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ALTERNATIVE?
EVIDENCE FROM TWO CASE STUDIES**

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ABSTRACT

As urban housing in capitalist societies becomes increasingly precarious, both activists and scholars search for potential democratic alternatives to for-profit housing. Like other prefigurative organizations and movements, housing cooperatives champion the ideal of a more horizontal and egalitarian democracy as an organizing principle. Ideally, these decisions are supposed to be made through fair and equal deliberation in inclusive house meetings. Some skeptics argue, however, that cooperatives are too idealistic and that it is impossible to put these principles into practice. Yet there is no systematic research which examines the quality of deliberative decision-making in cooperatives. This paper moves beyond unsupported criticism and questions the common place that deliberative democracy is utopian. I analyze video and audio recorded data from house meetings of two cooperatives located in Madison, Wisconsin (USA). Using Conversation analysis, I find that, overall, these cooperatives resolve disagreement in a democratic fashion. Although these results are hardly generalizable, they suggest that housing cooperatives represent a viable alternative to the capitalist housing market.

KEYWORDS: housing cooperatives, deliberative democracy, real utopias, democratic ownership

1. A SEARCH FOR REAL UTOPIAS

Capitalist urban housing brings a series of problems to contemporary cities: economic issues such as the real estate crisis and rising rent levels, social issues like growing inequalities and gentrification problems, environmental issues, specifically noise and air pollution. The most fundamental problem of the capitalist housing market – which is related to all the problems above – is private property though. The right to do whatever one pleases with their own property affects the lives of thousands of other people. Now I do not seek ways to abolish private property in this paper, but ways of *democratizing* the housing market. The point of departure in this paper is the assumption that one way for solving many of the above problems is to remove the capacities to make housing-related decisions from private, profit-oriented actors and return it to urban communities. Consequently, the task of activists and emancipatory researchers must be to envision possible alternatives, but also to evaluate existing approaches to democratic ownership in urban housing.

This paper is devoted to the latter task. I use Erik O. Wright's (2010; 2013) *real utopia* concept to find out whether housing cooperatives represent a potential alternative to the capitalist real estate market. The notion of *real utopias* represents an attempt to theorize ways of transforming capitalism in an emancipatory way. Its oxymoronic character is intentional and allows to reconcile aspirational visions of emancipatory life with concrete alternatives to existing problems. Wright's point of departure are three normative principles to which every real utopia must be responsive: equality, democracy, and sustainability – even though Wright admits that “[m]any different moral principles can be used as standards with which to judge existing institutions and social structures” (Wright 2013:3). Although equality and sustainability are equally valid moral principles, in this paper I focus on democracy for the very reasons outlined above. Deliberative democracy theory serves as the normative standard to assess the decision-making processes in housing cooperatives. Moreover, Wright suggests that any analysis of real utopian alternatives must account for three elements: desirability, viability, and achievability. While desirability refers to the moral principles, viability and achievability point to the practical dimension of potential alternatives. Wright argues that rather than asking whether an emancipatory project is achievable at this point, critical researchers should turn their attention to the viability problem. Demonstrating an alternative's viability, i.e. proving that it is more beneficial than harmful, affects how people think about its achievability: “developing credible ideas about viable alternatives is one way of enhancing their achievability” (Wright 2013:8). I follow this assumption in the way that I focus on the desirability and viability of housing alternatives – rather than on how to achieve an extension of democratic housing. This does not imply I do not care for the latter problem, because demonstrating that democratic ownership works prepares the ground for its dissemination.

Housing cooperatives represent such a potential democratic alternative to capitalist for-profit housing. Most cooperative organizations champion the ideal of a more horizontal and egalitarian democracy as a guideline for their internal structures. The members of a cooperative own the organization and make decisions through what is supposed to be open, fair, and equal discussion among themselves. Cooperatives purport to be “prefigurative” organizations (Boggs 1977; Breines 1980; Polletta 2013:41), i.e. more democratic than other organizations and society at large.

Skeptics argue, however, that cooperatives are too idealistic and that it is impossible to put these principles into practice. They claim that social groups tend to be dominated by elites over time, either because of oligarchization (Michels 1925 [1911]) or “structurelessness” (Freeman 2013 [1972]). It seems to be a “conventional wisdom” that “participatory

democracy is worthy in principle but unwieldy in practice”, as Francesca Polletta (2002:1) puts it. However, with few exceptions, there is no systematic research which examines the quality of deliberative decision-making in cooperatives. Therefore, it is necessary to move beyond unsupported criticism and question the common place that deliberative democracy is utopian: Can members of cooperatives actually live up to their principles and put fair and equal decision-making into practice?

I argue that only if housing cooperatives make democracy work, they will qualify as real utopias. In addition, addressing the question of democratic governance is important for two more reasons: Empirically, cooperatives are an important aspect of associative life of Western democracies, but they are largely understudied. Thus, social sciences need a better understanding of their internal processes – not only as an inquiry in its own right, but also to get a better grasp of their success or failure. Theoretically, the research questions shed light on the practical aspects of deliberative democracy. If cooperatives are successful and achieve legitimate decisions through fair debate, this would lend strong support for deliberative theory. If they fail to do so, theorists must revise some of their assumptions.

This paper presents the results of case studies from two housing cooperatives in Madison, Wisconsin (USA), which I describe more in detail in section 2. Subsequently, I present the main features of the research design (section 3): I use Conversation analysis to analyze audio and video recorded data from house meetings to assess the democratic quality of deliberations. Section 4 outlines the central aspects of a concept of deliberation which serves as a moral principle for assessing the internal governance of the two housing cooperative under scrutiny. In the following section (5), I present the central results of the empirical analysis. I find that, not unexpectedly, housing cooperatives make most decisions in an uncontroversial way. When disagreement arises, participants possess different ways overcoming it in a deliberative way. Overall, the democratic quality of decision-making is fairly high.

2. CASE STUDIES

In social sciences, cooperative organizations have largely been ignored. There is more research in management and organization studies, but Gupta (2014) laments that it is “disproportionately scant in relation to the prevalence and proliferation of cooperatives across the world”. According to the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA 2015), over 1 billion people around the world are coopers, i.e. members of a cooperative. In the U.S., about a third of the population are members of some cooperative (Haynes and Nembhard 1999:48). The ICA defines a cooperative as “an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise” (ICA 2015:100). There are different types of cooperatives, which are usually distinguished by the social need they address, such as workers cooperatives or consumer cooperatives.

The data for this study comes from two qualitative case studies of two housing cooperatives in Madison, Wisconsin: United Cooperative and Peter’s Cooperative¹. Located in the downtown area, the two cooperatives face the consequences of rapid urban change. Construction of high-rise luxury apartment buildings and rising rent have led to displacement and exclusion. Housing cooperatives offer an alternative for low and medium income residents, with rents being significantly lower than the Madison average². Part of their

¹ The names of the cooperative, the residents, and other references in this thesis are anonymized to ensure their privacy and protect their identity.

² The highest rents in the cooperatives are \$500 (\$355 respectively) per month. According to ApartmentList.com’s database (available at: <https://www.apartmentlist.com/rentonomics/april-2015-rental-price-monitor/>; checked on 5/10/16), the average rent for the entire city of Madison is \$790 in April 2015. The average in the downtown is likely to be even higher.

mission statement is to provide “low-cost, not-for-profit cooperative housing for very low to moderate-income people and to be inclusive of underrepresented and marginalized groups of the community”. Both houses are group equity cooperatives, i.e. every new resident pays a few to become a member of a larger umbrella organization of several cooperatives who owns the houses and the land. A board of directors with representatives from each house makes decisions regarding the entire organization, while house members make decisions regarding the individual houses. In addition to contributing financially, every resident has one or several work jobs, which are necessary to run the house: cook, treasurer, maintenance person, etc. Moreover, there are several connections between housing cooperatives and social movements. Both are prefigurative organizations in the sense that they attempt to be more democratic than the society at large. Housing cooperatives can be seen as part of the larger cooperative movement (Birchall 1997), as well as of the housing movement (Forest 1914)³. Also, many of United and Peter’s Cooperatives members are activists in other movements.

3. DATA AND RESEARCH DESIGN

While the central research question is fairly straightforward, my approach to answering it is not. During my stay in Madison in spring 2015, I observed many cooperative meetings. At the same time I was exposed to Ethnomethodology (EM) and Conversation analysis (CA), two approaches which focus on the very details of social interaction. Thus, I became increasingly interested not only in the democratic quality of cooperative meetings, but also in the micro-sociological processes of cooperative meetings. In other words, my aim is to study what the political practices are which coopers use to make democracy work. I suggest that this approach is particularly useful to understand the details of meeting interaction and to find out whether they qualify as deliberative democracy or not.

There are two data sets for this study. On the one hand, the audio and video recordings of two meetings in each cooperative represent the core data set. On the other hand, I rely on some contextual data. In the case of United Coop, I audio recorded two house meetings during my stay in Madison in spring 2015. The duration of these audio data is 223 minutes. Additionally, I took ethnographic field notes to capture the seating plan, as well as some non-verbal and situational aspects of these meetings. Additionally, there are the cooperatives’ own meetings notes, the house policy manual, and a couple of emails which helped understanding the context of these meetings. The data from Peter’s Coop come from two meetings in spring 2016 and were recorded by one of the residents. The first of two meetings was video recorded which helped identifying speakers and getting a grasp of the material aspects of the meeting. The total duration of recordings is 122 minutes. Also, the residents made the respective meeting notes available to me.

Decisions represent the unit of analysis for this study and therefore the main level of analysis. There are 18 decisions from United Cooperative and 5 from Peter’s Cooperative. In organizational sociology, a decision is broadly understood as a “commitment to future action” (Huisman 2001:70). Thus, a decision refers to the moment where it becomes clear to the participants that they commit to performing an action in the future. Conversely, the participants can also decide *not* to take action – an aspect which is reflected in the data, but largely neglected in the literature. Obviously, in this study, I focus on collective decisions as opposed to individual decisions. Table 1 in the appendix provides an overview of the decisions in the data.

³ Lance, one of United Cooperative’s residents addresses his fellow coopers in one meeting: “Whether you realize it or not, you’re part of a social movement”.

It might sound trivial, but much of the actual empirical analysis actually consisted in repeated listening of the audio data (and watching the video of course). Organizing the data according to the different levels of analysis represented the first step of the empirical inquiry. Second, through repeated listening, I traced the interactions and communicative practices which lead to each decision. Third, I addressed the question of deliberative legitimacy for each unit of analysis. This entailed checking individual utterances, sequences, and the overall interaction for the four dimensions of the concept: power, symmetry, cooperation, and participation. In order to facilitate the overall analysis of these categories, I employed the four-point coding scheme outlined in section 4. Later, I aggregated the scores for all units of analysis of each case.

4. DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY: CONCEPT AND MEASUREMENT

Gutmann and Thompson (2004:7) define deliberative democracy as “a form of government in which free and equal citizens (and their representatives), justify decisions in a process in which they give one another reasons that are mutually acceptable and generally accessible, with the aim of reaching conclusions that are binding in the present on all citizens but open to challenge in the future”. This concept of deliberative democracy involves three different criteria: prior disagreement, decision-orientedness, and deliberative legitimacy. First, deliberative theory is mostly concerned how to achieve a decision in a situation where preferences diverge. Thus, disagreement constitutes a necessary prerequisite for real deliberation, as Thompson (2008:502) summarizes: If people agree from the outset, there is no need for deliberation. Second, participants must seek a collective decision. Decision-making plays such a pivotal role, because politics, according to most definitions, is ultimately about achieving a decision which is collectively binding for all those affected by it. If deliberation is to be understood as a form of legislative politics, only those forms of political talk will count as deliberation when they are aimed at a collective decision. Disagreement and decision-orientedness refer to the starting and end points of decision-making. The third criterion states that the process which leads from the former to the latter must be legitimate. There are four requirements which a decision-making process needs to fulfill to count as deliberation: soft power, symmetry, accommodation, and equal participation.

Soft power refers to the practice of reasons-giving, which is at the heart of the deliberative democracy. Most importantly, this means that what has been called *hard* forms of power must be absent in deliberation. According to Haug and Teune (2008:13–14), hard power describes references to social dependencies – speakers use resources from the *outside* of the communicative interaction. These can be economic, relational, or symbolic. Thus, speakers may only use the “forceless force of the better argument” (Habermas 1975:108) to convince their peers. What constitutes a valid argument? First, the argument must be *relevant* to the matter at hand, i.e. it must refer to the subject which is discussed. Second, it must be what Thompson (2008:504) calls “public-spirited”: The reasons participants give for a given proposal must refer to the common good of the group, not to the promotion of self-interest.

The second requirement of *symmetry* does not imply a quantitative distribution of speaking turns or the equality of status, but the “relation which speakers constitute between themselves and others as they speak” (Haug and Teune 2008:14). Hence, when deliberating, participants have to show respect to others. This means they have to acknowledge each other as peers, as equal in status.

Accommodation refers to the participants’ behavior in the decision-making process and is the opposite of competition. Indicators for competition are “turns, in which speakers give no indication that they are ready to change their position, e.g. when they seem quite convinced that there is little to make them change their mind or to compromise” (Haug and Teune 2008:24). On the other side, accommodation is characterized by *active* efforts to find a

common solution for a problem and to take a decision that satisfies all those affected by it. This includes references to commonalities as well as the will to bridge differences (Haug and Teune 2008:12).

Equal participation is the most complex requirement. A useful point of departure is Fraser's (2007:20) distinction between *inclusiveness* of and *participatory parity*. *Inclusiveness* refers to the question whether all those affected by a decision are included in the decision-making process. This is a basic requirement which must be fulfilled before the analysis considers the participatory parity of the decision-making process. Regarding *participatory parity*, it is important to note that, generally, there are two ways of understanding equal participation (cf. Haug, Rucht and Teune 2015:39–40): The first view states that it is sufficient if participants have equal *chances* to speak and no one is blocked from the process to speak of equal participation (Fraser 2007:20). If some participants speak very little or do not speak at all, this must be understood as silent agreement or indifference. The second view holds that *actual* participation, i.e. the distribution of turns and speaking time, is what matters. Only if these are more or less evenly distributed, one can speak of *equal* participation. I suggest using a combined measure of both views, regarding the second as a higher level of equality in participation.

With regards to measurement, it is important not to conceptualize these dimensions as dichotomous variables (e.g. 0 no equal respect, 1 equal respect), but to distinguish several levels of them. This is necessary to assess the democratic quality of democratic decision-making, i.e. to differentiate between interactions which simply fulfill the minimal criteria for deliberation and those which come closer to the normative ideal of deliberation. Hence, I propose, very similar to Haug and Teune (2008:23), a four-point scale, ranging from 0 = no deliberation to 3 = perfect deliberation. It is important to note that this is an ordinal scale: The numerical values represent mere denominations to contrast to the alphabetical denominations for the different dimensions of deliberative legitimacy – I do not intend to use these values for a quantitative analysis. The subsequent section presents the results of the empirical analysis.

5. DEMOCRATIC QUALITY OF DECISION-MAKING

5.1 Power and reasoning

Mutual justification of proposals and decisions is at the heart of deliberative legitimacy. In both cases under scrutiny, there are three types of reasons which cooperators regularly give to justify their proposals and assessments: Based on general norms, on group experience, and on personal experience. Of course, these three types of reasons are not always clearly distinguishable. One utterance may contain elements of two or even all three kinds. Often, speakers give an example from group or individual experience for their justification which is based on general norms. A possible explanation for this could be that combinations of reasons might be more powerful than singular ones. All three types are forms of soft power. While the first two types are public-spirited (Thompson 2008), referring to an abstract shared norm or the common good of the group, the latter includes some form of testimony (Sanders 1997) or narrative (Young 1996). The overall values from the coding analysis are 1.0 for United Cooperative and 1.2 for Peter's Cooperative. There is only one item (303) where the deliberation is particularly elaborated (in the number and diversity of reasons), which I code as 2.

While instances of what Haug calls *hard* power, i.e. arguments based on social or economic resources are reflected in other parts of the data⁴, they were absent in decision-making

⁴ For instance, Johnson, one of the members of United Coop, threatens members to fine them if they do not do their required maintenance work – a resource he possesses as house maintenance coordinator.

processes. Although cooperatives are expected to be ideal cases, this complete absence is still surprising though. One explanation might be that coopers possess relatively scant resources in the decision-making processes

5.2 Symmetry

In their self-perception, as well as in their policy books, coopers form a community of equal peers. The analysis of the audio and video recording shows that this does not represent an idealized and distorted image, but a rather adequate description of reality. Overall, coopers actually treat themselves as equal.

There are no cases where speakers explicitly treat other participants as inferior in knowledge, status, or abilities. There are some apparent asymmetries in knowledge, but coopers make an effort to minimize them through discussion. For instance, in unit 303, the members of Peter's Coop spend almost 20 minutes interrogating Casey and Aaron about the financial specifics for lowering the food share every members pays. Casey and Aaron specifically allow questions, ask for concerns, and give information. Similar examples are present in the data from United Coop as well. This shows that coopers emphasize transparency and seek to reduce inequalities of knowledge.

The large majority of units is fairly neutral. 17 of the total 23 units of analysis are coded 1 (overall values are 1.1 for United Coop and 1.6 for Peter's Coop). This means that there are neither positive nor negative statements about proposals or counterarguments. Notable exceptions are units 106 and 108, where speakers explicitly value counterarguments. What is more frequent are positive statements towards the coop as a group. Generally, speakers refer to what others say, which displays that they are listening to each other. Altogether, these manifest signs of equal respect outweigh the disrespectful utterances.

5.3 Accommodation or competition?

Accommodating communication is particularly important when disagreement arises over a certain issue. Overall, the empirical findings suggest that they deal relatively well and favor accommodation over competition. On the one hand, there is no evidence of competition among coopers in the data. There is no sign of speakers being unwilling to change their preferences or revise their proposals. On the other hand, participants frequently make efforts to overcome controversies and jointly solve their problems. There are several indicators for this in the data.

First, a common accommodating practice is making what I call a *mediating proposal*, which speakers often use to overcome small controversies (in units 103, 106, 110, 207, 302). What is remarkable is that mediating proposal follow either one or two turns after the counterproposal or even right after it. Thus, from a Conversation analytical point of view, this represents a form of "nextness" (Stivers 2013). As a result, in most cases, controversies are solved immediately when they arise.

A slightly different practice is what I call making a *compromising proposal*. In this case, a controversy has already been established, i.e. there has been an interchange of arguments and the diverging positions of speakers are clear to them. In this case, one of the involved speakers can transform their own proposal or the counterproposal in a way that fits both parties. For instance, in unit 303, Victoria takes a skeptical stance towards lowering the food share by \$20. After some debate, she agrees not to block the proposal if it includes to revisit the budget in the future.

Both mediating and compromising proposals are indicators of what Bächtiger et al. (2007:90) call "constructive politics". Coopers do not insist on their own proposal but attempt to understand other speakers' perspective and find common ground. The overall coding scores

(1.33 for United Coop and 1.8 in Peter's Coop) support this finding. Thus, their decision-making is rather cooperative than competitive. In this regard, both United and Peter's Cooperative are worth their names.

5.4 Participation

While the first three dimensions of the analytical concept refer to characteristics of the discursive practices speakers employ to make decisions, the fourth dimension refers to how speakers participate in the decision-making processes. The analytical framework subdivides participation in two aspects: Inclusiveness and participatory parity.

Inclusiveness in cooperatives is relatively straightforward, as membership is fixed. Thus, decision-makers and decision-takers are basically identical. There is some variation regarding meeting attendance though, but it does not impair the democratic quality. Cooperatives also fulfill the minimal threshold for participatory parity. In both cases, every member has the equal right and chance to speak in meetings, and no individual or groups dominate the decision-making process. However, as expected, I find that participation varies in several ways. First, there is large variation in participation *across* units of analysis. On the one hand, there are items where only one participant talks. On the other hand, even in the larger United Coop, there are items (108) where every meeting attendee speaks. This demonstrates that, basically, broad participation is possible. Moreover, overall participation varies significantly among members – in both cases and in all meetings. One person in United Cooperative does not talk at all⁵, some only in one meeting but not the other (Toni), and some contribute only very little turns (Marc, Andrew). What becomes clear is that, in general, facilitators and proposers talk a lot. Proposers mostly elaborate on their reasons for bringing a proposal to the meeting and answer questions of other participants.

It is more surprising that facilitators often go well beyond their role as a 'switching station': They not only organize the turn-taking, but they also summarize other speakers' talk and engage in deliberation. In this regard, unit 303 is of particular interest. In this unit, Casey does not only facilitate, but he also takes notes, makes a proposal and participates in the exchange of reasons at the same time. I do not suggest this is Casey's individual failure at this point, because there is no sign he uses facilitation in his favor⁶. Rather, the data suggests that coopers seem to struggle with the facilitator role more in general. This represents a problem for equal participation as facilitators have privileged access to speech and possess significant control over turn-taking.

In addition to both cooperatives' problems with facilitation, I find that in United Cooperative, officers participate a lot more. Officers are residents who hold work jobs with a lot of responsibility, i.e. the two treasurers. They put most items on the agenda, they make the majority of proposals, and they generally talk more than non-officers. Peter's Coop does not have this problems, as they have a different point-based work job system. As a result, participation appears to depend less on speakers' roles in the cooperative.

These are the two most important problems with participatory parity in cases under scrutiny. Nevertheless, the decision-making processes are far away from being dominated by a few individuals or certain groups. Overall coding scores (1.22 for United Coop and 1.6 for Peter's Coop) support this claim. There are several interaction where a majority of the attendees takes part in the discussion. In sum, participation fulfills more than the minimal conceptual criterion – but it is not perfectly equal either.

⁵ According to the house's meeting notes, Kenny attended meeting A2. He never speaks though, neither at check-ins or check-outs. One explanation might be that he came in late and left the meeting early.

⁶ Also, during check-outs, Casey states that he did not mean to "take over the meeting".

6. CONCLUSION

Decision-making in cooperatives is a complex social process. Still, through applying Conversation analytical tools, I have been able to identify some central features of cooperative decision-making.

The central finding is that, overall, the democratic quality of decision-making processes is relatively high. Hard power is fully absent in these processes. Participants employ a broad range of reasons which can be described as arguments based on general norms, personal experience, or group experience. When they deliberate, coopers treat their peers, as well as their proposals and reasons respectfully. Accommodation is relatively frequent in cooperative decision-making. Speakers do not insist on their own position, but are willing to compromise and reach consensus. Participation varies significantly, but there is no evidence that any individuals or groups dominate the decision-making process. Table 2 provides an overview of the aggregate scores for both cases.

Table 2: Aggregate scores for deliberative legitimacy

	United Coop	Peter's Coop
Power	1.0	1.2
Symmetry	1.1	1.6
Accommodation	1.33	1.8
Participation	1.22	1.6

Source: Author

However, these findings are hardly generalizable, as the number of cases and the amount of data are small. Still, I conclude that the two cooperatives under scrutiny are desirable and viable forms of democratic housing. As such, they represent real utopias in the face of a precarious capitalist housing market.

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APPENDIX

Table 1: decisions in United Cooperative (A1; A2) and Peter's Cooperative (B1; B2).

Meeting A1

ID	Time	Decision	Cont
101	6:30 – 11:30	Reinvest in Cooperative Development Fund; Sense vote is inconclusive	Yes
102	17:30 – 18:50	Excuse Jill from house meetings in March; unanimous vote	no
103	19:00 - 26:16	Buy kitchen appliances; unanimous vote but discussion on what to buy and the budget:	Yes
104	26:15 – 27:00	Reimburse Bernie for buying a rice cooker; unanimous vote	No
105	27:08 – 28:30	Policy change: Every members has to attend 2 meetings per month	No
106	52:30 – 1:00:55	Controversy on the work job system; Nigel wants to bring back the old system; the decision is to make adjustments to the new system and not to back to the old system; no vote is taken though	Yes
107	1:01:00 – 1:04:30	Make a 'time capsule'; Zach wants to move to vote, but it's just a discussion item; confusing about whether to vote or not, in the end no vote is taken although there appears to be consensus to do it	No
108	1:04:30 – 1:17:40	Nigel proposes to get business cards for the house; controversy on whether the house really needs them; 6:3:5 vote for making a flyer; Nigel wants to do the business cards on his own and wants to know if people are ok. Turns a collective decision into an individual decision;	yes
109	1:17:40 – 1:46:30	Discussion on membership meeting questions; Lisa immediately applies some suggestions in the beginning, but there is some discussion on the discrimination questions; later the house votes on the changes, but not all of them. Lisa takes input, changes the question and later proposes the changed questions again; in the end the house unanimously accepts all the changes; pretty messy item	No
110	1:46:30 – 1:59:00	Item on having Zach's and Nigel's friends cook a dinner for the house; little controversy (Zach;) on funding from party money and on whether Paula has to help; almost unanimous vote (one abstention)	Yes

Meeting A2

ID	Time	Decision	<u>Cont</u>
201	19:10 – 19:55	A cooper from Chicago wants to stay over. No vote taken, everybody is “cool” with it	No
106f	22:40 – 23:30	Lisa reports on the sheets for the work job committee	No
202	26:26 – 28:00	Make a house video, buy a camcorder, at this point it's only a (collective) idea	No
203	32:45 – 35:45	Throw out the furniture in the hallway	Yes
204	38:10 – 43:35	How the membership process works, how to vote on membership; unanimous vote	Yes
203f	1:06:00 – 1:11:50	Make a house video; make a promotional video; Jill makes sign-up sheets; form a committee (Betty), no vote is taken	No
205	1:12:00 - 1:27:50	Start implementing a safe space policy; Lisa having a meeting; unanimous vote	Yes
206	1:30:00 – 1:32:20	Keep house bike deposits in policy – although no one uses them at this point – it is basically a decision not to take action, no vote is taken.	No
207	1:32:20 - 1:36:00	Make a barbecue before Spring Break; \$75 budget out of party money; unanimous vote	yes
208	1:36:05 – 1:39:00	Reimburse Zach’s and Nigel’s friends for the dinner they cooked for the house; \$120 from party money; unanimous	No
203f	1:39:00 – 1:40:00	Sense vote on the video thing; seems pretty positive;	No

Meeting B1

ID	Time	Decision	<u>Cont</u>
301	30:50 – 40:15	Establish education officer as a 2-point work job	No
302	39:35 – 40:10	Elect Barry as education officer	No
304	40:30 – 1:10:00	Lower the food share every member has to pay by \$20 per month	Yes
304	57:15 – 1:13:10	Contact local farmers for seconds/thirds & unmarketable food	No

Meeting B2

ID	Time	Decision	<u>Cont</u>
401	16:45 -28:40	<u>Memberships</u> : Accept Elena for fall	No

Source: Author