Worker Co-operatives and Spaces of Possibility: An investigation of subject space at Collective Copies

Janelle Cornwell, University of Massachusetts Department of Geosciences
…concepts of space and time and the practices associated with them are far from socially neutral in human affairs.

David Harvey
“Production of space”

Enclosures represent a remarkable historical creation of absolute space.

Neil Smith
“Production of space”

Enclosures represent a remarkable historical creation of absolute space.

As capital extends its sway, the entire globe is partitioned into legally distinct parcels divided by great white fences, real or imaginary.

Neil Smith
“Production of space”

As capital extends its sway, the entire globe...
Theoretical Space

Capitalocentrism

Diverse Economy
This is the economy most people recognize.
This is the economy most people recognize.

This is a more inclusive view of the economy.

Waged labor for capitalist firms

barter

household labor

volunteer

gift

self employed

black market

worker cooperative
This is the economy most people recognize.

This is a more inclusive view of the economy.

- Waged labor for capitalist firms
- Barter
- Household labor
- Volunteer
- Gift
- Black market
- Self-employed
- Worker cooperative
If capitalism can be seen to produce capitalist space, how are non-capitalisms (re)producing non-capitalist space?
It was pretty primitive but we were able to prosper.

Stephen Roy, founding member of Collective Copies
Subject space
Spaces of possibility

Subject Space

Work space

Time

Growth

Governance
Space

Collective Copies compared to a local capitalist shop:

“...look at the floor layout, it is hyper stratified. The designers are physically above and away from the production workers... younger, less trained workforce, more skilled designer, sort of top down flow of work...”

Caleb Wetmore, collective member since 2000
“I get my way all the time here.”

Carol McCall, sole proprietor of Paradise Copies
(former member of Collective Copies)
“Today Randy had to pick up his kid; he left, went and picked up his kid. It’s like you do what you need to do. You live your life.”

Jen Gallant, collective member since 1996
Spaces of possibility

Subject Space

Work space

Governance:
Surplus and growth
“...we have control over that together.”

Adam Trott, collective member since 2004
Transformations

“In a philosophical way, it helped transform that idea into a concrete solution. Like when I go to work, it’s like I feel like I’m changing the world”

Randy Zucco, collective member since 1998
The Movement (Growing more spaces)

“We’re all worker cooperatives, we cooperate inside out businesses, maybe we can cooperate among our businesses...”

Adam Trott, collective member since 2004
Inter-co-op co-operation
Spaces of possibility

Subject Space

Movement of worker co-operatives
“It’s really just important to see that we can do this. There’s a myth you need a boss. There’s a myth you need management. There’s a myth you need the profit motive. ...these things are just myths. They’re proven wrong all the time and we can work together much better without them.”

Adam Trott, collective member since 2004.