

DECISION-MAKING
AND
COLLECTIVE
LEADERSHIP
MODELS:

NON-HIERARCHICAL
LEADERSHIP
STRUCTURES



My we is always changing
(which has a lot to do with the way I was raised, I was always shifting communities)
Sometimes I feel unmoored

Cree Summer talks about the freaks: “God bless the freaks.”

I feel a kinship to that

The we I bring into my work and this room is my kids and my mom, because I weigh decisions on how it’s gonna affect them, how my involvement is going to reflect and affect them, and how much energy I’m going to take from them.
My we is the folks I parent.

As a child of the diaspora I also think about the larger community that I feel a part of. I’m part of a broader community of folks whose lineages go from the city to the south and the Caribbean, and that’s the we I think about a lot,

since that’s the we I’m a part of.

For the longest time my we was undocumented people, but as I’ve grown into myself, I’m realising, I’m not just undocumented, I’m also Filipino, I’m queer, I’m a Taurus

—yas Tauruses in the house—

so yes, my we is ever-shifting.

And who I bring into the room is all the we’s who’ve ever been a part of me.

This is part of my we, which is new, and I'm realising the people in this documentary work, are also all part of what I consider a serious movement to change the work that we do.

We on a grander scale is my family, my wife and my pandemic puppy who destroys everything around her in a beautiful way.

I take very seriously the responsibility not just for me but for the generations that will come after me.

I think about the young people I have the opportunity to work with: local young people, artists in upstate NY. Because a lot of people are on the treadmill, and later realise in life, *what the fuck did I get into?* And if we can prevent future generations from being harmed by this shit and from getting this trauma, that's an amazing vision.

The first thing I thought of was all the categories but I also think about - I'm a person who's done a lot of shape-shifting, and it's easier to list out the people I'm attracted to.

People who like nails, children of immigrants, people who are drawn to curious things.

In my we I would say black and latina women, the women who care for everyone and everything and hold everything down, from supermarket clerk to somebody working on an amazing art project, the whole spectrum.

I would also say my we is artists and the sensitive, vulnerable, raw people in the world.

My we is my family, and my we are a lot of the same things: the responsibility of the people who have allowed me to tell their stories in the past, and who will allow me to tell their stories in the future.

And my we is all the Indigenous communities around the world, and a lot of the native filmmakers who haven't had the chance to be seen.

The literary community is part of my we now, especially since I might be publishing soon. *That's been a big part of my we, and it's going to be even bigger.*

The first thing that came to my mind is my we is all the ancestors I bring to my back. It's something I'm proud of, and something I'm not, but also I think about the we who is everyone who's fighting for collective liberation and collective liberation, everyone I know who's continuing the fight, young folks, thinking about my students and how bold and sharp they are, and how I strive to be as bold and sharp as them.

My we is my family, sitting in my mother's house, in my childhood home,



My we is the people who live around my mom's house, my mom's friends, my aunties, all the people who show up in real life, in person.

Thank you to everyone who sent energy [to my mother]. We felt it, my mother felt it, that's also part of my we too.

The we is the physical community which I've been absent from, and being reminded of that in a moment of emergency, and also feeling a strong presence from all of the virtual energy that came from all over the world.

Who's my we?

People from small places.

Island people, Caribbean people, blasian people.

My we is people I am closest to,

People who I'm aligned with and who I have differences with

People who are still navigating the colonial hangover

Nation builders

People who navigate and negotiate borders all the time, not just geographical borders but people who belong to two communities, and two identities in mind and in heart at the same time.

People who are feeling weighed down by the current moment

The climate is creating a different sense of reality

My people are the people who feel burdened by that, confused by that, but also trying to see through that, to imagine beyond that to a world beyond.

My we is my ancestors. I carry the light and sometimes heavy weight of my ancestry.

The people of the mountains,
Jaguars, the sun.

My language we don't know how to write
My daughter
The children on Lake Titicaca
The people that live in one place but belong to another
Who want to be in another world

The revolutionistas who know we can't live at the world as a universe, but as a pluriverse

The llamas, the quinoa, the food.

All of us.

My we is you, fighting the system.

In Bolivia, we keep the language but now that it's not forbidden we're losing it due to capitalist structures

The misfits, the creators



My mother and grandfather who have given their lives fighting for a better cause.

My people are my family, with whom I disagree with on so many things
Collective memories and collective histories which people have forgotten

People who have been told no too many times, people who have persevered despite this

My we is the global peoples of African descent, of global liberation struggles
The people who've been fighting to live and just be left alone
Powerful women
Black political thinkers
Movement builders
Changemakers
And my family specifically my grandmother, Dr. Niara Sudarkasa
Whose legacy I exist in, which is a privilege.

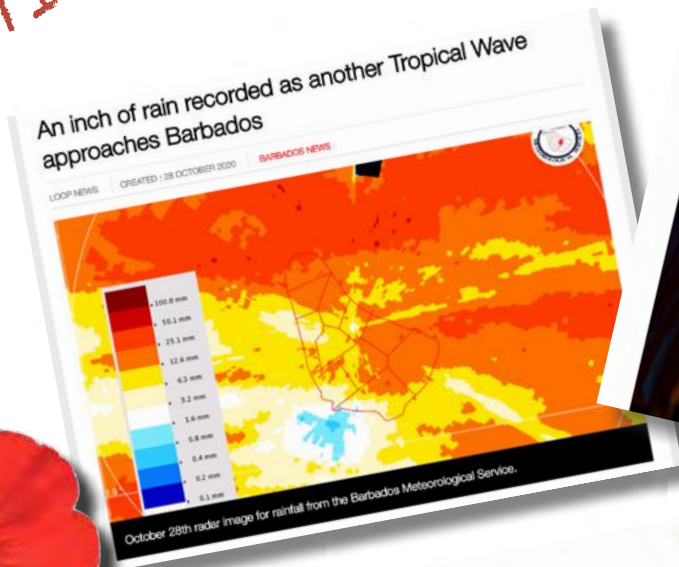
It feels good to be seen in your we
My we, along with so many of what each and everyone one of you said
Is people who are fighting battles on the inside every day
And fighting to do regular stuff and feel ok.



Cropped image of Coline
Marotta - I could love you
more (version #2), 2018

POLITICS OF THE MOMENT

So much to be said but nothing to be said.



LIVE UPDATES

Biden begins transition plans as Trump refuses to concede

By Melissa Macaya, Melissa Mahtani and Veronica Rocha, CNN
Updated 5:29 p.m. ET, November 12, 2020

Puerto Rico, unable to vote, becomes crucial to US election

By DÁNICA COTO and ARIANA GÓMEZ LUCÓN | October 19, 2020



The Latest: Australia court upholds state's border closure

By The Associated Press | November 5, 2020



Weary from political strife and a pandemic, some Americans are fleeing the country





**Be bold in
how you
strive to find
relief.
Take space.
Breathe.**

COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP: HOW DO WE SHARE AND MAKE DECISIONS?

(A group discussion, adapted)



Power and true revolution

Violeta Ayala

What can we understand about power and revolution?

We understand revolution as a political act to change the social structure so we can transform the lives of individuals. But there is no revolution in the world that has changed the conservation of power. We haven't changed the nature of power; instead power has changed us. So what would it mean to have a revolution of ideas?— paraphrased from David Choquehuanca, current Vice President of Bolivia.

In the Vice President of Bolivia's inaugural speech, he pointed out the ways in which systems in our collective global history have been overtaken but have also largely been left intact in nature. Coming from the desire to think about ways to transform the nature of our systems, we want to focus on those of us who have had some successes with these shifts:

Leadership models and consensus vs. consent vs. majority vote

Ligaiya Romero



Richard Barnes - Murmur no.
9, Dec. 17, 2005

We can consider three different decision-making models:

Majority vote: winner takes all, consistent with American presidential election.

Consensus agreements: everyone has to come to an agreement.

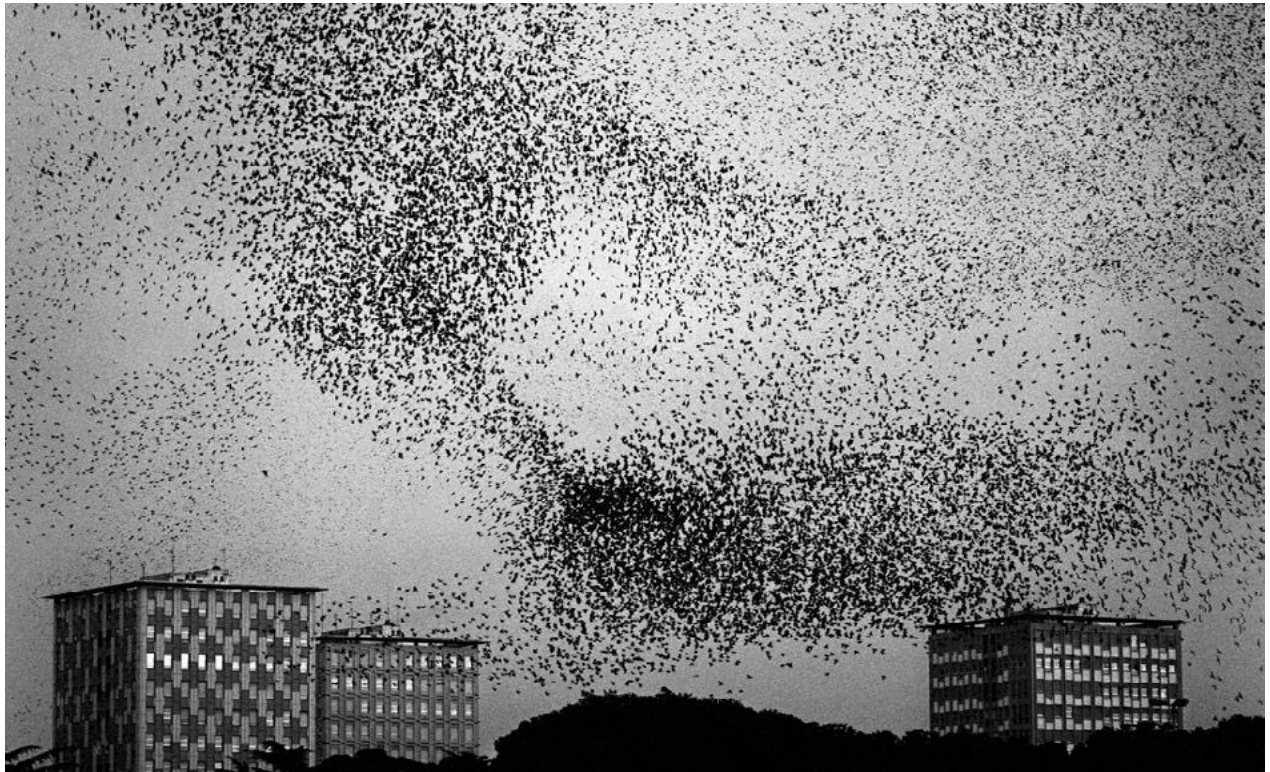
Consent: not everyone agrees in one direction but everyone must consent to the decision in disagreement.

It is interesting to think about applying these models with different amounts of people within groups. For example, smaller pods (might have a consensus style of decision-making) within larger groups of people (with a consent style agreement).

Leadership models can be thought of using bird formation analogies. Take, for example the Canadian geese leadership structure (with one leader in the front of the formation, who switches out when fatigued/on rotation) vs. Starling bird murmuration (never has a distinct leader, but everyone is following the lead of five birds around it). The birds form pods, where every bird is a leader, and takes cues from the five birds around it for the safety of the collective.



Richard Barnes -Murmur no.
20, Nov. 3, 2006



Richard Barnes -Murmur no. 23, Dec. 6, 2006

Structure

Set Hernandez Rongkilyo, Loira Limbal and Ursula Liang

Set Hernandez Rongkilyo

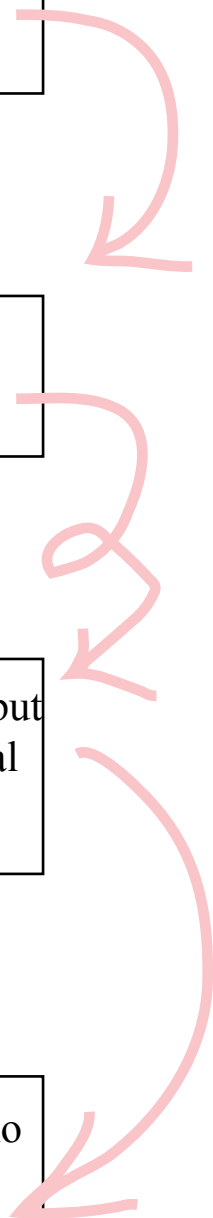
Lessons from the Undocumented Filmmakers Collective:

Steering Committee at the center. Five of the Subcommittee Leads make up this Steering Committee. The most distinct feature of this role is the ability and responsibility to make rapid, responsive decisions.

Subcommittee Leads: up to 2 Active Members lead each subcommittee.

Active Members: are less involved than Leads but want to be involved according to their individual capacities

Participant Network on the periphery: Folks who do not have capacity to be involved actively, but want to know about progressions of the organization.



Loira Limbal

In my work with Sista II Sista Collective, we had a creative, lateral leadership structure where petals (working groups/pods) belonged to a larger flower (team) and operated with horizontal functions.

Each petal of members were the official stewards of the project to which they were assigned, and the framework of group conversations leaned more toward presentations of progress, and then factoring in concerns and/or objections. But at the offset it was widely acknowledged that the petals were the stewards of their work.



Ursula Liang

The steering committee is the backbone of the organization (A-Doc): structuring the flow of things, creating agendas, acting as more consistent leadership etc.

Decision-making, however, is done on a rolling basis, where if you show up you are automatically involved in the process; and if not, you've missed the chance at that particular moment. We rely mostly on consensus-style decision-making, less consent.

Anyone can be in any group at any time i.e. folks are empowered to bounce between groups addressing the issues of public or private funding, data and transparency etc.

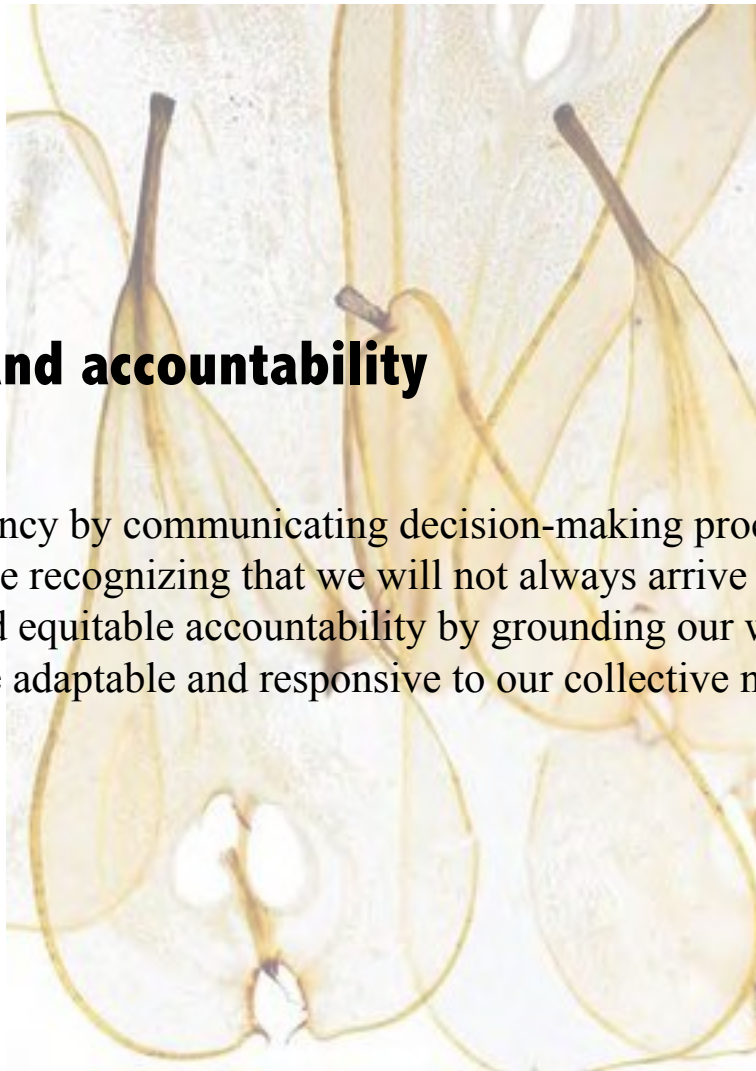
Warning: one thing that happens, when you are scaling up these kinds of utopian concepts, is the issue of "inviting anybody" and growing beyond control. This is important specifically when thinking about efficiency; when you have a lot of people, scheduling and workload becomes difficult so you have to work to manage these variables.

Decision-making in large groups is difficult. Pay is also important, as an aside, because people have to be compensated for their contributions. In our working groups, there is actually no structure at all. We don't need it because we are attracted to one another by personality and leadership/communication style. Nonetheless, new people must be required to respect the work that has been done before and upon their entry.

Transparency and accountability

Set Hernandez Rongkilyo

We practice transparency by communicating decision-making processes to the entire collective, while recognizing that we will not always arrive at a unanimous consensus. We uphold equitable accountability by grounding our work in structures and processes that are adaptable and responsive to our collective needs.



Family

Loira Limbal and Jason Fitzroy Jeffers

Loira Limbal

Family naturally comes with dysfunction; it is hard to juggle everyone's needs. We have arrived at a place where the team has been able to support me throughout the making of my latest film, *Through the Night*. Now, what I am trying to figure out is how that special, considerate treatment can apply for everyone so that all people in the organization, most who are filmmakers like myself, can also have these kinds of accommodations incorporated into their contracts.

I want to move towards a structure that centers most the family piece. Having worked at a lot of places, I will say that it is nice to be at a place where there are resources; this is an important factor that must be named.

Something that I did experience early in my career, which proves challenging to consensus agreements, was the power of persuasion (or manipulation), and there were no structures in place to call out that power dynamic. So, ahead of time, that is something to look out for.



Illustration by Anna Niedhart ([source](#))

Jason Fitzroy Jeffers

With Third Horizon, fundamentally, we really do try to function as a family first, then figure out everything from there. It sounds cuddly and cliché but it's true.

Also, there is dimension and flexibility in our leadership model; for example, we have had festivals where even though I'm the director, I've driven the shuttle. It's up-down, side-to-side. Ultimately, we do what needs to be done and if a switch up of leadership is needed, then we evolve in real time.

Emergent Strategy

“There is an art to flocking:
staying separate enough
not to crowd each
other, aligned enough
to maintain a shared
direction, and
cohesive enough to
always move towards
each other.”



– adrienne marie brown, ‘Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change’

Image: Richard Barnes - Murmur no. 8, Dec. 14, 2005

Violeta Ayala
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Sonya Childress
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Maori Karmael Holmes
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