rather of colonisation, she does astutely develop the core idea of the L theorem. Capitalist development, she claims, is identical with the crisis-wracked implementation of a systemic compulsion to grow. This compulsion results from the basic demands of capitalist reproduction. Luxemburg begins by posing herself the question of how a chaotic multiplicity of unrelated microeconomic operations can ultimately lead to the dynamic self-stabilisation of capitalist systems. Her answer: 'It is the production of surplus value which turns reproduction of social necessities into a *perpetuum mobile*' (2003, 11 [GW 5, 16]). Since it is the individual capitalist who determines the scale of reproduction, and since he does so under conditions of competition, there is a powerful motive for constantly expanding reproduction: 'Capitalist methods of production do more than awaken in the capitalist this thirst for surplus value whereby he is impelled to ceaseless expansion of reproduction. Expansion becomes in truth a coercive law, an economic condition of existence for the individual capitalist' (12 [18]). This compulsion to grow cannot be abrogated by individual capitalists – not only because of competition, but also because of the complex metamorphoses that capital needs to undergo within each reproductive cycle. This complexity emerges clearly, according to Luxemburg, when one breaks the formula for accumulation: $(c+v)+m/x+m$ down into individual operations. It then becomes apparent that as soon as capital has transformed from the commodity form into money, it requires a further metamorphosis, since money cannot be used to produce surplus value. In order to genuinely produce surplus value, the capital that has been advanced must assume the concrete form of machines, raw materials, labour power, means of reproduction, etc. that allow capital to operate as productive capital in the first place. Subsequently, the capital advanced sheds the commodity form again. Anarchically produced goods must be marketable: failing this, the capital invested is lost. From this complex metamorphosis, a structural compulsion to grow results. Since no capitalist can be certain that the multi-stage transformation process of the capital he has advanced will genuinely succeed, there is a constant need for measures that ultimately result in expanded reproduction. The systemic compulsion to grow renders the dependence of individual capitalists on society apparent, since an expanded sales market is not something any individual capitalist can create; he has 'no control' over this requirement (17 [23]).

It is in this dependence of the capitalist on society that Luxemburg identifies the germ of imperialist expansionism. She assumed (accurately, for her time) that the expansion of the mass of produced goods that comes with the

compulsion to expand reproduction meets with an effective demand that is limited not only structurally, but also politically. In fact, during the Weimar Republic, the mechanism that Burkart Lutz has described as the ‘capitalist law of wages’ was still operative. What is meant is that ‘wages in the modern sector of the national economy cannot rise significantly and permanently above the subsistence level that is proper to the poorer parts of the traditional sector, a subsistence level that is primarily defined in terms of barter’ (1984, 210). **Luxemburg** concludes that capitalist reproduction is structurally dependent on the occupation of a non-capitalist Other. She breaks with the two-class-model of the pure capitalism assumed in **Marx’s** reproductive schemes and emphasises that surplus value realisation is a problem in its own right. In the last instance, **Luxemburg** argues, expanded reproduction encounters boundaries that result from the limited capacity for consumption associated with antagonistic relations of distribution: ‘The market must, therefore, be continually extended, so that its interrelations and the conditions regulating them assume more and more the form of a natural law independent of the producers and become ever more uncontrollable. This eternal contradiction seeks to balance itself by an expansion of the outlying fields of production. But to the extent that the productive power develops, it finds itself at variance with the narrow basis on which the conditions of consumption rest’ (2003, 324 [GW 5, 294]). **Luxemburg** points out critically that in order to overcome this limitation, **Marx** resorted to a ‘theoretical contrivance’. For in fact, ‘real life has never known a self-sufficient capitalist society under the exclusive domination of the capitalist mode of production’ (328 [297]). The component of surplus value that is to be capitalised cannot possibly be realised by workers and capitalists; in fact, ‘a closer study of the diagram of enlarged reproduction will reveal that it points to some sort of organisation more advanced than purely capitalist production and accumulation’ (331 [299]). It is only by incorporating into itself non-capitalised labour power and land that capital ‘acquires a power of expansion that permits it to augment the elements of its accumulation beyond the limits apparently fixed by its own magnitude’ (337 [305]); thus capital retains ‘close ties [to] non-capitalist strata’ (ibid. [306]).

According to **Luxemburg**, it is only by virtue of this Other that expanded reproduction over extended historical periods becomes possible. At the same time, ‘continuous improvements in labour productivity’ entail a drive toward and depend upon ‘unrestricted utilisation of all substances and facilities afforded by nature and soil’ (337 et sq. [ibid.]). Capitalism may only extend to a small part of the world, but ‘[f]rom the very beginning, the forms and laws of capitalist production aim to comprise the entire globe as a store of productive forces’ (338). In its systemic compulsion to expand, capital ‘ransacks the

whole world, it procures its means of production from all corners of the earth, seizing them, if necessary by force, from all levels of civilisation and from all forms of society' (ibid. [307]). Until this process is concluded, it plays out in the twofold form mentioned above. One of the two movements imposes itself in the sites of surplus value production, in factories, a thoroughly capitalised agriculture, and on commodity markets. Here, capitalism reproduces itself largely on its own basis, and the principle of the exchange of equivalents holds true, or at least tends to do so. This means that wage-dependent persons are remunerated more or less according to the value of their labour power (though this is of course mediated by social struggle). The other movement asserts itself through relations of exchange between the accumulation of capital on the one hand and non-capitalist modes of production, social strata, and territories on the other (343 [315]). Because only a limited amount of aggregate social value can be realised on the 'internal market', expanding businesses are forced to realise parts of their surplus value 'externally'. In this context, 'external' must not necessarily mean abroad, or beyond the borders of the nation. Luxemburg notes an interweaving of internal capitalist markets across the borders of nation states. Yet it is also true that within national societies, there exist regions, milieus, groups, and activities that have either not been commodified at all, or only partially, and in which the prevalent forms of exchange are not those of capitalist markets. On 'external markets', the principle of the exchange of equivalents, i.e. the principle that the items exchanged are of equal value, only holds true to a very limited extent, if at all: here, arbitrariness and sometimes open violence prevail. The latter is also deployed with the aim of ensuring that social groups, territories, and even entire states remain at a pre-capitalist or less developed stage, at least for a time.

On Luxemburg's analysis, capitalist L relies on contingent processes that see the limits of capitalist accumulation imposed by 'internal' and 'external' markets being shifted and temporarily overcome. This is not, however, simply a linear valorisation of "new land". Rather, L always involves the possibility of regression, even to the point of violence being deployed for disciplinary purposes. The reason for this is that 'the old capitalist countries provide ever larger markets for, and become increasingly dependent upon, one another, yet on the other hand compete ever more ruthlessly for trade relations with non-capitalist countries' (347 [316]).

Luxemburg's theory of accumulation has frequently been criticised for implying a theory of capitalism's collapse, as well as for its logical inconsistencies (Bauer 1912/13, 862–74; Grossmann 1929/1992; Sweezy 1956, 202 et sq.). Thus it has been argued that underconsumption merely represents a special case of the larger capitalist problem of disproportionality, and moreover one

that can be neutralised through a large number of countervailing tendencies (Sweezy 1956, 218–34). Crises resulting from disproportionalities need to be distinguished, according to this criticism of **Luxemburg**, from crises whose ultimate cause is the fall of the rate of profit. Historically, both types of crisis manifest themselves only in hybrid forms, which is to say that empirically, neither one nor the other is ever encountered in a pure form. **Harvey** (2003, 137 et sq.) criticises **Luxemburg** for underestimating the possibilities for politically stimulating reinvestment and thereby generating an internal demand for capital goods and means of production. Moreover, **Harvey** argues, geographical expansion is capable of stabilising capitalist systems for extended periods of time. From the perspective of capital, it is often less a question of permanently keeping peripheral countries at the stage of non-development than of utilising them as stable investment locations, according to Harvey. More recently however, there has been a renewed sympathetic reception of **Luxemburg's** theory of crisis. Authors associated with the current known as the “new reading of **Marx**” (*neue Marx-Lektüre*) speak of a ‘macro-monetary class approach’ (**Bellofiore** 2009, 8; **Schmidt** 2012, 253) that is relevant to the politico-economic analysis of 21st cent. crises and can be interpreted as an innovative anticipation of elements of **Keynes's** *General Theory*.

Luxemburg's contribution to a theory of capitalist L can be summed up in three remarks. First, it draws attention to crises of capitalist reproduction whose deeper cause lies in the antagonism between a systemic compulsion to grow on the one hand and the finitude of social and natural resources on the other. Capital ‘must be able to mobilise world labour power without restriction in order to utilise all productive forces of the globe – up to the limits imposed by a system of producing surplus value’ (2003, 343 [GW 5, 31]). But this general mobilisation abstracts from the finitude of social and natural resources. Second, **Luxemburg** sharpens our awareness of the relations of exchange between capitalist reproduction and non-capitalist milieus. She demonstrates that ‘[h]istorically, the accumulation of capital is a kind of metabolism between capitalist economy and those pre-capitalist methods of production without which it cannot go on’ (397 [315]). Third, she draws attention to the fact that within the relations of exchange between the accumulation of capital and non-capitalist milieus, the very thing that **Marx** declared to be a specific characteristic of primitive accumulation is rendered permanent: ‘Its [sc. the accumulation of capital’s] predominant methods are colonial policy, an international loan system – a policy of spheres of interest – and war. Force, fraud, oppression, looting are openly displayed without any attempt at concealment, and it requires an effort to discover within this tangle of political violence and contests of power the stern laws of the economic process’ (432 [397]).

Excursus: Subsistence and care work as 'colony'. – Within the reception of **Luxemburg's** theory of accumulation, imperialist 'external' L was for a long time at the centre of discussion. The hypothesis that Luxemburg formulates in a more implicit way, namely that 'internal' L can occupy activities beyond remunerated or gainful employment, was explicitly picked up on by feminist social theorists (in particular **Mies** 1980, and 1983, 117 et sqq.; **Bennholdt-Thomsen** 1981; **v. Werlhoff** 1985, 23 et sqq.). It was applied by them to processes associated with the contemporary development of capitalism as based on the oppression of women and their simultaneous integration into the world market. Maria **Mies** assumes that the transformation of working-class women into housewives (in the course of Fordism) should be understood as a form of 'colonisation' or 'domestication' (1983, 120). The transformation of the female proletariat into housewives, and the subsequent deployment of housewives as underpaid single earners, is understood by Mies as a global process that ultimately also aggravates the situation of the male proletariat. She characterises this process as one of 'housewifisation'. Men's relationship to women is comparable, she argues, to the relationship between metropole and colony. 'Thus the colonies are the external global "housewife" and housewives here are the internal colony of capital and men' (117). Veronika **Bennholdt-Thomsen** emphasises the violent character of the underlying processes (1983, 207 et sqq.). Claudia **von Werlhof** speaks of a general historical tendency: the spread of capitalism aims not at proletarianisation, but at 'reducing wage labour overall and replacing it through labour relations that have been subjected to "housewifisation"' (1982, 92). The concept of housewifisation is intended to capture the global process by which the undervaluation of domestic work is made to serve as the structural and ideological basis for a general policy by which capital strives to generate greater profits.

Since the 1990s, and beginning in the Anglophone world, feminists have replaced the term *reproduction* with that of *care*, in order thereby to emphasise the emotional aspects of domestic work (for a critique, see *Argument* 292, 2011, *Care – eine feministische Kritik der politischen Ökonomie?*). Mascha **Madörin** (2007) relates this approach back to economic relations, arguing that in the case of care work, the value produced does not enter into the capitalist production of exchange value except via numerous intermediate stages.

These intermediate stages provide leverage points for a power-based hierarchisation of remunerated and unremunerated activities. The separation of public and private allows dominant capitalist actors to deploy economic, cultural-symbolic, or state-political power resources in order to valorise gainful employment vis-à-vis other activities while simultaneously creating a hierarchy within gainful employment. The examples of subsistence or care work

allow one to show that even under capitalist conditions, exploitation within surplus production is only one of several, and often not even the dominant mode in which social wealth is privately appropriated. It is combined with another variant, to which a definition of exploitation that emphasises the violent character of appropriation can be accurately applied: 'To exploit [*Ausbeutung*] is to gather booty [*Beute machen*], i.e. to appropriate something that is not the product of one's own labour through violence, to take something without returning anything of equal value' (Mies 1983, 120). Such (secondary) mechanisms of exploitation are at work whenever it is not just economic, but also symbolic or state-political disciplinary mechanisms that are deployed in order to preserve distinctions between the internal and external, with the goal of forcing the labour power of certain social groups significantly below the general level of wages and reproduction, e.g. through racist or sexist devaluation, or of turning activities within and without the sphere of gainful employment into resources that can be used free of charge. Thus it is argued that when society's dependence on human services and care work that is difficult or impossible to rationalise within the process of reproduction increases, extra-economic disciplinary mechanisms may be resorted to in order to artificially depress the cost of these activities, or so as to continue to be able to use them for free. The social significance of such mechanisms of exploitation becomes apparent when the scale of care work is assessed by means of expanded calculations of the gross national product (GNP). According to such calculations, unremunerated labour accounts for about 41 percent of gross value production. In terms of working hours, the preparation of meals is actually the largest economic sector. If women were to curtail their unremunerated care work by only ten percent, this would be the equivalent of all institutions within the field of remunerated healthcare and social services being shut down (Madörin 2007, 143–45; the figures are based on the case of Switzerland). In sum, while these activities can only be commodified to a limited extent, they represent an 'external market' that can become the object of 'internal' L.

3. *Accumulation of political power.* – The extra-economic motives for L have been analysed by Hannah Arendt (1951). Unlike Luxemburg, Arendt witnessed the October Revolution, the fall of the Weimar Republic, the ensuing 'global civil war', fascism, and Stalinism. In her efforts to reveal the causes of totalitarian forms of rule, she makes use of the L theorem in an original way. Alluding to Marx's analysis of primitive accumulation and explicitly referencing Luxemburg, she claims the process of capitalist accumulation requires that the 'original sin of simple robbery' (Arendt 1951/1979, 148) be periodically repeated: 'When capitalism had pervaded the entire economic structure and all social

strata had come into the orbit of its production and consumption system, capitalists clearly had to decide either to see the whole system collapse or to find new markets, that is, to penetrate new countries which were not yet subject to capitalism and therefore could provide a new noncapitalistic supply and demand' (ibid.). In complex, internally differentiated societies, Arendt argues, the need for expanded reproduction has to be recurrently written into the action strategies of capitalist actors. However, ideological and political legitimisations tend to hive off from the socio-economic causes of expansionism and take on a life of their own. They can also anticipate the dynamic of expansionism. Arendt's account resembles Marxist analyses in that it identifies an overproduction and financial crisis as the original driver of capital's compulsion to expand. It was only 'exported money' that 'succeeded in stimulating the export of power' (137). The 'bourgeoisie's empty desire to have money beget money' could only be satisfied because in the occupied territories, 'power, with complete disregard for all laws – economic as well as ethical – could appropriate wealth' (ibid.). Only the 'unlimited accumulation of power could bring about the unlimited accumulation of capital' (ibid.). Thus the putatively unlimited accumulation of capital is preceded, on Arendt's account, by an accumulation of power that is also unlimited, at least according to its ideological self-legitimation. Yet Arendt insists that an ideological expansionism that legitimises imperialist policies should not be reduced to its economic functions. Thus military and political elites may push for aggressive colonial policies even when this is economically dysfunctional. In such cases, ideological expansionism serves to consolidate social alliances between 'superfluous wealth and superfluous men' (200). This fictional union of a people divided into classes, which is based on the ideology of the mob, exceeds the interpretive capacities of Marxism, according to Arendt. It is the popularity of an aggressive nationalism and the appeal of racist and anti-Semitic resentment that account for the absence of popular opposition to imperialist policies in the capitalist centres. Through the postulate of national interests, which sought to legitimise expansionism as an end in itself, imperialist policy was able to provide the 'superfluous' persons of Central and Eastern Europe with a common ideological reference point within their nation states. In this way, the despotism of the people's community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) was made possible and the demands of the 'superfluous' were aggressively directed at an 'outside', a target beyond the nation's borders.

Even if one does not subscribe to Arendt's interpretation of Luxemburg's theory of imperialism (for a critique, see F. Haug 2007, 181–97), there remains a fruitful core to Arendt's reflections: the ideologically legitimated accumulation of political power can, as evidenced by the example of state socialism, serve as

a social orientation system even in the absence of a private capitalist base. The welfare-state project that asserted itself in capitalism's core regions after 1945 was also based on expansion. It generated an expansive L dynamic, as did the failed attempt to catch up with and overtake developed capitalism that was undertaken by state-socialist societies.

4. *Fordist L*. – Burkart Lutz has described 'internal' Fordist L as a 'short-lived dream of perennial prosperity' (1984). The Fordist L cycle was primarily shaped by policies aimed at curbing the power of the market. Much as suggested by the notion of 'original sin' that Marx and Arendt make reference to, it was extra-economic forces, according to Lutz, that allowed a new *modus operandi* of capitalist L to assert itself: the significance of demand-oriented state intervention, which had already become evident during the Second World War; the North American model of a New Deal based on mass production, mass consumption, and an individualised lifestyle; the elite consensus, prompted by the rivalry between capitalist and state-socialist countries, on the need to allow persons in dependent employment to partake of the benefits of increased productivity. This political interventionism created the possibility, in capitalism's core regions, to abrogate the 'law of wages'. Subsequently, real wages tripled within twenty years (1950–1970): an improvement in the standard of living of wage-dependent persons and their families that is unparalleled both in quantitative and in qualitative terms, and which rendered obsolete, at least temporarily, the oscillation of wages around a historico-moral subsistence minimum.

However, this Fordist growth spurt relied on conditions that could not be reproduced once they had exhausted themselves. The overcoming of the dualism between the traditional and the industrial sector led, within welfare-state capitalism, to a 'destruction of the structures, modes of production, forms of life and behavioural orientations that had until then been constitutive of the small-business and artisanal sector' (228). The progressive exploitation of natural resources was associated with rising costs for the community and constituted an ecological front line within developed societies. Moreover, low growth rates meant that struggles over distribution increasingly concerned the very substance of societal wealth (228–35). In this sense, what occurred was an 'internal' L that 'can very much be seen as analogous to the "external L" of imperialism' (213). The successful expansion of the welfare state that characterised the external relations of capitalism's core regions went hand in hand with an accentuation of the North/South divide – an additional barrier to the unbroken continuation of the Fordist accumulation regime.

With hindsight, Lutz's statements concerning the significance of labour-market dualism – this dualism is identified by him as the decisive field of Ford-

ist L – need to be qualified somewhat. Nor has it in any way been demonstrated that the small-business and artisanal sector is doomed to disappear forever. Lutz does however implicitly make clear that L is always associated with the surrender of territory. Given the relations of forces of the time, the process of making labour power available for ‘internal’ capitalist markets only became possible, within capitalism’s core regions, thanks to policies of decommodification, that is, thanks to the expansion of the welfare state and non-commodified public sectors. When the driving forces of the Fordist accumulation regime began to lose steam, the ‘outside’ created in this way became the object of a new L, driven this time by finance capitalism.

5. *Global expropriative capitalism.* – David **Harvey** has analysed this process from a Marxist perspective. In a number of works (2006 and 2010b), he has brought the L theorem up to date and made it a useful tool by which to analyse the expansion of finance capital since the mid-1970s. His contribution to the debate can be summed up in five key ideas. Harvey is in favour of an updated interpretation of ‘accumulation through dispossession’; he emphasises that the process of primitive accumulation has not been concluded to this day; he sees a continuity between the violent expropriation of assets and their integration into the circulation of capital; he cites numerous examples, including the catch-up processes of L in China and other emerging economies and the expropriation of home owners during the 2007/09 subprime crisis in the USA. Harvey concludes that in each of its stages of development, capitalism rests on two fundamentally different systems of exploitation and accumulation, and that therefore ‘there is much to suggest that **Luxemburg** was right in principle, even if one does not have to follow her all the way to her specific conclusions’ (2010a, 306).

Harvey situates the relations of exchange between two systems of exploitation within a dynamic interpretation of capitalism, which he argues ‘is nothing if it is not on the move’ (12). Following **Marx**, **Harvey** explains the dynamism of capitalist societies in terms of their ability not so much to eliminate their contradictions as to find forms in which they ‘have room to move’ (C I, 198 [23/118]). **Marx** considers this to be ‘in general, the way in which real contradictions are resolved’ (ibid.). Consequently, for **Harvey**, the dominant social actors can at least temporarily circumvent or overcome the immanent barriers to capitalist accumulation, though ‘barriers overcome or circumvented at one point result in new barriers appearing at other points’ (2010a, 339). In this context, **Harvey** makes a case for shelving all older Marxist controversies on the nature of capitalist crisis (theories of overaccumulation, underconsumption, or the profit squeeze). Major crises of capitalist accumulation, those that

extend to the entire ensemble of modes of regulation, are to him mainly the spatio-temporal manifestation of barriers that continuously reappear within the process of capitalist accumulation and reproduction. Harvey identifies eight possible barriers, 'each of which can slow down or disrupt the continuity of capital flow and thereby create a crisis of devaluation' (337): (1) the inability to amass enough original capital; (2) scarcities of labour; (3) disproportionalities between sectors; (4) resource depletion and ecological crises; (5) imbalances resulting from rapid technological change; (6) worker recalcitrance within production processes; (7) underconsumption; (8) monetary and financial crises (316–37). According to Harvey, the means and methods employed to overcome such barriers, without any master plan and in a manner mediated by millions of microsocial activities, result in a specific *modus operandi* for each L cycle. In other words, the relevance of specific barriers to capitalist accumulation at a given time, and the particular attempts made to overcome those barriers, generate driving forces of L processes that are always specific to their particular context and need to be analysed empirically.

Harvey also considers the production of space and time a key aspect of capitalism's dynamic self-stabilisation – this is in fact his most important contribution. In a sense, Harvey argues, L corresponds to the dynamic of creative destruction outlined by Joseph Schumpeter (1934). Differently from what classical theories on the relevance of location to economic development suggest, this dynamic never results in conditions of harmonious equilibrium. Instead, it tends to compress space and time. It obeys the capitalist motive of minimising spatial barriers and accelerating the circulation of capital, i.e. reducing costs and the time needed for moving capital through space (Harvey 2003, 98). Corporations and states can respond to valorisation problems by breaking up existing spatio-temporal consolidations of capital, as well as by moving capital through space and time with an eye to overcoming barriers to accumulation; however, this always comes at the cost of new consolidations with their own potential for crisis. This dynamic view implies that an 'outside' of capitalist accumulation can be actively created again and again. On Harvey's view, there are no absolute barriers to capitalist accumulation. For example, a non-capitalist Other can be created via the mechanism of the reserve army of labour. In a sense, this mechanism is a way of actively creating an 'outside' in a manner that runs contrary to state-driven decommodification (*C I*, 781 et sq. [23/657 et sqq.]). During periods of economic upturn, the various forms of this industrial reserve army of labour can be used to mobilise additional labour power. In times of crisis, those excluded from capitalist production are especially useful as a means of exerting downward pressure on wages.

Capitalism ‘actually throws workers out of the system at one point in time in order to have them to hand for purposes of accumulation at a later point in time’ (Harvey 2003, 141). Yet when the workers are employed again, this occurs under conditions that are more favourable from the perspective of valorisation.

According to Harvey, this manner of actively producing an ‘Other’ or ‘outside’ that is temporarily exempt from exploitation as it occurs within the framework of surplus value production is characteristic of contemporary forms of finance-capitalist L. Much like Marx, Luxemburg, and Arendt before him, Harvey attributes special significance to the finance sector when it comes to the dissolution of modes of production and forms of life associated with earlier capitalist epochs. Finance capital’s ‘fix’ – the original sense of this term is that ‘a certain portion of the total capital is literally fixed in and on the land’, but there is also the metaphorical sense of ‘a particular kind of solution to capitalist crises through temporal deferral and geographical expansion’ (115) – is considered by Harvey to represent a particular system of power that is essentially based on ‘accumulation through dispossession’ (for a critique of this hypothesis as overly general, see W.F. Haug 2012, 143, fn. 129). Not only is this system especially prone to crisis, but it can also be stabilised only temporarily, by constantly introducing new assets, territories, social groups, etc. into the circuit of capital. This is the reason why the engine of ‘accumulation through dispossession’ needs to be kept running by means of ever new rounds of privatisation, deregulation, and precarisation (Dörre 2011, 63). It is also the key cause of neoliberalism’s capacity to survive, neoliberalism being an aggressive ideology that legitimises finance capitalism’s expansion and has proven highly flexible in spite of all the crises it has suffered.

6. Engaging with Harvey in the spirit of *Aufhebung*, we can consider the L theorem a concept that is essential to the renewal of Marxian theory in the 21st cent. In conclusion seven considerations are to be outlined as a way of suggesting how a theory of capitalist L might be developed further.

6.1 *Types of L.* – Harvey tends to use the expression ‘accumulation through dispossession’ as a catch-all phrase encompassing highly diverse phenomena such as the valorisation of rural regions in emerging economies and the “cold” expropriation of homeowners in the USA. It would be more analytically precise to distinguish between *first-* and *second-order* forms of L. Forms of first-order L correspond to the pattern of primitive accumulation, disciplinary commodification, and violent expropriation outlined by Marx and Luxemburg. By contrast, second-order L refers to the occupation of territories, institutions, milieus, and social groups that have already become the object of first-order L,

or result from it, and are now used to actively produce a non-capitalist Other. Finance capitalist L corresponds to this model, because it dissolves the power of wage-dependent persons and expropriates citizens. On the global scale, forms of first- and second-order L interact by means of diverse relations of exchange (Dörre 2011, 67 et sq.). However, a society that strives to totalise creative destruction in the course of forms of second-order L will ultimately destroy itself.

Finance capitalist expansion is increasingly mutating into a seizure of and assault on society and nature. This is why such a programme inevitably mobilises counterforces that seek to protect themselves from market competition. Yet while these counterforces help to ensure that the entrepreneurial “spirit of capitalism” never fully asserts itself, the vast number of its microsocial realisation efforts shifts the boundaries between the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’ of (finance) capitalist accumulation. In the course of second-order finance capitalist L, the decommodified sectors of the Fordist cycle become the object of policies of commodification, which is to say a structure that has already undergone L is subjected to it a second time. One of the paradoxes of this process is that the dominant *modus operandi*’s capacity for survival rests on an instrumentalisation of institutions, forms of production, labour systems, and schemes of thought and action whose origins lie, in some cases, in earlier historical phases, in “social” capitalism or state-bureaucratic socialism. These elements of older social formations do not vanish from one day to the next. On the contrary, they need to be understood as ‘long-term [...] structures’ (Braudel 1982, 225), which however are combined with the finance-capitalist regime of competition and thereby transformed, such that in spite of the persistence of older elements, society transitions to a new aggregate state.

6.2 *Forms of exploitation.* – It seems appropriate to expand the **Marxian** concept of exploitation, but also **Harvey’s** reflections, by distinguishing between forms of primary and ‘secondary exploitation’ (C III, 745 [25/623]); the forms of primary exploitation are determined by capitalism, whereas secondary exploitation is not specific to the capitalist formation. Primary relations of exploitation are embedded in contractual relations intended to guarantee the exchange of equivalents (labour power in return for adequate compensation) – a principle that can only assert itself through complex notions of justice and conflicts over distribution. Secondary forms of exploitation institute a different type of relation of equivalence. In this context, “secondary” does not mean less painful, brutal, or significant. Rather, the characteristic feature of secondary relations of exploitation is that the rationality of the exchange of equivalents and of exploitation within surplus value production does not apply. The func-

tionalisation of women's unremunerated reproductive labour or the institution of a disenfranchised, transitory status for immigrants are classic instances of mechanisms of secondary exploitation at work. In the first of these two cases, symbolic-habitual and politico-institutional mechanisms are deployed in order to establish a hierarchy of activities by means of gender-specific constructs. It is here that the devaluation of reproductive work and the relatively far-reaching exclusion of women from gainful employment that would allow them to earn a living originate historically. In the second case, the special status of immigrants, which is transitory and based on relative disenfranchisement and deracination, stabilises a specific distinction between the internal and the external whose purpose is to ensure the availability of cheap labour power that can be mobilised for use in the more unattractive segments of the labour market with their low-skilled, strenuous, and poorly paid work. When social groups participate in a hegemonic way of life, consuming natural resources on a scale that is detrimental to the quality of life of other groups and populations, this is also a case of secondary exploitation (Dörre 2012, 108 et sq.). Today, a group of people making up one-fourth of the world's population, and residing mainly in the global North, consumes three-quarters of the world's resources and is responsible for three-quarters of waste and emissions (König 2008, 277). This is also an exploitative relation of equivalence outside of surplus value production, and one that cannot be reduced to the capitalist determinacy of its form. Thus the concept of secondary exploitation must go beyond its Marxian usage.

6.3 *Actors.* – From the perspective of the dominant capitalist actors, the dialectic of the internal and the external that is characteristic of capitalist L presents itself as a space of possibility by virtue of which corporations and states, and/or their leading representatives (proprietors, managers, financiers, governments, etc.), are able to integrate mechanisms of both primary and secondary exploitation into their micropolitical and strategic calculi, in addition to reconfiguring those mechanisms. This is the reason why developments that appear regressive when held to the standard of social welfare can go from being no more than a possibility to becoming the prevailing reality at any stage of capitalist development. What appears rational on the macroeconomic level and on that of society as a whole must by no means prove practically relevant to the microeconomic and microsocial calculi of capitalist actors. From the microsocial perspective, it can appear sensible to resort to strategies that aim at an intensification of primary or secondary exploitation even when this appears unreasonable from a macroeconomic and macrosocial perspective. Dominant capitalist actors will sometimes seek to circumvent social rules in order to use

the disparity between the general validity of these rules and their limited local efficacy as a way of generating additional profit (Streeck 2009, 241); this is one way in which secondary forms of exploitation can be made use of. Bearing this in mind, one can analyse the dialectic of the internal and the external proper to capitalist L without resorting to functionalist simplifications. From the perspective of the actors, the question is no longer whether or not expanded capitalist reproduction systemically requires a non-capitalist Other, but rather how this Other is produced and put to use within concrete practices and action strategies.

6.4 *Antagonisms*. – Processes of L are always to do with new sales markets, though this is never the only thing they are about. Regardless of the question of market expansion, L always bears on the interconnection of different productive and reproductive activities. Here, points of contact become visible between a theory of capitalist L and research on the overlap between different relations of domination that is today being conducted under the heading of ‘intersectionality’ (Andersen/Collins 1998). The interconnection between primary and secondary relations of exploitation (where the former are specific to the capitalist formation and the latter are not) implies a plurality of social antagonisms (though not an unlimited one). Capital and labour, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and relations between humans and nature all institute specific contradictions and relations of exploitation that are always present within the social relations between rulers and ruled, though one can never determine a priori which antagonism will prove decisive in social struggles and political conflict. Moreover, the welfare state creates additional possibilities of politically influencing, and perhaps ameliorating or aggravating, the social inequalities associated with one or the other form of exploitation. In other words, there is a structural ‘politicisation’ of relations of exploitation (Lessenich 2009, 156). In any case, it needs to be emphasised that all forms of exploitation and all antagonisms remain present throughout. Social actors establish a hierarchy of the various antagonisms, but this does not mean that one form of exploitation can be traced back or even reduced to another. None of the ‘axes of inequality’ constituted in this way can be ‘adequately grasped’ by ‘considering it in isolation’ (Becker-Schmidt 2007, 56). Thus the new forms of servitude evident in the field of care work bring about a hierarchy and synthesis of various relations of exploitation: low valuation, and consequently discrimination, of female-dominated reproductive activities; overexploitation and informalisation of immigrant labour power; deficits associated with a model of welfare that privatises a large share of care work; but also class-specific forms of super- and subordination that are not even regulated by

means of formal employment contracts, as in the case of the illegal employment of immigrants (Lutz 2007; Becker-Schmidt 2007, 68).

6.5 *Reproduction.* – As flexible modes of production assert themselves, society becomes increasingly dependent on care work and other reproductive activities (job training, further education, etc.), a development that Harvey underestimates. It is a property of such activities that they are not easily rationalised. This is due to three features. Human services are geared toward the production of use values, and the processes of production and consumption are inseparable here. Labour time is part of the service rendered in an immediate sense; if labour time is reduced, this has an effect on the service rendered, because there results at the same time a curtailment of the effort invested into the cultivation of relationships and the affective labour involved in such processes. Finally, care work establishes a power imbalance between service worker and client, the client's strong dependence on the worker notwithstanding (Madörin 2007, 142). These features of care work and other remunerated human services lead to a steady increase in the volume of such activities by comparison to more easily rationalised productive activities. While meal preparation can to a certain extent be replaced by the serial production of oven-ready meals and fast food, the same does not apply to activities such as childrearing or caring for family members. In theory, the flexibilisation of gainful employment and work activities ought to increase not only the client's, but the entire productive sector's dependence on care work. The value attributed to care work by society ought to increase; where it is a matter of professional services, wages ought to rise. And yet the empirical reality more closely resembles the opposite scenario. What is becoming apparent is a social devaluation and precarisation of these activities that cannot be understood purely in terms of economic coercion, but needs also to be traced back to disciplinary measures that are of a political nature, and to mechanisms of secondary exploitation. The relevant activities are occupied, but they are also appropriated, as poorly paid or free-of-charge resources, through politico-cultural disciplinary measures and extra-economic force.

6.6 *Transfer.* – With processes of finance-capitalist L, market-dominating corporations need to be seen as playing a role comparable to the one held only by states in earlier epochs (Crouch 2011, 71 et sqq.). The accumulation of economic, ideological, and bureaucratic power by corporations has become almost symbiotic and can be used as a lever for policies that generalise not market exchange as such, but rather competition. It is in this sense that 'market power is constitutive of competition'; 'competition proceeds in the mode of market power' (Thielemann 2010, 382). The intensification of competition,

both between market-dominating corporations and within them, distinguishes 'second-order' L from the financial capitalism of the early 20th cent. Financial market actors are the driving force behind this development, and they 'are themselves intensely competing with one another' (Windolf 2005, 25). This 'competitionalisation' can assert itself by means of shareholder value qua tool for steering the behaviour of corporations, or by means of the market for corporate control; it can also assert itself by means of management models that lead to the creation of spin-off companies, or to strategies of outsourcing and contracting out. Such strategies aggravate the secondary power imbalance on the labour market. What is no less significant is that this rationality of competition is also extended to areas of society beyond the export-oriented economy (finance-capitalist penetration, economisation). Bureaucratic instruments such as budget planning, rankings, ratings, and target agreements are deployed on infra-organisational quasi-markets, with an eye to generalising competition. There is a logic of augmentation inherent in this generalisation of competition, and with it comes an aggressive effort to access hitherto untapped labour power and reserves of activity. 'Whoever does not adapt his manner of life to the conditions of capitalistic success must go under, or at least cannot rise' (Weber 1904/05/2001, 34). The radicalisation of this logic of competition forces wage-dependent individuals to work longer hours and more flexibly; it constrains them to pursue activities unrelated to their profession, to abandon any clear distinction between private and public and consequently to mutate into not just labour-power entrepreneurs but 'life entrepreneurs' (Dörre/Haubner 2012, 80).

6.7 *Crises*. – The L theorem can help account for the global crisis taking place from 2007 onwards as a spatio-temporal condensation of finance-capitalist accumulation and reproduction's self-created boundaries. In the 21st cent., the feedback effect by which socio-economic and ecological crises mutually aggravate one another becomes a fundamental problem for the dynamic self-stabilisation of developed capitalist society. Ever since the industrial revolution, growth (or the augmentation, both in terms of value and in material terms, of the aggregate amount of assets and services) has been considered the royal road to the temporary overcoming of capitalist dysfunctions. Yet to the extent that it rests on the extensive consumption of natural resources, depletes a finite supply of fossil fuels, and produces emissions that are harmful to the climate, this approach can be retained only at the cost of escalating ecological crises. On the other hand, if economic growth comes to a standstill or collapses altogether, the results are unemployment, poverty, and precarity in the form of growing inequality. Thus the capitalist system is not particularly able

to withstand stress during periods of stagnation and weak growth. As soon as the engines of growth come to a halt, the feedback effects of expanded reproduction stop contributing to the integration of contrary interests and begin to produce the opposite effect, i.e., they begin to trigger or aggravate crises. This is why the different variants of capitalism, including those associated with developed welfare states, cannot transform themselves, of their own accord, into steady state systems or post-growth societies that exist in a state of equilibrium and are no longer characterised by the compulsion to continuously engage in L. The dynamic inherent in all variants of capitalism can only ever push the system towards ‘one of two extremes: expansion or collapse’ (Jackson 2011, 80).

It remains an open question whether the principle of dynamic self-stabilisation will soon encounter not just relative socioeconomic barriers, but also the absolute barriers associated with the humanity/nature antagonism. Harvey mentions that ‘there may be an imminent crisis in our relation to nature that will require widespread adaptations (such as the development of new environmental technologies and the expansion of industries producing these goods)’ (2010a, 323), but he also believes it ‘would be false to argue that there are absolute limits in our metabolic relation to nature that cannot be transcended or bypassed in some way’ (322). Other Marxist authors (Sarkar 2012, 295 et sq.) believe that this kind of ‘Pincer-Grip Crisis’ is already upon us and call for efforts to realise a ‘socialism of the 21st cent.’ (Altvater 2010, 238 et sqq.) that operates without the compulsion to growth. There is a consensus that the – limited – plurality of property forms and social antagonisms should also highlight the diversity and range of anticapitalist movements and political forces, of which labour movements are only one among many.

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→ accumulation, agribusiness, appropriation, capitalism, capitalist mode of production, class analysis, climate politics, coercion, colonialism, commodification, competition, crisis, crisis of Fordism, crisis theories, critique of political economy, culture, cultural imperialism, discipline, domestic mode of production, domination, Earth, ecology, ecologisation of production, ecosocialism, environment, exploitation, expropriation, exteriority, fascism, female labour, feminisation of work, feudalism, feudalism debate, forces of production, Fordism, formal/real subsumption, gender relations, globalisation, growth, high-technological mode of production, housewifisation, housework debate, ideology critique, imperialism, justice, labour market, labour movement, labour power, legality/legitimacy, legitimisation crisis, Luxemburgism, market, market economy, mode/conditions of life, mode of production, nationalism, nature, October Revolution, overaccumulation, peasants, possession/property, power, poverty/wealth, pre-capitalist modes of production, precariat, primary valorisation, primitive accumulation, Prussian road, racism, relations of production, relations of reproduction, reproduction, reserve army of labour, secondary

exploitation, sexism, social formation, socialism, Stalinism, subsistence production, surplus value, tendency, tendency law, tendential fall of the profitrate, totalitarianism, unemployment, wage-labour, war, world war

→ Agrobusiness, Akkumulation, Aneignung, Arbeiterbewegung, Arbeitskraft, Arbeitslosigkeit, Arbeitsmarkt, Armut/Reichtum, Ausbeutung, Besitz/Eigentum, Disziplin, Enteignung, Erde, Exteriorität, Faschismus, Feminisierung der Arbeit, Feudalismus, Feudalismus-Debatte, Fordismus, formelle/reelle Subsumtion, Frauenarbeit, Gerechtigkeit, Geschlechterverhältnisse, Gesellschaftsformation, Gewalt, Globalisierung, Hausarbeitsdebatte, Hausfrauisierung, häusliche Produktionsweise, Herrschaft, hochtechnologische Produktionsweise, Ideologiekritik, Imperialismus, industrielle Reservearmee, Inwertsetzung, Kapitalismus, kapitalistische Produktionsweise, Klassenanalyse, Kleinbauern, Klimapolitik, Kolonialismus, Kommodifizierung, Konkurrenz, Krieg, Krise, Krise des Fordismus, Krisentheorien, Kritik der politischen Ökonomie, Kultur, Kulturimperialismus, Lebensweise/Lebensbedingungen, Legalität/Legitimität, Legitimationskrise, Lohnarbeit, Luxemburgismus, Macht, Markt, Marktwirtschaft, Mehrwert, Nationalismus, Natur, Ökologie, Ökologisierung der Produktion, Ökosozialismus, Oktoberrevolution, Prekariat, Preußischer Weg, Produktionsverhältnisse, Produktionsweise, Produktivkräfte, Rassismus, Reproduktion, Reproduktionsverhältnisse, sekundäre Ausbeutung, Sexismus, Sozialismus, Stalinismus, Subsistenzproduktion, Tendenz/Tendenzgesetz, tendenzieller Fall der Profitrate, Totalitarismus, Umwelt, Überakkumulation, ursprüngliche Akkumulation, vorkapitalistische Produktionsweisen, Wachstum, Weltkrieg, Wettbewerb, Zwang