Twitter Thread by Per Bylund



Per Bylund
@PerBylund

Many anti-market folks assert that property must have arisen from someone claiming for himself that which was jointly used. That's their bias, not an explanation or theory. Private property can emerge from joint or communal use without conflict. When it does, it is by definition

legitimate property. Locke showed how it could be done through mixing one's labor with unowned/unclaimed land. I have previously drafted an alternative theory. Neither claims that all existing property, or even the existing property *system*, is therefore https://t.co/qzC437yyvf

legitimate, only that there can be legitimate private property. This is enough to carefully consider the concept, which must be accepted as a potential alternative solution for social production and economy. The arguments for property-based production are very strong, which is,

I suspect, what actually drives the anti-market folks' refusal to consider the potential for legitimate property: with it, their position becomes a very steep uphill battle. This may also be the reason they make vague historical claims, as though any historical action would

invalidate the concept itself (it does not). But it is not difficult to see how legitimate property could emerge without any conflict. Elinor Ostrom's work shows how communal property might not lead to the 'tragedy of the commons' because users adopt rules of use that create

structural incentives for lasting use. But those rules, even though they are communal or collective, are exclusionary just as private property is: no individual or grouping may use the joint resource in ways not accepted by the rules/everyone. But outsiders may also not use the

resource, which is communal and not open-access (which would undo the Ostromian solution to the tragedy of the commons problem). The step to rules-based individual usage is minimal. What if a community has vast joint grazing grounds, and one member wants to experiment with

growing food instead. If she does so beyond the grazing grounds, can she ask the others to keep their cattle from that patch of land? What if she asks to use part of the grazing grounds, and the others agree to keep the cattle from grazing there--perhaps by fencing it in (or, if

you wish, keeping the cattle out)? In both cases, whether or not what is produced is private, use of a resource itself restricts other uses. There is no conflict if nobody else makes any claim to a resource, and I therefore start using it for producing (for me, my family, the

community, whatever). Does my producing not allow me to at least plead with others not to tamper with or destroy what's being produced? Do I not have a right to attempt production using a resource that was unclaimed, unused, uncollected? Can I not make an agreement with the

community to allow the production to conclude without disruption, perhaps even get their guarantee, beforehand? The real question is not if this is "real" private property, whether there are some specifics about the exact practical nature of that one agreement that does not fit

with one's theory of property. The real question is why such voluntary exclusion for the purpose of production (whether private or communal), which harms no one and which nobody objects to, is illegitimate. And, more to the point, what right some observer has to claim that this

must be prohibited behavior despite no harm and no disagreement. This is, by any reasonable definition, legitimate exclusionary property. It excludes for the sake of engaging in production--the creation of value and thus the bringing about of a higher standard of living.