Theory on Solidarity/Democratic Economies (particularly in connection to cooperatives)


Gibson-Graham bring together theory, from feminist poststructuralism to political economy, to examine the various challenges and successes of alternative economies, as well as outline strategies for creating and fostering post-capitalist communities, in spite of the supposed inevitability of capitalist globalization.


Healy discusses the progressive potential of cooperatives from a Marxist perspective: whether the primary benefit is through it’s collective production and distribution of surplus or the potential for progressive surplus distribution to the larger society outside the cooperative.


Healy et al. bring a Relational Poverty Theory analysis to the solidarity economy movement to better understand the concerns of co-optation and exclusionary trends within the movement, while also drawing from Gibson-Graham’s postcapitalist theory of commoning, as well as the experience specific organizations, to demonstrate how solidarity economies use shared spaces and resources to achieve their radical ends.

Menser analyzes the history of participatory democracy - both theoretically through feminist, anarchist, liberal, and environmental justice strands and practically within various movements - in order to demonstrate the very real potential for a more egalitarian society with community-based governance.


Miller explains the foundations of the solidarity economies, as a process of identifying, connecting, and building diverse economic forms that hold shared values of cooperation and mutuality, individual and collectively well-being, equity, ecological health, democracy and pluralism.


Peuter and Dyer-Witheford analyze the ambivalent nature of the cooperative – as both a labor commons that is anti-capitalist and as a (potentially) co-opted structure within capitalism – but also notes the radical potential of the cooperative if constitutive of a larger process of commons struggles.


Safri and Graham argue for the significance of the global household, existing across transnational family networks, as international institutions of production and finance, and as a key site feminist noncapitalist transformation from below.

**US Cooperative Movement History and Practice**

Abrams explores the underlying principles of employee ownership and workplace democracy, which he argues, leads to better decision-making.


Bajo and Roelants analyzes the resiliency of four cooperatives through the 2008 financial crisis, demonstrating the potential for cooperatives to provide an alternative to the debt trap underlying the boom and bust of the dominant economic system.


Cornell documents the history of the radical pacifist organization of the 1970’s and 1980’s, the Movement for a New Society, showing the important precedent for collective and autonomous forms of education, living, decision-making, and direct action that form crucial foundations for anti-authoritarian movements and prefigurative politics.


Curl recounts the hidden history of the American cooperative movement, from colonial times through to modern corporate hierarchies.


Deller, et. al. assess the economic significance of cooperatives in the United States by quantifying the magnitude of cooperative businesses across economic sectors.


Nembhard examines the history of black cooperatives in the United States, demonstrating the historical benefits of cooperative ownership and economic democracy to black communities through collective economic agency and grassroots-level economic organizing.

Nembhard chronicles the violence and terrorism by white supremacists against black cooperatives, and argues for reparations in the form of funding for the development and reinvigoration of cooperatives in black communities.

**Cooperatives in New York City**


The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies argues for the importance of worker cooperatives as an important part of larger campaigns against poverty, unemployment, worker isolation, and income inequality in New York City, and examines the cooperative landscape in the city.


[do not have access]


Estey documents the BeyondCare child care cooperative in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, emphasizing the importance of cooperatives in home-based and often privatized work, such as child care, which are particularly susceptible to exploitation.


Glasser and Brecher analyzes the importance of the culture of Cooperative Home Care Associates (CHCA), a Bronx-based home care agency, to the cooperative’s success.

In light of the recent municipal funding, Hudson examines the struggles over narrative within the NYC Solidarity Economy movement between a capitalism-friendly and cooperative-centric ‘poverty alleviation’ approach and a more radical, multi-form, and fluid vision. Hudson particularly notes the gendered nature of this transformative narrative, its political enactment by women the domestic spaces, and the invisibilization of this political work within the poverty alleviation discourse.


Iuviene draws from Madragón in Spain and the Evergreen Initiative in Cleveland in order to give a recommendation for developing a cooperative economic development strategy in the Bronx. Iuviene focuses on three critical components- defining a geographical area, growing a cooperative network, and creating policies founded on an import replacing economic development model.


Pavlovskaya et al. survey the cooperatives in New York City, finding that most cooperatives are small in size, the majority of worker-owners are women of color, among other major findings.


Tanner investigates the thriving cooperative ecosystem in Quebec in order to provide recommendations for the creation of a cooperative ecosystem in New York City. Tanner identifies governmental monetary and legal support, leadership and technical support from apex organisations, strong cooperative networks, and specific historical and cultural factors as crucial aspects of a supportive cooperative environment.

**Cooperative outside of New York**


**Other Resources (practice-oriented)**

[University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives](#)

[Mapping the Solidarity Economy](#)

[Solidarity Economy Resources (Borowiak’s website)](#)

[International Cooperative Alliance](#)

[North American Students of Cooperation (NASCO) resources](#)

[Democracy at Work resources](#)

*NYC-specific*

[SolidarityNYC resources](#)

[NYC’s Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative (WCBDI)](#)

**Regional Networks**

[NYC Network of Worker Cooperatives (NYC NoWC)](#)

[Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance (PACA)](#)

[Worker-Owned and Run Cooperative Network of Greater Boston (WORC’N)](#)

[Valley Alliance of Worker Cooperatives (VAWC) (Northampton, MA)](#)

[Network of Bay Area Worker Cooperatives (NoBAWC)](#)

[Madison Worker Cooperatives (MADWorC), Madison, WI](#)