

# Organizational structure of collectives. Case study: MYÖS Ry

Maria Glazunova



<b>Author(s)</b> Maria Glazunova	
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<p>The aim of this thesis was to make a research on collective ways of operating and flat organizational structure. Commissioner for this paper is non-profit collective/organization called MYÖS Ry. MYÖS is a Helsinki based DIY collective, party platform and co-care network for genre-fluid electronic music DJs, producers, organizers, party lovers and allies of currently underrepresented actors in the Helsinki club scene, and anyone in favour of a safer space to party in.</p> <p>MYÖS collective consists of 45 people in the main group and working group is around 20 people. In this work, the author looked deeper into collective's work, what was the current organizational structure and finding out things that have to be changed/implemented in the future. Need in this research appeared from past problems related to decision-making, not having a clear understanding about collective's structure and roles, communications and fair work load in organising events. The research herself has been a member of MYÖS collective since their first meeting back in March 2018.</p> <p>From this research, the author expected to find ways and tools on how to implement a better organisational model inside MYÖS Ry collective, grow empowerment inside the collective, develop a decision-making process which would involve each member's desire, needs and interests. As a result of this research, the author aims to find tools to establish better organisational structure for MYÖS Ry collective which would reflect on ability to develop the quality of different things such as: produced content, both old and new members' motivation and satisfaction, internal relations, external communications and all the components that relate to successful management. Qualitative research methods, such as semi-structured interview and observation, were implemented.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> Organizations, bachelor thesis, management	

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# 1 Introduction

Throughout the history of human kind people have always been gathering in groups to work together to achieve common goals, share knowledge and transit them from one generation to another. Nowadays, number of individuals form teams to achieve certain tasks together. This thesis will be concentrate around a group of people with shared ideas who came up together to form a collective. This collective aim to be operating based on the flat organizational management, also known as self-management.

«MYÖS» is a Helsinki based DIY (do-it-yourself) collective, party platform and co-care network for genre-fluid electronic music DJs, VJs, producers, organizers, party lovers and allies of currently underrepresented actors in the Helsinki club scene, and anyone in favour of a safer space to party in. It was formed in Spring 2018 by several people who were interested to organize musical events and bring the diversity of places to party in the local Helsinki's electronic scene. The need to form a collective like MYÖS came naturally due to the lack of female, non-binary and POC (people of color) representation in the local electronic music industry (specifically DJing) and event organization. At the beginning of its existence, there were some three to five people willing to arrange underground events consisting of different aspects:

- presenting under-represented artists of electronic music from Helsinki and Finland in overall
- presenting under-represented visual artists from Helsinki and Finland in overall
- creating wider representation among above stated professions
- encouraging people to perform and act nevertheless their gender, color and religion
- creating safer spaces to perform and party in (applying rules such as a fair pay for the artist's work and no harassment policies)

Eventually, the idea of creating events with the criteria mentioned above, drew attention of people from different professional and cultural backgrounds: visual artists, musicians, producers, office workers, students and occupations of all kind. In a period of about a month from the first meeting, the amount of people who were interested to build a collective raised to ten. At current moment of time MYÖS' main working group has twenty members from different fields of professions and areas of interests. Almost none of the participants had had previous experience of being in a collective, only few of them have. Regarding this matter, the question «How do we operate? » came across everyone's mind. Original concept of the inner arrangement of the collective was agreed at the early stage of its existence and it was thought to follow the flat organizational structure, which

does not support any hierarchical methods of running the group. They wanted to adopt this model where members would have «roles and responsibilities», but not official titles and hierarchical positions, nonetheless a huge number of the them.

Need in this research appears from past problems related to decision-making, not having a clear understanding about collective's structure and roles, communications and fair work load in organizing events. The aim of this study is to analyze MYÖS' operational ways and understand if decentralized organizational structure could be fully implemented in this collective. At the current moment (beginning of 2019) it seems that the idea of this concept has been tried to be implemented, but not very successfully. Firstly, different power dynamics have affected members' motivation of contributing to the collective and taken projects, unfair workload. Secondly, there have been several cases which lead to understanding of poor decision-making process and how it doesn't suit every member's desires and needs. Aims of this thesis are highly correlative between themselves:

- find out what are the struggles and challenges that MYÖS Ry members experience regarding inner processes
- how to establish better organizational structure for MYÖS Ry which would reflect on ability to develop the quality of different things such as: amount of taken projects, produced content, both old and new members' motivation and satisfaction, internal relations, external communications and all the components that relate to successful self-management

Over the past month, it has been understood that numerous amount of people from outside MYÖS Ry are interested to join the working group, but it has been decided that as long as inner structure is not established well, no new members will be taken. Knowing how to operate in healthy and collective ways would allow to take new members in and grow the quality of produced events/content.

This thesis is divided into five chapters: introduction, theoretical framework, research methods, results and discussion. The author talks about prior academic knowledge about flat organizations and collectives in the second chapter. Third chapter tells about qualitative method used in this research, as well as about research process and limitations. Results are presented in the fourth chapter, they are based on semi-structured questionnaire and discussed in the last chapter.

## 2 Flat organizations and empowerment, collectives

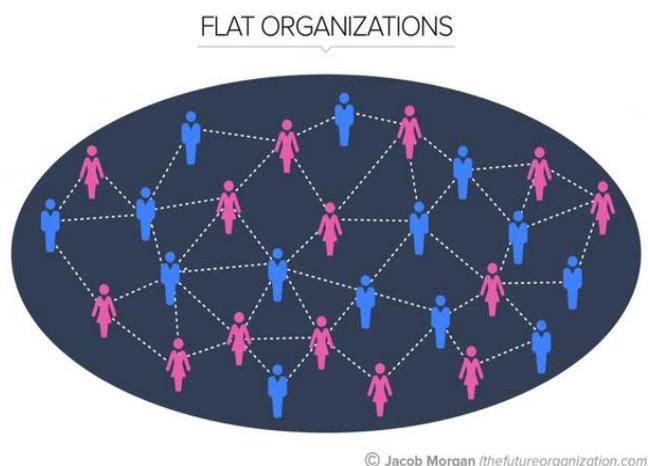
Second chapter of this thesis tells about academic knowledge in studies about organizations and collectives.

### 2.1 Flat organizational structure vs. The Hierarchy

For contrasting purposes, it is necessary to briefly describe the hierarchical organizational structure. It was initially designed “as a way to show a chain of command.” The “communication typically flows from the top to the bottom” in this structure, so people lower down in the hierarchy must appeal to their superiors for decision making. The structure and content of their work is usually created by the management, and the employees are expected to abide by it. The hierarchy is “reliable at maintaining the status quo” which no longer serves most companies due to the fast-acting nature of modern business and the growth of competition. Heavily contrasting with the flat organizational structure, “there is also no focus on the employee experience” in a hierarchy. (Morgan, 2015)

Business Dictionary defines a flat organizational structure as “an organizational structure in which most middle-management levels and their functions have been eliminated, thus bringing the top management in direct contact with the frontline salespeople, shop floor employees, and customers.” The inherent change in flattening an organization is the increased communication between all employees, regardless of their roles and responsibilities.

Figure 1. Flat organizations (forbes.com)



Instead of maintaining the norm, a flat organizational structure sets aside the ego of a hierarchical structure, so that the employees can focus on taking on “roles that help manifest their company’s purpose” (Laloux, 2014, 248).

Rather than presenting a set of orders from upper management or the CEO, flat organizations work harder to increase the exchange of ideas and feedback by everyone. Communication becomes like a webbed network where individual points in the web are more equal.

One concept about flat organizations that is sometimes misunderstood is, without managers, what happens to the executive tasks of an organization? “The tasks of management – setting direction and objectives, planning, directing, controlling, and evaluating – haven’t disappeared. They are simply no longer concentrated in dedicated management roles” (Laloux, 2014, 135). The people responsible for areas requiring a decision that affects several people still need to decide something, only now, consulting those people for further insights and ideas should be an essential part of the decision-making process. Laloux refers to this practice as an “advice process” that ensures that others in an organization feel like they are heard. It gives them confidence that their points of view will be considered when a decision affecting them is made.

However, as this research set out to explore, “enlightened leaders don’t automatically make for enlightened organizations, unless they also embrace structures, practices, and cultures that change how power is held, how people can show up, and how the organization’s purpose can express itself” (Laloux, 2014, 257). A flat organization is more than removing the organizational chart. Self-management concepts must be clearly understood by all organization members.

## **2.2 Empowerment in the workplaces**

“Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorizing an individual to think, behave, take action, and control work and decision-making about their job in autonomous, independent, self-directed ways” (Heathfield, 2018). Empowered employees in a flat organization feel like they have a feeling of control and influence in decision making in their areas of responsibility and over their tasks.

Empowered staff are motivated. They ordinarily have a sense of commitment to the company and what it is trying to accomplish, its purpose. Empowering people in a flat organization requires a radical change in communications. “Listening is no longer limited

to gathering information so as to better convince, fix, or dismiss. We can create a shared safe space from judgement, where our deep listening helps other to find their voice and their truth, just as they help us to find ours” (Laloux, 2014, 49). The result of these kinds of practices is that employees feel like they have a voice in matters that concern them. With a voice, it is a common result that employees will also feel empowered, which will result in more commitment to the purpose of the company and their work. This is a positive cycle.

According to Simon Sinek, appealing to why we do things creates cohesion and loyalty, which can be a powerful tool for creating commitment to the company purpose. The Why of one’s decision making incites emotion and is controlled by the limbic brain. The limbic system is a part of the brain which controls feelings, behaviors and thus all decision making. When appealing to why one acts instead of what they do, the communicated message goes directly to the limbic brain, which allows the person to feel more connected, and consequently, motivated. (Sinek, 2009, 11:16) Providing employees a voice creates a connection to the Why and affects behavior, which in turn, can help shift mindset.

### **2.3 Definition of a collective**

According to “Build those collectives” zine, a collective is a group of individuals, ranging from between two and twenty (and sometimes larger), who share an interest or political outlook, and are working together on a long-term basis. These are groups of people between whom there is not necessarily a deep level of trust, but it can develop over time. It’s be important to note that «organizations» is a loose term that can be used to describe a collective. (Inza Moose, 2003, 1) The uniqueness of the collectives lies in the fact that the power is divided equally among all participants and the voice of each is important and taken into account in decision-making, which in turn is absent in other hierarchical organizations. As Brian Dominic states:

«When a group of people comes face to face to organize in their own interest, and not in purported interest of others, and to take actions which do not impose upon others, they are acting collectively. A collective is a social organization in which all actors are on even ground, in which all participate equitably, and in which all members are seen as vital elements of group unity and successful function. A collective is an organic unit. It is not a collection of individuals who see their interest as more important than those of the other members. Collectives serve their members by including them all. When you are a member of a well-functioning collective, you know that your interests are the interests of the collective. It is not something which is outside of you; it is an entity of

which you are an integral and valued part. Your collective is yours. Collective members are autonomous managers which run their own lives. »

Collective organizations can be used to achieve many goals and Brian Dominic (What is a collective? 2003, 10) has formed 4 basic categories of collective institutions. Each type of a collective, in adapting to its circumstances, will choose to organize in a manner slightly different from those serving other purposes. But, due to individualized nature of collective groups, even those within a certain category will be organized differently than others of their kind-by definition, there's no standard. (Inza Moose, 2003,10)

The first sort of collective, agreeing to Brian Dominic, is the alternative institution (AI). These are groups whose reason is to supply elective social space or administrations. Cases can be everything from an autonomous destitute shield to a «free school». These are anarchic spaces where or by which individuals can involvement a noteworthy degree of independence and freedom to develop and create themselves with the assistance of assets around them. The essential reason of the AI is to form and keep up holes in society which are generally free from onerous forces, within which people can create themselves free from specialist and constraint. All collectives, as a establishment, got to be AI, in spite of the fact that numerous have other purposes on their motivation. (Inza Moose, 2003,10)

Another type are counter-institutions or XLs. These are dissident bunches which exist to restrict oppression. Everything from dissent bunches to coordinate activity collectives goes beneath category of counter-institutions. Still, most XLs are not collectives, but or maybe run progressively. Each such gather, from the community «coalition» to the national liberation army sees its part in overwhelmingly objective terms, not recognizing that the subjective advancement of the activists themselves is as critical as acting for outside alter. "For those who want more out of revolution than objective change, the collective is a much more fulfilling choice of XL structure". (Inza Moose, 2003,10)

A third frame of organization which can be collectively organized is the economic institution. At whatever point a bunch is centered on the generation and/or arrangement of fabric merchandise, it is economical in nature. Financial collectives are exceptionally troublesome to function basically since the nature of the mass advertise negates them at each turn. We bargain with national and world economies which are entirely authoritarian and progressive, and there's no simple elude from them. So, financial weights which are exceptionally manipulative and totally genuine frequently play destruction on how financial collective-especially one with radical social standards can work. All things considered, there are endless cases of effectively working financial collectives wherein specialists are

paid equitably (based on exertion, not position or quantitative commitment) and given full cooperation within the choice that influence them. “In a non-market, socialist economy, collectives would be the ideal units of small scale economic organization, with democratic workers’ and consumers’ councils playing the role that market determinants carry out today.” (Inza Moose, 2003,10)

As the last one, there are living institutions, such as families, homes, and even entire communities. All of these common organizations can be designed and run collectively. The standards of independence, solidarity and cooperation can be connected to our living circumstances, be they a communal family or an purposefulness lodging community, fair as they can be connected to other sorts of educate. The living institution is basically an alternative institution (AI) in which we are completely developed, since it is our most fundamental social course of action, the one in which we really live. “By overlooking what we come domestic to, be it after work or school or play or activism, we neglect a tremendous portion of our lives which influences us in ways we regularly don’t realize.” (Inza Moose, 2003,10)

Since collectives are focused, at least in parts, toward fostering the subjective development of their members, they need to be focused on those members. Based on this, all members of the collective should be familiar with each other to some degree. Collective members should have some idea about each other, over time to learn a little about their background and privileges in society. It is not necessary that the collective is a group of best friends, but another important factor is that it should be small enough for all participants to get to know each other better. (Inza Moose, 2003,11)

Since the work of the team requires the full participation of each member, they are limited in size. During meetings, there should be a safe environment for expressing ideas, the voice of each member should be considered in decision-making processes. If this balance is absent and there appears toxic dynamic in meetings, the personal focus of the collective will be lost. Most often in collectives there are from three to fifteen participants, but there are always exceptions. (Inza Moose, 2003, 11)

Doing work within a collective can be complicated and tricky. This usually happens because each member might have different idea on vision and mission of the collective, their own beliefs and truth, which might contradict with other members’ views. Below the Federation of Revolutionary Anarchist Collectives (FRAO) offers suggestions about how to «do» the inner organizational structure of collectives.

## 2.5 Basic Process

Decision-making process and organizational structure of the collective always depend on how collective members want to construct it. In overall, all collective's participants should have equal "weight" of the voice while making decisions, as well as power over all decisions and tasks that the collective makes. Consensus is usually, but not always, is a way to proceed with decision-making. Below there are several guidelines for it:

- Any decision that the collective makes should be as close to unanimous as possible. In order to do this, whatever proposals are made should be acceptable to all the members.
- Take the time to discuss and debate proposals so that they meet with the approval of all the members. Life concerns and disagreements. Find ways to resolve these differences.
- Be generous and don't be afraid to compromise on minor points.
- Put yourself in other member's shoes and try to understand why they would be against the particular action, event or project. (Inza Moose, 2003, 4)

## 2.6 Structure: Formal vs Informal

According to Jo Freeman, for everyone, so that anyone has the chance to be involved in this group and take part in its work, the organizational structure must be explicit, not implicit. The guidelines for decision-making must not be closed, but accessible to anyone. This can only happen if those guidelines are formalized. This does not mean, in fact, that formalizing the structure of the group will demolish the informal structure. But this does not give the informal structure dominant control and provides some ways to attack it if the people involved are not at least responsible for the needs of the group as a whole. "Structurelessness" is organizationally impossible. It is not possible to decide whether to own a structured or structureless group, only whether or not to have a formally structured one. "Unstructured will refer to those groups which have not been deliberately structured in a particular manner. Structured will refer to those which have. A structured group always has formal structure, and may also have an informal, or covert, structure. It is this informal structure, particularly in unstructured groups, which forms the basis for elites". (Jo Freeman, 1971, 3)

Typically, small collectives tend to have informal structures, depending on the cohesion of the members. In this case, consensus decision-making will be enough. But sometimes

collectives grow so that they need more formal structures in order to work perform work well. "Do not hesitate to accept the changing nature of the collective (as well as its growth) and the need for more formal structural changes to reflect this. Is there a need for a Coordinating or organizing committee? Working groups dedicated to specific tasks? We have no doubt that, independently of what design is to be determined, there are ways for all conclusions to be accountable and ultimately agree to be the whole group, not just a small cadre of intense members who sit in subgroups". (Inza Moose, 2003, 5)

Structures should not be seen as fixed and immutable. They should be flexible and responsive to the needs of the group and individual members. The introduction, use, modification, and discarding of explicit structures should be under the control of the group. According to John Englart, democratic structuring within a collective could include any or all of the following basic structures:

- Defined decision making process.
- Regular meetings.
- Defined joining and training procedure for new people.
- Defining a level of commitment for working in groups.
- Delegation of specific responsibility.
- Rotation of all the tasks.
- Regular social events.
- Roster for tasks to be undertaken.
- Evaluation and clearness meetings. (John Englart, mid 1990s, 2)

## **2.7 Sizes of collectives**

Only after reaching a certain size, collectives begin to think whether to stop numerically growing and take in new members. It all depends on each case. The optimal size for a collective will vary according to the project and the skills of the members. The larger the group gets, the more complicated the decision-making process can become, and the more coordination required. A collective of up to ten or twelve members under most circumstances, would be quite workable and effective. If members have good conflict resolution and communication skills, larger numbers in a collective should be possible without losing any of the benefits of working collectively, or establishing a hierarchy. (John Englart, mid 1990s, 2)

### **3 Research methodology**

In this chapter, the author will talk about research method, research strategy, research tools and process of this thesis, as well as its limitations.

#### **3.1 Research method – Qualitative vs. Quantitative techniques**

The author has chosen to use qualitative research, which is an effective tool to gather information that cannot be measured and quantified, and it is commonly used on small samples (MYÖS collective members in this research). Usually, qualitative way is held in order to explore, gain understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations.

“The strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. It provides information about the “human” side of an issue – that is, the often contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals”. (Qualitative Research Methods: A Data’s Collector Field Guide, 2005, 2) In contrast to qualitative research, quantitative method is used on large samples and provides numerical data that can be transformed into usable statistics. It is more structured and straight forward way to gather information, unlikely to qualitative research.

	Quantitative	Qualitative
<b>General framework</b>	Seek to confirm hypotheses about phenomena  Instruments use more rigid style of eliciting and categorizing responses to questions  Use highly structured methods such as questionnaires, surveys, and structured observation	Seek to explore phenomena  Instruments use more flexible, iterative style of eliciting and categorizing responses to questions  Use semi-structured methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation
<b>Analytical objectives</b>	To quantify variation  To predict causal relationships  To describe characteristics of a population	To describe variation  To describe and explain relationships  To describe individual experiences  To describe group norms
<b>Question format</b>	Closed-ended	Open-ended
<b>Data format</b>	Numerical (obtained by assigning numerical values to responses)	Textual (obtained from audiotapes, videotapes, and field notes)
<b>Flexibility in study design</b>	Study design is stable from beginning to end  Participant responses do not influence or determine how and which questions researchers ask next  Study design is subject to statistical assumptions and conditions	Some aspects of the study are flexible (for example, the addition, exclusion, or wording of particular interview questions)  Participant responses affect how and which questions researchers ask next  Study design is iterative, that is, data collection and research questions are adjusted according to what is learned

Table 1. Features of Qualitative & Quantitative Research (Qualitative Research Methods: A Data's Collector Field Guide, 2005, 3)

### 3.2 Research strategy and questions

To gather the required information and formulate results according to the research questions the author has decided to choose primary research methods since the research is based on a specific organization. The author has not been able to find any academic researches that are related to collective ways of working in non-profit organizations, so this is a relatively new subject of discussion on academic level.

The study is supposed to give a clear picture on the following research questions:

RQ1: How do MYÖS Ry members see its organizational structure

RQ2: Is there a flat organizational structure inside MYÖS collective?

### 3.3 Research approach, data collection method and tools

The research approach that was followed for the purpose of this research was the inductive one. According to this arrangement, the researcher begins with certain studies, which are used to obtain generalized doctrines and conclusions drawn from the study. The prerequisites for using the inductive layout were that it provided a table of contents in which the author was actively working, while it was still suitable for small samples that produced qualitative data. However, the key defect of the inductive alignment is considered to be the fact that it allocates generalized doctrine and conclusions based only on a small number of studies, as a result of which the reliability of the results of studies is questioned. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The interviews are generally time consuming and resource intensive, so for the aim of this research the author has conducted online standardized interviews with open-ended questions. The interview is a semi-structured questionnaire with certain prepared questions. Nevertheless, there was still room for expressing participant's emotions, feelings and opinions regarding a research subject. Several questions were marked as optional due to the nature of collective and confidentiality of information. Not everyone in collective has previously felt that they have a voice and could express themselves freely. Some sample questions that were a part of semi-structured questionnaire:

Q1: What does "working collectively" mean to you?

Q2: How long have you been a member of MYOS collective? (optional)

Q3: Do you have a specific role in the collective? How do you see yourself as a part of it?

Q4: At the current moment, are you satisfied with collective's organisational structure and how it operates? For example: rotation of the tasks, decision making process, frequency of the meetings, amount of workload that collective has. If no, explain why

Q5: Do you think that MYÖS collective has an underlying hierarchical structure? If yes, explain why

Q6: How would you describe power dynamics in the collective based on your observations and experience?

Q8: Are you familiar with the concept of flat organizational structure? If yes, explain how you understand it

Q9: How satisfied are you with the collective in overall? Would you like to see/implement any changes in collective's working processes? If yes, what kind of changes would those be

Apart from the interviews, participant observation has been a part of the research tools, too. Being part of the collective has let the author to be able to see how MYÖS Ry

operates from within, its dynamics and what kind of structure has been present in past and in at the current moment.

### **3.5 Sample selection and research process**

Purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In the current study, all respondents have an important relationship with the phenomena that is being investigated in this thesis. The task of the researcher was to interview all members of the collective, regardless of how long they had been in it and what level of activity they showed. Some of the participants were part of other collectives before, but for many of them this is their first experience in this type of organization.

The observation has been an ongoing process in the collective, the attention was paid to it in the summer of 2018, when the first conflicts arose and it was not always possible to find consensus, which led to some participants feeling depressed and not having the right to vote, since they would still disagree with the majority. Throughout 2019, the researcher has an active role in the work of the collective and could subjectively analyze how the participants interact with each other.

The researcher believes that despite the different level of contribution to one team, it is important to interview everyone, especially if some feel oppressed to express their opinion at general meetings. In mid-October 2019, the author compiled questions for an online interview and personally wrote to each member of the team with a request to answer the questionnaire, approximate time for filling in the form is 15-30 minutes depending on how much one would want to contribute to it. The time allotted for this is two weeks. In two weeks, by the beginning of November, only eleven out of twenty participants had answered the questionnaire.

### **3.6 Ethical considerations and research limitations**

The current study was subject to certain ethical issues. All participants were aware that the interview was conducted in order to study the organizational structure within the collective and write a thesis on this topic. In order to maintain trust and anonymity, all interview questions could be answered without mentioning your name. The interviews

were conducted on a volunteer basis, no one was forced. Except from the above, participants were not harmed or abused, both physically and psychologically, during the conduction of the research. In contrast, the researcher attempted to create a climate of comfort and raise awareness of how important it is to gather collective members knowledge and opinions.

Nonetheless, these results must be interpreted with caution and several limitations should be borne in mind. These are the ones that were followed in this study:

1. It often happens that it is difficult to get answers to questions from people who are not active members of the team. The sample size could have been bigger. As it was stated before in this paper, only 11 out of 20 members answered the questionnaire. In 9 other cases, participants refused to speak their opinions without reasoning.
2. While choosing this topic for research, the author did not expect that there were such restricted amount of academic texts regarding working in collectives. Collectivist work is reflected in independent zines and magazines of the 20th century. There has been a lack of previous research studies on the topic.
3. Following the previous statement, this thesis is short compared to other works that the author has read online.
4. The author has formulated aims and objectives too broadly. It should have been narrowed down to focusing on explaining what is the current structure of the collective, what are the flaws and what kind of changes could have been done in the future to improve its organizational structure.
5. The researcher hasn't had many years of experience of conducting researches and producing academic papers of such size individually, the scope and depth of discussion in the paper are compromised in many levels compared to the works of experienced scholars.
6. No quantitative research on measuring satisfaction and motivation of MYOS members has been conducted, which restricts the author from analyzing those factors numerically and in percentages.



individual and re-imagining, co-dependence.

When asked whether participants have their own special role in the team and how they see themselves, seven out of eleven respondents said that they do not have a specific role in the team, while four responded that they have their own role. Basically, those who replied that they have a role wrote what it consists of. In overall they mean tasks as organization of meetings, facilitating the meetings, DJ:ing, organizing events. One of eleven people wrote that they has their own special managerial role in the team, which worries them due to the fact that roles are not clearly distributed and all responsibility falls on those who are showing activity. Also, one of the respondents replied that they are interested in the work of MYÖS in a large scale. The respondent clarifies what it ,means for them: for example, the submission of grants, lectures, activist work that collective does in a local scene. Following the answers, one of the respondents, who answered anonymously, replied that they "see themselves as an active member of the team only when their skills are needed". (anonymous, on-line interview, 2019) Two of the participants wrote that they saw themselves at the outlines of the collective: one person because they did not DJ work at the events, and the second did not explain the reason.

The next in order is the question of how much the collective members are satisfied with its organizational structure and how the operations take place. For example, rotation of tasks, decision-making process, frequency of meetings, the workload that both collective and individuals have within the team. None of the respondents are fully satisfied with the organizational structure of the team. Basically, the majority replied that "there is no clear organizational structure and most of the work falls on the shoulders of the most active participants." One respondent replied that they "feel that the flat organization structure is missing even though we stated that we would operate that way". (Juuso, on-line interview, 2019) Six out of eleven people stated that the team lacked a functional organizational structure and that it is extremely necessary. Majority of the people noticed that eventually most of the workload comes on shoulders of those people who are mainly active, and thus are the same respondents who wrote that the more you do, the more power you gain inside of the collective. Several respondents also noted that "the organizational structure of the team is in the process, and that we have already come a long way to where we are now". (Eeva-Maja, on-line interview, 2019)

According to the results of a survey on whether underlying hierarchical structure is present in the collective, eight out of eleven respondents answered that it is and it is reflected in power dynamics. Three persons noted that nobody talks about it out loud. Also three said that there was no way to get away from the hierarchy in such a large team and it would

always be present, but the main thing is to vocalize the different power structures and build safe environment. One of the respondents, who joined the team in September 2019, replied that the underlying hierarchical structure is absent from the team.

To the next question about how you would describe power dynamics in the collective based on your observations and experience, many answered, as it was said earlier, that the most active members of the group have more influence on the decision-making processes and on the work of the team as a whole. Respondents also note that “everyone can take more of the lead if they want by participating more”.

To the question of whether the MYÖS Ry should implement different level of engagement in collective work, seven out of eleven people said “yes, it would useful for the team”. Three answered yes, but doubting a little, noting that “we can try”. Many are sure that this will distribute the workload on the team members more evenly depending on the responsibilities of each team member.

Following the answers to the next question, five out of eleven respondents answered that they know what a flat organizational structure is. Three persons said they did not know about decentralized organizational model, one person got acquainted with this method of working through the collective. One person refrained from answering this question, and one answered a question to a question that is not relevant to this type of questionnaire.

Towards the end of the interview, the author asked the respondents how satisfied they are with the collective in overall and what changes they would like to make to the way the MYÖS collective works on a given day. Many of the respondents agree that it is necessary to distribute the responsibilities in the team more clearly and evenly, to also improve the ways of communication between each other and to create a healthy and positive working atmosphere in a team so that no one feels like unsafe and as an outsider. Three said they would like more “hanging out” type of meetings between the members of the team to happen, to get to know each other better and subsequently create a more co-care environment. One respondent replied that “would like to be able to trust everyone”. Two out of eleven people noted that they feel on the outlines of the collective: one of the respondents explains this by the fact that they felt this way from the very beginning, the other respondent said that it is because they do not DJ. One of the respondents who joined the team in 2019 replied that they were satisfied. Many noted that it is important that people devote themselves to the common cause and do not merge work on others in the team thinking that someone can do this work for them. Some also said that you need to take care of those who already have a lot of responsibility.

Based on the answers, the overall outlook of the results is that people are not feeling that things are working out in a way that it was expected at the beginning of starting the collective. There have been formed underlying hierarchical structure and group of elites with more power and rights. None of the members is completely satisfied with the current organizational structure and majority feels that several things have to be changed.

## 5 Discussion

Speaking about the internal structure of MYÖS Ry, we can say that over the year and a half of the collective's existence, it has been created gradually: very long and energy-intensive process was carried out, starting from the very first meeting. The organization of internal order in non-profit organizations can sometimes be much more complicated than you can imagine, and there are several reasons for this.

Firstly, participation in this type of collective, like MYÖS Ry, is activism. The work of the team members is not paid in any way, since collective's existence is not sustained by grants or other source of steady income. The collective had decided that the entire profit that it receives (from gigs, for example) goes for organizing different kind of events, such as workshops or music events, and for renting a studio in the future.

Based on the fact that individuals' work in the collective isn't paid, many team members do not feel motivated, do not want to take responsibility for making a decision, but simply go with the flow and, perhaps, perform much simpler tasks than they are required in the organization, which is trying to operate on the foundations of a flat organizational structure. These working tendencies create unbalanced workload inside the collective. Based on research results and the theoretical knowledge on how flat-managed organizations are operating, we can conclude that one of the main factors that affects this is the lack of a clear rotation of tasks and a schedule for their implementation. From the very beginning of the collective, for each task, the one who had the most desire and free time would do the work. Based on this, it happened that more active members appeared in the team, subsequently it turned out to be those people who today have the "most significant voice". In the last six months of the team, when one of the active participants distanced themselves from working in MYÖS Ry due to personal reasons, some had expressed an opinion, as well as that distanced participant, that collective's both inside and outside activity slowed down. In fact, it turned out that the team was not very sustainable without a specific leader, which contradicts the order of flat organizations. Information and responsibilities should be shared evenly in the team so that it does not happen that all workload falls on the shoulders of several active members. To avoid this in the future, the author proposes to improve the system of rotation of tasks, specifically determine what routine activities should be present in the working environment of the collective, draw up a clear calendar for the next year and determine who, when and what does. For example, the organization of bi-weekly meetings: one person can do this for 3 months, then this task would be taken by another member. The list of things that could be

discussed and further implemented in the collective, if it suits all the members, are following.

Distinguishing the level of commitment from collective's members. According to Richard (Patterns for decentralized organizing, 2018), there could be created different levels of engagement depending on individual's commitment level. For example, all collective stakeholders could be divided into 3 categories: members, contributors and volunteers. Being a member doesn't mean having a lot of power, it's just a sign that those people have prioritized the collective and putting time and effort into it, it's a thing that occupied them to a certain degree. Members would have a responsibilities & rights of decision-making, handling money. In crises collective could count on those people. Contributor would be a person who knows how things work, but not as fully committed as a member, don't have enough of spare time to invest into collective's daily operations and routine. Could help at organizing workshops, events and playing at gigs. Volunteers could be people, who are not a part of the collective, but they are interested in one-time help at events. For all the groups to feel safe and empowered it would be vital to create transparent ways of working, explicit rights & responsibilities, easy access to information and ability to switch from one group to another.

Based on John Englart's democratic structuring, next step on a way of settling a better organizational structure could be creating a list of routine responsibilities, rotation of the different tasks. For example:

- Meeting set-up for three months at a time and booking a space:  
Creating general meetings events on Facebook and Google calendar, one person for three month. Deciding on the next responsible happens voluntarily two meetings before the end of the term of current one. Creating a roster to see who has taken this role and who hasn't done it yet. There would be four to five general meetings, one or two MYÖS talks, one or two hang-out sessions in a time frame of three months. MYÖS talks are forums to address certain topics: money/economical sustainability/conflict resolution/taking in new members/working environment and any problems that might appear in the collective. These talks would be facilitated by collective's members. MYÖS talks would not be working meetings primarily, they can be workshop mode as well and collecting ideas.
- Taking shifts for facilitating and taking minutes responsible every meeting.
- Social media. Such as promoting community's members on social media (starting with collective's members, then from the local scene). Instagram, Facebook,

Soundcloud could be the platforms for promotion. For example, one post in two week. One responsible person for two month.

- Money and billing check person role should be set up.
- E-mail person. That would be someone who directs emails to the right person and makes sure they get responded.
- Checking new applications.
- Organisation building. Regarding bigger organization meeting there could be one to two retreat events, one to two MYÖS day events per year.
- Creating excel document for different responsibilities and their rotation: roster for responsibilities to be undertaken such as meeting setup.
- Working groups separately means smaller groups, for example specific events: members share and rotate tasks (depending on the length of the project) specific roles between themselves

It is very important that the work of the team is based on a safe atmosphere in which no one is afraid to express themselves. Despite the fact that the team consists of 20 people and that each is different in its own way, it is important to be able to find consensus with different types of disagreements. As well as it is important to build trust and belonging by spending time together (for example, annual retreats, hang-out sessions), getting to know the whole self, beyond the job title. According to patterns for decentralized organizations, it would be healthy to systematically distribute care labor. Care is work, and collective members' mission is to make it visible, so it could be fairly shared. For example, practice giving and receiving care in a "stewardship" peer-support circle, mostly check-in: how can I support you?. It is important to remember not to turn stewarding circle into a gossip chamber. Possible check-in questions:

- How is your wider life going?
- How is MYÖS going for you?
- How is this community feeling for you right now?
- What's your role in it?
- What did you like/ dislike, what would you change?
- What do you want to do this month?
- Is there anything you want to check in on again at our next meeting?

The value of emotional intelligence is immense; developing emotional intelligence encourages many positive traits, from resilience to communication, motivation to stress management, all of which can be seen as conducive to effectively achieving personal,

physical and occupational health. If a person feels good within their own life and health, it will reflect on their performance in a collective and vice versa.

As well as practicing distribution of care labor, it is important to collectively agree on explicit norms and boundaries on how to do and how no to do things. That would make it easier to know what is expected, easier to belong to the group and take in new members.

Regarding decision-making process, MYÖS Ry could try to work with consent decision making, which is explained in the following picture.

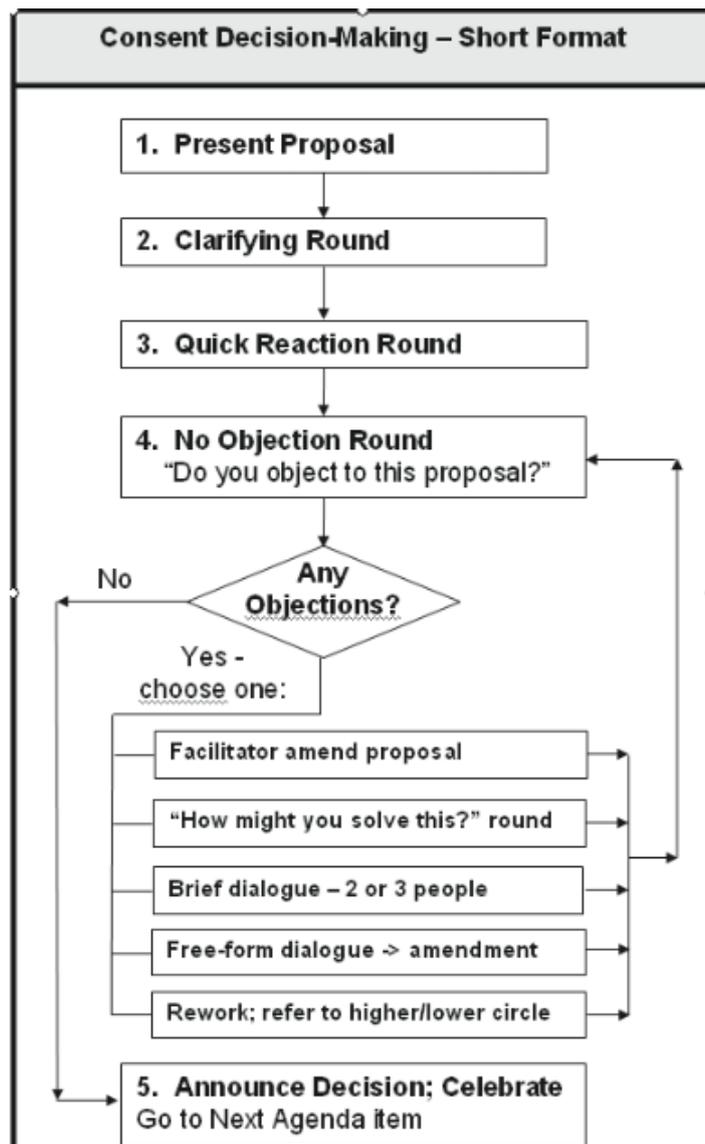


Figure 3. Consent decision-making process – short format (solutionsiq.com)

Decision-making becomes easier when there is transparency, shared purpose and direction, psychological safety, reliable conflict resolution and regular reflection.

Consensus decision-making is not necessary in every single decision, because it might become heavy and overwhelming.

Patterns for decentralized organizing suggest, that in big collectives like MYÖS, it is important to keep talking about power to be able to avoid toxic power dynamics. Often founders might end up having more power while others will not do anything without them. What needs to be clarified: who has power, who doesn't? If there are some roles that attract more influence, they should be rotated. Also, people need to be encouraged to take leadership roles, facilitate meetings etc. It takes time to encourage other people and people in power must stay patient with them. Rather than acting out of impatience and personal characteristics, it would be more efficient to share knowledge and experience with new members.

Conflicts are normal and they appear in each team, if there were no conflicts, there would be no self-improvement. Nevertheless, conflicts are inevitable part of any collective, it is important to know how to deal with them and solve them in a right way. According to patterns for decentralized organizing, these are the points of conflict resolution escalator:

- Agreeing about norms and practices in order for people to find their place in the collective and ways of doing things.
- Talk to each other: 1 on 1 non-violent communication
- If you don't feel comfortable with that or if you don't arrive to a solution, chance to have a supported conversation with a steward
- Help from a working group
- System review: do we need to change the way we work in the collective? Is there something that is not working?
- What if someone breaks boundaries? (once/twice/constantly?)

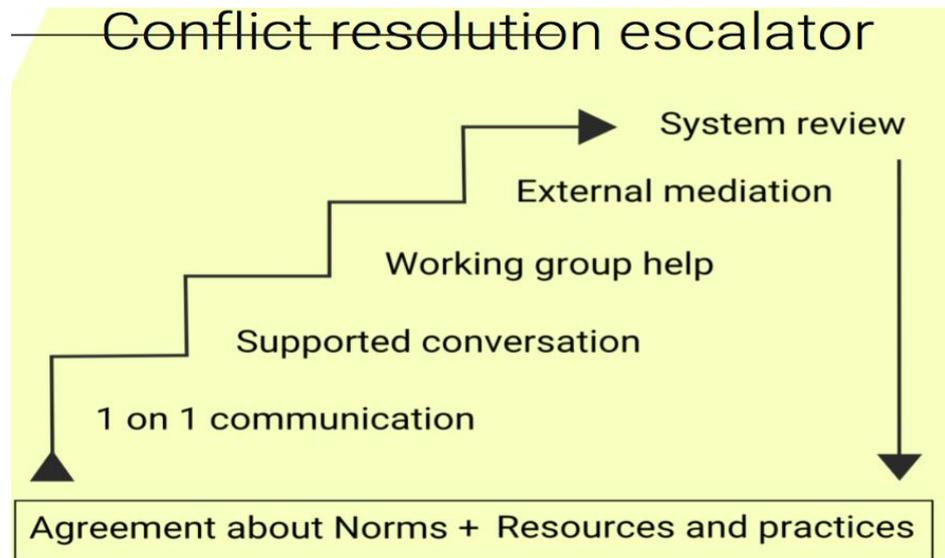


Figure 4. Conflict resolution escalator (Pattern for decentralized organizing, 2018)

Finishing the discussion chapter, the author has come to acknowledge that the process of establishing a complete organizational structure in collectives like MYÖS can take a significant amount of time. Due to the limitations of the project, the final work is not as long as it might be expected from the Bachelor thesis. Nevertheless, the work done feels huge and it has been overwhelming from time to time. As a conclusion, the author would like to say that establishing a better organizational structure inside the MYÖS collective has been an on-going process and will always remain on-going. Findings from this work helped to understand better what needs to be done and which tools could be used to achieve it.

Assessing her own work, the author believes that despite the length of the final work, it is a rather important milestone in the life of the MYÖS Ry. The finding of the research will be discussed at the upcoming MYÖS day on 30<sup>th</sup> of November, where the author and another collective's member will facilitate a discussion about organizational structure of MYÖS Ry.



Image 1. MYÖS collective members for Image magazine (Helen Korpak, 2018)

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## Appendix 1. Questionnaire questions

Q1: What does "working collectively" mean to you?

Q2: How long have you been a member of MYOS collective? (optional)

Q3: Do you have a specific role in the collective? How do you see yourself as a part of it?

Q4: At the current moment, are you satisfied with collective's organisational structure and how it operates? For example: rotation of the tasks, decision making process, frequency of the meetings, amount of workload that collective has. If no, explain why

Q5: Do you think that MYÖS collective has an underlying hierarchichal structure? If yes, explain why

Q6: How would you describe power dynamics in the collective based on your observations and experience?

Q7: Richard D. Bartlett wrote: "Trying to "engage everyone" is a Sisyphean task. In my experience, it is much easier to just make the different levels of engagement explicit, give each group of stakeholders a name and set of rights and responsibilities, and create transparent supported pathways for people to move in and out." Do you think that different levels of engagement should be implemented in MYÖS collective? Explain your answer

Q8: Are you familiar with the concept of flat organizational structure? If yes, explain how you understand it

Q9: How satisfied are you with the collective in overall? Would you like to see/implement any changes in collective's working processes? If yes, what kind of changes would those be

Q10: If there's something else you want to tell - please write it here

Q11: If you wish, you can leave your name here (not necessary)