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The Autonomous and Agentic Organization Newsletter – July 17th – August 14th 2026

Welcome to the fifteenth newsletter on (Decentralized) Autonomous Organizations. If you have interesting insights that should be in our newsletter as well, please let us know via info@howtodaao.it. Enjoy the read! In this edition we cover three themes: market & industry highlights, scientific advances in (D)AO research, and the emerging Zero Human Company concept.

1. Market & Industry Highlights

The [BonkDAO governance attack](#) dominated headlines this period. An attacker spent approximately \$4 million acquiring BONK tokens to accumulate enough voting power to pass a malicious governance proposal, [draining \\$20 million from the DAO treasury](#). Crucially, this was not a smart contract exploit — the governance system functioned exactly as designed. The attacker simply [outspent other voters](#). Multiple [exchanges successfully blocked the stolen tokens](#) from being liquidated. The incident immediately boosted demand for governance infrastructure, with [DeXe \(DEXE\) surging to all-time highs](#) as the market bet on more robust governance tooling.

The ENS governance saga reached a turning point as the Ethereum Name Service finalized its [transition from a DAO to an independent foundation model](#). The ENS Foundation [gained administrative control of \\$65 million in assets](#), sparking delegate outrage. Meanwhile, key contributor Brantly [Millegan departed ENS entirely](#), winding down [ethid.org](#) amid the governance upheaval.

[Compound DAO approved a landmark \\$52 million program](#) — its largest-ever funding initiative — targeting institutional DeFi expansion. [Rain Protocol completed](#)

[its first DAO-governed settlement](#), putting \$23 million into community hands through on-chain voting. [Arbitrum Foundation proposed a \\$43 million budget for 2027](#), triggering heated governance debates about fiscal responsibility in DAOs.

On the broader blockchain front, [Cardano's civil war intensified](#) as founder Charles Hoskinson hunted through 11,000 DAOs in a governance dispute. The [Eliza Labs/ai16z saga concluded](#) when the founder shut down the native token after a legal settlement. [XAO DAO pushed for governance reform on the XRP Ledger](#), and [Orbs community launched a governance vote](#) on its DAO framework. [TRON DAO joined the S&P Pantera Digital Asset Index](#). [GMX continued refining its token economics](#) through DAO governance, and [XMAQUINA](#) emerged as a novel DAO focused on robotics and Physical AI governance.

2. Scientific News on Decentralized Autonomous Organizations

A rich crop of academic publications appeared during this period. At the Academy of Management, three DAO papers were presented: [Sauerbier published on aligning without hierarchies](#) — a framework for collective sensemaking in DAOs. [Hsieh, Sampo', Baumann and Alexy presented on pathways to performance](#) through configurations for integration in DAOs. [Hsieh, Klapper and Janjic examined the promise and reality of democratic organizing](#) through vote delegation in DAOs.

[Pahari, Chandrasekaran, Messias and Gummadi published on exercising governance power in DAOs](#), building on their earlier centralization findings. [Baliatti, Saggese and Strohmaier examined how voting power is distributed](#) across choices in DAO governance. [Davó and Arroyo published on enhancing voter engagement through recommender systems](#) in Inteligencia Artificial — a novel approach to addressing participation challenges.

[Bridj, Pohlmann and de Almeida published on DAOs for circular economy](#) in Technological Forecasting and Social Change, presenting a proof of concept in e-waste recycling. [Çağlayan Aksoy and Alparslan examined DAOs and the future of arbitration](#) in Law, Innovation and Technology, analyzing on-chain and off-chain dispute resolution. [Heydari, Sola, Neghabi and Hasanpour proposed the DAO-VC model](#) — a holistic design for decentralized autonomous venture capital — in The Journal of Supercomputing.

[Tang published a socio-technical PhD study](#) at the University of Sydney on the evolution and system design of DAOs. [Vega-Ibáñez, Baumgartner and Tanaka examined DAO governance mechanisms](#) and traditional corporate management structure adaptation. [Santiago explored the convergence of corporate law and blockchain](#) in regulating DAOs. [Patil and Shrivastava published a systematic review](#) on governance, security, and emerging applications of DAOs.

[Zigang contributed two papers on post-decentralization theory](#): one on cognitive constitution and metarule engineering, and another on theoretical boundaries from protocol evolution to the digital polity. [Mackey et al. published in the Journal of Medical Internet Research](#) on blockchain-based indigenous data sovereignty platforms using DAO governance. [Patelli et al. proposed a DAO-enabled framework](#) for collaborative crisis management in critical infrastructure resilience. [Kothai, Sharma and Pal evaluated governance and effectiveness](#) in DAOs through federated learning.

3. Zero Human Company Developments

[Newsweek published a feature article titled "The Empty Office: What Happens When AI Runs the Company"](#), exploring the concept through the lens of independent researcher Brian Roemmele's work. The article examines the practical implications of fully AI-operated business entities — from legal personhood questions to operational challenges — and positions the Zero Human Company concept as an emerging reality rather than theoretical speculation.

On the security front, [Cyber Press reported the discovery of critical and high-severity vulnerabilities in Paperclip](#), the open-source control plane used by several Zero Human Company initiatives for orchestrating autonomous AI agent operations. This highlights a key tension in the space: as companies move toward fully autonomous operation, the security of the underlying AI infrastructure becomes existentially important. A compromised control plane in a zero-human setting has no human operator to detect or intervene, making robust security architecture a prerequisite for the concept's viability.

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