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# Democratic by Design: How Carsharing, Co-ops, and Community Land Trusts Are Reinventing America

*Gabriel Metcalf*

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How Carsharing, Co-ops, and  
Community Land Trusts are Reinventing America

## DEMOCRATIC BY DESIGN



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**Gabriel Metcalf : Democratic by Design: How Carsharing, Co-ops, and Community Land Trusts Are Reinventing America** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Democratic by Design: How Carsharing, Co-ops, and Community Land Trusts Are Reinventing America:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. If you care about social change, read this book!By David S SchecterBy David Schecter on December 20, 2015Format: KindleIs it possible to make real change in the United

States by developing one new, democratically-run institution at a time? Gabriel Metcalf says it is, and he supports his argument with substantial personal experience as well as broad knowledge of the history of alternative institutions in America. The book covers a wide range of political, economic, and place-based institutions, from before the American Revolution to the present day - from Deliberative Polls and Citizen Initiative Review to land trusts and cooperatives, from Puritan communes and utopian socialist communities to garden cities and City Car Share. Metcalf is a rare combination - an innovative theorist and clear, articulate writer who is grounded in practical experience with alternative democratically-run institutions. If you care about social change, and don't want to wait until "after the revolution," read this book!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Practical original solutions to make democracy stronger

By sunny

This book not only tells you, in a diplomatic way, what is wrong with the state of the democracy in our Western world, but has very original and practical solutions that don't involve cooperation from those who don't want to cooperate! A rare gem in my opinion that gives hope and inspiration what we as individuals or small groups can do about all that is so wrong and try to restore the way to true democracy. Not in a top down way that uses force or brainwashing but in a from bottom up way, founded upon common grounds for cooperation. Just an example is to use labor pensions money to invest in socially responsible companies instead of only for profit companies. This book has many ideas. It emphasizes to work on a project base, start small and has good pointers for people who would actually like to act upon this. I am giving it as a present to other people as well. I wish I could find more of books with practical solutions for our bigger problems.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An important worthwhile book for those interested or involved in changing the world for the better

By JDP

This book offers a pragmatic, straightforward, clear-eyed view of social change in the United States, past and future. By looking at successes and failures of the past, it summarizes practical strategies for how we can continue to change and evolve. Direct, short, engaging, and well-crafted, I would recommend this to anyone interested in the patient hard work of trying to make the world a better place - a very worthwhile, short, fast read.

Americans have, since our founding, participated in a variety of alternative institutions--self-organized projects that work outside the traditional structures of government and business to change society. From the town meetings that still serve as our ideal of self-governance, to the sustainable food movement that is changing the way we think about farming the land and feeding our families, these secondary structures have given rise to many of our most exciting and important innovations. Yet most people still know little about them, even as their numbers and their influence increase. In today's climate of widespread economic inequity, political gridlock and daunting environmental challenges, we sorely need a fresh approach to social and political change. In *Democratic by Design*, Gabriel Metcalf sketches out a strategy that starts with small-scale, living examples of a better society that can ultimately scale up to widespread social transformation. Using examples like car-sharing organizations, community land trusts, credit unions, workers co-ops, citizen juries, community-supported agriculture farms, mission-driven corporations, and others, *Democratic by Design* shows how alternative institutions can be the crucial spark for a broad new progressive movement.

It's forgotten history that the real American genius has always been finding new ways to work together. Metcalf shows that America's rich history of social innovation--from farmers' co-ops to credit unions, communes to the Constitutional Convention -provides powerful tools and templates for designing new alternative institutions: ones that can not just disrupt the status quo, but transform society.

--Alex Steffen, author of *CARBON ZERO: Imagining Cities That Can Save the Planet* and editor of *WORLDCHANGING: A User's Guide to the 21st Century*

"Democratic by Design" proposes a new model of institutional change within social movements. It takes the idea of starting small with pilot projects that can scale up if they are successful, now a major driver of innovation within the business world, and applies it to the most urgent and profound problems facing America. It should be a source of both ideas and inspiration.

--Douglas K. Smith, author, *THE DISCIPLINE OF TEAMS* and *TAKING CHARGE OF CHANGE*

Gabriel Metcalf understands that urban America's challenges require new strategies, and this book makes a persuasive case that alternative institutions must be among them. "Democracy by Design" recalls social movements of the past while offering useful tools for the movements of tomorrow.

--- Randy Shaw, author, *The Tenderloin: Sex, Crime and Resistance in the Heart of San Francisco* and *The Activist's Handbook* (if you feel latter is needed).

--Randy Shaw, author of *THE TENDERLOIN: Sex, Crime and Resistance in the Heart of San Francisco* and *THE ACTIVIST'S HANDBOOK: Winning Social Change in the 21st Century*

An important first book from a car sharing pioneer and leader in urban policy. Drawing on social movement theory and grounded in his own practice in city planning, this book is required reading for those who are working for a more sustainable, democratic economy.

--Neal Gorenflo, co-founder of Shareable

It's forgotten history that the real American genius has always been finding new ways to work together. Metcalf shows that America's rich history of social innovation--from farmers' co-ops to credit unions, communes to the Constitutional Convention -provides powerful tools and templates for designing new alternative institutions: ones that can not just disrupt the status quo, but transform society.

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takes the idea of starting small with pilot projects that can scale up if they are successful, now a major driver of innovation within the business world, and applies it to the most urgent and profound problems facing America. It should be a source of both ideas and inspiration. Douglas K. Smith, author, *THE DISCIPLINE OF TEAMS* and *TAKING CHARGE OF CHANGE* Gabriel Metcalf understands that urban America's challenges require new strategies, and this book makes a persuasive case that alternative institutions must be among them. "Democracy by Design" recalls social movements of the past while offering useful tools for the movements of tomorrow.--- Randy Shaw, author, *The Tenderloin: Sex, Crime and Resistance in the Heart of San Francisco* and *The Activist's Handbook* (if you feel latter is needed). Randy Shaw, author of *THE TENDERLOIN: Sex, Crime and Resistance in the Heart of San Francisco* and *THE ACTIVIST'S HANDBOOK: Winning Social Change in the 21st Century* An important first book from a car sharing pioneer and leader in urban policy. Drawing on social movement theory and grounded in his own practice in city planning, this book is required reading for those who are working for a more sustainable, democratic economy. Neal Gorenflo, co-founder of Shareable Offer{s} solid examples of cycles of change in this country... Although alternative institutions can't fix everything, Metcalf believes they can help transform society, and many readers may agree. "Kirkus s""About the Author Gabriel Metcalf serves as executive director of the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR), one of the leading urban planning organizations in America. He is a frequent writer and speaker on these topics. He has been profiled in national media, including the Wall Street Journal, and in the San Francisco Examiner and other local media. He has a degree from University of California, Berkeley in City and Regional Planning. He lives in San Francisco.