

# Guidelines and Criteria for the Submission of Short Papers at EGOS Colloquia

Short papers should focus on the main ideas of the later full paper, i.e. they should explain the purpose of the paper, theoretical background, the research gap that is addressed, the approach taken, the methods of analysis (in empirical papers), main findings and contributions. In addition, it is useful to indicate clearly how the paper links with the sub-theme and the overall theme of the Colloquium, although not all papers need to focus on the overall theme. Creativity, innovativeness, theoretical grounding and critical thinking are typical characteristics of EGOS papers.

Your short paper should comprise **around 3,000 words** (inc. references, appendices, and other material).

**Submission deadline** for short papers for the (main) 42<sup>nd</sup> EGOS online Colloquium hosted by the University of Bergamo, July 9–11, 2026:

- Tuesday, January 7, 2026, **12:00 CET**

The deadline is unchangeable and therefore **extensions can not be granted!**

## Formatting your short paper

Your short paper should comprise **around 3,000 words**, according to the following format:

- Font: 12 pt, Arial or Times New Roman
- Margin left/right: 2.5 cm
- Line spacing: 1.5
- Use APA style for your citations

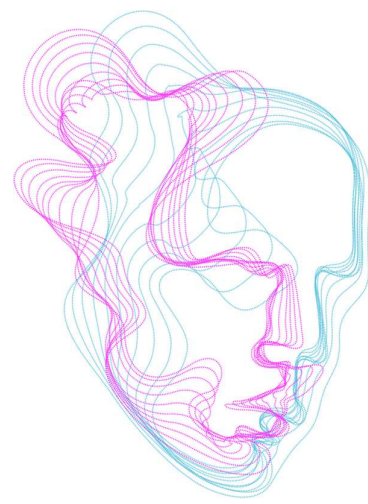
**Do not use capital letters** in your paper's title, unless they are proper nouns (e.g. "London", "Thomas"), quoted titles, or if it is the first word after a colon or hyphen. For example: *Mark Twain's "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn": Summary, analyses, and quotations*. Do not write your title in ALL CAPS.

Please **state your name** (and that of your co-author/s, if applicable) + affiliation + email at the top of your short paper (because no [single/double blind] peer review).

Short papers should be submitted as a **pdf or docx file**. Please do not upload txt files!



# Sub-theme 04: [SWG] Social Movements, Alternative Organizations, and the Democratization of the Economy



42<sup>nd</sup> EGOS  
Colloquium  
University of Bergamo  
July 9–11, 2026  
**EGOS**

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## Call for Papers

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The study of democratic organizing in social movements is a longstanding and vibrant research field (Della Porta & Rucht, 2013). Studies have addressed the participatory processes in social movement organizations, how they are used by activists, and the conflicts, dilemmas, and tensions which can result from democratic decision-making in movements (Laamanen et al., 2019; Maeckelbergh, 2011; Reinecke, 2018). In this sub-theme, we want to expand on such classic studies through a focus on the roles movements and alternative organizations play in enacting and strengthening democracy in the economy and in society at large.

In recent years, issues of economic democracy (Cumbers, 2020) have been revived by a series of social movements (and their offspring), in particular by alternative organizations that prefigure horizontal and more participatory economic structures. In their prefigurative organizing (Schiller-Merkens, 2024), these organizations often draw on and innovate from classic forms of democratic organizing such as consumer cooperatives or workplace democracy. At the same time, new fields and forms of democratic organizing emerge, for



instance in food and agriculture or in the digital data economy.

For this sub-theme, we invite both theoretical and empirical contributions that study initiatives of democratizing the economy “from below” through the angles of social movement theory, alternative organizations and prefigurative organizing. Submissions to our sub-theme could for instance tackle the following list of indicative, but not exhaustive, topics and questions:

- The democratization of the economy is often pursued through transformative politics from below by alternative organizations that prefigure inclusive, horizontal and participatory forms of organizing and thereby attempt to change the economy at large (Chertkovskaya et al., 2023; Schiller-Merkens, 2024; Shanahan, 2024; Zanoni et al., 2017). For example, in the arena of food and agriculture, prefigurative initiatives such as food policy councils, community supported agriculture, consumer-owned retailers or food co-ops democratize this sector by bringing about inclusive and participatory forms of organizing food production, distribution, and consumption (Bornemann & Weiland, 2019; Goodman et al., 2012; Motta, 2021). Interesting questions both for the food and other sectors include: What struggles do organizations like these face in democratizing their own work processes and how do they address them? How do they contribute to democratizing the broader economy and which conflicts do arise?
- Furthermore, organizations that prefigure an alternative economy are often part of broader social movements. What is the relationship between both, or between prefigurative and contentious politics? Which role do social movements play in processes of the social transformation of the economy?
- Both other businesses and state actors can be important allies in the social transformation of the economy, able to foster or impede its further democratization. What is the relationship of prefigurative movements and organizations to politicians, public agencies and municipalities in processes of democratizing the economy? What are the relationships between institutional politics and prefigurative politics, and how are these organized? How are more mainstream businesses and organizations in the economy involved in or reacting to the collective democratization efforts of prefigurative initiatives?
- Over recent years there have been calls to strengthen worker participation in decision-making practices in firms (Battilana et al., 2022). Workplace democracy in worker-owned or worker-managed businesses as well as worker co-determination in corporatist settings are ways to strengthen economic democracy. Workplace democracy has been associated with positive outcomes for workers and can also constitute a potential avenue towards more sustainable forms of production (Webb & Cheney, 2014). At the



same time, research on alternative organizations has also shown that they often face difficulties in market environments, that they struggle with their internal democratic processes, and that democratic values may erode over time (Cheney et al., 2014; Laamanen et al., 2019; Reedy et al., 2016). We invite (comparative) studies on organizing democracy at work and its outcomes, case studies on worker autonomy movements, as well as research on workplace democracies that empirically and critically addresses their dynamics over time.

- Processes of economic democratization are also driven by consumers. We welcome studies on consumer democracy, that is, consumer participation that goes beyond individual forms of activism (such as political consumerism) by involving consumers in collective participatory projects that seek to democratize both consumption and production (e.g., co-ops, sustainable community movement organizations) (Brown, 1985; Forno & Graziano, 2014). What different types of organizations exist in this realm, how is consumer participation organized within them, and what kinds of consumer participation do they enable? How does consumer participation change economic practices of such cooperative retailers? Do consumer cooperatives transform their environment and if so, how?
- Economic democracy in the digital realm is an increasingly important topic in an economy characterized by platform power. Platform cooperatives (Scholz, 2016) have been advocated as an alternative to this. What forms of democratic participation do platform cooperatives enable? Under which conditions can platform cooperatives constitute viable alternatives to conventional platforms? Furthermore, democracy in the digital economy is also related to issues of open data or data democracy. One core feature of digital capitalism is widespread data collection and use by digital companies. Calls for data democratization come from social movement actors seeking to regulate, collectivize and democratize the collection, access and use of digital data through a “contentious politics of data” (Beraldo & Milan, 2019). How do social movements attempt to bring democracy into the setting of the digital data economy? What alternative forms of collectively and democratically controlled data management exist?
- While the majority of research has focused on left-wing alternatives and movements, right-wing, populist activism is increasingly putting our democracies at risk. Which alternative organizations and social movements mobilize against democracy particularly in the economy, through which tactics and networks, and with which effects? How do, if so, economic organizations (mainstream businesses, corporations, alternative organizations) and social movements in the economy mobilize against right-wing activism and with which effects on the democratization of the economy?



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