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The Routledge Companion to Alternative Organization. By M. Parker, G. Cheney, V. Fournier and C. Land (eds). London: Routledge, 2014

This Companion Edition establishes not only that there is a problem with capitalist models of organizing but also that there are viable alternatives. The opening chapters provide a concise, clear and convincing discussion that de-centres the notion of capitalism as a 'coherent and relatively unified system' and shows it to be partial, incomplete, often contradictory and encompassing many varieties. Capitalism, it is argued, is more a goal than a system of organization—a goal focused on accumulation of economic surplus. Following J.K. Gibson-Graham the 'plurality of capitalisms' is recognized. It is suggested that variety and difference are the norm, that the 'cracks and gaps' in a seemingly 'single coherent logic' are significant, and that the extent to which social and economic relations have been commodified is overstated. Recognizing the plurality of 'non-capitalisms' already existent, their role in the accumulation of economic surplus and the dependence of capitalist organization on these alternate forms of organizing also provides a foundation for de-constructing the powerful 'there is no alternative' (TINA) argument. Historical perspectives on organizing are presented in the context of, and in relation to, current trajectories and the complexity of 21st-century markets.

In compiling this Companion, the editors advise they are keen to establish what they are arguing *for*—to move 'beyond complaining' about the present—and the edition is described as something of a 'recipe book' to this end. To firmly position the alternative organization agenda as more than a potentially utopian manifesto, they suggest there are three principles that must be central to reflection and practice—autonomy, solidarity and responsibility: '... forms of organizing which respect personal autonomy, but within a framework of cooperation, and which are attentive to the sorts of futures they will produce' (p. 32). Engagement with these principles requires consideration of both means and ends. In alternative organization, the means and the ends cannot be separated, as isolating one from the other obscures assumptions that may be underpinning the choice of methods and/or goals (and also fails to recognize that sometimes means are ends in themselves).

The central argument about the importance of choices recognizes that all forms of organizing are inherently political and therefore contested. The editors argue that there is always a series of choices involved in any form of organizing, and therefore, other choices can always be made. These choices will be in constant tension, particularly when working with and through the suggested principles, and continuously need to be renegotiated as the situation evolves. Focusing on the processes of organization fosters clarity around the choices being made, and it is this that provides the counter weight to the 'TINA' argument. Once arguments about inevitability are removed, individual and collective choices must be justified, and the relationship between means and ends probed at each step. The editors suggest this perspective helps work through complexities, generating a reflexive approach to organization that is prefigurative to recognizing the responsibility and possibility that organization presents for all of us.

Alternative organization, and the principles proposed by the editors, are explored further through interesting and provocative chapters on past, present and prospective examples. These are grouped around three issues: work and labour, exchange and consumption and resources. The sections were chosen as, the editors suggest, they broadly reflect the types of questions that arise when reflexive organization is engaged with. Evidence of engagement with the three suggested principles, and therefore with both the means and the ends, was a key factor in selecting the chapters.

A section contributed by Geoff Lightfoot outlines the limitations of micro-finance as an alternative form of organizing—due to the commercialization of the industry, and also as a result of its tendency to direct labour towards marginal enterprises. The editors use this discussion to illustrate how weighing up the relationship between ends-and-means highlights the inherent tensions between the three fundamental principles. They explain how this process influenced their decision not to include a chapter on micro-finance as means and ends are considered out of balance in current practice, and there it is not 'alternative enough'.

Chapters on some of the 'usual suspects' (such as households, cooperatives, intentional communities, voluntary simplicity and fair trade) found in texts on the topic tend to provide some deeper thinking and longer term perspectives than are often encountered, while chapters which cover newer territory (such as scrounging, algorithmic actors, technology, international refugees and social reproduction) challenge the boundaries of the field. Some of the examples are easily recognized as forms of 'organization', and others are more emergent and will no doubt capture the interest of researchers and theorists. Together, they provide a nuanced and insightful collection that challenges the polarizing 'sell out or not' question, highlighting the dynamic nature of alternative organization.

In the 'Work and Labour' section, the editors asked contributing authors to consider the following: what counts as labour, and how do we count it; what counts as production, and how do we value it; and what sorts of relations are implied or achievable through organizing? Chapters on worker-recuperated enterprises in Argentina, worker-owned cooperatives, intentional communities, non-commodified labour, family and household reproduction, immigrants and immigration, and algorithmic actors are included. Diverse in scope, each shows a facet of the re-embedding of economy, demonstrating how '... it is always social, and that markets are made' (p. 43).

The 'Exchange and Consumption' section sets out to 'redefine exchange in terms of social and environmental relations rather than purely economic ones' (p. 161). Chapters on fair trade, complementary currencies, gift economies, voluntary simplicity, bioregional economies and the transition movement are included. Through these discussions, the image of the calculating consumer that underpins the logic of capitalist organization disintegrates, showing the complex webs of relations that make exchange and consumption possible and drawing out implications for how we understand a 'good life'.

The resources that are used in alternative organization can look very similar to those used in capitalist organization (money, knowledge, natural resources, social networks, technologies, etc.),

but how they are constituted and deployed is different. The 'Resources' section provides examples of this, while also reinforcing a core argument of the book—that means and ends cannot be separated. Chapters on credit unions, social accounting, the commons, scrounging, technology, education and global governance show how choices about organizational resources embody and prefigure alternative values.

In considering the perennial-scale question, the orientation towards creating space for the 'imaginary' is heartening, and the positioning of organization as 'politics made durable' (p. 367) puts change within grasp of our each and every choice. The discussion in response to the often-heard concerns that perhaps the best we can hope for is to have a bit more 'social' in our entrepreneurialism and that all alternative forms of organization are destined for assimilation and co-optation because of their reliance on existing, capitalist institutions and political frameworks takes a similarly open stance.

In particular, the discussion on entrepreneurship as a form of social creativity, a societal force that is unstable and contested and therefore a site of possibility presents a useful counter to a major thread in social entrepreneurship literature more generally, which is strongly influenced by mainstream management thinking and something of a 'hero' model. In proposing a focus on 'insurgent entrepreneurship' as a fundamental ingredient for alternative organization, the editors emphasize a group-level orientation, suggesting that this has the potential to reinvigorate the economy with virtues like compassion and empathy which featured in Adam Smith's 'oft-misunderstood' account of the market (pp. 367–369).

It would have been interesting to also hear the editors' perspective on the alternative organization potential of the globally emerging social procurement movement, which focuses on harnessing existing budgets to generate social and environmental values (e.g. the United Kingdom's Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012). While this is clearly an example of using existing capitalist structures to achieve 'more than economic' outcomes, and therefore could be described as a mere 'tweak' to the system, the opportunities for alternative organizations, and through them the potential to reconfigure exchange relations, are significant.

This Companion Edition is presented in an accessible style, and as such, it is likely to be of interest beyond purely academic audiences. The discussions in the opening chapters, the preludes to each section and the concluding chapter would make a stimulating and useful introduction to the topic for students and potential co-organizers. The use of historical perspectives, discussion of the complexities of current trajectories, and diverse and thought-provoking examples throughout will also make the Companion a useful resource for those interested in including alternative organization in mainstream business (or other) courses. Each chapter could be drawn on for teaching and learning on any of the broad range of topics covered, and with a variety of participants.

The editors succeed in their task of moving the alternative organization discussion forward and into less charted waters, and in making a useful and timely contribution to the field. Focusing on difference and multiplicity, the editors argue, may be an effective approach to realizing social change. 'How we reach decisions can be as important as the decisions themselves. This is a really important shift, because it moves us away from thinking that organizing is what happens *after* decisions have been taken' (p. 39). While being clear that the edition does not provide all the answers or that the perspective and approach they are advocating is easy, the editors present a 'critically optimistic' account of the potential engine house for change that alternative organization represents.

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