

# Next steps in organizing alternatives to capitalism: toward a relational research agenda

## *Introduction to the Special Issue*

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In the last ten years, the latest acute economic crisis of global capitalism has put in check most of the institutional pillars of the post-Keynesian consensus: globalization, free trade, free movement of capital and labor, and so on.

*Status quo* response to the crisis was the enforcement of austerity economic models, cutting public budgets and curbing public services. Those economic models remain the dominant ways of thinking in the post-2008 crisis (Davis, 2009). Austerity was not only prescribed to the indebted economies of the Global South, but also to the gigantic powers of the North: Western Europe and North America. It was not by chance that various movements of anti-capitalism and neoliberal policies erupted, such as "Occupy Wall Street" in the United States and the "15-M Outraged Movement" in Spain, bringing together a group of actors who demanded a radical transformation of order, the end of economic austerity programs, and the reduction of social inequalities.

Attention and interest in the movements contesting the capitalist order grew not only among the general public, but also within the academic circuit, not least in the area of business management. After a sustained and deep criticism of the inability of conventional literature to transcend traditional models of capitalist organizations responsible for deepening inequalities and maintaining the economic crisis, it seems that there is a movement to search for alternative ways of organizing capitalism in a more humane way, with greater attention to social, economic and environmental sustainability of organizations.

As a consequence, literature around the topic of organizing alternatives to capitalism has gained traction among scholars in business and organizational theory. One expression of that is the recent spread of different organizational models and legal structures over the world, portraying diverse labels, such as social entrepreneurship (Dacin, Dacin & Tracey, 2011), inclusive innovation (George, McGahan & Prabhu, 2012), inclusive business (Halme, Lindeman & Linna 2012), pirate organizations (Durand & Vergne, 2012), social business (Yunus, Moingeon & Lehmann, 2010) and hybrid organizations (Battilana & Dorado, 2010). Others, such as cooperatives (Charterina, Albizu & Landeta, 2007), have been around for more than a century, but have generally received very little attention from business and organizational scholars in the last three decades.

This growing interest in the topic of organizing capitalism differently – and other signals coming both from the academy and practice – had a major influence on our decision to propose this special issue. On the one hand, we felt, in our own experiences as academics, that more and more students were interested in having information or even experiencing working in organizations that were different to the traditional for-profit

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enterprise. Many of these students identified a search for purpose in their work and a wish to dedicate their efforts to organizations that shared their humanistic values. In the same vein, we started to see more colleagues developing research on these topics and a particular frustration in recognizing the lack of teaching opportunities available in this area. On the other hand, the creation of a more adaptable legal status in some countries and the growing number of social incubators and accelerators over the world have encouraged the multiplication of initiatives and of types of organizations that did not fit anymore in the traditional corporate, for-profit model. Such initiatives and organizations can be broadly labeled as 'incrementally alternative', such as the emergence of the B-Corp System organizations, which comprises 1,700 organizations worldwide (Gehman & Grimes, 2016) and is very close to the traditional model, or the recent interest in the United Kingdom in the 'Purposeful Company' (<http://www.biginnovationcentre.com/purposeful-company>). However, others appear to fundamentally challenge some of the main features of the for-profit model, such as worker cooperatives (Leca, Gond & Barin Cruz, 2014; Esper, Cabantous, Barin Cruz & Gond, 2017) in which collective ownership and decision making is central.

Consequently, organizing alternatives to capitalism have become a significant object of interest in academy and practice, although most of the current knowledge on the topic has been fragmented and little developed. This introduction to the special issue presents our view of how the current literature has been developing in this field and through this discussion we propose avenues for future development.

## CURRENT DEBATE ON ORGANIZING ALTERNATIVES TO CAPITALISM

Most of the current literature has circumscribed the debate around organizing alternatives to capitalism to the notion of 'alternative organizational forms'. Consequently, the literature has so far tried to understand the different business/organizational models available, the process of creation and development of alternative forms, and the objectives and impacts of these alternative forms. Mirroring developments in practice, the literature also tends to bifurcate around the degree to which the fundamentals of capitalism are challenged (for an overview, see Table 1).

The first group of studies we identify in this field aims at understanding *the types of alternative organizational forms and their business/organizational models*. Here, scholars focus on the different legal structures and organizational models available, arguing for their strengths and limits. Research in the preceding years has considered very diverse types of legal structures and organizational forms as alternatives, which is normal for an emerging field within which definitions and consensus have not yet emerged. There are at least two ways to conceptualize the notion of alternative organizational forms. Taking a broader and very inclusive view, 'alternative' can be seen as anything different to the traditional for-profit model. In this case, any legal structure that does not follow this standard (such as cooperatives, associations, NGOs, social enterprises in some countries) is seen as alternative. A much more restrictive view is to conceptualize 'alternative' as something that is different and in contrast to the dominant economic system, in other words, different to capitalism. In this case, only organizations that challenge the fundamental characteristics of capitalism – such as property rights or the accumulation of capital – could be considered alternative organizational forms. Clearly, most of the

previous studies in the last decade have focused on market-oriented forms of alternative organizations that differ from the for-profit model but follow the same principles, such as social enterprises and social entrepreneurship. Topics such as the strategy and financial viability of these types of organization have been extensively treated, with researchers usually insisting on the difficult task of balancing social mission with financial survival (Dawson & Daniel, 2010; Belz & Binder, 2017). Extensive studies have been developed using institutional theory to understand how hybrid organizations were able to manage distinct logics (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Pache & Santos, 2013; Jay, 2013; Smith; Gonin & Besharov, 2013). On the other hand, the creation and development of cooperatives, a form that would challenge some of the classic principles of the capitalist system such as ownership and accumulation of capital, have been largely neglected in the organizational literature, though there has been a recent wave of attention in some journals in the last few years (for example, the special issue of *Organization* in 2014 on worker's cooperatives).

A second area of study has targeted the *processes of creation and development of alternative organizational models*. Scholars inspired by entrepreneurship literature have in general conceptualized this process in three main phases that are linked to an organizational 'life-cycle' of development. The first refers to 'ideation' and creative processes to reflect on social issues and potential ways to face them by designing and developing an alternative business model (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010; Osterwalder, 2016). The second refers to the process of 'incubation' in which recently created alternative organizations go through a series of 'managerial tests and experimentation' to stabilize their business model (Nicolopoulou, Karatas-Ozkan, Vas & Nouman, 2017). Finally, the third group of studies has concentrated on the 'acceleration' of relatively stabilized alternative organizations, by analyzing the different forms of scaling the social impact of these ventures (Seelos & Mair, 2017). On the one hand, the majority of studies in this area are interested in alternative organizational forms that accept and embrace market-based principles such as social businesses (Yunus, Moingeon & Lehmann-Ortega, 2010; Yunus, Dalsace, Menasce & Faivre Tavignot 2015), B-Corporations (Kim, Karlesky, Myers & Schifeling, 2016; Sttubs, 2017) or social entrepreneurship ventures (Drayton & Budinich, 2010). On the other hand, there has been a recent emergence of a series of studies have been contributing to the debate of alternative economies (Zanoni, Contu, Healy & Mir, 2017), focusing on the development of worker cooperatives (Bretos & Errasti, 2017; Esper, Cabantous, Barin Cruz & Gond, 2017).

A third area of development has focused on the *objectives and impacts of alternative organizational forms*. Particularly, the debate around social impact has been receiving a great deal of attention in the most recent period. A first group of scholars, largely influenced by social entrepreneurship literature, has focused on the output, outcomes or the consequences associated with the activities of alternative organizational forms. Assuming that these organizations are structured around a socially-oriented mission, previous studies have tried to understand what forms of social impact different alternative forms can generate. Part of this literature concentrates on the development of measures and indicators of performance for social impact (Louis, Seret, & Baesens, 2013). Social impact in this case is seen as a product. Others are more interested to understand how alternative organizational forms impact society during different stages of development (Stephan, Patterson, Kelly & Mair, 2016). In this case, social impact is seen as a process, built over time. A second

group of scholars in this area has followed a critical perspective and recognized the political character of alternative organizational forms. Scholars that may be bracketed in this group have largely been inspired by critical studies, but their work has followed two main but distinct orientations. A first group tries to analyze the market-based solutions for social issues, and raises questions about power relations (Paranque & Willmott, 2014) and the use of the poor and marginalized groups as a new market (Griffits, 2012). The main argument is against the appropriation of these by traditional capitalist mechanisms. A second group focuses on a more positive view of the potential alternative organizational forms and tries to analyze the benefits of developing grassroots ventures, based on democratic participation principles and collective property rights (Cheney, Santa Cruz, Peredo & Nazareno, 2014). The most common examples here are the studies interested in the cooperative movement and its impact on democracy and participation in shop floor everyday practices (Jaumier, 2017).

Although these three groups of study have inspired a great deal of debate and raised the importance of the topic in the field of organizational studies, we note that a broader discussion outside the boundaries of the 'organizational forms' that alternatives may take and the consequences of these has received very little attention up until now. The relations and connections that those 'alternative organizational forms' establish with key actors or multiple stakeholders in society such as National, Regional and Local Governments, Universities, Investors or Civil Society groups may have a decisive influence on each of the areas of study previously identified. For instance, how does the relationship with Government and the public sphere influence the availability of certain options in legal status that could make some alternative business models viable? Or, how can scholars and students in Universities play a role in the processes of creation and development of alternative forms? Or, how can 'alternative' or socially-minded investors influence or guarantee the survival of alternative forms? Or further, how may a deeper connection with Civil Society organizations result in a different conceptualization of social impact? We believe that future research should be encouraged in these directions, which is the examination of the relationships that may facilitate, support or constrain the organization of alternatives to capitalism and the forms, functions and consequences that these may have. In other words, we understand the topic of organizing alternatives to capitalism as an interactional and relational process between organizational forms and key supportive actors in society.

Areas of Research	Incremental Alternatives	Fundamental Alternatives
<i>Types of alternative organizational forms and their business/ organizational models</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·Balancing social mission with financial survival (Dawson &amp; Daniel, 2010; Smith et al., 2013; Belz, Binder &amp; Katharina, 2017)</li> <li>·Hybrid organizations and multiple logics (Battilana &amp; Dorado, 2010; Pache &amp; Santos, 2013; Jay, 2013; Smith; Gonin &amp; Besharov, 2013)</li> </ul>	Creation of cooperatives as a form that challenges some of the fundamental principles of the capitalist system such as ownership and accumulation of capital <i>(Special Issue of Organization in 2014 on worker's cooperatives)</i>
<i>Processes of creation and development of alternative organizational models</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designing and developing a business model (Osterwalder &amp; Pigneur, 2010; Osterwalder, 2016)</li> <li>Incubation/Stabilize business model (Nicolopoulou, Karatas-Ozkan, Vas &amp; Nouman, 2017)</li> <li>Scaling alternative organizations (Seelos &amp; Mair, 2017)</li> </ul>	Alternative economies <i>(Zanoni, Contu, Healy &amp; Mir, 2017; Bretos &amp; Errasti, 2017; Esper, Cabantous, Barin Cruz &amp; Gond, 2017)</i>
<i>Objectives and impacts of alternative organizational forms</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures and indicators of performance for social impact (Louis, Seret, &amp; Baesens, 2013)</li> <li>How alternative organizational forms impact society during different stages of development (Stephan et al., 2016)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Power relations and the use of the poor and marginalized groups as a new market <i>(Paranque &amp; Willmott, 2014; Griffiths, 2012)</i></li> <li>Benefits of developing grassroots ventures, based on democratic participation principles and collective property rights <i>(Cheney et. all, 2014; Jaumier, 2017)</i></li> </ul>

Table 1 - Overview of current research activity

## AREAS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

In this section we give consideration to how a relational approach to understanding the organizing of alternatives to capitalism might be developed. We build our recommendations in this section around four key actors and their relations with alternative organizational forms (these are captured schematically in Figure 1): Governments, Universities, Investors and Civil Society. Our intention is not to map out an exhaustive picture of these relationships – nor indeed the range of actors that may be relevant – but to highlight the potential value of a relational approach in researching the processes and contexts of organizing alternatives.

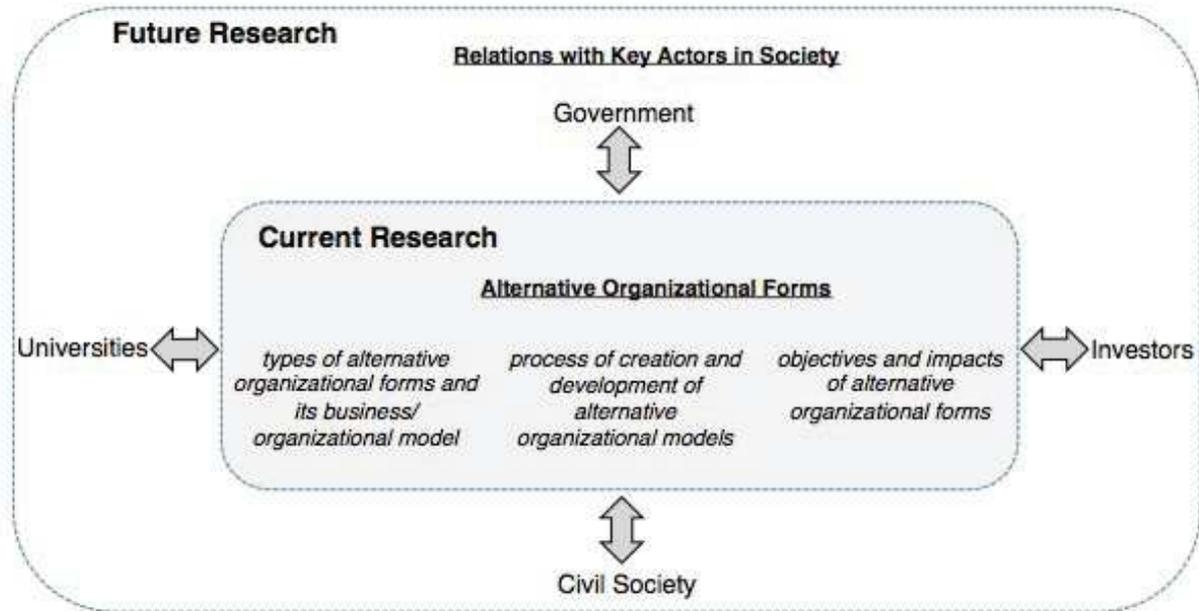


Figure 1 - Future research directions: the key relationships in organizing alternative forms

## ORGANIZING ALTERNATIVES AS RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENTS

In the post-World War II years, the role of Northern governments was to build and consolidate a state of social welfare, as well as to foster economic activity through counter-cyclical policies of an industrial nature. With the 1980s the implementation of neoliberal policies advocating the minimum state - Thatcherism, and Reaganomics - had a profound impact not only on states' capacity to intervene in the economy but also on industrial policy drivers (Peck, 2001).

However, the economic crisis of 2008 brought back the possibility of again planning and implementing industrial policies for the development of strategic sectors in the different capitalist economies of the North (Yifu & Stiglitz, 2013) and developing countries (Bresser-Pereira, Oreiro & Marconi, 2014).

In this contemporary debate, however, little attention has been given to how governments can create and implement development policies in ways that are likely to produce alternatives to the capitalist economy. Particularly in the Northern countries, this debate is still - to some extent - partially interdicted (Parker, forthcoming 2018).

On the other hand, for more than a decade, several governments in the South have been developing a set of public policies and actions to develop alternative forms of organization for capitalism or at least alternative organizations to capitalism. Brazil, since 2003, has been implementing at the national level a set of policies to foster the Solidarity Economy, which has resulted in the establishment of almost 20,000 different organizations, such as cooperatives, solidarity groups, and alternative enterprises. In the Andes, the idea of "sumak kawsay" or "well-living" takes its place, based on the notion that development must be guided by the realization of the "good life" of all, in peace and harmony with nature and indefinite extension of human cultures (Escobar, 2011). In Ecuador, the government introduced the "Plan Nacional de Desarrollo," which establishes a set of bold public policies aimed at strengthening

indigenous self-organization as opposed to capitalist development based on the idea of "sumak kawsay".

Thus, possibilities of research emerge in relation to the roles governments may enact in organizing alternatives to capitalism. Looking beyond mere regulation, it would be interesting to understand how governments may create an ecosystem of support to alternative organizations through policies of sustainable public procurement, direct or indirect funding, etc.

## ORGANIZING ALTERNATIVES AS RELATIONS WITH UNIVERSITIES

Universities all around the world have been challenged to deliver a consistent and sustained positive impact on society. Federal funding agencies have even been evaluating Universities and scholars on their ability to contribute to the development of the region in which they operate. We believe that a better understanding of the role and influence of Universities in organizing alternatives could open a productive field of research in this field, particularly approaches that extend beyond mere economic value in a conventional sense to embrace societal concerns and 'public value' (see Brewer 2013; Delbridge 2014). Several examples have demonstrated the role of Engineering (Leca, Gond & Barin Cruz, 2014), Philosophy (Esper, Cabantous, Barin Cruz & Gond, 2017), or Business Schools (Reedy & Learmonth, 2009) in the creation, support and maintenance of alternative organizational forms. We see lots of potential in the development of solid theory around the practices of 'reflexive scholars' (Freire, 1970), 'engaged scholarship' (King & Learmonth, 2015) or 'activist scholars' (Contu, 2009) pushing for teaching and researching activities around alternative organizational forms.

Critical performative scholars have taken some important initial steps in this direction, for example when debating the role of scholars in the sociomaterial production of subjectivities and identities (Cabantous, Gond, Harding & Learmonth, 2016), in the creation of new organizational models and realities (Fleming & Banerjee, 2016: 262; Leca et al., 2014; Schaefer & Wickert, 2016: 220-222), or in the connections to broader social political dynamics (Spicer, Alvesson & Kärreman, 2016: 237-240; Willmott, 2013). However, we believe that research in this area could go beyond current debates and explore other important questions. Particularly, what conflicts and tensions do scholars face in trying to undertake such projects within their Universities and with their peers? What kind of 'pedagogy' is needed to encourage greater awareness amongst students of the importance of alternative organizational forms? Further study is necessary to understand the infrastructure necessary to advance teaching on alternative organizational forms. Here, scholars could help in studying questions like: what are the institutional conditions favoring or challenging the work of this type by scholars? Which kind of training should they receive in their PhDs to engage in this 'responsible role'? What are the courses (and which degree) to be developed? Posing these questions and opening this field of research would encourage scholars to be part of the process of organizing alternatives instead of just external observers.

A further consideration when contemplating the role of universities stems from the increasing emphasis that is being placed on them as drivers of regional economic growth. These expectations have particularly developed on the basis of exemplar regions where world-leading universities such as MIT, Harvard, Cambridge and Stanford are seen to have been key actors in the emergence of local innovation ecosystems. However, policy prescriptions founded on these exemplar regions have

come to be seen as simplistic and narrow both in their emphasis on the direct commercialisation of knowledge rather than the wider range of possible forms of external engagement (Perkmann, Tartari, McKelvey, Autio, Broström, D'Este, Fini, Geuna, Grimaldi, Hughes, Krabel, Kitson M, Llerena P, Lissoni F, Salter A & Sobrero., 2013) and in their concern with innovation for solely economic rather than broader social ends (Goddard & Vallance, 2013). The examination of the roles that universities might play in the development of potential new organizational forms and the mobilization of alternatives to capitalism should be broad-based and formed around a more complex understanding of the multiple roles and institutional dynamics of universities in regional innovation ecosystems, particularly with regard to their role as strategic actors and knowledge network orchestrators (Markkula & Kune, 2015; Price & Delbridge, 2015). In part, this debate is founded on competing conceptions of the relationship that universities should have with their communities, and also of the role that engaged or activist scholars should play.

### **ORGANIZING ALTERNATIVES AS RELATIONS WITH INVESTORS**

The field of 'responsible finance' or 'social finance' has emerged in recent years and claims that certain types of investors may look for more than just the maximization of their financial gains (Arjaliès, 2010). Most of this research still focuses on investors interested in traditional Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives or social entrepreneurship, but some have started to look into alternative forms of financing. This is a rich area of research, particularly considering that most of the alternative forms of organization available deal constantly with the challenge of financial sustainability, which sometimes jeopardizes their capability to deliver the promised impact and leads to mission drift. Many alternative organizations still rely exclusively on Governmental funding and become extremely dependent on the political will of the party in power. Questions such as how to reduce the risk and dependency of alternative organizational forms on exclusive sources of funding or how to create mechanisms to encourage collective participation that goes beyond government could be explored here. Also, how to make aware and motivate the general population to participate in forms of funding that could benefit alternative organizational forms?

In particular, the field of alternative finance has grown around the world in the last few years. Cambridge University jointly with Nesta produced a report in 2015 highlighting the growth of interest in alternative finance in UK. Among the innovative options available, they list peer-to-peer business lending, peer-to-peer consumer lending, invoice trading, community shares, reward-based crowdfunding, donation-based crowdfunding, equity crowdfunding, pension-led funding or debt-based securities (Zhang, Baeck, Ziegler, Bone & Garvey, 2015). Also, they propose several questions that continue to deserve to be better investigated, such as what type of people and organizations use these various different alternative finance models? Why do people and organizations seeking money turn to alternative finance platforms? What makes the model attractive to people with money to donate, lend or invest? What is the socio-economic impact of alternative finance and how do organizations and businesses perform after fundraising on alternative finance platforms? How do people find out about various alternative finance models and what do they think of them having used them? We believe that this is a promising field of research and organizational scholars, not just finance scholars, should look into this phenomenon.

## ORGANIZING ALTERNATIVES AS RELATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

When it comes to alternatives to capitalism, it is perhaps in the field of civil society and its organizations that the most fruitful efforts are expected.

Civil society is not a uniform set of associations and social movements that operate regularly and in the same directions (Mercer, 2002). On the contrary, it is a space of struggles (Alves, 2004; Cohen & Arato, 1992), where the emancipatory battles that feed utopias (Wright, 2013) and the possibilities for transformation or overcoming of capitalism may occur.

The different struggles for recognition and redistribution (Fraser & Honneth, 2003) in civil society are driven by a broad set of social movements that are anchored in organizations (Zald & Ash, 1966, McAdam & Scott, 2005). These social movements are also capable of producing new organizations (Rao, Morrill & Zald, 2000).

Thus, it is important to highlight how forms of cooperative organization are extremely dependent on a strong articulation with social movements with an anti-competitive connotation (Schneiberg, King & Smith, 2008; Schneiberg, 2013). It is important to understand how countercultural social movements can produce new forms of artistic production and consumption, as in the case of the Burning Man Festival (Chen, 2009), or how the different anti-management resistance movements work to try to create alternative forms of organization through disruptive strategies (Spicer & Böhm, 2007).

There have been some interesting recent developments amongst what might be broadly grouped as civil society organizations; both those that are actively involved in organizing as alternatives and those engaged in advocacy for and/or constructing prospective alternatives. A recent example of the former is reported by Fernandez, Marti and Farchi (2017) who present ethnographic research on the formation of a worker cooperative in Greater Buenos Aires. Their study reports on the local actions of the long-term unemployed in *La Juanita* who successfully mobilized to establish an alternative and sustainable organization in order to both create employment and to resist political domination, thereby allowing the disenfranchised to engage actively and constructively in the political process.

Cultural resistance is one of the major features of social movements and active politically-driven civil society organizations. In Brazil, Barcellos, Dellagnelo and Salles (2014) presented the case of *Fora-do-Eixo*, an organization that has a clear political position of disputing the dominant conceptions of culture through the enactment of different strategies from organizing an alternative cultural circuit through the creation and circulation of their own social currency.

When it comes to lobbying rather than the organizing of alternatives themselves, an example may be found in the recent work of the Big Innovation Centre in the United Kingdom. This convenes a network of representative global companies, plus national public agencies and some leading universities, in order to support and promote innovation and regional economic development. The Centre has recently mobilized a task force of business representatives, academics and consultants to address some perceived challenges in how business is organized and conducted, most notably short-termism, a lack of stakeholder voice in corporate decision making and the lack of diversity on corporate boards. Their report makes some important suggestions for the future structure and regulation

of the UK's largest companies. At the heart of these is a belief that a stated *purpose* is key to corporate and economic success: 'Great companies are enabled by the pursuit of clearly defined visionary corporate purposes, which set out how the company will better peoples' lives' ([http://www.biginnovationcentre.com/media/uploads/pdf/TPC\\_Policy%20Report.pdf](http://www.biginnovationcentre.com/media/uploads/pdf/TPC_Policy%20Report.pdf)).

The report identifies problems with the British ecosystem, most notably a fragmented and diversified shareholder base and a legal and regulatory system that imposes short-term profit maximization on corporate boards, and advances options for change. These encompass corporate law, corporate governance; executive remuneration; equity ownership; shareholder engagement; disclosure; accounting practice and taxation. While these might clearly be seen as constituting 'incremental alternatives', the potential for regulatory change is significant. However, it is not clear that the campaign will ultimately prove successful. More research on how various civic society and third sector organizations might contribute to both larger-scale meta-change and grassroots development of alternative organization will be needed as multiple actors respond to the challenges of contemporary capitalism.

## PAPERS IN THE SPECIAL ISSUE

The papers selected in this special issue cover topics that illustrate the current debate in the field but also provide some insight into the areas that we have highlighted for future research.

The paper of Nathalie Lallemand-Stempak challenges the common theoretical view that has been widely advanced on the concept of hybrid organizations. It fits well within the tradition of studies interested in the objectives and impacts of alternative organizational forms. Studying a French mutual insurance company, she proposes that hybrid organizations have their own institutional logic and should not be understood as simply borrowing or adapting logics from public, charitable or private for profit sectors as most of the literature suggests. By doing so, this paper keeps up the tradition of using well established organizational theories such as institutional theory (and in this case, institutional logics) to understand the functioning of alternative organizational forms. In particular, the study opens the debate about the need to recognize that alternative forms have their own way of working that cannot merely be considered as a merging or borrowing from other logics.

The second paper in this special issue focuses on another type of alternative organizational form, the social enterprise. It follows the tradition of studies interested in the types of alternative organizational forms and their business/organizational model. One important characteristic of this paper is the consideration of worker cooperatives as social enterprises. This is not something generally found, neither in the cooperative literature nor in work on social enterprises. Luc K. Audebrand challenges the sometimes antagonistic view of these two organizational forms and proposes the potential insights in considering them together. By mobilizing paradox lenses to the study of social enterprises such as worker cooperatives, Audebrand suggests we consider tensions between communality and individuality, hierarchy and democracy, and between 'staying alternative' and 'going mainstream'. By doing so, he goes beyond the consideration of the traditional tensions between financial and social performance and proposes novel a research avenue in which paradox scholarship can be mobilized to study alternative forms.

Focusing on the idea of 'indigeneity', the third paper of this special issue proposes a comprehensive approach to understanding of how indigenous enterprises evolve in the capitalist system. It makes advances on our proposal for future research interested in the relation that alternative organizational forms develop with some key actors (indigenous communities, in this case). Specifically, Jacob Vakkayil studies indigenous enterprises in India and unveils the contradictions and tensions of indigeneity as it is expressed through integration and resistance to the capitalist system. He describes the use of 'indigeneity' as a performative tool that grants to entrepreneurs legitimacy, identity and certain types of outcomes. The paper indicates several challenges and opportunities for the long term maintenance of alternative forms operating at the fringes of the capitalist system.

The final contribution for this special issue is an invited paper. Martin Parker leads us through his thoughts about what sorts of policy changes would be necessary to encourage alternative businesses to grow. This paper address directly our argument for more research on the relations between alternative organizational forms and Governmental policy. Specifically, Parker adopts the point of view of those who are responsible for proposing public policies and engages in a pragmatic debate on 'what can be done' to encourage an economy that works for the common good. Parker proposes a list of nine recommendations for policy that encourages a focus on local initiatives mostly led by small and medium organizations. Instead of positioning themselves as anti-businesses, he invites governments, politicians, policy makers and scholars interested by alternatives to capitalism to turn the debate to the questions of what sort of business voices they should be listening to, and hence what sort of business models they should be encouraging. In this regard Parker's work picks up the challenge of how organizing alternatives to capitalism may be achieved while reinforcing the value that we identify in adopting a relational approach to such an undertaking.

## CONCLUSION

This special issue represents a first step in the documenting and 'organizing' of the field of organizing alternatives to capitalism and aims at helping scholars to understand both past and current bodies of research as well as future zones of development. We recognize that most of the research in the field has focused on 'alternative organizational forms' as an expression of 'organizing alternatives to capitalism'. We highlight the fact that organizational scholars have now shown an increasing appetite for better understanding these organizations and the impact they can have on economy and society. We recognize that different traditions have emerged in the field, ranging from more to less market-oriented solutions.

We propose to surpass the internal boundaries of alternative organizational forms and orient future research to the relations that these organizations establish with key actors in society such as Government, Universities, Investors and Civil Society. By doing so, we believe that research in the field will become more connected to the role of these organizations in society and that this will help to better understand the sometimes reformist and sometimes transformational projects behind these organizations. We encourage organizational scholars to embrace the challenge of structuring a theoretical and practical field around such alternatives. And to play their role in exploring the alternatives that may challenge the long-established limitations and contemporary vicissitudes of capitalism.

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