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

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

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

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

Chart 2: Wages and Wage Stability in Farming Cooperatives (Source: Meemken et al. 2019)

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