

Building Organizational Democracy

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Motivation

- Examples of organizational democracy
 - Worker cooperatives
 - Credit unions
 - Producer cooperatives
 - Utility cooperatives
 - Partnerships
- Organizational democracy has various positive social externalities
- Conversion from conventional structure to workplace democracy is a puzzle
 - Tension with strong leadership
 - Democratic participation unfamiliar to most workers

Fig. 1: Total household income and wage income by type of worker and certification status of the employer (in 1000 CFA per month).

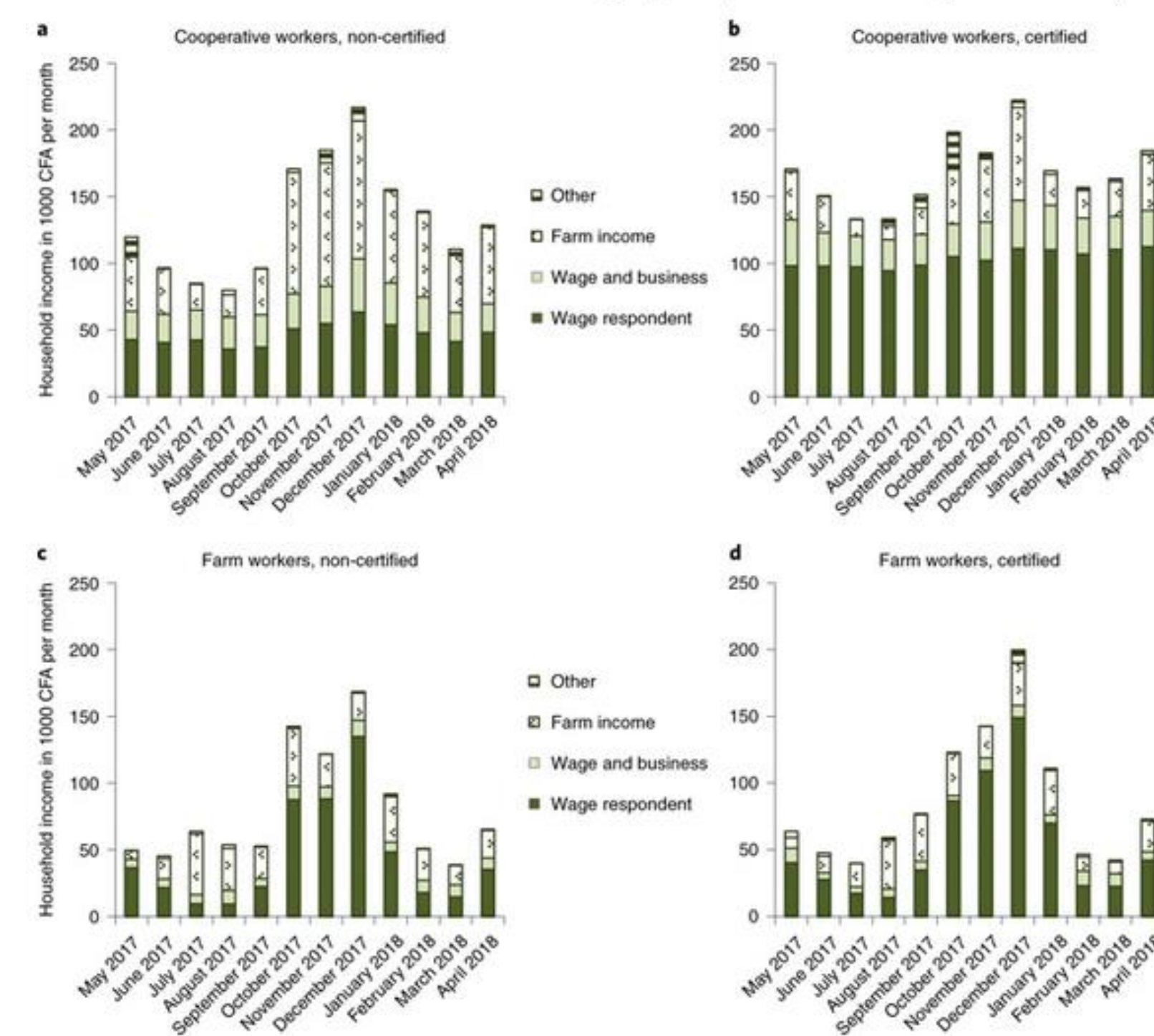


Chart2: Wages and Wage Stability in Farming Cooperatives (Source: Meemken et al. 2019)

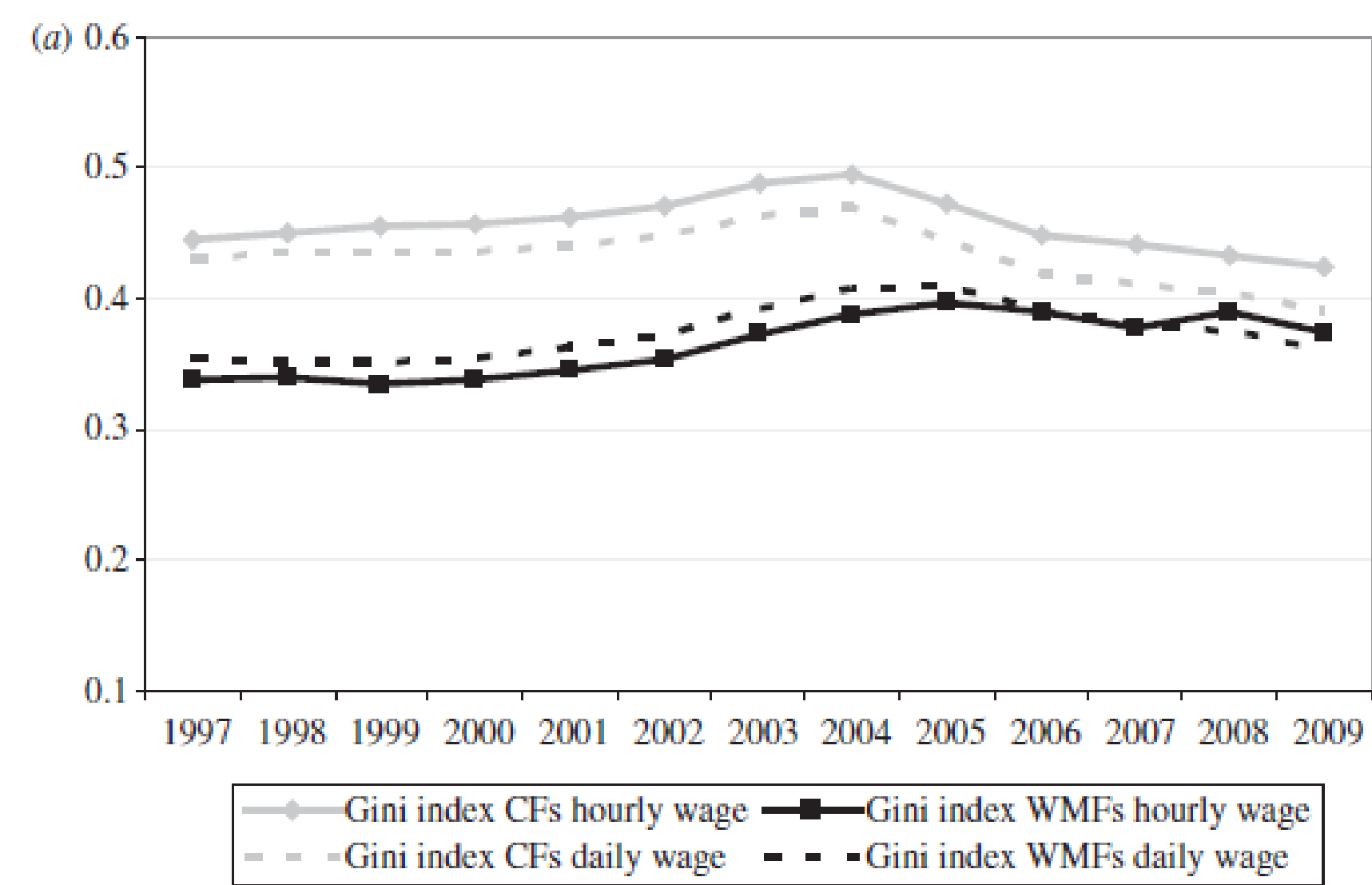


Chart 1: Wage Inequality in Conventional Firms and Worker Cooperatives (Source: Burdin 2016)

This project will examine *how* organizations *transition* from centralized power structures to *organizational democracy*.

Project Description

- Ethnography of interpersonal dynamics during conversion process
 - Two years of data collected
 - Tracking evolution of governance structure
 - Tracking evolution of individuals' involvement
- Automated video data collection
- Data
 - Audio transcripts
 - Video recordings

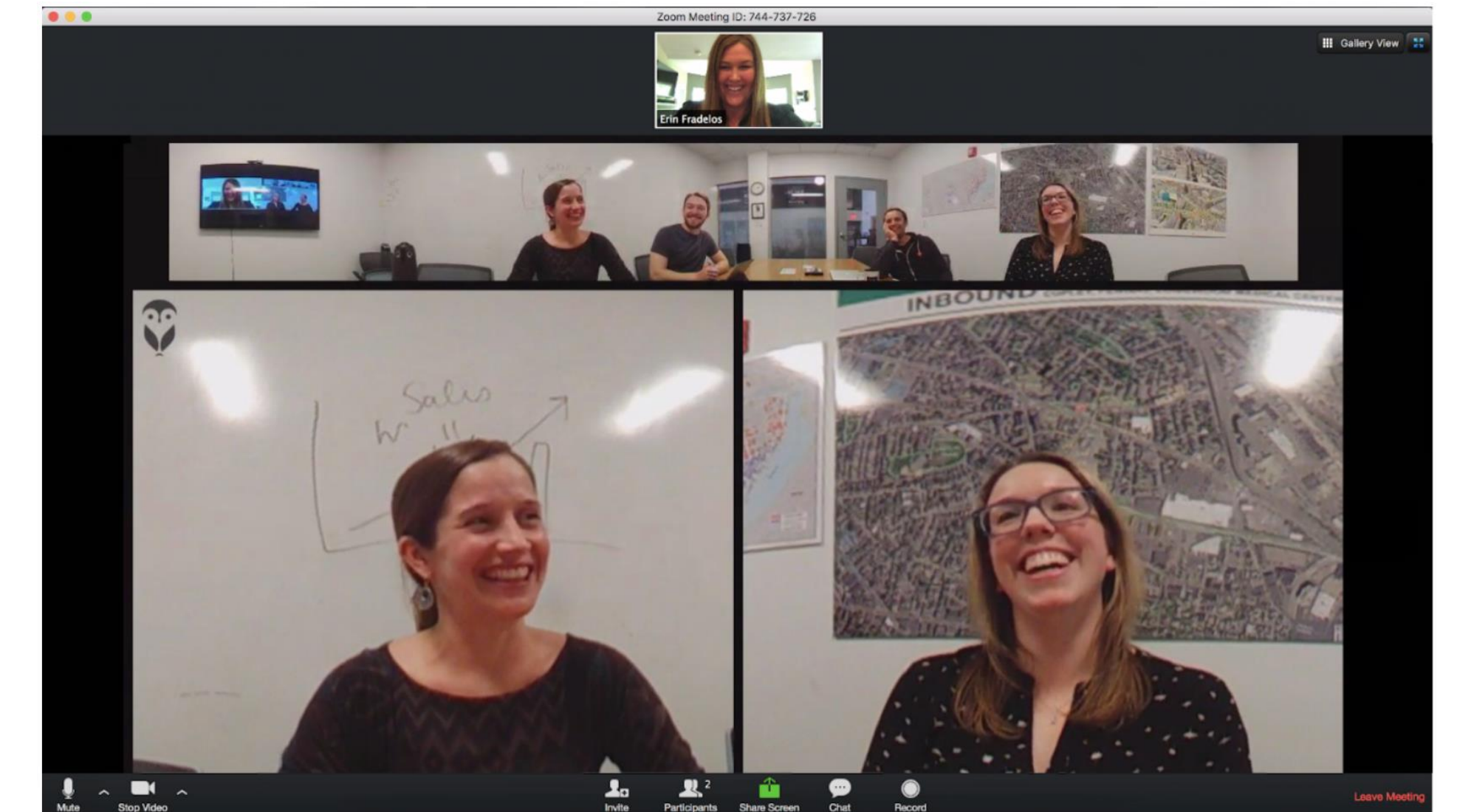


Figure 1: Illustration of Video Data Collected Through Video Conferencing System

Context

- Current research emphasizes when an organization become more democratic, focusing on external factors
- This study will focus on internal dynamics
 - Role of the founder
 - Events that accelerate or impede change

Project Deliverables

- Mid-term deliverable – December 2020
 - 25,000 pages of transcribed meetings
 - 60 hours of recorded video
- Final deliverable – May 2021
 - Manuscript on process model of workplace democracy emergence
- Extension of project – December 2021
 - Extension of data collection to multiple firms in process of conversion
 - Pittsburgh Taskforce of Worker Ownership
 - National Center for Employee Ownership

Potential Impact

- Offers practical solution to salient policy problem
- Facilitates alternative economic development strategy

