

Teaching about Alternatives to Bureaucracy

New Discussions and Approaches*

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Overview of Session (8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.)

Background

- Framing “cooperative alternatives to bureaucracy”
- Empirical examples
- Introductory resources

Teaching Ideas

- Our teaching stories
- Resources for a variety of courses

Discussion

- Tailoring content to your classes
- Crowdsourcing ideas

Bureaucracy: most familiar, legitimate organizational form

Bureaucratic ideal-type	Collectivist ideal-type
Fixed division of labor	Rotating system of tasks
Hierarchy of offices	Democratic decision-making
Rules and regulations	Flexible rules
Selection of personnel based on technical qualifications	Members can learn and teach skills
Career-oriented employment	Belief in substantive goals of the collective

*Common or related terms: **alternative** organizations, alternative / social enterprises, **collectivist-democratic** organizations, **participatory** organizations*

Source: Rothschild-Whitt (1979)

What are some alternatives to bureaucracies?

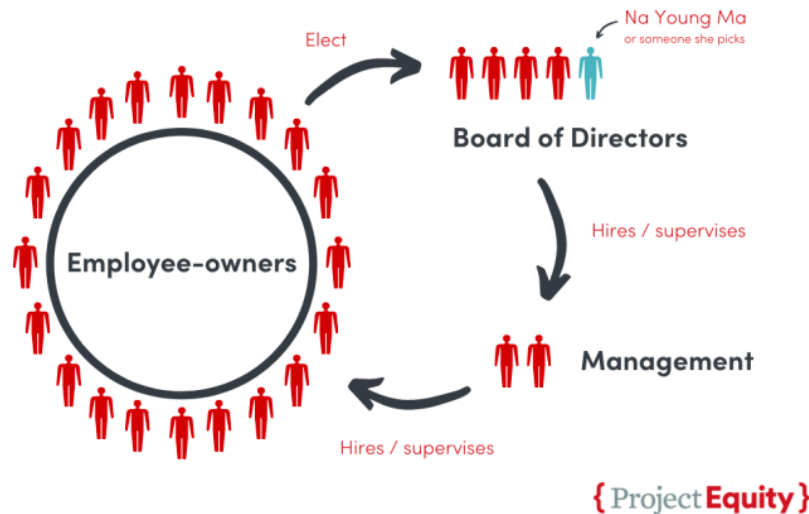
Employee-owned businesses

- Broad inclusive ownership
- May govern themselves democratically
- Some use cooperative, nonhierarchical forms of supervision and organization

Variety of types

- **Worker cooperatives:** owned equally by workers; 1 person, 1 vote
- **Platform cooperatives** with worker ownership: workers in digital economy own business, may own app or platform
- **Employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs):** give workers a stake—small or large—in the company through their retirement plans; often replicate traditional organizational structures
- **Employee ownership trusts:** half of shares owned by workers; dominant in UK

Governance at Proof Bakery



Graphic inspired from the ICA Group publication Governance Systems for Worker Co-ops

Worker cooperatives and ESOPs in the U.S.

612 **worker cooperatives** in the U.S. in 2021 (many more outside U.S.)

- Growth during pandemic: up from 465 in 2019
- Employ 6,000 people, \$283 million in annual revenue

Much larger footprint for ESOPs (**employee stock ownership plans**)

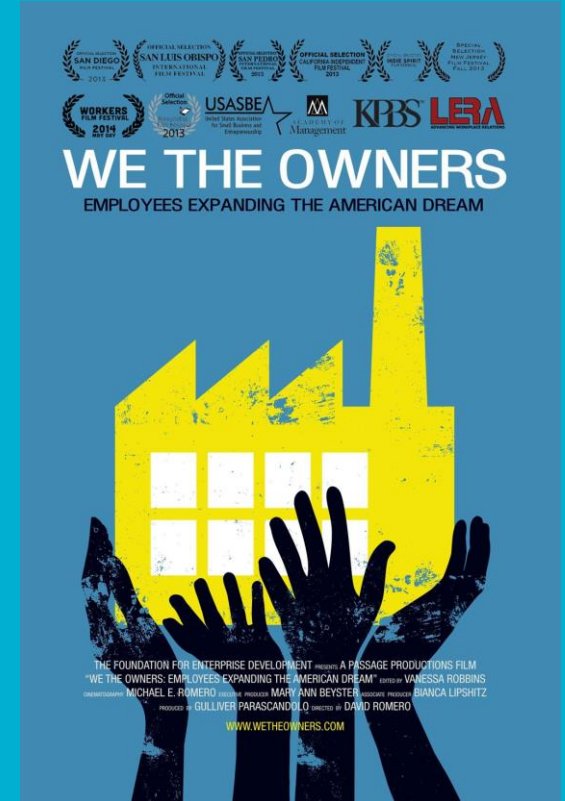
- In U.S., 6,257 companies owning a total of \$1.6 trillion in assets



Sources: Biannual census by the Democracy at Work Institute and the U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives; National Center for Employee Ownership

Introductory resources

- [*The Case for Employee Ownership*](#) (report by Project Equity)
- [National survey](#) of cooperatives conducted by the Democracy at Work Institute
- [*We the Owners*](#) documentary film



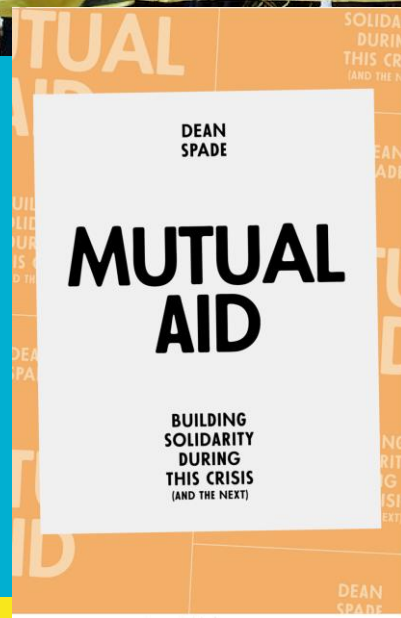
Other forms of egalitarian ownership and decision-making

- Consumer cooperatives
- Producer cooperatives
- Communes



Participatory democratic social movement groups and voluntary associations

- Feminist groups
- Direct action groups (Occupy, Autonomi in Germany)
- Giving circles
- Mutual aid groups
- Democratic / free schools and learning centers



Partial ownership and decision-making by stakeholders

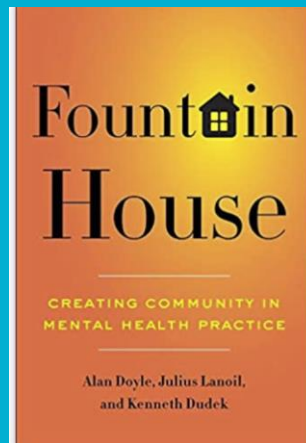
- **Credit unions** and **community banks**
- **Mutual societies** (e.g., insurance mutuals)

Self-management

- Worker **self-directed** nonprofits

Hybridized organizations

- Nonprofit board and staff, with **members having a say** in everyday activities and a **blurring of distinctions** between members and staff



FOUNTAIN HOUSE

ABOUT / HOW WE WORK

What is Social Practice?

Social Practice is a specialized form of therapy that uses the setting of an **intentional community** to assist people in their mental health **recovery**. It focuses on a community-based approach of helping individuals learn new skills, hone their talents, build dignity, develop a sense of belonging, and make progress towards their goals.

- **Recovery** can be personal, that is — the process of regaining control over one's life in a social environment or can be one of the common outcomes in clubhouse programs - the reduction in hospitalizations, independent housing, and gainful employment.
- **Intentional Communities** are social environments designed to combat social isolation as persons living with mental illness are often faced with barriers to access community due to stigma and discrimination. The intentionality of the group offers a safe space and the opportunity to foster mutual support between mental health professionals and peers.

Pioneered by Fountain House and implemented in clubhouses across the world, the social practice model is a unique blended community of both mental health professionals and peers working together to foster a specific environment for recovery. This practice has successfully addressed symptoms associated with mental illness that are not directly managed through medication alone, such as social isolation, social withdrawal, apathy, the absence of self-confidence and self-worth.

Similarities and differences across these forms

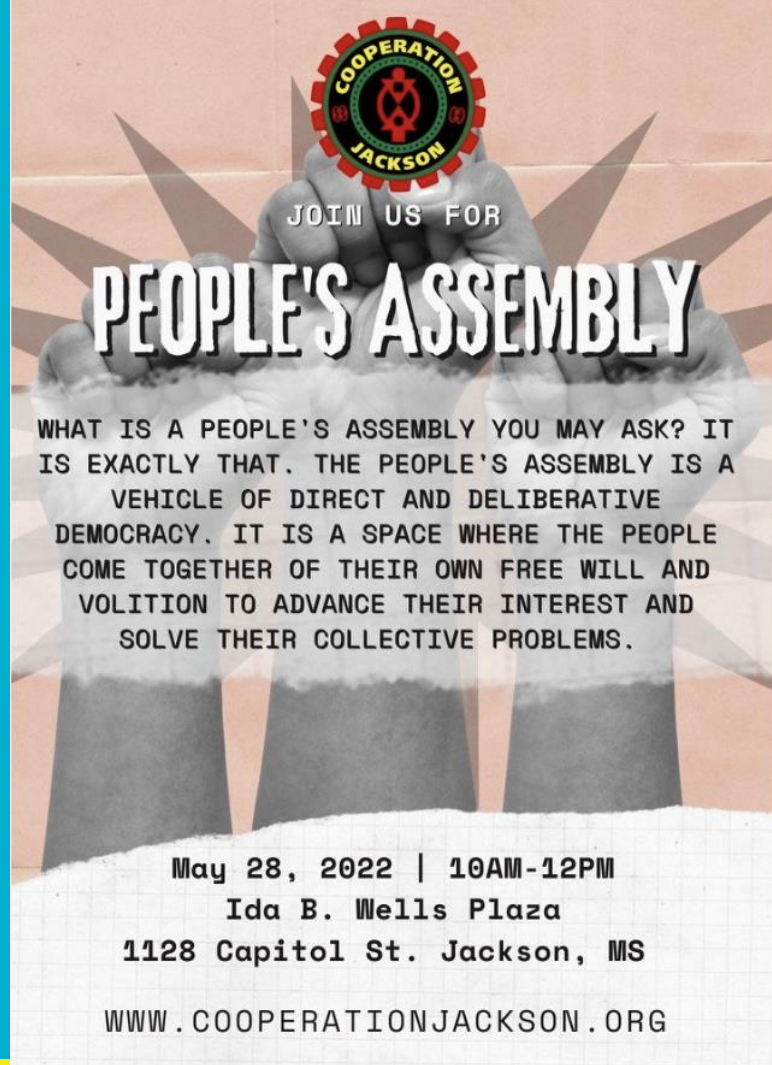
Can differ in their **values**, **ownership**, **decision-making**, and **social relations**

But often share a desire **not to replicate oppressive hierarchies** of bureaucracies

- Workers (including frontline workers), consumers, and other stakeholders: **deeply involved** in participatory decision-making processes

Another world is possible?

- **Solidarity economies** in Brazil (and in Jackson, Mississippi, USA)
- Way of “**eroding**” **capitalism** by increasing organizational diversity? (Wright 2015)



Outcomes associated with under - / over- organizing with bureaucratic and collectivist practices

		Bureaucratic		
Collectivist		Under-organized	Moderately organized	Over-organized
	Under-organized	Disabling chaos	Bureaucracy	Oligarchy
	Moderately organized	Collectivist organization	Enabling organization	Disempowered teams
	Over-organized	Culty collective	Feel-good collective	Totalitarianism

Source: Chen (2009:20)

Teaching Resources

To share **your** teaching modules, syllabi, and publications with CLEO, contact Adria at adria.scharf@rutgers.edu

Rutgers University Curriculum Library for
Employee Ownership (CLEO)

<https://cleo.rutgers.edu>

*Online library of teaching and research
materials on employee ownership*

- Sample syllabi with employee ownership readings
 - Library of reports and case studies of worker-owned companies
 - Lists of datasets on employee ownership that are freely available
 - Search resources by country/date/subject/format
 - CLEO connects professors with guest speakers to speak to your class (without a speaking fee!)
-

Katie's experience

Undergraduate course on the **sociology of work**

- Class is set up as **interrogation of work under capitalism** with examples and proposals to make work more just, equitable, and democratic
- Students learn about **bureaucracy** and **alternatives to bureaucracy** simultaneously
- Readings include **case studies** of different ownership arrangements and managerial models (most recently, Chen's book on Burning Man, Lee's work on **holacracy**, news reporting on **Winco**, and my work on worker-recuperated businesses)
- **Final group project** asks students to apply a critical lens to their own work experience and make a collective proposal for the future of work

Victor's experience

Concluding classes on **economic inequality** and **social stratification**; from my slides:

What are the best ways to deal with the challenges presented by economic inequality?

- Changes to the social safety net, the tax system, and other forms of **redistribution**? (tax-and-transfer policies)
- Government interventions to affect income or consumption—**before taxes**? (market inequality policies)
- **Worker cooperatives** and other forms of **collectivist-democratic organizations** that operate within markets but with different practices and goals than just profit maximization? (alternative ownership / alternative enterprises)
- **Moral renewal** in regards to work ethic, family responsibilities, sense of community and egalitarianism? (cultural change)
- **Grassroots organizing** to bring about these various outcomes?

The following are slides you can just throw into your slide deck (won't go over them):

Worker cooperatives and other collectivist-democratic organizations

Alternative enterprises: based on social values

- Triple bottom line: consider **social and environmental impacts** in addition to financial impacts (profit)
- **Wide range** of alternative enterprises: from B-corps to nonprofits, to cooperatives
- Joyce Rothschild: collectivist-democratic organizations

Renewed interest in these more radical approaches

- **Democratic** forms of governance: companies collectively owned and run by members of the organization

Source:

<https://www.valvesoftware.com/de/publications>
(available in multiple languages)



HANDBOOK FOR NEW EMPLOYEES

A fearless adventure
in knowing what to do
when no one's there
telling you what to do

FIRST EDITION
2012



and we've also been able to diversify. We're an entertainment company. A software company. A platform company. But mostly, a company full of passionate people who love the products we create.

Welcome to Flatland

Hierarchy is great for maintaining predictability and repeatability. It simplifies planning and makes it easier to control a large group of people from the top down, which is why military organizations rely on it so heavily.

But when you're an entertainment company that's spent the last decade going out of its way to recruit the most intelligent, innovative, talented people on Earth, telling them to sit at a desk and do what they're told obliterates 99 percent of their value. We want innovators, and that means maintaining an environment where they'll flourish.

That's why Valve is flat. It's our shorthand way of saying that we don't have any management, and nobody "reports to" anybody else. We do have a founder/president, but even he isn't your manager. This company is yours to steer—toward opportunities and away from risks. You have the power to green-light projects. You have the power to ship products.

A flat structure removes every organizational barrier

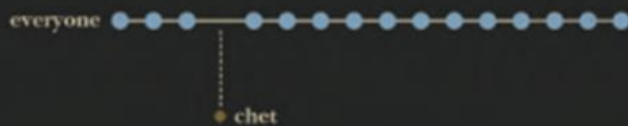
VALVE ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS

(AS ENVISIONED BY EMPLOYEES)

Diag. 1



Diag. 2



Diag. 3



Diag. 4



Diag. 5



* "I'm the noob, coffee anyone?...Hello?"

Worker cooperatives and other collectivist-democratic organizations

Worker ownership:

- From **employee stock ownership** (all workers own stock and thus share in profits) to **worker cooperatives** (workers run the company by voting on management decisions: one worker, one vote)
- *Find a [list of worker cooperatives here](#)*
- Largest U.S. worker cooperative: **Cooperative Home Care Associates** (1985)
- Largest worker cooperative in world: **Spain's Mondragon Corporation** (1956)
- **Varying degrees** of worker involvement in management

Cooperatives can be found in a variety of area—even in the banking sector:

- Occupy and Black Lives Matter movements pushed for **credit unions**
- Not as focused on profit: e.g., offer lower-cost alternatives to for-profit payday loans

Some evidence of larger community benefits of alternative enterprises

- Marc Schneiberg (2021): areas with large numbers of alternative enterprises saw **lower surges in unemployment** during the Great Recession and **faster reductions in unemployment** during the subsequent recovery

Worker cooperatives and other collectivist-democratic organizations

Based on values, but also **need to survive** in a (capitalist) marketplace

- Competing institutional logics of financial tendency toward **mission drift** (organization moving away from founding principles)
- Iron law of oligarchy (Robert Michels): “Who says organization, says oligarchy”
- Can such organizations sustain **democratic values**?

Social movements play an important role in “**imprinting**” (sustaining) these **non-financial values** of **democracy** and **social responsibility**

- Jason Spicer and Christa Lee-Chuvala (2021): In a network of “**ethical**” **banks** (focused on triple bottom line), those banks that had ties to social movements were less likely to leave the network

Katherine's experience

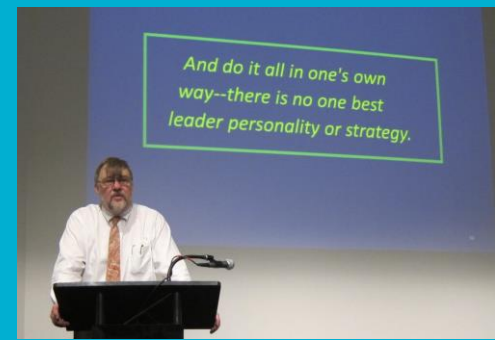
Learned from **Richard Hackman**, organizational psychologist and expert on team work, who taught teamwork in undergraduate class by having them **practice teamwork**

Frustration with how sociology is **problem-focused** (poverty, inequality, homelessness, etc.) but is limited on **how people collectively coordinate and expand toolkits**

Researches a **liberatory learning center** and its larger network:

- Went through multiple trainings at research site
- Has participated in offerings to learn how to facilitate learning experiences
- Also went through **emergent strategy** facilitation training at Allied Media

Teaches at a **minority-majority public university** known for launching students into economic mobility



Katherine's experience with methods and elective courses

Any class can be an opportunity for students to practice aspects of participatory organizations : **prefigurative process** is just as important as outcomes

Showcase studies of prior and contemporary participatory organizations

Student-led discussion and facilitation with **emphasis on inviting participation**

Practice incorporating individual and collective needs and interests

Community- and relationship-building as part of group learning:

- **Flipped classroom** with recorded lectures, classtime spent learning from each other
- **Group project with presentation:** group together similar sites, what people paid attention to, what they didn't
- **Built-in groupwork time and feedback forms** on teamwork experiences

Readings emphasize **minoritized perspectives** that highlight interdependence: **Combahee River Collective Statement, Data Feminism, Data Justice**

Adria's experience and advice

Worker Cooperatives in Health Care in the United States

- Interviews with 10 worker cooperatives ranging in size and complexity
- Variation in worker cooperative practice:
 - Representative vs. direct democracy
 - Degree of formalization
 - Degree of hierarchy
- Conclusion: elements of bureaucracy in democratic organization can function well, offer resilience, enable worker voice (consistent with Chen, Meyers)
 - Worker cooperatives vary in how they structure division of labor, supervision and hierarchy

Teaching courses that ...

- Help students “see” dominant, taken-for-granted models of organization that shape their lives
- Plant the seed that “other ways are possible”

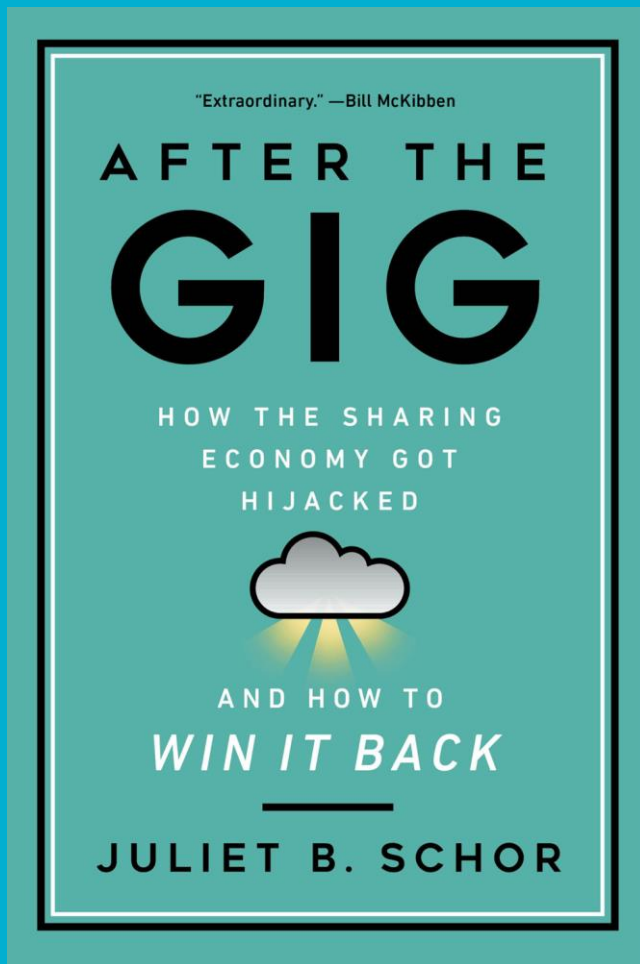
Participatory organizations can be taught in a variety of classes

- Methods (including Data and Society)
- Theory
- Sociology of Organizations / conventional business classes
- Nonprofit / Voluntary Associations / Arts Management
- Sociology of Work
- Race and Ethnicity
- Gender
- Immigration
- Education / Learning
- Social Problems / Design Thinking (see Jerry Davis's syllabus)
- Social Movements

... and many more!

Methods classes

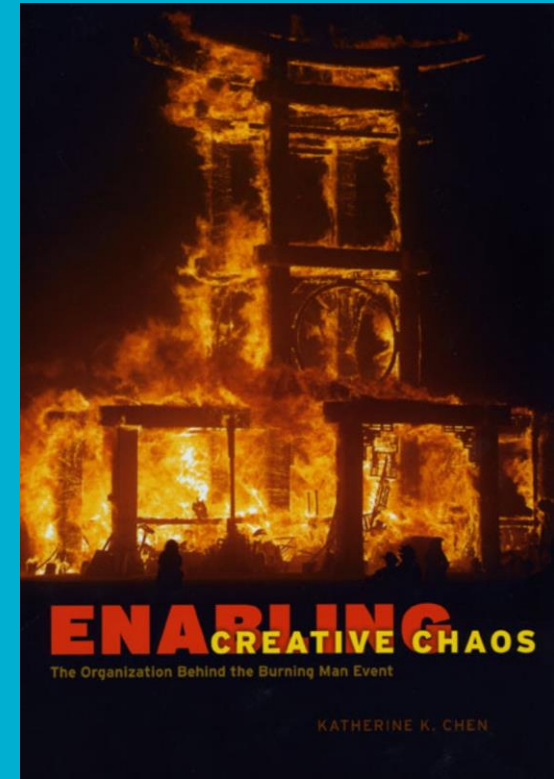
- CLEO: Lists of datasets on employee ownership that are freely available
- How to study **emergent** phenomena
 - **Class research opportunities** on alternative organizations: **organizational ethnographies**, interviews, surveys, etc.
 - **Platform cooperatives**: good topic for Data and Society class



Theory classes

How to interrogate **capitalist assumptions** about work, organizations, and the economy

- Counter to **Marx's** critique of work under capitalism and exploitation
- Foil for **Weber's** "iron cage" argument about bureaucracy
- Possible support for **Durkheim's** arguments about integration and anomie



ARTICLE

Another organization is possible: New directions in research on alternative enterprise

Jason Spicer ✉ Tamara Kay

First published: 11 February 2022 | <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12963>

State-of-the-art
article by Jason Spicer
and Tamara Kay

Abstract

Interest in alternative enterprises is again high, yielding a wave of popular experimentation with alternative organizational models, and new scholarship. From an organizational studies perspective, what have we learned about alternative enterprises since the last prior round of such experimentation in the 1970s, and what questions remain unanswered? Reflecting historical research legacies, scholarship often remains focused on micro-aspects of internal organizational dynamics, but recent research at the meso scale has advanced our understanding of alternatives' field-level construction, and their relationship to external forces and other organizational forms. Less is known, however, at the macro scale about how or why these enterprises develop and are sustained in certain contexts, although work on this front is emerging. Meanwhile, many new alternative organizational forms/practices have not been well-studied. Future research can remedy this oversight, while also seeking to improve our understanding of the effect of external, macro and meso-scaled dynamics of alternative enterprises. It can also seek to better explain variations in alternatives' institutional development and effectiveness in different sectoral contexts and domains, most notably across today's crisis-related fronts of climate change, housing precarity, and technological change. In so doing, it could more directly speak to a rising generation's concerns, and better enable their effective deployment of alternatives in practice.

Sociology of organizations and conventional business classes

How to include discussion of employee ownership?

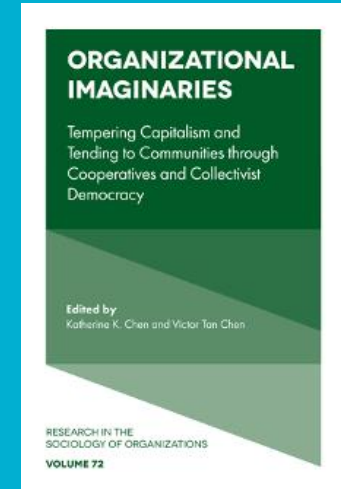
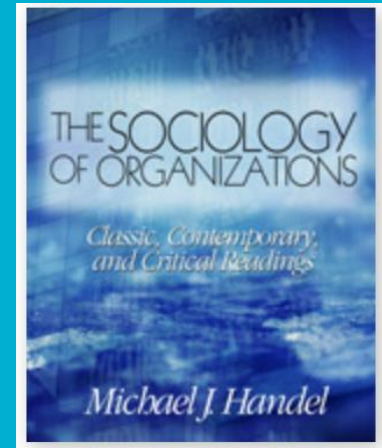
- Include topic areas: **alternative organizations** (or **alternative enterprises**), **organizational democracy**

Conventional business classes

- CLEO: case studies of employee-owned firms

General background

- CLEO: reports on employee ownership
- CLEO: sample syllabi with employee ownership readings



Articles by Marc Schneiberg (et. al) about role of social movements

Social Movements and Organizational Form: Cooperative Alternatives to Corporations in the American Insurance, Dairy, and Grain Industries

Marc Schneiberg, Marissa King, Thomas Smith

First Published August 1, 2008 | Research Article

<https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240807300406>

Article information ▾



Abstract

How do social movements promote diversity and alternative organizational forms? We address this question by analyzing how cooperative enterprise was affected by the Grange—a leading anticorporate movement in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. State-level analyses across three industries yield three findings. First, the Grange had positive effects on cooperatives and mutuals during the nineteenth-century populist struggles over corporate capitalism. Second, these effects were stronger where corporations counter-mobilized to block challengers' political efforts. Grangers pursued economic organization as an alternative to politics and in response to blocked political access. Third, the Grange continued to foster cooperatives even as populist revolts waned. It did so, however, by buffering cooperatives from problems of group heterogeneity and population change, rendering them less dependent on supportive communities and specific economic conditions. These findings advance research at the movements/organizations interface by documenting movement effects and by isolating different causal pathways through which mobilization, countermobilization, and political opportunity shape economic organization. The results also provide economic sociology with new evidence on how social structure moderates economic forces, and help revise institutional analyses of American capitalism by showing how cooperatives emerged as significant, rather than aberrant, elements of the U.S. economy.

Movements as Political Conditions for Diffusion: Anti-Corporate Movements and the Spread of Cooperative Forms in American Capitalism

Marc Schneiberg

First Published May 1, 2013 | Research Article



<https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840613479226>

Article information ▾



Abstract

Addressing the spread of cooperatives in the early 20th-century US economy, this study analyzes the role of anti-corporate movements in the diffusion of politically contested organizational innovations. It finds that institutional change can rest fundamentally on the combination of standard diffusion processes and collective mobilization in support of new practices. Specifically, it finds that the Grange, a leading anti-corporate social movement, was a political condition for the diffusion of cooperative alternatives to corporations in American capitalism. Cooperatives evoked fierce opposition by corporate forces, suppressing the diffusion of cooperative forms. When the Grange was weak or absent, cooperative organization in states or sectors had weak or no effects on cooperative organization in other states or sectors. But when the Grange was present and increased in strength, it amplified and even made possible the diffusion of cooperatives across states and industries. These findings shed new light on the contentious transactions between movements, corporations, and non-governmental organizations, expanding existing work on the trajectories, tactics, and organizational effects of anti-corporate movements.

Work and Inequality

Crossnational legal/policy contexts: easier to start cooperatives elsewhere?

- In **Basque Country**, the Mondragon Cooperative Corporation
- Even the U.S. has a long history of alternative organizations: **Knights of Labor**, the **Grange** (postbellum agricultural movement **opposed to corporations**; launched **cooperatives** and **mutuals**)

Unions and cooperatives

- Cincinnati Union Co-op Initiative (now called **Co-op Cincy**) and **1199SEIU**

MAKING MONDRAGON



The Growth and Dynamics of
The Worker Cooperative Complex

WILLIAM FOOTE WHYTE
KATHLEEN KING WHYTE

AMERICA *beyond* CAPITALISM

RECLAIMING OUR WEALTH,
OUR LIBERTY, & OUR DEMOCRACY

GAR ALPEROVITZ

WITH A NEW FOREWORD BY
JAMES GUSTAVE SPETH

ORGANIZATIONAL IMAGINARIES

Tempering Capitalism and
Tending to Communities through
Cooperatives and Collectivist
Democracy

Edited by
Katherine K. Chen and Victor Tan Chen

RESEARCH IN THE
SOCIOLOGY OF ORGANIZATIONS
VOLUME 72

Socio-Economic Review article by Jason Spicer

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JOURNAL ARTICLE

**Cooperative enterprise at scale:
comparative capitalisms and the
political economy of ownership** [Get access >](#)

Jason Spicer ✉

Socio-Economic Review, mwab010, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwab010>

Published: 15 October 2021

A correction has been published: *Socio-Economic Review*, mwab055, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwab055>

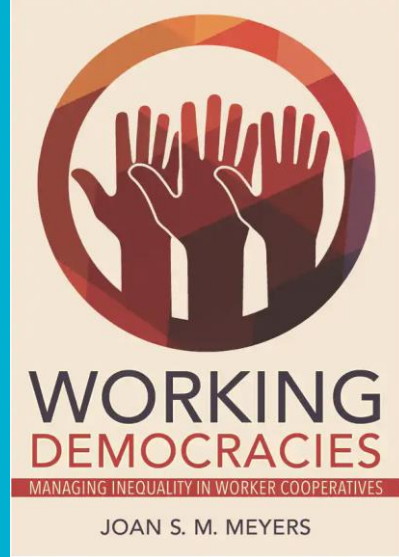
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Abstract

Under what conditions do cooperatively owned enterprises scale to stand alongside investor-owned firms? This article measures and attempts to explain large cooperatives' variable prevalence across high-income capitalist democracies. Controlling for other known social, economic and geographic factors, statistical models confirm that state-mediated institutional arrangements, as operationalized through two comparative capitalism frameworks (Varieties of Capitalism and Welfare Regimes), are a significant factor in this variation. Cooperatives scale in a manner that complements arrangements in coordinated market economies, while exhibiting institutional incongruencies with those of liberal market economies and residual welfare states. Public policies which have variously enhanced or inhibited cooperatives' ability to coordinate to scale are compared across four case countries (United States, France, Finland and New Zealand). Policy differences are shown to reflect the joint effect of state-mediated institutional arrangements alongside other control variables. They reveal how states privilege some ownership forms over others, suggesting a distinct political economy of ownership.

Classes on work and inequality

- Comparison of how **two worker cooperatives** that generate **eight-figure** annual revenues in the U.S. manage **diverse memberships** (Meyers 2022)
- **Worker-recuperated businesses** in Argentina that promote organizational equality (Sobering 2022)
- **Survival finance**



Can Collectivist-Democracy bring Gender Equality? The Efforts at Twin Oaks

Joyce Rothschild, Amy Tomchin

Worker Participation: Current Research and Future Trends

ISBN: 978-0-76231-202-3, eISBN: 978-1-84950-341-9

ISSN: 0277-2833

Publication date: 11 April 2005 [Reprints & Permissions](#)

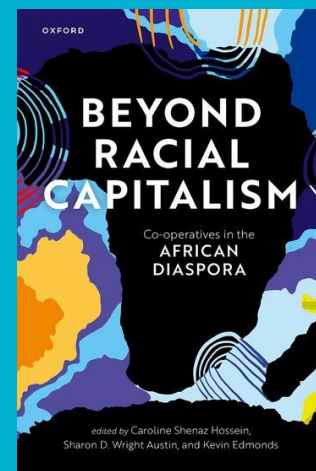
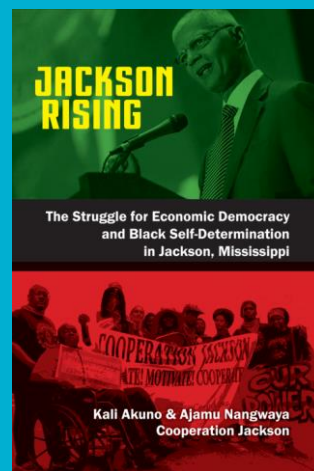
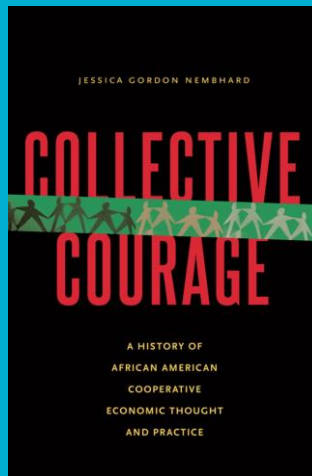
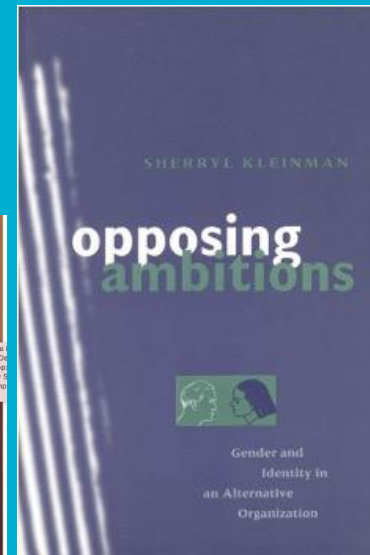
Abstract

A division of labor that segregates household labor from capitalist employment and that de-values women's work is ubiquitous in our society. This article examines Twin Oaks, a long-standing intentional community that is intensely focused on overcoming the gender-based inequalities they see in U.S. society. Specifically, they have tried to create a comprehensive alternative to capitalist work relations by developing a work system that values equally all forms of labor – from childcare to income-producing types of labor to pregnancy itself. We describe in this article the specific system they have developed for translating all forms of work into 'labor credits' on a one hour equals one credit basis and for encouraging men and women to perform work that in the surrounding society is often assigned to the opposite gender. We consider how they have accomplished this in some detail, and in our conclusion, we draw out some of the tensions or downsides this can create as well.

Classes on race and ethnicity and gender

Disadvantaged communities turned to alternative forms of organizing after being excluded or underserved by dominant markets or programs

- Women of color: 1977 Combahee River Collective Statement
- Collectives and self-help / solidarity economies formed by African American communities (Nembhard 2014)



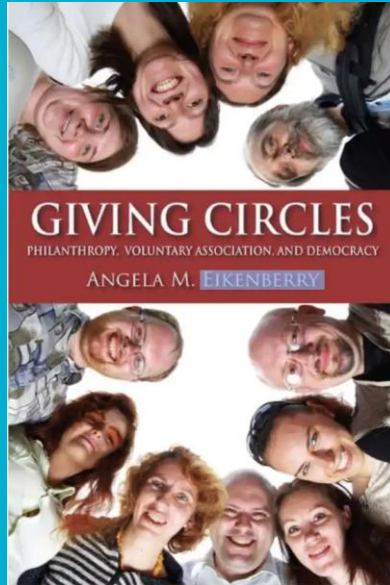
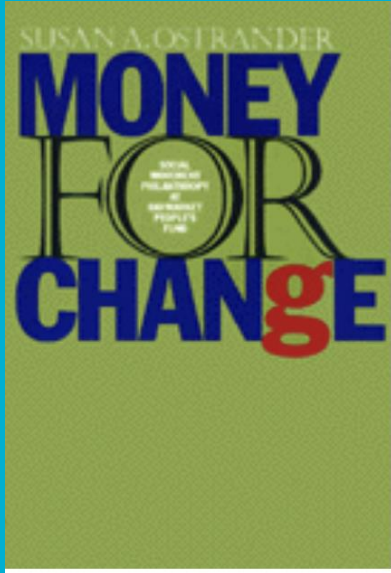
Immigration classes

Immigrant worker-owners are the largest and fastest-growing segment of worker-owners in the United States

Case study: **Up & Go**, a digital **platform cooperative** in Brooklyn ([short video](#))

- Allows users to book cleaning services
- Organized and **owned by workers**, many of whom are **undocumented**
- Don't need traditional status to be employable in a cooperative

Classes on nonprofits and voluntary associations



Powered Down: The Microfoundations of Organizational Attempts to Redistribute Power¹

Amanda Barrett Cox

[PDF](#) [PDF PLUS](#) [Abstract](#) [Full Text](#) [Supplemental Material](#)

Abstract

What types of interactions facilitate the redistribution of power across institutional roles? To answer this question, the author draws on ethnographic data from two organizations attempting to shift the conventional power relations within their respective institutions: a private philanthropic foundation seeking to transfer control over its grant making to a community-based board and a democratic school designed to give students and adults an equal voice in decisions. The author offers a typology of power-shifting encounters and focuses on two types of encounters that facilitate the balancing of power relations—symmetrizing encounters and encompassing encounters. She shows that these encounters supported and were supported by power-redistributing discourses and organizational structures within each organization. These findings suggest that the balancing (or near balancing) of asymmetrical power relations relies on power-distributing mechanisms that are consistent and aligned across multiple levels within an organization, from interactions, to organizational structures, to organizational culture and discourse. Symmetrizing encounters and encompassing encounters are the interactional building blocks within such an effort.



American Journal of Sociology
Volume 127, Number 2
September 2021

Article DOI

<https://doi.org/10.1086/716591>

Views: 567

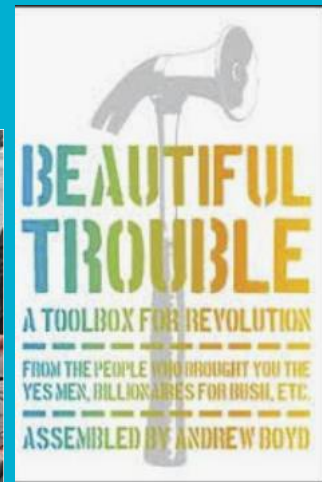
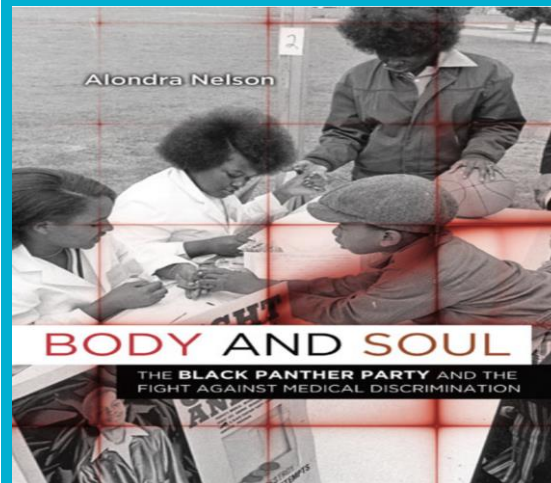
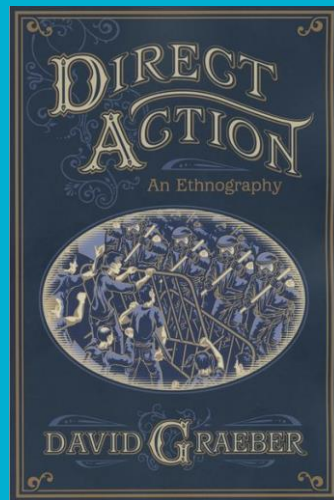


Sustainable
Economies
Law Center

Classes on social movements and social change

Examples of decentralized organizing:

- **Black Panthers**
- **Occupy** and its precursor **Direct Action Network (DAN)**
- **Billionaires for Bush**: progressive activist group that used satire and humor to engage people
- **Beautiful Trouble**: online and print toolbox for grassroots activism (Creative Commons-licensed)
- **Beautiful Solutions**: crowdsourced ideas for participatory democracy and alternative economics (Creative Commons-licensed)



Education classes

Organization Without Authority

Dilemmas of Social Control in Free Schools

Ann Swidler


Harvard University Press

Learning how to be a scyborg: how prefigurative organisations can promote capacity to decolonialise organisations

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Abstract

How can people acquire the capacity and community to potentially move institutions, such that they are change-promoting organisations? La paperson's (2017) *scyborg* describes how within organisations, members can repurpose colonial practices for decolonised, transformative goals. My research suggests that prefigurative organisations can offer spill-over effects by strengthening the experiential organising repertoire and ties of *scyborgs across* organisations. Using my own experiences, I examine how my participant observations at a democratic independent school and its growing global network have informed my efforts to infuse conventional organisations, including my public university, with liberatory practices. Conventional organisations blur boundaries and thereby promote overwork, obscure work often performed by minoritised members and encourage networking for transactional purposes. In contrast, *scyborgs'* transformative practices: (a) make invisible and usually devalued and extracted work visible; (b) encourage and support voice and member-led efforts; and (c) cultivate relations as avenues for mutual growth.

Keywords: *scyborg*; organisational ethnography; democratic school; decolonisation

Learning communities for researchers

Network A: Communitarian Ideals and Civil Society



SOCIETY FOR
THE ADVANCEMENT
OF SOCIO-ECONOMICS

Our network has an experimental sub-track called “Emergent Organizations: Creating More Participatory, Inclusive, and Caring Civil Societies and Social Economies.” This sub-track welcomes studies of activities coordinated through formal organizations, informal groups, decentralized projects, or participatory decision-making. For example, individual and panel submissions could examine how organizational or group values, practices, or relations can promote more inclusive, liberatory, democratic, equitable, or caring communities; how such forms can impact economies and politics and shape the nature of work, family, and community life; and how state policies and market pressures affect these collectivities.

Next **SASE** annual meeting (2023) is in Brazil: <https://sase.org/event/2023-rio-de-janeiro>. **CFP** will be distributed in **November 2022**. (SASE meetings are usually in Europe or U.S.; Network A **listserv** that you are free to join is at inthe fray.org/list.)

Discussion

The following slides are teaching suggestions and experiences shared during our discussion.

Students have difficulties imagining alternatives

- Many **do not yet have firsthand experience** with participatory practices
 - Classroom would be the first place for this
- Katherine Chen uses example of a group of friends trying to **decide where to eat**
 - Example of the **difficulties of collective decision-making**
 - People often default to the **least-satisfying option**
- Give the class an assignment to look at the diversity of organizations in their **local communities**
 - Helps students realize the **variety of organizational options** around them
- Find relevant stories in **alternative news sources** that cover contemporary organizations (e.g., [nacla.org](https://www.nacla.org))

Students have difficulties imagining alternatives

Use **video clips** and **documentaries** that immerse students into the challenges of democratic forms

- **The Take**: documentary about worker-recuperated cooperatives in Argentina
 - **Email** Katie Sobering for an updated teaching slide deck, “Worker-recuperated businesses since *The Take*”
- **Approaching the Elephant**: documentary about a free school in New Jersey
- Lots of videos related to Occupy (such as this **classic Colbert Report interview**)



Teaching tools from Marc Schneiberg

Marc Schneiberg, Reed College

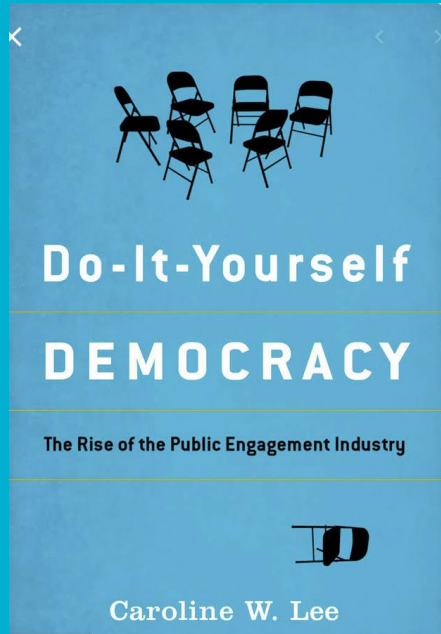
- In **Introduction to Sociology**, assigns reading on **do-ocracy** when discussing **symbolic interactionism**: e.g., Chen's (2016) "**Plan Your Burn, Burn Your Plan**"
- Organizes class projects around **three themes**: how can people create organizing around (1) **predictability**, (2) **creativity**, and (3) **democracy**?
- Emphasizes importance of cultivating **organizational ecosystems** that allow alternative organizations to thrive
- Assigns Lipsky's (1968) "**Protest as a Political Resource**"
- Also uses **America Beyond Capitalism**

Teaching tools from Jason Spicer

Jason Spicer, University of Toronto

- Conducts **simulation exercises** similar to those used by Harvard Law School's **Program on Negotiation**
 - Teaches students how to **frame social movements** and engage with **contentious repertoires**
- Uses cases and tools from:
 - The **Democracy Collaborative's** **Community-Wealth.org** site
 - **Grassroots Economic Organizing's** collections
 - **Beautiful Trouble's** toolkit
 - **Beautiful Solutions**
 - The **Next System Project's** learning resources

Participatory practices in governance



Managed Participation: City Agencies and Micropolitics in Participatory Budgeting

Celina Su

First Published February 18, 2018 | Research Article |



<https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764018757029>

[Article information](#) ▾



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Abstract

As participatory budgeting (PB) processes proliferate around the globe and within the United States, there remain questions regarding PB's contested role as an empowering, pro-poor tool for social justice. This analysis of the New York City PB process focuses on the interactions between everyday participants in PB and city agency representatives, the bureaucrats involved in the process. In New York, PB has successfully broadened notions of stakeholderhood for many constituents. Still, the agencies' micropolitical practices—especially regarding contested politics and local versus technical knowledge—help to forward a model of managed participation, sidelining deliberative aspects of the process. Combined with a context of austerity, these practices limit the ability of such participatory institutions to retain volunteer participants, as well as the ability of constituents to substantively shape state priorities.

Organizational Imaginaries: Tempering Capitalism and Tending to Communities through Cooperatives and Collectivist Democracy Vol: 72

Edited by:

Katherine K. Chen, The City College of New York,
USA

Victor Tan Chen, Virginia Commonwealth University,
USA

Our everyday lives are structured by the rhythms, values, and practices of various organizations, including schools, workplaces, and government agencies. These experiences shape common-sense understandings of how "best" to organize and connect with others. Today, for-profit managerial firms dominate society, even though their practices often curtail information-sharing and experimentation, engender exploitation, and exclude the interests of stakeholders, particularly workers and the general public.

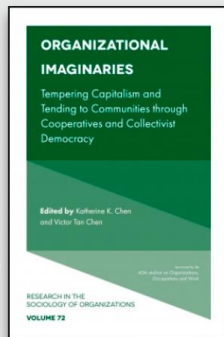
This Research in the Sociology of Organizations volume explores an expansive array of organizational imaginaries, or conceptions of organizational possibilities, with a focus on collectivist-democratic organizations that operate in capitalist markets but place more authority and ownership in the hands of stakeholders other than shareholders. These include worker and consumer cooperatives and other enterprises that, to varying degrees

Emphasize social values over profit

- Are owned not by shareholders but by workers, consumers, or other stakeholders
- Employ democratic forms of managing their operations
- Have social ties to the organization based on moral and emotional commitments

Organizational Imaginaries explores how these enterprises generate solidarity among members, network with other organizations and communities, contend with market pressures, and enhance their larger organizational ecosystems. By ensuring that organizations ultimately support and serve broader communities, collectivist-democratic organizing can move societies closer to hopeful "what if" and "if only" futures.

This volume is essential for researchers and students seeking innovative and egalitarian approaches to business and management.



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More about the book: victortanchen.com

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Keep in touch!

(Email us to get resources after the session)



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Public mailing list for **SASE Network A** (focused on cooperatives and collectivist democracy): inthefray.org/list