

ephemera: theory & politics
in organization

**management
business
anarchism**

What is *ephemera*: theory & politics in organization?

ephemera is an independent journal, founded in 2001. *ephemera* provides its content free of charge, and charges its readers only with free thought.

theory

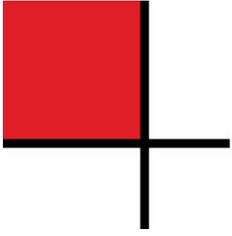
ephemera encourages contributions that explicitly engage with theoretical and conceptual understandings of organizational issues, organizational processes and organizational life. This does not preclude empirical studies or commentaries on contemporary issues, but such contributions consider how theory and practice intersect in these cases. We especially publish articles that apply or develop theoretical insights that are not part of the established canon of organization studies. *ephemera* counters the current hegemonization of social theory and operates at the borders of organization studies in that it continuously seeks to question what organization studies is and what it can become.

politics

ephemera encourages the amplification of the political problematics of organization within academic debate, which today is being actively de-politized by the current organization of thought within and without universities and business schools. We welcome papers that engage the political in a variety of ways as required by the organizational forms being interrogated in a given instance.

organization

Articles published in *ephemera* are concerned with theoretical and political aspects of organizations, organization and organizing. We refrain from imposing a narrow definition of organization, which would unnecessarily halt debate. Eager to avoid the charge of 'anything goes' however, we do invite our authors to state how their contributions connect to questions of organization and organizing, both theoretical and practical.



ephemera

theory & politics in organization

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**Management, business,
anarchism**

Konstantin Stoborod and Thomas Swann

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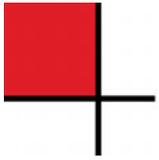


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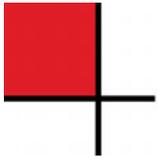
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Did you hear the one about the anarchist manager?

Thomas Swann and Konstantin Stoborod

Introduction

How many anarchists does it take to start a conversation about anarchism in a business school? Perhaps the most appropriate punchline is that such a conversation shouldn't ever take place at all, never mind the number of participants. And yet just that conversation did take place, in November 2010. In fact, the topic of anarchism almost naturally surfaces within discussions of forms of organising that escape the Procrustean bed of the day-to-day academic curriculum of business and management studies; at least it does if this special issue is anything to go by.

While the inclusion of anarchism and management in the same sentence would normally connote a rejection of one and a corresponding defence of the other, the study of management and radical social and political thought are not as antithetical as one might at first imagine. The field of critical management studies (CMS), regularly dated back to the publication of Mats Alvesson and Hugh Willmott's collection (1992), has drawn on theoretical sources including the Frankfurt School, poststructuralism and various left-wing political traditions, as well as heterodox empirical research, in reflecting on and ultimately criticizing prevailing practices and discourses of management. As Gibson Burrell noted twenty years ago, there is a 'growing number of alternative organisational forms now appearing, whether inspired by anarchism, syndicalism, the ecological movement, the co-operative movement, libertarian communism, self-help groups or, perhaps most importantly, by feminism' (1992: 82). Despite anarchism appearing first in his list of inspirations for alternative organisation and having a history at least as old as Marxism and feminism, there has been relatively little

research on anarchism and its principles within management studies. The core aims of this special issue are, firstly, to identify where the links between anarchism and CMS lie and, secondly, to provide a space for those working at these intersections to contribute towards bringing this new cross-over into existence. In many ways, one could say that this issue returns to Burrell's comments made at the outset of CMS and tries to show where and how the claim about anarchism as an alternative organisational form influencing CMS can be taken seriously.

To date, anarchism hasn't prominently featured in any of the key CMS journals. Many of the authors who have juxtaposed anarchism and CMS, or introduced an anarchist-inspired reading of management, business and organisation into the mix of what goes on in CMS, have also contributed to this special issue. So while this special issue is introductory in nature, it is not unprecedented. One might see the pre-history of anarchism and CMS as Colin Ward, the influential British anarchist writer, sees anarchism itself: always existing, like seeds beneath the snow. So if the already existing work can be seen as the anarchist seeds beneath the CMS snow, then this special issue, while certainly not the blossoming end-point of this intersection can be made sense of as a green shoot, struggling to make an entry into the world.

So what was germinating beneath the snow before the special issue was put together? While there are of course a number of important works that focus more generally on radical left politics and organisation theory, focussing variously on social movements (e.g. Böhm et al. 2010; Davies et al., 2005; Feigenbaum et al. 2014; Maeckelbergh 2009; 2014), workers cooperatives and self-organisation (e.g. Atzeni and Ghigliani, 2007; Atzeni and Vieta, 2014; Cheney, 1999; Webb and Cheney 2014), non-commodified work practices (Williams, 2005; 2014), leadership (Western, 2013) and the commons (De Angelis and Harvie, 2014; Fournier, 2013), the purpose of this special issue is to hone in on specifically anarchist contributions to these debates and others. In terms of CMS, the anarchist seeds are indeed few and far between. While Chris Land's (2007) and Martin Parker's (2011) work on pirates and other outlaws don't deal exclusively with anarchism, they do show the radical and very-often anarchistic practice that have taken place in specific historical contexts. More explicitly, Patrick Reedy's (2002) work has drawn on anarchism in its discussion of utopias. Reedy takes inspiration from anarchism as a 'powerful counter-discourse to the managerial vision of the good life' and argues that anarchism is characterised by principles of 'diversity, difference and voluntarism over collective norms and orthodoxies' (*ibid.*: 170). Reedy, along with Martin Parker and Valerie Fournier, have also contributed to the intersection of anarchism and

CMS through their *Dictionary of Alternatives* (2007) which similarly takes anarchism as having something important to say to CMS.

The two most recent contributions to the discussion come from Neil Sutherland et al. (2013) and George Kokkinidis (2014). Sutherland et al. discuss forms of anti-authoritarian leadership in anarchist groups, highlighting the fact that while leaders may not be formally present in such groups, practices of leadership certainly are. Kokkinidis in turn examines the role of autonomy and democratic decision-making in Greek workers' collectives. This empirical research focuses on the concrete practices that take place within several radical workers' collectives in Greece and how they relate to political principles such as fair pay, democratic control and individual autonomy in the workplace.

Other attempts to bring anarchism into conversation with organisation theory, though outside CMS as a discipline, do represent important contributions. Perhaps the earliest of these is Pierre Guillet de Monthoux's *Action and existence* (1983): Guillet de Monthoux reflects on his experiences with anarchism in this special issue. Marius de Geus' *Organisation theory in political philosophy* follows, published in Dutch (as *Organisatietheorie in de politieke filosofie*) in 1989, examined several political philosophers' work through the lens of organisation theory. De Geus devotes two chapters to anarchism and organisation theory, one to Mikhail Bakunin and the other to Peter Kropotkin (this latter chapter is included in this issue in English translation for the first time). Brian Martin has also written on the relationships between anarchism and organisation, highlighting, for example, how anarchists are expected to behave in mainstream organisations (2013) as well as anarchist responses to expertise (2008-2009). L. Susan Brown's essay 'Does work really work?' (n.d.) questions identity in the context of work and discusses the case for the abolition of work (see also, Black 1986). Similarly of interest, Guillaume Paoli's *Demotivational training* (2008) attacks modern human resources management, while Liam Barrington-Bush's *Anarchists in the boardroom* (2013) focuses on the management and organisational practices of NGOs encouraging organisations to be 'more like people.'

Other studies consider anarchism as a theory of organisation including critical legal scholar Grietje Baars (2011), social movements scholars Anna Feigenbaum (e.g. 2010) and Andre Pusey (e.g. 2010) and critical geographers Jenny Pickerill (e.g. Pickerill and Chatterton, 2006; Barker and Pickerill, 2012), Simon Springer (e.g. 2012) and Richard J. White (e.g. White and Williams, 2012)¹. Other scholars

1 White and Williams have also contributed to this special issue.

worth mentioning here are: Adin Crnkić (2013), Maria Daskalaki, PJ Holtum, Emil Krastrup Husted, Bojan Radej, Leandros Savvides and Orestis Varkarolis.

As mentioned above, this brief literature review constitutes a few anarchist seeds beneath the snow of CMS. Something we wanted to identify in putting this special issue together was whether anarchism figures more generally in CMS and to do this we turned to six journals that are considered as suitable homes for CMS research.

Anarchism in critical management studies

We conducted a brief bibliometric analysis for the sake of discerning the extent to which anarchism resides within CMS. Drawing on the work of Stephen Dunne, Stefano Harney and Martin Parker (2008), we surveyed six journals ‘usually hospitable to those writing in the name of CMS’ (*ibid.* 275). The six journals we examined were: *Culture and Organization*; *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*; *Gender, Work and Organization*; *Consumption, Markets and Culture*; *Accounting, Organizations and Society*; and *Organization*. Rather than providing research that aims to bolster the status quo of mainstream organisations, critical management journals aim to take business, management and organisation as phenomena that deserve to be studied and/or criticised. As Martin Parker, writing with Robyn Thomas, elsewhere notes (Parker and Thomas, 2011), the very idea of a critical sociological discipline is oxymoronic:

many academics would argue that all good work in social sciences is critical, in the sense of being sceptical of common sense, and regarding all arguments as provisional and dependent on evidence. (*ibid.*, 421)

In opposition to this conventional notion of critique, CMS developed a need to challenge the complicity of business and management research in the running of capitalism from a moral and political, as well as academic, standpoint. Not only is CMS aimed at studying business and management, it is also committed, at least in theory, to generating a politically oriented critique of management and managerialism (Parker, 2002). At its inception, the ‘critical’ in CMS was taken to refer to the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School, labour process theory and critical realism (all having their roots in Marxist political thought), as well as postmodernism and poststructuralism (which while not being as explicitly left-wing as other influences have certainly formed an important part of left-wing critique for the last 40 or so years) (e.g. Alvesson and Wilmott, 1992; Böhm and Spoelstra, 2004). In this sense, then, to be a critical management journal is not only to soberly take business and management as objects of study but also to approach them as parts of the capitalist system and to critique them on those

grounds. As CMS developed as a discipline it moved to include as wide a range in terms of critique as exists in the left as a whole. Feminist opposition to patriarchy (e.g. Calás, 1996; Ashcraft, 2009), post-colonial opposition to racism and imperialism (e.g. Ibarra-Colado, 2006; Mir and Mir, 2013) and queer opposition to imposed gender and sexual identities (e.g. Brewis, Hampton and Linstead, 1997; Hassard, Holliday and Wilmott, 2000) all made an impact (although as Rumens (2013; 2014) highlights, queer theory could be seen as occupying a marginal space in CMS and as we show below in some journals appears less than anarchism).

So what role has been given to anarchism within CMS's critique of business and management? A review of the critical management journals can help answer this question. The analysis we conducted took these six CMS-related journals and, using their websites' own search functions, searched for the phrase "anarch*" (using the wildcard asterisk would return results containing all words beginning with 'anarch', such as 'anarchism', 'anarchist', 'anarchy', etc.). We included all results available, which in all cases meant from the journal's inception to when the study was conducted, in May 2013. Based on these searches, we ended up with a total of fifty-five articles.

Of these fifty-five articles, twenty-five had an instance of the search term in the text, three of which were in quotations from other authors; twenty-three included the search term in the bibliography; and only two referenced authors who could be considered as anarchist academics. The search turned up only five instances of what we termed 'naive' uses of anarchism. By this we mean the equation of anarchy with chaos, mindless violence, a complete lack of rules and authority and an ethics of 'anything goes'. Twelve of the fifty-five articles returned had some kind of a radical edge to them: they presented, discussed or came from a radical left political position. Not one of the articles we found in these six critical management journals actually dealt with anarchism at length as a political theory or form of action. In every case where anarchism or anarchy came up it was a fleeting mention, an aside in an article the focus of which was elsewhere. This supports the hypothesis that anarchism has been largely absent from critical management journals: not once in the last 20 or more years has a CMS-related journal published an article that deals extensively with anarchism.

As well as searching for explicit mentions of anarchism in critical management journals, we also searched for other political 'ideologies', for want of a better word: socialism, feminism, Marxism, post-colonial theory and queer theory. Along with anarchism these have all been highlighted as having influenced CMS. In each case there was significantly more interest paid to these other bodies of theory than anarchism. 'Socialism', for example, appears in thirty-one articles in

Culture and Organization compared to anarchism's two, and has forty-three mentions in articles in *Gender, Work and Organization* compared to three article that mention anarchism. *Organization* is one journal in which the differences aren't so pronounced. Socialism comes up in twenty-seven articles in *Organization* while anarchism appears in twenty-two; still a difference in favour of socialism but not such a great one. Looking at 'feminism' tells a similar story, *Accounting, Organizations and Society* has sixty-seven articles but only twelve mentioning anarchism. The only political position or ideology which comes up in a similar amount of articles is that of 'queer' (i.e. queer theory). Four articles in *Culture and Organization* mention 'queer' while two mention anarchism. *Accounting, Organizations and Society* doesn't have a single article that includes the word 'queer' but has twelve that include some mention of anarchism. This perhaps owing to the fact that Queer Theory is a relatively recent academic intervention, emerging in the early 1990s. Still, in some other journals it enjoys more frequent mention than anarchism. Table 1 below includes the figures for each journal and ideology.

Journals	Anarchism	Feminism	Socialism	Marxism	Post-colonial	Queer
<i>Culture and Organization</i>	2	66	31	38	22	4
<i>Critical Perspectives on Accounting</i>	14	105	152	227	82	6
<i>Gender, Work and Organization</i>	3	354	43	41	11	44
<i>Consumption, Markets and Culture</i>	2	64	26	35	6	15
<i>Accounting, Organizations and Society</i>	12	67	161	123	54	0
<i>Organization</i>	22	89	27	38	45	29

Table 1: Mentions of specific political positions or ideologies in CMS journals

Our search in these journals also brought to our attention three articles which both included anarchism in the title and were mentioned more than once as references in the 55 articles we surveyed. These three articles are: David Cooper, David Hayes and Frank Wolf's 'Accounting in organized anarchies: understanding and designing accounting systems in ambiguous situations' (1981) (which was returned in our initial search as well as being referenced more than once); Tony Tinker's 'Metaphor and reification: are radical humanists really libertarian anarchists?' (1986) (referenced more than once); and Eben Moglen's 'Anarchism triumphant: free software and the death of copyright' (1999) (referenced more than once). Of these, only Moglen's article deals with anarchism in a political sense. Cooper, Hayes and Wolf are among those who use anarchy in a naive sense to refer to disorder, while Tinker doesn't really deploy the concept at all and any mention of libertarian anarchism outside the title is buried in an endnote that makes reference to Gareth Morgan's radical humanism.

What this empirical account of the state of CMS journals with respect to anarchism tries to show is not that there are moves behind-the-scenes to exclude research on anarchism from CMS or that CMS is on the whole hostile to anarchist research but the more general point that anarchism simply hasn't featured as a serious concern in CMS. The reasons for this may be many and we wouldn't want to start speculating; this is something further, more qualitative research might be able to determine. Anarchism has only in the last decade or two began to be taken seriously again as a movement on the radical left (e.g. Graeber, 2002; Parker et al., 2007: 10) never mind in academia and perhaps it should come as no surprise that while it has warranted mention now and then given its historical importance, it hasn't featured in the same way that feminism or Marxism have. Anarchist studies itself is a small (but quickly growing) field and while the journal *Anarchist Studies* has been published twice a year since 1993 the first Anarchist Studies Network conference was held only six years ago, at Loughborough University in September 2008. So anarchist research hasn't played much of a role in academia up until the last few years, certainly not when compared to other political movements, and CMS proves, as we have tried to show, to be no different. While the seeds have been there, they haven't yet produced the green shoots this special issue represents. Perhaps our initial disappointment at not finding more of anarchism in CMS in fact could have been expected from the outset. But of course this says nothing of the role anarchism should have in CMS. It may appear infrequently and even then most often in passing, but for us there have been since the outset strong reasons to believe that anarchism has much to offer CMS and vice versa. Ultimately, this special issue attempts to redress the imbalance in CMS journals and provide a

space for discussions of that which lies at the intersection(s) between anarchism and CMS.

Contribution to the field

When starting work on this project, we as editors ventured into uncharted territory, perhaps even creating a new territory that had not previously ever properly existed. The cartographic metaphors (see e.g. Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) that are invoked here often do more than simply bringing the land of CMS and anarchism into being in some kind of Baudrillardian manner, but are actually the best way of describing what the issue does in terms of its goals and contribution. Not only, however, are the whereabouts of anarchism and CMS quite unknown, as analysis outlined in the previous section reveals, but also the route has to pass through a space saturated with a plethora of biases, stereotypes, misconceptions, hostilities and simple lack of understanding. The most challenging aspect of this is that those biases are equally present on the side of organisation studies as well as on that of anarchist studies. This may in fact be evidence of the conceptual flimsiness that the former often suffers from and the controversial (at least from a mainstream academic standpoint) political biography the latter is endowed with.

Thus it seems to us that one of the main and overarching contributions this issue makes is shaking off these misconceptions, paving a way for a productive dialogue and further questioning of what exactly alternative forms of organising can and should be about. Correspondingly, the importance of opening up the debate and identifying points of intersection, can be gauged by the number of preconceived opinions that have to be scrutinised and (hopefully) reevaluated and/or reconsidered in the process of going through the pages of this edition of *ephemera*. If there was a goal we had firmly in our minds while working on this special issue it was precisely this one.

At the same time an attempt to try to firmly establish the coordinates of the intersection between CMS and anarchism might be an example of rigid scholarly fetishisation, which risks reducing each field to dogmatism and their respective default positions. Instead, we think the issue makes most sense as a collection of answers to all sorts of questions that inevitably rise when anarchism is offered to serious reflection, all the more so with management and business as the backdrop. In this light, the contributions, while being self-sufficient and dealing with different problems, together make up a complex and comprehensive narrative aimed at addressing a wide range of practical and theoretical concerns; such concerns that inevitably arise when a progressive theory of organisation is

proposed. Taking the gamut of the various (primarily poorly informed) critiques often levelled at anarchism – a simplistic understanding of political economy, a certain degree of anachronism, a naive utopianism, etc. – as an implicit point from which to distance ourselves, this special issue, through its multiple contributions, presents anarchist theory of organisation as much more nuanced and appealing than it might appear at the outset.

CMS seems to be inevitably connoted as a field where practical knowledge of a kind of ‘how things can be done’ is favoured, increasingly so under the auspices of the call for ‘critical performativity’ (Spicer, et al., 2009). That may be one reason why the anarchist studies perspective presented by Ruth Kinna suggests that the practical side of the recent examples of anarchist organising may constitute the main contribution of anarchism to CMS. However, the likely fallacy of adopting the position of critical performativity with respect to management of organisation can be seen as, perhaps inevitably, succumbing to a Jamesonian diagnosis. We simply stop imagining the world outside of capitalism and also other forms of domination and exploitation. That is why we suggest that as well as paying attention to practical lessons (indeed, this has merited a separate section in this special issue), CMS has to preserve the critical-political edge that Burrell was talking about at the dawn of the CMS, as a heterodox niche within organisation and management studies. Thus, somewhat contrary to Kinna’s suggestion, we contend that there is a lot to be learned and even introduced to the field of CMS from anarchist history as well as anarchist theory; not least to reawaken a suppressed and yet vital capacity for critical imagination.

Imagination is something that envelops this whole project. This is where everything started. Although, as we highlighted above, we didn’t initially think that it would take an awful lot of imagination to bring anarchism and CMS together, it turned out to be essential. That is also why the final section of this special issue affirms radical imagination as one of the crucial ways forward for the project of bringing anarchism and CMS together. Importantly, however, between tender sentiments to imagination, what we managed to accomplish, thanks to all the people who took part in this project, is to recalibrate our understanding of alternative organising and what studying it critically might mean. It would be naive to assume that with this one issue all the omissions, gaps and even deliberate evasions presented in the previous section can be fully addressed. Meanwhile, the range of themes raised within the special issue and variety of the backgrounds of the contributors, is testament to the fact of how much there is to be said about many facets of organisational life and its political implications. What we, as editors, witnessed with this special issue is the emergence of an almost separate vernacular, one that allows questions of the very notion of organisation to be asked, and in a way that breaks with the trite

ideological wisdoms and capitalist discursive hegemony. Introducing anarchist theory and practice to the field of organisation studies, where business and management are shy of being sacred ideologemes, allows for reclaiming of the territory at which we all, willingly or otherwise, dwell

One possible ordering of the special issue

Trying to stitch together an overview of the articles and notes included in this special issue is a difficult task. Not only are there so many (twenty in total, making this one of the biggest issues of ephemera to date), but the connections between them are so manifold that when putting the table of contents together we found ourselves with several options on our hands. Indeed, drawing a map of this special issue has proved perhaps as difficult as drawing a map of a physical landscape, the central concern being: which map do you draw, while all the time acknowledging that the map is not the territory? Ruth Kinna, editor of the journal *Anarchist Studies* and one of the founders of the Anarchism Research Group at Loughborough University, has provided her own overview of the issue from an anarchist studies perspective (see the preface to this issue). She has drawn one of these possible maps. Our table of contents and this overview make up another. We have sub-divided the special issue into five sections, outlined below.

1. *Anarchism as a theory of organisation*

‘Anarchism as a theory of organisation’ borrows its title from Colin Ward’s influential 1966 piece. This is apt not only because Ward is one of the authors cited in this issue the most, but also because organisation, alternative forms of organisation to be more precise, emerges as one of the core concerns of the contributions to this issue. This is perhaps unsurprising given that the intersection here is between anarchist politics and anarchist studies, on the one hand, and critical management studies, a body of sociological thought that deals intimately with questions of organisation: organisation of space, people, bodies, identities, knowledge, resources, value, wealth, and so on. As Kinna notes in her overview, ‘the inventive and productive ways that anarchism has approached questions of organisation in theory and through practical experimentation might be seen as its primary contribution to CMS’. That being said, CMS’ account of organisation and the analysis of different organisational forms many of the authors here present shows that this could also be a terrain on which CMS contributes to anarchist theory and practice.

Martin Parker, George Cheney, Valerie Fournier and Chris Land’s contribution is perhaps the most pertinent in this regard, presenting as it does a manifesto for alternative organisation. They present a view of alternative organisation with

autonomy, solidarity and responsibility as fundamental elements and their article highlights both the promise and difficulties of anarchist and alternative organisation. Individual autonomy and co-operation are on the face of it contradictory, but doesn't identifying such a contradiction as being of central importance risk reducing anarchist engagement with organisation to a simplistic rejection in the name of the untamed individual? Patrick Reedy's article contributes to this project bringing a critical edge to discussions of alternative organisation. He highlights the tendency within critical scholarship to reproduce abstracted accounts of non-managerial sites of organisation rather than engaging critically with the practices and subjectivities that actually constitute such sites. Reedy argues that CMS scholars could learn a lot from critical geographers, sociologists and political theorists in approaching alternative organisation and, crucially, drawing on real-life examples of anarchist organisation. While Reedy's and Parker et al.'s contributions speak to a humility of CMS academics concerned with radical and anarchist organisations, it is important to recognise where and how CMS can contribute to understanding these forms of organisation and, ultimately, making them better as alternatives. In the final contribution to the section on anarchism and organisation theory, J. Christopher Paskewich deals directly with Colin Ward's work and its relation to that godfather of management gurus Peter Drucker. Paskewich brings to this debate on anarchist organisation theory the cautionary tale of taking anarchism merely as a form of organisation (embodying certain principles of flexibility and autonomy and an opposition to strict hierarchy) and ignoring the essential challenge it represents for all forms of domination and exploitation. Crucially though, Paskewich is not suggesting that anarchists and those interested in alternative organisation can learn nothing from Drucker. His work, while limited in its critique, does suggest ways in which autonomous forms of work can be integrated in large organisations. The flip side of this is that it also shows how autonomy can be incorporated and co-opted by capitalist organisation and sapped of its radical potential.

2. Key ideas in anarchism and CMS

The second section of this special issue focusses on some of the key ideas in CMS and anarchist theory and practice. Looking in turn at leadership, ethics, political economy, consumption and technology, this section draws out some of the important overlaps between cutting edge work in both anarchist studies and CMS. Simon Western, who here builds on his earlier-introduced concept of Autonomist Leadership, argues that rather than rejecting leadership in social movements, anarchists and other radicals ought to recognise that leadership is not synonymous with hierarchical structures and fixed leaders. Western draws on Lacanian psychoanalysis to describe the potential of leadership as an

emergent process that occurs in social movements. Western's contribution is important not only because leadership is a central topic of discussion in CMS but also because of how he engages with recent critical work on leadership in social movements. Following Western's contribution comes that of Benjamin Franks. Franks here develops an anarchist critique of business ethics and corporate social responsibility. In a focussed and rigorous account of both anarchism's critical edge and Milton Friedman's position on ethics and the duty of the manager, Franks argues that even a softer version of capitalism, of the type promoted by CSR scholars and activists, should be rejected on the grounds that it clashes with the core anarchist values. Franks shifts anarchism away from a simplistic opposition to coercion and instead defines it in terms of the contestation of hierarchical social structures, a social view of the self, a focus on prefigurative action and the rejection of a universal epistemology. Carl Rhodes takes up the question of business ethics and anarchism from a different direction, basing his contribution on Emmanuel Levinas' an-archic ethics of openness to the Other and sets this against a background of corporate tax-avoidance and the bottom-line justification of 'it's called capitalism.' Rhodes shows that a Levinasian ethics has the potential to pose a critique of corporate authority and can be put to work to justify dissent in the face of the excesses of corporate freedom. This note makes connections between some of the most critical ethical responses to capitalism in CMS and recent developments in Postanarchism. What Rhodes is able to do ultimately is frame anarchism in terms that those unfamiliar with its terminology might find less alienating than other approaches.

The fourth contribution in this section is from Angela Wigger and deals with some of the proposals for an anarchist political economy. While anarchism is often characterised as having less to say about political economy than Marxism, Wigger shows that although it does share much of its critique with its sibling, this doesn't mean that anarchist theorists don't have important contributions to make. Wigger demonstrates that from its inception in the mid-19th century, anarchism was intimately concerned not only with a critique of political economy but also with proposing alternative economic practices. Andreas Chatzidakis, Gretchen Larsen and Simon Bishop, in their note, add more to this anarchist political economic critique by focussing on consumption and the importance of de-growth in imagining and realising practical alternatives. Rather than situating themselves in mainstream de-growth discourse, Chatziadakis et al. put forward a more radical understanding of de-growth and sustainability and provide an analysis of contemporary consumer culture along these lines. They conclude by arguing for a shift from viewing citizenship as consumption to viewing citizenship as social participation. Their account is developed in relation to a more general radical politics but shows again one area of clear intersection between anarchist theory and practice and CMS. The final contribution in this

second section is Simon Collister's note on anarchism, social technology and hacktivism. Collister asks whether there is any space left for technology-enabled radical organisation in contemporary society and draws on a range of theoretical positions including, importantly, hacker culture and Postanarchism. Hacktivism, he shows, is not a homogenous phenomenon and the distinction between an abstract and a critical hacktivism is crucial when it is seen in relation to anarchist and radical politics. Collister also highlights the importance of discussions around technology in the anarchist tradition and points towards the connections between anarchism and cybernetics developed in Ward's *Anarchy* journal in the 1960s.

3. *The roots of anarchist organisation*

The third section of this special issue tries to bring together contributions that examine the roots of anarchism as a theory and practice of organisation. Marcello Vietta opens this section with a detailed historical account of *autogestión* or self-organisation. He describes how the concept emerged in the 19th century and was promoted by anarchists like Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin as well as Marx and others. Vietta lays out a narrative of how *autogestión* developed through the 20th century before making something of a resurgence in the early-21st century with workers co-operatives and the solidarity economy coming to the fore as radical alternatives to capitalist exploitation. This account of *autogestión* is an invaluable contribution to both anarchist studies and CMS given its foundation in Vietta's rich theoretical and empirical research. Moving on from Vietta's large-scale account of anarchist self-organisation, Elen Riot's case study of publishing and multimedia workers in France charts the shift in politics from the anarchist and syndicalist publishing workers of the 19th and 20th centuries to the current neoliberal outlook of those working in the contemporary multimedia and software industries. In a contrast reminiscent of the distinction between Ward's anarchism and Drucker's liberal working practices discussed by Paskewich, Riot shows how in many ways the signified content of anarchism as a radical anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist position has been replaced by a far more accommodating and commercial way of doing business, as exemplified by the likes of Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg and the Googleplex. Remaining in the French context, Norman Jackson and Pippa Carter turn to the pseudo-anarchist Georges Sorel and the ways in which his radical thought connects to many of the most recent developments in critical management and organisation theory. While Sorel has often been adopted as something of a fascist, for example by Carl Schmidt, Jackson and Carter do a fine job of highlighting his personal and academic importance for a more critical, even radical, position and argue that his approaches to language, science, myth and agonistics prefigure the poststructuralist turn in CMS. While not made explicit in the paper itself, the

reader may well note some (unexpectedly) strong connections here between Sorel and Postanarchism, and Sorel could well come to stand alongside Max Stirner as a precursor to this turn in anarchist theory.

4. *Anarchist praxis*

The next section turns from anarchist theory to anarchist praxis and the practical experiences activists and others have with anarchist organising. This is an incredibly important section to have in the special issue as it provides a space for reflection on the real-life examples of anarchism. While many see anarchism as an unworkable ideal, the contributions in this section show that although it certainly isn't unproblematic, anarchism does exist in the lived practices of alternative forms of organising and reproducing social life. Sandra Jeppesen, Anna Kruzynski, Rachel Sarrasin and Émilie Breton of the Collectif de Recherche sur l'Autonomie (CRAC; Collective Autonomy Research Group), a Montreal-based anarchist research collective, discuss in their contribution some of the results of their long-term research project on the anarchist commons in Montreal. Their article both surveys some of the concrete practices of the anarchist commons and provides a reflection on the role of such a commons in resisting exploitation and domination. Their rich analysis identifies several key elements of anarchist organisation and sheds a theoretical light on them that draws on anarchist as well as Autonomist Marxist theory. Fabian Frenzel provides a similar empirically-grounded reflection but this time on protest camps, specifically the Camps for Climate Action in the UK. Building on some of the themes discussed in the contributions to the first section of the special issue, Frenzel argues for a spatial understanding of protest camps and highlights some of the tensions present in these examples of alternative organisation. Space and territory is central to Frenzel's account and he uses his experience of protest camps to counter some recent conclusions about the virtual nature of partial organisation.

Chris Land and Daniel King focus in their contribution instead on voluntary sector organisation and take the example of one organisation that developed from being rooted in radical and anarchist activism to embodying elements of hierarchical and exploitative working relations. They discuss how dissatisfaction with the shift to more a traditional organisational structure coupled with a drastic cut in funding in recent years drove the organisation to a period of reflection and the resumption of anarchist-inspired consensus decision-making practices. Land and King's research, however, highlights some of the problematic aspects of 'translating' anarchist practices to more mainstream organisational settings. The final contribution to the section on anarchist praxis comes from Richard J. White and Colin C. Williams. They aim to provide support for Ward's thesis that

anarchism always exists in society as seeds beneath the snow. Their study of non-commodified work shows that within the cracks of capitalism there are examples of the anarchistic organisation of production and reproduction. While they don't claim that these examples show an explicit uptake of anarchist ideas, their work does show that capitalism is far from hegemonic and alternatives exist in the everyday.

5. *The radical imagination*

The fifth and final section of the special issues turns to look at notions of the radical imagination and anarchist aesthetics. Pierre Guillet de Monthoux provides a retrospective account of his time working at the intersection of anarchism and CMS. Going back to the 1960s and 1970s Guillet de Monthoux discusses some of the key movements in an aesthetic anarchism, situating this as a form of critique that can be deployed in a management context. He describes a personal narrative that brings him into contact with European radicals, the anarcho-syndicalist CNT in the Spanish Civil War and the neoliberal surge of the 1980s ending by highlighting the importance of Jacques Ranciere's aesthetics as well as his politics as examples of anarchist critique. Brigitte Biehl-Missal and Raymond Saner develop further the notion of anarchist aesthetics in focussing on Fernando Pessoa's *The Anarchist Banker*, a short story adapted for a stage environment by Saner. Their analysis is not only directed towards the claims by the eponymous character of being the only real anarchist in practice but also at seeing the staged version of the short story as a form of anarchist reflection that draws on some of the identifiable aspects of anarchist aesthetics discussed by anarchist studies scholars. Staging such a play in the business school context, Biehl-Missal and Saner argue, presents an opportunity for anarchist reflection on the realities of business and management practice. The final paper in this section and in the special issue as a whole is by David Bell. Bell's paper comes last because in many ways it wraps up a lot of the discussions that have been played out across the various articles and notes in the special issue. Bell takes musical improvisation as an example of anarchist praxis and shows clearly how some of the ideas around anarchist organisation set out in this issue can be developed in practice and what the potential pitfalls of these practical experiments are. Important among these is the constant risk of anarchist modes of organisation being incorporated into dominating and exploitative projects.

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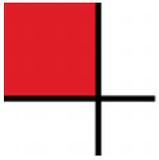
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Anarchism and critical management studies: a reflection from an anarchist studies perspective

Ruth Kinna

Riding the wave of nearly twenty years of global activism, anarchism has established a niche hold in a diverse range of research fields. It would be a wild exaggeration to say that anarchism research has entered the mainstream, but hardly an embellishment to argue that the possibilities of the anarchist turn have been recognised by significant groups of scholars. Richard J. White and Colin C. Williams, in their contribution to this special issue, outline the potential for critical management studies: anarchism not only offers a framework to ‘expose, subvert and undermine’ dominant assumptions about the social order but also a set of distinctive and innovative alternatives to it.

The value of adopting an anarchist squint in CMS might be measured by the challenges involved. A number of contributors explain the want of anarchism in the field by pointing to the fundamental tension that exists between the concepts with which CMS operates and the ethical principles that anarchism champions. Benjamin Franks probes definitions of ‘business’ and ‘management’ to identify a ‘corporocentric’ value system in business ethics which ‘privileges market values’ and runs counter to the bioethics of social anarchism. Patrick Reedy observes similar problems with accepted conceptions of ‘organisation’. Starting from Ahrne and Brunsson’s ‘complete’ formulation, he argues that this assumes the existence of hierarchy and a highly centralised apparatus for decision-making which regulates members by command, compliance-monitoring and sanctions. These impossibly strict criteria not only run counter to ordinary-language understandings of organisation, suggesting that some groups called organisations are in fact something else (would the OECD qualify as an organisation on these criteria?) they also normalise a set of practices and

behaviours that are antithetical to any conceivable form of anarchism. As a result, however, Reedy argues that anarchism ‘suggests a different set of evaluative criteria for thinking about the everyday practices of alternative organisations. Even the simple but rarely considered idea that organisation should primarily exist in order to meet the material, existential and social needs and desires of its participants creates and evaluates space that moves us beyond the usual consideration of struggle and resistance in conventional workplaces’. In other words, because CMS appears to operate in a conceptual universe that is hostile to anarchist perspectives and testing for anarchists to negotiate, it’s possible to find a positive stimulus for CMS in anarchist thinking. Indeed, the inventive and productive ways that anarchism has approached questions of organisation in theory and through practical experimentation might be seen as its primary contribution to CMS.

Anarchism and organisation

‘Anarchists are not against organization’. Martin Parker, George Cheney, Valerie Fournier and Chris Land are of course right, but the contrary view remains stubbornly persistent. The idea that anarchism is against organisation is not explained solely by the historical misrepresentation of anarchist thought: some anarchists have argued that the capacity for groups and individuals to behave anarchistically makes the construction of organisational systems redundant and potentially risky. Anti-organisation currents cut across the left-right, communist-individualist divide that Franks discusses and they are not restricted to the forms of Stirnerism lampooned by Fernando Pessoa (which Brigitte Biehl-Missal and Raymond Saner examine). However, there’s a considerable distance between the principles of anarchist anti-organisationalism and the anti-organisation ideas that critics of anarchism ascribe to anarchists without discrimination.

As Pierre Guillet de Monthoux’s essay suggests, one of the central tenets of the anti-anarchist anti-organisation thesis is the apparent resonance of classical elitist critique with anarchism. On this account, Robert Michels’s iron law of oligarchy exposes a truth about bureaucratic degeneration and the effects of state centralisation which anarchists might accept. However, the conflation of elitism with anarchism encourages a parallel elision of organisation with hierarchy. Correctly understood as an antonym for hierarchy, or priestly rule, anarchy is thus also wrongly interpreted as the antonym of organisation. Proudhon described anarchy as ‘no-rule’, yet it appears to stand for no rules, underpinned by a philosophical critique of authority that renders decision-making impossible. This construction works against anarchism in two ways. As anti-authoritarians, anarchists emerge as critics of organisation by default, whether or not they

actually call themselves anti-organisationist, and hopelessly idealistic to boot. Indeed, in the light of Michels' insistence that anarchist communism was not an exception to the 'law' that he formulated, (though he argued that it was more resistant than either syndicalism or parliamentary socialism, the main target of his attack), the presumed anarchist rejection of organisation appears futile. Unlike elitists, who embrace the oligarchic tendencies apparently latent in organisation, anarchists can only advocate for fluid alternative practices knowing that they will inevitably solidify time or, as Frenzel's analysis of climate camps shows, by mirroring what are deemed to be statist practices. For as long as anarchist conventions are described in oppositional terms, anarchism will inescapably be shown to be incapable of delivering any of the functions that organisation makes possible. At the same time, concepts that feed into contestable mainstream conceptions of organisation (of 'decision-making', 'rule', 'membership' and so forth) remain unexamined.

Anarchists who explicitly disavow organisation sometimes appear to follow the logic of this argument and moralise the concept. As Fabian Frenzel argues, this is the approach taken by Ahrne and Burnsson, which he also adopts. Hierarchy, membership, rules, monitoring and sanctions, he argues, are entailed by organisation. Networks, on the other hand, 'are social forms without organization'. In anarchist circles, organisation is sometimes conflated with a particular idea of power. Bob Black's view is that 'organization makes inevitable the crushing of an individual who is right by a machine which is wrong' (1994: 48-9). The worry here is about fetishism and the homogenising, disciplining practices that allegiance to policy encourages. Members of organisations might not seek to oppress others, but they nonetheless end up coercing them because they prioritise the well-being of the organisation over the interests of any of its members.

Anarchist anxieties about organisation are more productively read in the context of the new elitism of sociologists like C. Wright Mills than the classical elitism of Michels. Anarchists might agree that Michels pinpointed some of the factors that contribute to the degeneration of even radical groups and the centralising tendencies active on organisations operating within the framework of the state. This was precisely the point that Gustav Landauer made of the German Social Democratic Party. It played, he argued, on the 'reactionary tendency of an oppressed people' in 'the most shameful way' to construct 'an extremely strict party rule ... strong enough to crush on every occasion the rising germs of freedom and revolt' (Landauer, 1896?: 2). Nevertheless, critics of party politics like Landauer approached organisation as critics of elitism, not as elitists fearful of 'the mass' and the principle of democracy.

Unlike elitists, anarchists have often distinguished between organisation as a social practice and organisation as a statist form. This was the approach adopted by Colin Ward, who features in several of the contributions here. As a result, some anarchists have defined anarchism in explicitly – and critics might say narrowly – organisational terms. To quote one activist group, anarchism might be defined ‘simultaneously’ as ‘both a critique of authoritarian forms of organisation which foster manipulation and passivity, and a theory of free organisation... organised from below rather than without’ (Black and Red, 1977). Even those who might quibble with this description normally accept that anarchism has an organisational dimension: the idea that organisation need not entail hierarchy is hardly contentious. As Black argues, Stirner’s Union of Egoists, the thinnest organisational current within anarchism, is a form of organisation – ‘for mutual self-help for just so long (and no longer) as it suited any egoist to deal with it’ (Black, 1992: 184).

Acknowledging the limitations of anti-anarchist organisation critique raises some thorny issues about the potential for anarchist or anarchistic organising within the statist organisational mainstream. This is the theme in several of the essays. Chris Land and Daniel King present a case study of a UK voluntary sector organisation to illustrate the enormous pressures active on radical groups to adopt practices that run counter to their professed aims. Equally, examining the attitudes of French publishing and multimedia workers, Elen Riot argues that the prospects for the adoption of anarchist organisational practices are remote where there is no collective memory of lived, shared experiences. It might be argued, as Marcelo Vieta contends, that history is a potent source for contemporary activism. Riot believes otherwise. And even though she finds that an awareness of historical traditions helps shape contemporary projects, she argues that anarchism cannot be learned from historians. Riot is not alone in squeezing out the ghosts. Perhaps because anarchism has come to scholarly attention through recent global activism, the outstanding contribution of anarchist organising to CMS seems to come from recent practical activity, especially social movement practice, not from anarchist history.

Anarchism and the anarchistic

The tension between anarchism and the anarchistic or the conditions that anarchists variously link to anarchy and the possibility of challenging orthodox organisational behaviours through radical experimentation informed by social movement activism is examined by a number of contributors. Marius De Geus’s discussion of Kropotkin’s work gets to the heart of this tension. In *Mutual Aid*, he argues, Kropotkin presented a historical sociology of the state in which he

highlighted the continued existence of un-colonised traditional communities that remained under the radar of the state and the resilience of anarchistic practices that by-passed or resisted statist controls. Kropotkin's account pointed to the interruption or inhibition of a potential for social development, which he linked to an evolving and increasingly self-conscious expression of anarchist ethics. Anarchism, he argued, described a commitment to the protection of these residual communities and the fostering of the anarchistic behaviours they encouraged in conditions that were inimical to them: the historical rise of the state in Western Europe left both traditional and new mutual aid societies vulnerable to further encroachments. Anarchism, on this account, described a politics committed to the expansion or defence of these communities. For Kropotkin, as De Geus explains, it included a theory of change and entailed advocacy for communism in order to ground fully anarchistic practices and to protect against future degeneration. Kropotkin's twin concerns were the possibility of unlimited individual accumulation and the creation of economic inequalities that might support the establishment of systems of political subordination and/or the concentration of political power facilitating institutionalised injustice through slavery and exploitation. Yet Kropotkin's idea was that the process of revolutionary change would support social and cultural diversity. Anarchy would provide the space for communities to devise their own social practices and codes of behaviour which, for Kropotkin, had the potential to support the expression of an anarchist ethics.

J. Christopher Paskewich's discussion of Colin Ward's adaptation of Kropotkin's thesis in *Anarchy in action* demonstrates how the tenor of this argument has changed in the post-war period, where wholesale structural change appears unfeasible. Ward's two key observations, Paskewich argues, were that '[p]eople in every country around the world have created some spaces or groups that are self-determining and non-hierarchical' and that 'people have been encouraged to misunderstand their own natures' as competitive rather than co-operative. Also drawing on Ward, White and Williams make a similar point. They note: 'anarchism ... is a description of a mode of human organisation, rooted in the experience of everyday life, which operates side by side with, and in spite of the dominant trends of our society'. One effect of this recasting has been to treat everyday practices as exemplars of anarchy rather than, as Kropotkin argued, sites for the expression of an ethics which demonstrated the viability of anarchist revolutionary politics. For White and Williams, the empirical analysis of household work shows that 'anarchist forms of organisation – underpinned by mutual aid, reciprocity, co-operation, collaboration and inclusion – are found to be deeply woven into the fabric of everyday "capitalist" life'. Another consequence is to identify the characteristics of social movement organising – networks, syndicates, autonomous groups, collectives and affinity groups – to

show how principles that underpin experiments might be transferred from one location to another.

Paskewich finds a key to management orthodoxy in autonomy, creativity and freedom. Simon Western similarly uses contemporary movement practices to delineate a conception of autonomist leadership based on values of spontaneity, autonomy, mutualism, networks and affect. Notwithstanding anarchist rejections of leadership, he argues that autonomist leadership is consistent with anarchism. Parker, Cheney, Fournier and Land propose three principles to develop alternatives to mainstream management norms: individual autonomy, solidarity and responsibility to the future. It's difficult to object to any of these, but there's a risk that the structural conditions which, in Kropotkin's view, inhibit the full realisation of these values, becomes divorced from their independent evaluation. In this way, the aspirations of anarchists who organise in projects, setting up infoshops, zines, skools, squats and housing co-operatives, in kitchens, gardens, bicycle workshops and micro-breweries are adapted to modify precisely the institutions that activists seek to abandon.

David Bell highlights a philosophical risk with the analysis of anarchist principles. Anarchism, he notes, 'is frequently (mis)understood as the belief in absolute freedom, which is (to be) brought about through the eradication of hierarchies that impose power over the individual.' Canonical writers including Stirner, Proudhon, Bakunin and Rocker expressed wariness of treating any concept as an 'absolute'. Even while describing himself as a fanatical lover of liberty, Bakunin recognised that the freedom was defined differently by elites than by those excluded from this group and would remain always contestable. Biehl-Missal and Saner's discussion of Pessoa's story of the anarchist banker highlights the absurdities that follow from the apparently rigorous application of an abstract idea – also individual freedom. Although the context is shaped by an equally problematic desire to seek an escape from all 'social fictions', Pessoa's treatment of anarchist freedom provides the Banker with a justification to amass unlimited wealth in order to resist the controlling influence of money. Avoiding the pitfalls of abstract analysis, Bell returns to a practice-based approach, examining a self-consciously alternative collective musical improvisation as an ideal form. The risk of seeking to replicate these practices, Bell notes, is recuperation. De Monthoux notes the smooth corruption of Jerry Rubin's 'do it' into a sales pitch for pliant consumption; invitations to workplace morning raves, motivated by a bid to improve productivity and team-working, speak to a similar process of absorption and manipulation (Campagna, 2013). But there's another risk that Bell overlooks. He argues that a commitment to communism, understood as a Marxist critique of material relations, is required to provide the necessary reinforcement to anarchist organisational experiments. Re-injecting

Wardian analysis of anarchist practices with a Kropotkinite concern to realise structural change, Bell by-passes anarchist theory in favour of Marxist analysis.

Angela Wigger notes that anarchism has sometimes been described as Marxism's poor cousin, lacking a distinctive critique or analysis of capitalism. What anarchism 'lacks', however, is a theoretical touchstone. Because anarchism has produced different sociologies of the state, provided an array of anthropological studies of stateless living and offered a range of critiques of capitalism, variously inflected with class, feminist, queer, ecological and postcolonial thinking, anarchists differ significantly in their treatment and understanding of anarchism. The weight that groups or individuals attach to particular organisational principles will depend on the ways in which any of these themes and approaches are understood and combined, delimited by possibilities of existing practice. Nevertheless, it is possible to elaborate anarchist theory and to consider both the extent of the overlaps with non-anarchist forms of socialism and the significant questions that anarchism asks about the purposes of organisation.

Kropotkin is part of a significant anarchist tradition which rejects the legitimacy of the state's regulation of the political and/or the economic sphere, either for the sake of protecting the freedoms said to be contained within the other, or in search of some sort of ideal balance. As Franks argues, this current of anarchist critique has not been trained on the possibility of regulating neo-liberal regimes by strengthening democratic controls. Its vision is typically revolutionary. In this context, the question that is properly put to Colin Ward about his suggestion 'that anarchist organisations should be voluntary, functional, temporary and small' is not 'functional for who?' (as Parker et al. ask) but, 'functional for what?' This is the tack taken by Andreas Chatzidakis, Gretchen Larsen and Simon Bishop. Do we, as they suggest, continue to organise for growth 'where fulfilment, autonomy and freedom are sought through consumption' or for 'de-growth'? Should organisation be designed with a view to realising human flourishing and psychological well-being, as Ward's contemporary Paul Goodman argued, or to meet the demands of consumer markets and shopping-mall economics? Anarchist bioethicists might define function in terms of the health of species or, as Franks puts it, the recognition of 'the inherent value of all living entities'. Answers to these macro questions importantly shape the micro experiments which anarchists support.

Utopianism and prefiguration

Critics often seize on the impossibility of anarchist politics. Yet the consistent application of anarchist critique is wrongly interpreted as an inability to analyse the distinctive harms that different systems support. Anarchists are able to differentiate between market and legal freedoms and are sensitive to ways in which changes to regulatory policy produce different and more or less negative results for particular groups of people – the marginalised, exploited and disadvantaged. Indeed, anarchist ethics focus attention on the incentive structures and moral codes that underpin existing forms of organisation, as well as their effects. In their discussion of Sorel, Norman Jackson and Pippa Carter comment that it has become ‘unacceptable, within the dominant discourse, to claim that the working class should be seen as oppressed’, notwithstanding the introduction of a catalogue of austerity measures that have resulted in the ‘intensification of labour, infantilisation of the workforce, mass unemployment, absence of a living wage, zero hours contracts, unsafe working conditions’. Anarchists are not such purists that they prefer to ignore these realities for the sake of the revolution to come. On the contrary, the everyday judgments that activists make about struggle and resistance – openly discussed in a range of anarchist media – are typically informed by assessments of policy changes in particular in areas like immigration, asylum, education, food production, development, land rights and the exploitation of natural resources.

Anarchist aspirations for change and the project of imagining alternative futures become unintelligible when anti-organisation arguments are read incautiously. Anarchists who seek to challenge the neo-liberal mantra ‘there is no alternative’ either emerge as misguided utopians because they are assumed to reject all that exists (‘organisation’) or prohibited from thinking about possible futures on the grounds that utopianism contravenes anarchism’s anti-organisational principles. Drawing on contemporary postanarchist theory, this is the argument that Carl Rhodes makes:

Anarchy here is in the form of ‘ideological dissent’ that contests corporate sovereignty and power... Such a requirement is not to be based on the ideas that we might be graced, *deus-ex-machina*, by a new form of self-management where all forms of oppression dissipate; no fantastical utopians. Instead it involves a recognition that the space between sovereign organization and anarchic ethics must be maintained. Politically, this favours dissensus as a practical ethico-politics over utopianism as an impossible dream. Such an ethics is enacted through a ‘project of ethico-political resistance and critique that works against forms of coercion, inequity, and discrimination that organization so frequently and easily produce.

Several contributors note that prefiguration, or the demand for consistency of means with ends, fills the space between contemporary practices and utopian ideas of anarchy. According to Wigger, prefiguration demands that 'new forms of social organisation ought to be realised straightaway, while the means of social change must prefigure the anticipated anarchist future'. This formulation, however, suggests a division of activist practices, on the one hand, from long-term goals and the strategies designed to meet them, on the other. While it is the case that 'anarchists seek to stimulate solidarity activities and imitation' by 'exemplary political actions' prefiguration is more often described as a discussion about the interrelationship of present practices and future goals. In some accounts, the means and ends of struggle are collapsed in social organising. Frenzel outlines this relationship: 'Prefigurative politics focuses on the way of doing politics, its processes. The means of progressive politics need to be aligned with its ends'. Sandra Jeppesen et al. quote Federici and Caffentzis: the 'Anti-capitalist commons are not the end-point of anti-capitalist struggle, but its means'. In other accounts, prefiguration involves reading between utopian aspirations and experience, developing new practices in the course of organising and in the light of reflection.

As Vieta argues, the utopianism of anarchist prefigurative politics differs from the blueprint planning associated with early-nineteenth century utopian socialism or, for example, the less romantic kinds of blueprints devised Soviet planners. In prefigurative politics utopian goals are themselves scrutinised as part of the practice of experimentation. For some activists, prefiguration is intimately linked to resistance activity because the imaginative spaces for utopian dreaming are said to occur only in moments of crisis. Even then, there can be considerable variation in the elaboration of anarchist goals. Land and King emphasise work-based principles, commenting that Ward argued that '[t]he autonomy of the worker at work is the most important field in which [the] expropriation of decision-making can apply.' Vieta adopts a similar slant. Other anarchists (including Kropotkin) have emphasised community as a primary sphere, perhaps more open to the idea that expropriation of decision-making can apply in fields outside work (for example in health care or education) equally important to the expropriated. For Simon Collister 'hactivism offers a potent and powerful model of anarchist organizing'. It provides a 'prefigurative framework for twenty-first century anarchist organizing which offers a rich potential for experimentation and the creation of socio-technological solutions out of the immanent, irreducible social space of Postanarchism'.

In Jeppesen et al.'s work, prefiguration is linked to constitutive practices. They describes how a process of calling out to reveal bigotry or privilege, racialised or gendered behaviours has given way to calling in, a process designed to resolve

tensions through care and compassion. Both approaches support the goal of non-domination but the decision to pursue different methods importantly transforms the ethics of the group and changes the character of its organisational practices. The desire, they note, is ‘to focus on building bridges ... for gentleness, pleasure, enjoyment and passion in life and in organizing’.

Constitutionalism, Paskewich notes, is typically associated with particular institutional doctrines, for example checks and balances or the separation of powers. Above all, it is associated with the desire to set decision-making arrangements in stone, in ways that render organisations incapable of confronting, still less addressing, forms of domination that arise subsequent to the constitutional settlement. On Jeppesen’s account of anarchist organising, prefigurative politics enables individuals to be flexible about group practices and the commitment to anarchist ethics itself provides the dynamic for continual revision and change. Groups are constituted in a manner that requires individuals to behave in particular ways – respectfully, hopefully, with kindness – but responsibility for the group’s constitution rests with the membership.

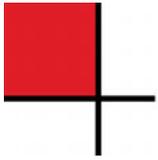
Anarchist sociologies of the state and CMS analysis suggest that the adoption of these kinds of prefigurative practices in organisations constituted within or by the state is challenging, notwithstanding the widespread evidence that anarchy remains active in capitalist and statist societies. However, the value of anarchism to CMS does not depend on showing that anarchy exists or that it anarchism provides a solution to all the evils of neo-liberalism and the state, only that there are multiple points of entry into organisational practice and that the strength of critical approaches rests on their adaptability and combination.

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The question of organization: A manifesto for alternatives*

Martin Parker, George Cheney, Valerie Fournier and Chris Land

abstract

This paper is an attempt to articulate some general principles which might guide anarchist thinking about organized alternatives to market managerialism and might be read as a sort of manifesto for defining ‘the alternative’. That is to say, it describes what we include in our list of useful possibilities, and what to exclude on the grounds that it doesn’t fit with our definition of what counts as sufficiently different from the present. We suggest three principles which we believe that radicals should be guided by – autonomy, solidarity and responsibility – and that we think any reflection on the politics of organizing needs to deal with. We wish to encourage forms of organizing which respect personal autonomy, but within a framework of co-operation, and are attentive to the sorts of futures which they will produce. This is a simple statement to make but it produces some complex outcomes since gaining agreement on any of these ideas is not a simple matter.

Introduction

...anarchy is not the negation of organization but only of the governing function of the power of the State. (Dunoi, 1907)

Anarchists are not against organization. The tired old joke needs to be treated as evidence that someone knows little about the ideas they so quickly dismiss. Indeed, we think that anarchist thought and practice is a crucial element in thinking about how progressive politics might be conducted. It is easy to point to

* This paper is a fairly substantially revised version of chapter three in Parker et al. (2014). Thanks to the editors and reviewer for this special issue.

the problems of the present, and then to suggest (at the end of a series of complaints) that a new world is possible. What is much harder is to systematically imagine what those alternatives might look like, to turn opposition and analysis into proposals. Colin Ward once suggested that anarchist organizations should be voluntary, functional, temporary and small (1966: 387). Whilst this is a provocative beginning, it shows the problem with any attempt to state general principles as if they were truths. 'Functional' for who? Could a temporary organization administer justice, or make computers? How small should an organization be, or how big can it get before we split it in two? Is slavery an alternative to capitalism? Is piracy, or the Kibbutz, or digging unused land for food? At some point, being critical of other economic ideas and institutions must turn into a strategy of providing suggestions, resources and models, but these themselves must be criticized. There are no grounds for assuming that 'alternatives' are somehow new, pure or uncontroversial. 'Politics' will not end because we have new organizational forms.

However, in this paper we want to explore just what sort of principles we might deploy to think about the question of organization. Anarchism is a really rich stream of thought to stimulate such ideas because it is, in an important sense, the first form of 'organization theory' in which 'organization' was assumed to be an open term. From the earliest forms of anarchism the problem was precisely how systems of governance might be arranged in the absence of the divine right of kings, the violence of the state, or the coercions of capital. Unlike the sort of organization theory which exists within the business school, and which assumes economic white man, managers, managed, the sale of labor, the superiority of markets and so on, anarchist organization theory assumes as little as it can. There might be a commitment to some version of individualism and/or community, but even these presuppositions need to be spelled out as a precursor to actual descriptions of communes, federations, syndicalism, mutual aid, co-operatives or whatever. This is to say that anarchism (like some feminisms and forms of green thought) is a system which proposes organizational answers to political questions. It is in this sense that we offer this paper as a contribution to the project of conjoining anarchism and critical management studies. Not anarchist organizing as a closed category, but certainly a theory of organization which is infused with anarchist ideas.

This paper is not a worked out manifesto for a new world which could be inaugurated tomorrow. The world is more complex than that, with different histories and spaces running parallel to the rise of different capitalisms. Neither do we believe that there will be another world one day in which all our problems will be solved once its logic is explained, or humans can become innocent again, or a prophet turns up with some instructions. Instead we argue here that all

forms of organizing are ‘political’, which is another way of saying that they are contested. They have upsides and downsides, and it simply isn’t possible to say that there are some arrangements which are unambiguously good, and others that are unambiguously bad. Markets can be hugely helpful forms of reward and distribution in some circumstances, and communes can be oppressive and narrow places which crush individuals. Hierarchies of authority can be helpful too on occasion, particularly for making quick decisions, while democratic and popular education could easily reproduce sexist and racist ideas. The key issue that we want to bring out in this paper is an awareness of the consequences of particular forms, and to always understand that there are other ways of doing things. We have choices, individually and collectively, and we must never assume that ‘there is no alternative’ because of certain immutable laws of markets or organizing (Clegg, 1990: 58; Fisher 2007).

This paper is an attempt to articulate some general principles, understood as qualified and contingent, which might guide thinking about alternatives to globalizing capitalism and market managerialism at the present time. We are trying to say what we are ‘for’ and not just endlessly moan about what we are ‘against’ (Parker, 2002a). Below, we outline some key principles which seem to tie together the forms of organizing that we are positive about, and might be read as a sort of manifesto for defining ‘the alternative’. That is to say, it describes what we include in our list of useful possibilities, and what to exclude on the grounds that it doesn’t fit with our definition of what counts as sufficiently different from the present. In broad terms, we will suggest three principles which we believe that radicals should be guided by – autonomy, solidarity and responsibility – and that we think any reflection on the politics of organizing needs to deal with. To summarize very briefly, we wish to encourage forms of organizing which respect personal autonomy, but within a framework of co-operation, and are attentive to the sorts of futures which they will produce. This is a simple statement to make, almost a vacuous one, but it actually produces some complex outcomes, because gaining agreement on any of these ideas is very tricky indeed.

The means and ends of organizing

My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. (Foucault, 1983: 231-232)

It isn’t always easy to decide what is ‘alternative’, and we think it would be hard to say that there are any forms of organization, or specific organizations, which we can always and forever decide to be good. There are plenty of accounts of

institutions which start well, but fall into bad habits, or become dominated by a cadre of leaders, or within which the excitement of the new becomes the atrophy of the old. Sometimes we could say that a noble goal has been displaced by a business logic, the logic of capitalism. Another possible explanation is that, as the sociologist Robert Michels suggested with his phrase the 'iron law of oligarchy', those who become powerful within an organization are often motivated by self-enhancement, self-preservation and the consolidation of power (Georgiou, 1981). This means that organizations often just keep on doing whatever it is that they do, like zombies that move, but have no consciousness or heart. As Cheney (2002) notes, organizations don't usually choose to self-destruct, regardless of whether their ends have been corrupted, or their means are still appropriate.

This means that we always need to be wary about organizing, even organizing that looks like it is 'alternative'. Part of the problem here rests on making some judgments about the inseparability of means and ends. That is to say, is it enough to decide that a particular form of organizing aims at an end that we deem to be 'good'? We might well say that it is, and consequently that certain ends justify almost any means. So, if a big bank is making money from microfinance, but people are being lifted out of poverty, then we might be satisfied. Or, if a very hierarchical form of managerialism is being used in a company that manufactures organic foods, then we could still potentially agree that this is a good organization. Of course we can also play these arguments in reverse, and suggest that the means are the evidence that we should use in our judgments. So if an organization was co-operatively owned, but engaged in a particularly cruel form of factory farming, we could perhaps discount the means in some way. Or perhaps we could imagine a form of community currency being used to exclude 'outsiders' from engaging in certain kinds of financial transactions. In these cases, it might be that our care for animals, or for a certain sort of humans, means that the ownership of the organization or the origin of the medium of exchange is pretty irrelevant to our final judgments.

As should be pretty clear, the distinctions we are making here are very troublesome, and could well create some rather paradoxical outcomes. In fact, we believe that any argument about a separation between means and ends should be treated with extreme skepticism, because we do not think you can make a judgment about one in isolation from the other. The distinction between the two often makes us assume that we have no choice, but to use particular methods, or to attempt to achieve particular goals. Max Weber captured the distinction rather nicely in terms of his distinction between the instrumentally rational action which in modern times he saw as characteristic of bureaucratic organizations (*Zweckrational*) and value rational action which was aimed at a particular ethical, political or spiritual goal (*Wertrational*) (Weber, 1978 [1922]). But though they

may seem different, the key issue for Weber is that they are both 'rational' in the sense that they are explanations that can be used to justify forms of action and organization. So the question is not whether one way of thinking is irrational, or less rational, because every form of life is underpinned by a certain sort of rationality. We can't simply disentangle the question of how something is done from the broader issue of why it should be done as if value rationality could simply be discounted, and neither do noble ends justify the use of any means necessary.

Take for example the question of the university. Can we detach 'how' something is being taught from why it is being taught? Many policy makers and students might argue that the university should be relevant to the economy and business, which typically seems to be a way of saying that it should fit students for jobs. In which case, the university is merely a means to get a degree certificate. But it is very difficult to argue that the end of certifying potential employees is the *only* purpose of the university, simply because the means are crucial in order to achieve the end. The process of learning is what we learn, and the certificate you get when you leave states that you have undergone that process, not simply that you have learnt certain facts and can repeat them when poked. Hypnosis or smart drugs would be more effective if this was the case, and we wouldn't bother with reading, listening or talking. Indeed in some sense the educational means are the end, unless we argue that a university is only there to award degree certificates in return for money. To use a different example, we sometimes walk because we want to get somewhere in particular, but we also go for walks because we like walking, and it keeps us healthy, and we can talk with our friends and see interesting things. Which is the means and which is the end?

Think about the idea of making a decision. Within conventional organizations, decisions are made by those with power and status. We could say that a decision is a means to an end, and having 'managers' to make those decisions is a means that ensures that getting to the end is more speedy and efficient. Perhaps, but as many radicals – but particularly anarchists – have argued, we could treat a collective form of decision making as an end in itself as well as a means. This might be based, not on an utilitarian meta-ethics which assumed that means and ends could be clearly distinguished, but an account which orients social practices to virtues which can be collectively discussed (Franks, 2008). We might then think about the art of cooperating, and not about organizing as simply a means to some end (Lovink and Scholz, 2007). If the intention of the organization's members is to take decisions slowly and democratically, then the very process of organizing in a particular way becomes its own reward, as well as a process by which other goals might be achieved. As Maeckelberg's work on the alter-globalization movement shows (2009; 2011), such organizing is 'prefigurative',

in the sense that it attempts to bring new forms of social relationships into being. A distinction between means and end, cause and effect, which seems quite secure in common sense (and utilitarian reasoning) begins to look rather suspicious, and politically loaded, in the context of alternative organizing which attempts to build a new world in the context of the old.

Hence we are suspicious of arguments which suggest that any means are acceptable to achieve certain ends, just as we are about suggestions that only certain means are 'efficient' or justifiable. Allowing big financial institutions to make money from the poor is an useful example here, because deeming microfinance or 'bottom of the pyramid' arguments not to be 'alternative' doesn't mean that we are against poverty reduction, simply that we do not think that any means are justifiable. (And in any case, there might be better means than these.) A key part of our argument here is to show that we can, and should, treat all assertions about the relationship between means and ends as political ones. We should always be suspicious if someone tells that there is no alternative, no choice, and that we should be 'realistic'. The end point of many arguments against change is that things have to be like this because of 'the market', or 'the bottom line', or 'human nature' which are usually assertions that suit pro-capitalists and those who have something to defend in the present state of affairs. In fact, we think that almost no particular forms of human organizing are inevitable, and that there are always choices about means, ends and the relations between them. For example, if we imagine the university as a mechanism for producing the future, then perhaps it can produce different futures, and different sorts of people to inhabit those futures? The only other position is that history has ended and there are no alternatives, in which case writing articles like this, in journals like this one, is an exercise in futility.

Three principles

...everyone organizes themselves – organizers and anti-organizers. Only those who do little or nothing can live in isolation, contemplating. This is the truth; why not recognize it. (Malatesta, 1907)

Opening up the politics and possibilities of organizing, whether using anarchist theory or any other, like this doesn't solve our problems. It makes things much more difficult because we can longer admit of any arguments about inevitability, and instead have to justify our individual and collective choices on the basis of what forms of rationality we wish to encourage. These will have to be reasons which encompass both means and ends, processes and purposes, and rest upon some sort of idea about the kinds of society and people we wish to encourage. This means that visions of a better form of social order, ideas about utopia if you

will (Parker 2002b; Parker, Fournier and Reedy 2007), are central to the judgments we might make concerning what is alternative and what is mainstream, about the difference between community and coercion, fair exchange and appropriation. We cannot assume that we will ever know the 'one best way' to organize (to borrow Frederick Taylor's term), and might instead encourage debate about ideas that are different to the way that we do things now – whether old, new, marginal, hidden, possible or imaginary.

Having said that, it seems necessary to try to explain the general principles that we think tie together what we mean by 'alternative' because we are not suggesting that 'anything goes'. There are many 'alternatives' to the present, including fascism, feudalism and slavery, but we are not advocating any of these here. As we noted quickly above, we think there are three broad orientations, values, logics or principles at work here – autonomy, solidarity and responsibility – and in this section we will explore them in a bit more detail.

First, we think that any alternative worth exploring must be able to protect some fairly conventional notions of individual autonomy, that is to say, to respect ourselves. This is not a controversial or novel idea, but one that underpins most conservative, liberal and libertarian political philosophy (Mill, 2005 [1859]; Nozick, 1974). Words like liberty, diversity, dignity and difference are more often honored in the breach rather than the observance but still gesture towards the radical proposal that individual freedoms really do matter. When we feel that we have been forced to do something that we don't want to do we are diminished in an important way and any social system which relies on coercion of an economic, ideological or physical form is not one which we can support easily. This means that we do think that individuals should have choices about some of the most important ways in which they live their lives. If there is no autonomy within a given social system, only rules, then we are justified in calling it totalitarian, uniform and intolerant of difference. For most people this will be an easy principle to establish, because it underlies so much of the ideology which supports neo-liberal capitalism, and yet we also want to argue that it contains a principle which must lie at the heart of any robust 'alternative'. As anarchists like Godwin, Proudhon and Stirner showed, a serious investigation of the conditions of possibility for freedom rapidly leads to a thoroughgoing criticism of the present, even if it is a present which claims to value individuals and encourage difference.

Our second principle reverses the assumptions of the first, and begins with the collective and our duties to others. This could be variously underpinned with forms of communist, socialist and communitarian thought, as well as virtue ethics, and insists that we are social creatures who are necessarily reliant on

others (MacIntyre 1981; Marx and Engels 1848/1967; Mulhall and Swift, 1992). This means that words like solidarity, co-operation, community and equality become both descriptions of the way that human beings are, and prescriptions for the way that they should be. On their own, human beings are vulnerable and powerless, victims of nature and circumstance. Collectively – bound together by language, culture and organization – they become powerful, and capable of turning the world to their purposes. Perhaps even more important than this is the way in which we humans actually make each other, providing the meanings and care which allow us to recognize ourselves as ourselves. In the most general sense, this is what ‘social construction’ means (Berger and Luckmann 1967), the making of the human through and with other humans in such a way that it becomes impossible to imagine even being human without some conception of a society to be oriented to. In terms of anarchist thought, the collectivism and mutualism of Bakunin, Kropotkin and anarchist communists of the First International fit fairly well with these sort of understandings.

Let’s pause a moment before thinking about the third principle, because it’s fairly clear that one and two are at best in tension with one another, at worst contradictory. How can we be both true to ourselves and at the same time orient ourselves to the collective? How can we value freedom, but then give it up to the group? Our answer to these problems is that we need to understand both principles as co-produced. For example, when we speak of being free, we usually mean ‘free to’, in the sense of being free to be able to exercise choices about where to go, who to vote for, what to buy and so on. This is precisely the idea of liberty that we are very often encouraged to imagine as being the pre-eminent principle around which our lives *should* be organized within a consumer society. But a moment’s thought also allows us to see that ‘freedom to’ is only possible if we also experience ‘freedom from’. As the political philosopher Isaiah Berlin (1969) put it, ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ liberty are not the same things, even if they appear to be aimed at the same goals. The individual freedom to be who we want to be rests on our freedoms from hunger, dislocation, violence and so on which can only be pursued collectively. We, as individuals, can only exercise our autonomy within some sort of collective agreement, a social contract if you like, which provides us with a shelter against events. So ‘freedom’ is an entirely abstract concept unless it is embedded within some sort of institutions. Otherwise, we might as well talk about being free to starve or pay high interest rates on loans, or at liberty to become a refugee or political prisoner. This is what liberalism, and extreme libertarianism, so often misses. In its entirely credible and modern defense of individual autonomy against despotic exercises of power it tends to have an allergic reaction towards the institutions which are needed to ensure that we can eat well and sleep safely in our beds.

The reverse is also true of course. As the history of the 20th century showed very clearly, just because a social system claims to be collective (whether communist, nationalist, capitalist or national socialist) it doesn't mean that it is. Even if it is supported by a majority, there might be compelling reasons not to support certain dominant norms, to stand out against the mass (Arendt, 1994 [1963]). Often enough, loud claims to be representing others are actually providing a warrant for the powerful to do what they want. The suggestion that individual preferences should always be dissolved in the collective, and that any dissent from the dominant line is heretical, is one that we find in a wide variety of flavors. Liberty is usually suppressed in the name of a greater good – 'the corporation', 'the people', 'the state', 'the nation' – but what is common is that it requires conformity, fear, exile or death to enforce it. There is not such a merit in being collective that the destruction of all liberties is necessary in order to achieve it. Indeed, as Zygmunt Bauman has argued, the impulse to create the perfect collectivity is itself something to be distrusted (1989, 2007). The idea of creating the ideal human within the ideal city is one that requires that people and things which don't fit are 'weeded' out, and that all the contradictions and politics of real people in real places are reduced to a 'year zero' from which we can begin again. It is because of such assumptions - often enough wielded by feudal kings, generals and bishops – that assertions of individual liberty matter.

That being said, the dichotomy between the individual and society is not quite so straightforward or dramatic because it also often mediated by some sort of identity as a member of a group, class or category *within* or *between* wider societies (Jenkins, 2008). When organizing happens on this level – social movements, women's groups, indigenous organizations, social class based politics – it is often protecting a form of collective autonomy against perceived repression or ignorance. The politics of identity insists on the importance of some form of collective distinctions and on the 'right' to express them. Here we can see many practical examples of how a certain sort of individual difference becomes aligned with a cooperative strategy, and, consequently, a form of distinctiveness can be articulated as the precondition for a form of solidarity. When a group of anarchists establish their own co-operative, or the Somali migrants in an Italian city establish self-help groups, they are making an identity claim. We can be 'different together', a position which appears to dissolve a clear distinction between liberalism and communitarianism, between the demand for freedom and the embracing of a collective. This is not the same as insisting on radical autonomy, but neither is it necessarily a form of totalitarianism. As with many matters, the messy reality of actual organizing is rarely as simple as theoretical distinctions would suggest. The fluidity and hybridity of many identities today, including those of class, pose challenges to scholars just as they do to citizens and activists.

In any case, even if we acknowledge that our two first principles do embody a profound contradiction, does this matter? Contradiction is not something to be feared or eliminated by arguments in papers like this, as if the 'one best way' could be described once and for all. Instead it is a lived reality for people who take on the responsibilities of organizing people and things, as they juggle mixed motives and outcomes individually and collectively. The tensions between being free, making enough money, having an impact, worrying about the future or whatever are not ones which will go away by making theoretical gestures. Indeed, if there were no tensions or conflicts in a particular set of ideas it would be difficult to understand it as living thought. If we already have all the answers, if we already know how to do things, then there would be little point in debating alternatives, or learning from anarchism, and no way to understand what a word like 'politics' might mean.

Our third principle is a little easier however, in the sense that it presents a more direct challenge to the externalizing tendencies of capitalism. We think that any alternative worth the name must have a responsibility to the future – to the conditions for our individual and collective flourishing. This will involve words which are used often nowadays, but not always taken very seriously as practices, such as sustainability, accountability, stewarding, development and progress. The economic and organizational structures of the present tend not to encourage such responsibilities, instead treating people and planet as resources which can be used for short term gain by a few. In large part, these are matters which bear upon questions of climate change, environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity, but not exclusively. The conditions for our individual and collective flourishing are also institutional and cultural; any responsibility to the future must also have regard to the sorts of people we create and the sort of organizational arrangements that they make and that make them. This means, for example, being attentive to what technologies do to us and for us; what sort of assumptions about democracy and hierarchy we embed into our workplaces; or how the architecture of our dwellings separates home from work, or women from men. We take responsibility to be a term which presses us to think about all sorts of consequences, which encourages us to respond to the 'long future', and not insulate ourselves with the usual arguments which merely end up displacing problems to some other place, and some other time. As the Great Law of the Iroquois Confederacy was supposed to have it – 'In every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations'.

What we have here then are three principles which we require of alternative forms of organization, three responsibilities which must be negotiated and understood – to ourselves, to others, and to our future. All three are elements of what we believe to be alternative and any one in isolation is insufficient. An

organization which only defends individual liberty will not be able to co-ordinate very much, but an organization which only demands collective loyalty must necessarily expel disagreement. And, since we don't know and probably won't agree on what the future should look like then the balance between individualism and collectivism will also be written across our futures. These three cannot be treated as matters that can ever be solved for once and for all, but rather as concerns that must be raised, and addressed, in the certain knowledge that there will always be disagreements. Too much concern for ourselves ends up as possessive individualism and selfishness; too much direction from others and bending to the collective will is a form of coercion; and too many promises about the ideal future neglects the mucky problems of the present. For us, evidence of all three is required before we deem something to be 'alternative'.

Organizing as politics

Certainly in every collective undertaking on a large scale there is need for division of labour, for technical direction, administration, etc. But the authoritarians are merely playing with words, when they deduce a reason for the existence of government, from the very real necessity for organization of labour. The government, we must repeat, is the aggregate of the individuals who have received or have taken the right or the mean to make laws, and force the people to obey them. The administrators, engineers, etc., on the other hand, are men who receive or assume the charge of doing a certain work. Government signifies delegation of power, that is, abdication of the initiative and sovereignty of everyone into the hand of the few. Administration signifies delegation of work, that is, the free exchange of services founded on free agreement. (Malatesta, 1891)

Errico Malatesta, like so many other anarchists, is not against organization. In this closing paragraph of his pamphlet *Anarchism*, he uses the word 'administration', and opposes it to 'government'. For Malatesta and many others, the question of administration, of organization, is open once we refuse the naturalization of government imposed by the state. But this does not mean that anarchists can show us how to organize, and neither should we expect that they can. This would be to abdicate our own choices to another set of experts. Instead, we have suggested three broad ways in which we might judge forms of organization for their radical politics. Thinking about these three dimensions makes organization into a series of choices and encourages us to see that there is always another way of getting things done. It problematizes the relationship between means and ends, often making means into ends themselves. Rather than believing that 'we have no alternative', we become able to see that 'organizing' is an open process, and become more able to understand and debate the values which underpin particular institutions and ways of doing things.

Another implication of this is to think of organizing as a kind of politics made durable¹. Our current versions of markets, management, hierarchy, leaders, employees, consumption and so on constitute a particular set of political assumptions which are solidified in organizational configurations. These aren't necessary and inevitable arrangements, dictated by the structure of our monkey genes or the misleading metaphor of the invisible hand of the market. Rather than seeing organizing as a technical matter, something to be left to experts with MBAs perhaps, we can understand it as a way of working through the complex ways of being human with other humans and hence a responsibility and possibility for all of us (Parker et al. 2007; 2014). This is why critical management studies has much to learn from anarchism, as well as feminisms, deep green thought and socialism, because it *makes organization radically contingent*. This is the most important implication of all forms of anarchist thought, the reason why anarchists cannot be opposed to organization. Instead anarchists of all stripes have continually problematized the concept, making the implications of social arrangements transparent to those who engage in them. This is what we might call 'reflexive organizing', a form of working which deliberately and continually reflects on how people and things are being put together.

For example, if we claim that democracy – the rule of the people – is a value that we care about then we might reasonably ask just why so many decisions in workplaces are taken autocratically, by a small minority. Arguments from expertise or efficiency might work in particular cases – such as when a doctor uses their expertise to diagnose a medical problem, or something has to be done quickly – but this is not the case in many situations. Why assume that all forms of organization need a class of people called 'managers', and that these people should be paid so much more than the workers? Why are these managers appointed, and not elected? Why assume that the people who work for a company will be different to the people who own it? Why not have workers or trade union representatives sitting on boards of directors? Why do shareholders have votes, but not employees, members of local communities, customers and so on?

Once these sorts of questions and many others are opened up, it is difficult to get them back in the box. The answers become prefigurative of a certain attitude, a constitutive politics in themselves. This is to stress the open ended quality of organizing and the importance of thinking about organizational processes as part of thinking through the recognition of individual autonomy, the encouragement of solidarity, and taking responsibility for the future. As we explored above, how

1 To rephrase Bruno Latour (1991)

we reach decisions can be as important as the decisions themselves. This is a really important shift, because it moves us away from thinking that organizing is what happens *after* decisions have been taken, and that it can be left to other people. In a society with a complex division of labor, professional politicians and policy makers, global supply chains and gigantic corporations, it is not surprising we should believe this. Most often, the responsibility does not seem to be ours when we swipe a credit card, buy some shoes or tick a box on a ballot paper. We make a choice, and someone else organizes things for us. In this paper we are proposing that organizing is a decision too, a means and an end, a decision which prefigures and shapes what follows.

In some rather important ways, we also think that these principles press us to think locally, to think small (Schumacher, 1993 [1973]), because any meaningful use of words like difference, community, sustainability and so on must refer to a particular group of people with names and faces. Otherwise the words are merely hopeful labels with no referent to the times and places where we live our lives. One of the features of the 'there is no alternative' argument is to point to forces outside the local which constrain decision making. 'If it was up to me...'; 'in an ideal world...'; 'if we don't do this...', are all phrases which deny local agency and point to a framework which means that things just have to be like they are. Other people and things – 'head office', 'the market', 'the customer' – can be given the responsibility for the maintenance of the social order. But this buck passing has a cost in terms of the way that it prevents us from thinking that these responsibilities are ours, and that we can imagine different ways that things can be done. That is why many of our alternatives confront us with the local, with what is in front of our noses, because it is there that we spend most of our lives.

That being said, small isn't always beautiful, particularly when it comes to the avoidance of insularity and the building of (real and metaphorical) bridges. In addition, as Jo Freeman argued in 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness' (1970), small groups can also reproduce all the hegemonic problems of larger ones, but in ways that are less perceptible and more difficult to struggle against. Finally, as anarchists from Kropotkin to Bookchin have argued, small institutions can also become large through federalist arrangements entered into freely and with the intention of mutual aid. In networked and connected times like ours the 'will of the many' can be expressed through forms of virtual collectivity which can have demonstrably powerful effects, within the alter-globalization movement for example (Maeckelbergh, 2009). Nonetheless, in the most general terms, smallness is less likely to do as much damage as gigantism. In other words, we don't have to assume that organizations must grow and become big, because in taking our three responsibilities seriously we might decide that local works

better. But whatever the scale, the point is that how we organize reflects political choices.

Not that any of this is easy, because simply imagining that the world could be different merely builds castles in the air. So this manifesto is not merely an idealistic project, in the sense of putting forward some images of what a perfect world might look like, but more like a recipe book, in which the arguments are intended to function to provide some ideas and inspiration. Browsing through a recipe book, you are not told what to make, when to make it, and how to eat it, but are encouraged to think that you don't need to keep on eating Chicken McNuggets if you desire something else. Other theories of organization are available.

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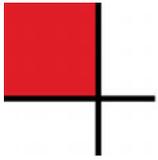
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Impossible organisations: Anarchism and organisational praxis

Patrick Reedy

abstract

Organisational scholarship tends to focus its attention mainly on conventional work organisations and so neglects the organisational practices and principles of other sites of organising. The paper considers the implications of this limited focus even within more critical scholarship through a close reading of a recent paper calling for a greater engagement with social movements. Specifically, I consider problems of understanding a phenomenon in terms of what it is not and evaluating alternative sites of organisation using conventional categories of analysis. I then go on to outline the potential contribution of anarchist theory and its enactment by recent anti-capitalist movements. These radically different approaches to organisation are evaluated and I argue that they present a profound challenge to mainstream assumptions. The paper concludes that critical organisational theory has much to learn from an engagement with such alternative sites of organisation but only if a determined attempt is made to move beyond the usual theoretical frameworks and that anarchist theory may help us do this.

Introduction

Anarchist approaches to organisation, both in theory and practice, are relatively neglected in organisational scholarship, including within more radical work. In this paper I consider why this is and what might be gained from paying more attention to them. As far as more mainstream work is concerned, it is plausible that, as March (2007) and others argue, the location of organisation studies within business schools encourages a focus on the firm and management practitioners. This focus leads to a neglect of other sites of organisation and gives rise to a dominant 'myth of organisation studies' (March, 2007: 10) as having a

self-evident disciplinary identity. This myth conceals the discipline's hybrid origins, shameless borrowings and wholesale omissions (Parker, 2002b). O'Doherty, et al. (2013) argue that organisation studies relies on a concept of organisation that is 'distilled from the practitioner language of business and management' (*ibid.*: 1432). They call for a greater awareness that organisation is happening in 'the blind spots and aporias of our discipline' (*ibid.*: 1440). Such arguments plausibly explain why scholarship oriented to the mainstream concerns of business schools should pay little attention to alternative ways of thinking about organising. They do not, however, explain the relative neglect of 'actually existing' alternatives by more critical scholars.

This not to say that critical scholarship has simply ignored these alternatives. In recent years there has been growing interest in them (see Fournier 2006; Parker, et al. 2014: for example; Parker, et al. 2007; Reedy and Learmonth, 2009). Others have suggested that engagement with the practices of new social movements provides a route to an enlarged vision of organising (see Spicer and Böhm, 2007; Willmott, 2008; Zald and Lounsbury, 2010, for example). In both cases it is hoped to encourage organisation scholars 'to abandon their pre-occupation with struggles occurring in the workplace and also consider the multiple resistances against managerial discourses taking place in the wider realms of civil society' (Spicer and Böhm, 2007: 1691). However, as I argue below, even this more critical work has a tendency to reproduce an abstracted view of these non-managerial sites of organisation rather than engaging with the quotidian practices that actually constitute such organising and the subjectivity of participants. As Wachaus (2011) suggests, there are problems with conceptualising alternative sites of organisation with respect to conventional ones, i.e. they are defined by what they are not. There is thus a real danger that this limited view both misses what is distinctive about alternative ways of understanding organisation and that it leads to 'the dispossession of agency' (Featherstone, 2008: 5). Indeed, the way Spicer and Böhm (2007) characterise such alternatives as instances of resistance to managerialism rather than something in and of themselves exemplifies this problem. The discursive hegemony of managerialism may even contribute to what Krinsky (2007) has argued is the organisational de-skilling and passivity of oppositional movements when faced with an insistence on the need for managerial 'skills' or other conventional organisational elements.

Consequently, this paper argues that it is not enough to call for more attention to be paid to alternative conceptions of organisation. Rather what is required are new ways of making sense of such alternatives and then using these insights to reflect back upon our assumptions regarding organisation more generally. Without such a theoretical re-framing we are in danger of unwittingly

reproducing aspects of managerialism that, as others have noted, derive from and support the dominance of neoliberal imperatives of hierarchy, control and economic instrumentality (Harvey, 1989; 2005; Johnson, 2006; Parker, 2002a). Instead we require ‘a sustained effort to shatter the “common sense” spell of neoliberal governmentality’ (Springer, 2012: 1618) and to learn from those who have mastered ‘the art of not being governed’ (*ibid.*: 1617). In doing this we may escape the trap of abstracting ‘organising from the world’ and instead ‘use our conceptual and practical tools to engage the world fully’ (Cheney et al. 2012: 67). This not only requires that we inform ourselves of everyday alternative organising practices but also that we attempt a theoretical refiguring of organising that does not rely on managerial categories of analysis. It is anarchist organisational thinking that may serve this purpose. Such theory potentially enables us to escape from the usual emphasis in organisation studies on structure – that an organisation is a *place* where people get organised (usually by managers). Rather it sees organisation as a set of fluid processes whereby needs and desires are cooperatively formulated and met (Cumbers et al. 2008; Kinna, 2005). The paper encourages a more expansive view of organisation that views it as a universal cooperative human achievement undertaken for a variety of ends and achieved through a rich multiplicity of means. The paper thus forms part of a wider project to theoretically legitimise non-managerial ways of understanding and performing organisation.

The paper is organised in the following way. I begin with a critical reading of Ahrne and Brunsson’s (2011) recent paper in *Organization*. I have chosen this paper not because it is a bad paper but, on the contrary, because it represents a rather well-formulated call to enlarge the scope of organisation scholarship by including a wider range of sites of organising. However, my contention is that in doing so it reproduces the centrality of mainstream notions of organisation in ways that limit our ability to see what is really distinctive about them. I go on to contrast this limited view of organisation with one derived from anarchist thought and related organisational practices within new social movements influenced by the anarchist tradition. Because of the relative absence of organisational studies research into such everyday practices (though see Imas and Weston (2012); Imas et al., (2012) for two noteworthy recent exceptions), I turn to the broader social sciences. Here, the everyday organising of recent anti-capitalist movements receives much more attention (see Broad, 2002; Fominaya, 2010; Jasper, 2010; Maeckelbergh, 2012; Moore and Roberts, 2009; Murray, 2010; Pickard, 2006; Saunders, 2008). In particular there has been a resurgence of interest in anarchism and social movement organising in the work of critical social and political geographers (see Chatterton, 2010; Chatterton and Pickerill, 2010; Cumbers et al., 2008; Davies, 2012; Featherstone, 2008; Routledge, 1996;

Springer, 2012). In the concluding section I return to the significance of anarchist views of organisation for critical organisation theory.

Organisations, networks and social movements

Ahrne and Brunsson begin their article 'Organisation outside organisations' by asking 'is organisation becoming obsolete?' (2011: 83; all further page references without author and/or date are to this article) given the growing dominance of the concepts of 'institution' and 'network' within the social sciences. They conclude that it is not but that organisation studies should widen its scope from its traditional focus on 'organisations rather than organisation' (84). These are arguments that accord with the calls I cite above and with my own conviction that we require a more expansive conception of organisation within our discipline in order to engage more fully with the broader social and political contexts within which organisation takes place (Zald and Lounsbury, 2010). The way in which they develop this intention is primarily designed to bring a conceptual and analytical clarity to the category of organisation and its relation to institution and network. In this respect the paper is a model of its kind, but it also struck me as illustrating how easy it is for even more critical scholars to categorise alternative organisation according conventional frameworks and so reduce their disruptive potential. It is arguably symptomatic of a broader tendency to 'managerialise' non-managerial domains of organisation (see Ahrne, 1996; Herriot and Scott-Jackson, 2002; O'Mahony and Bechky, 2008, for further examples).

To illustrate this tendency, Ahrne and Brunsson begin by claiming that an imperative of conceptual clarity requires that we initially define organisation as traditional formal organisation which they term a 'complete' (84) organisation. To qualify as a complete organisation the following are required: 'decision-makers who make decisions about and on behalf of other organisation members' (85); 'membership' – a formal contractual relation that goes beyond affiliation (86); 'hierarchy, a right to oblige others to comply with central decisions' (86); the ability to 'issue commands' and 'decide upon rules that its members are expected to follow' (86); 'the right to monitor compliance' as well as 'the right to decide about sanctions' (86). They then identify organisation more widely with these qualifications: 'we define organisation as a decided order in which people use elements that are constitutive of formal organisations' (85).

Other forms of organising are then defined as 'partial organisation' to describe the kind of alternative organising that is found in new social movements. Non-hierarchical forms of organisation are thus defined by a lack of ability to qualify as complete. For example, partial organisations result from a lack of 'opportunity

to or interest in building a complete formal organisation' (87). As is commonly the case (Castells, 2004; Cumbers, et al. 2008; Routledge, 1996), the paper categorises new social movements characteristic of the anti-capitalist mobilizations of recent years as networks, i.e. informal, non-hierarchical associations of individuals and groups bound together by personal relationships. However, it is made quite clear that these do not qualify as organisations because they are 'emergent social orders, which merely happen rather than being decided' (90). 'Genuine networks' are 'completely lacking in organisational elements' (99) and so lack the capacity to be decided upon or 'to create a specific order' (90). This lack of decision-making ability is crucial for Ahrne and Brunsson, because such a capacity 'is perhaps, the most effective way of assuming responsibility available to us' (91) but in networks 'everyone or no one is responsible' (92). The solution for such networks to operate effectively and justly is to have recourse to one or more of the characteristics of the complete organisation, particularly hierarchy.

My contention is that we are seeing an instance of how 'networks have been conceptualized using the tools of hierarchies' thus limiting 'our conception of that thing to what it is not' (Wachhaus, 2012: 34). Rather than making such comparisons using language developed for the theorisation of the conventional, what is required is a theoretical framework for treating such alternatives as a distinctive thing in and of itself. As it is we are left with a paradox. We have entities that manifestly organise (see Brown and Hosking, 1986; Chatterton and Pickerill, 2010; Davies, 2012; Haug, 2013, for some accounts of such organising) but that we may not call organisations. They are then definitionally *impossible organisations* and relegated to the margins of organisational studies. Indeed, most critical organisational theory restricts itself to the chronicling of work organisations as sites of domination, oppression or resistance (Parker, 2002a; Reedy, 2008). Only rarely does our discipline pay attention to the much broader historical tradition of everyday organising undertaken cooperatively in an almost infinite variety of social settings and places. It is here that anarchist approaches to organisation may make a contribution to the reframing of both what organisation *is* and what it is *for*. A starting point for discussing this claim is that most anarchists would fundamentally oppose all of Ahrne and Brunsson's organisational characteristics as oppressive and unnecessary for organisation and decision-making to take place (Graeber, 2002; Kinna, 2005; Marshall, 1993; Woodcock, 1963). In addition they would insist that a model of organisation that separates the means (a particular form or set of rules for organisation) from the ends (the purpose and outcomes of what the organisation does) is fundamentally at odds with human flourishing (Ward, 1973).

Anarchism and organisation

In this paper I am mainly interested in anarchist thinking on organisation as it relates to the practices of various groupings and movements against neo-liberal capitalism, commonly though not always referred to as the anti-capitalist movement (Bieler, 2011), a term preferred by most activists to the 'anti-globalisation' terminology of most news reporting (Graeber, 2002). Alternatively some prefer terms such as 'alterglobalization' (Maeckelbergh, 2012) or 'global justice network' (Cumbers, et al. 2008) to emphasise a positive rather than negative political project. Due to the diversity and fragmentation of these movements it is difficult to precisely bound them but my comments apply mostly to those movements and groups in Europe and the US that came to public attention following large scale protest at the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle in 1999 and that re-emerged into the limelight with the Occupy movement in 2008-9. However, such manifestations are merely the more visible aspects of movements that both have a considerable historical continuity with the counter-culture and new left of the 1960s (Maeckelbergh, 2011) and a plethora of less visible local forms of protest, opposition and alternative lifestyle. Where I draw on specific movements, events and groups I indicate these in the text. The common thread that links these disparate movements and groups can arguably be claimed to be an affinity with anarchist thought and practice (Graeber, 2002; Marshall, 1993) and so it is useful to begin this discussion with a brief overview of the relevant aspects of anarchism before looking at the specific practices of these movements. The first thing to note is that some might regard it as more accurate to talk about 'anarchisms' rather than anarchism (Kinna, 2005). By its very nature, there has never been the same drive for ideological unity that has sometimes characterised Marxism and a diversity of thinking has flourished as a result (Marshall, 1993; Woodcock, 1963). Most expositions on anarchism begin with the single defining characteristic of rejection of imposed authority, particularly that of the state. For example, Marshall asserts that

All anarchists reject the legitimacy of external government and of the State, and condemn imposed political authority, hierarchy and domination. They seek to establish the condition of anarchy, that is to say, a decentralized and self-regulating society consisting of a federation of voluntary associations of free and equal individuals. The ultimate goal of anarchism is to create a free society which allows all human beings to realize their full potential. (1993: 3)

By extension, many anarchists tend to be highly suspicious of any form of regulative authority, including representative voting systems that may give rise to the tyranny of the majority. This rejection dates from William Godwin's insistence that no-one may represent the interests of another (Marshall, 1986).

Freedom, frequently characterised as the autonomy of the individual to determine their own affairs according to their own reason (Kinna, 2005), is a central ideal of most anarchist thought but has also given rise to one of the persistent areas of difference within the tradition. The debate is often framed as a dichotomy between Kropotkin's communistic anarchism (1970a; 1970b) and the individualistic anarchism of Stirner (2006). Discussion thus centres on the relationship between the individual and the collective (see Kinna (2005) for a useful account of these) particularly the degree to which individuals should be bound by collective norms and decisions. However, such a simple dichotomy is misleading as most anarchists see community as an essential aspect of a free life for individuals: i.e. freedom is a project we work out with each other. Consequently, much anarchist theory and praxis seeks for a harmonious relation between individual liberty and communal belonging. Even Stirner argued for the necessity of some form of community, a 'union of egotists' (2006). A key principle is that many anarchists believe that any rules worked out within communities are voluntarily accepted or rejected and all have a voice in their formation. This must also be seen in the light of widespread anarchist belief in the emergence of a natural rationality and harmony once the distorting effects of hierarchy and authority are removed (Marshall, 1993). More recently, some anarchist theory has turned to post-structuralism (May, 1994) in order to refine the understanding of power and domination within social groups more fully, a theoretical turn sometimes referred to as 'post-anarchism' (Springer, 2012: 1610).

It may therefore be argued that anarchist theory and practice has engaged with the problems of extending individual agency whilst sustaining communities and organisation more than is commonly the case within organisation studies. This is not to say, as Marshall (1993) points out, that anarchism provides universal solutions to the various difficulties of trying to reconcile community and autonomy. Problems such as the oppressive potential of social censure or the withdrawal of community membership are discussed widely and never fully resolved. It can be argued, however, that this is a strength of anarchist theory and practice. The lack of prescriptive norms or institutional forms means that organisation is always debatable and changeable and can be constantly renegotiated. Organisation within an ideal anarchist community is essentially comprised of dynamic, negotiated fluid processes. Additionally, it is this alertness to the tension between autonomy and the need for collective organisation that has driven a number of organisational innovations that are exemplified by many anti-capitalist social movements and that I discuss below.

Recent anti-capitalist movements do seem to exemplify a shift towards a greater emphasis on the primacy of individual autonomy and personal development and

away from more collectivist thinking within anarchist thought (Curran, 2006). Graeber (2002) terms this shift one from big 'A' Anarchism to small 'a' anarchism. This may partially be due to a general societal shift towards individualism but is also a result of the refiguring of anarchism during its 1960s revival (Marshall, 1993). This revival was associated with increasing disillusionment with mass movement party-based vanguardist politics in the aftermath of the failure of 'really existing socialism' in the Soviet Union (Curran, 2006). It is widely asserted that today's anti-capitalist movements are the direct heirs of the 60s counter cultural, liberation and protest movements (Broad, 2002; Maeckelbergh, 2011; McDonald, 2006; Snow et al., 2004). Certainly the idea that the personal is political is central to contemporary anarchistic social movements prompting some social movement scholars to describe the overriding form of activism within them as being that of 'personalism' (Clemens and Minkoff, 2004).

Prefigurative politics is another distinctive aspect of the anarchist tradition that has been a powerful influence on anti-capitalist movement (Chatterton and Pickerill, 2010; Kinna, 2005; Maeckelbergh, 2012; Robinson and Tormey, 2012). Anarchism, despite its contributions to the utopian imaginary (Reedy, 2002), and unlike Marxism, has not been associated with a teleological unfolding whereby one historical era is a prerequisite for the emergence of another. Rather it is characterised by a degree of 'primitivism' (Marshall 1993), i.e. anarchism pre-existed political authority and is a 'natural' way of conducting human affairs. It is thus always immanent in existing social arrangements bubbling under the surface and waiting to re-emerge under the right conditions. As a result, rather than postponing new social and organisational arrangements into the future, the anarchist utopian imagination is harnessed to constant communitarian and organisational innovation and experimentation in the here and now (Reedy, 2002; Woodcock, 1963). The refusal to separate ends and means (Ward, 1973) reinforces this desire that everyday organising practices in themselves enact and realise the ideals of communal harmony and individual autonomy. This prefigurative perspective provides a rich source of alternatives to the contemporary managed formal organisation which appears as historically and culturally contingent. Thus the marginal-central relation between alternative and managerial organisation is reversed according to the long historical anarchist perspective. This brings into question Ahrne and Brunsson's contention that it is the managerial conception of organisation that should be the norm by which other forms of organising are judged. As a result of this experimentation, the anti-capitalist movements, heavily influenced as they are by anarchism, provide fertile ground for examining new ways of organising that do not rely on the assumed necessity of formality, hierarchy, rules, authority and punishment; it is to these I now turn.

Anarchist organisation and new social movements

Various studies of anti-capitalist movements observe the centrality of the anarchist principles outlined above (see Bieler, 2011; Chatterton and Pickerill, 2010; McDonald, 2006; Pickard, 2006, for examples). This is despite the fact that many participants are reluctant to define themselves solely in terms of a political identity such as ‘anarchist’ (Chatterton, 2010), a consequence of the decline in mass movement big ‘A’ Anarchism noted by Graeber (2002) which I discuss above. There are, of course, other political philosophies apparent within these movements, most notably autonomism (Gautney, 2009) or other philosophies that descend from the Marxist and Trotskyist traditions (Bircham and Charlton, 2001; Ibrahim, 2011). It is also worth noting that green political thought has its own distinctive influence and that environmentalism of various kinds is a widespread feature of the anti-capitalist movement (Curran, 2006; Dobson, 2000). However, there has been a considerable convergence between these political traditions in terms of their organisational practices (Gautney, 2009) despite some continuing tensions (Ibrahim, 2011). I do not wish to get too bogged down in a lengthy detour of these distinctions here particularly, as it can reasonably be claimed that ‘anarchism is the heart of the movement, its soul; the source of most of what’s new and hopeful about it’ (Graeber, 2002: 16). One may therefore consider the anti-capitalist movement a kind of laboratory for anarchist organisational practice, one that has been given an additional impetus by the financial collapse. With the growing inability of previously prosperous nations to provide paid employment to large swathes of young people entering the labour market (European Commission, 2013), participation in Ahrne and Brunsson’s complete organisations is far from the universal experience it might have been considered fifty years ago. Instead groups such as the *Indignadas* in Catalonia (Conill et al., 2012) or the *Centri Sociali* across Italy (McDonald, 2006; Ruggiero, 2000) have relied on anarchist models of mutual aid and community self-help as well as anarchist organisational principles to satisfy basic material and social needs, a trend apparent throughout those regions hit hardest by the crisis (Castells, 2012; Castells et al., 2012).

Other studies of anti-capitalist movements reveal further affinities with anarchism, particularly its insistence on the preservation of individual autonomy even when pursuing large scale collective action. A useful summary of this is given by Murray’s reflections on the G20 protests in Pittsburgh in 2009: ‘the central challenge for theorists and practitioners of radical politics today is to develop forces of action and organisation that account for the specificity of diverse local struggles and promote the free transformation of individual and collective subjectivities through political action, but also provide the means for collective action on a global scale’ (2010: 462). Murray goes on to identify three

basic modes of anarchist organisational practice evident in the anti-capitalist movements relating to deliberation, decision and action (2010: 462). These combine systemically in order to produce the underlying social structure of collective life – the common, a shared set of affinities, purposes, procedures, convivialities and spaces. The first of these modes is characterised by free speech without a goal and is ‘a process in which each strives to recognise the merit in another’s argument (2010: 463). This is not simply aimless discussion but neither does it seek to enforce a consensus or majority view. Rather, by striving to understand the preferences and viewpoint of the other, subjectivities are changed, solidarities forged and the common is produced, these deliberative practices are to be commonly found in the social forums that are a characteristic of the anti-capitalist movement. (Sen et al. 2003)

Decision-making stands in close relation to deliberation, as it would be difficult to envisage such decision-making as democratic unless preceded by deliberation. The key distinction between deliberation and decision is that the latter requires consensus. This is a very different organisational principle from the authority based decision-making of Ahrne and Brunsson’s conception of organisation or even the majoritarian democratic decision-making of Trade Unions or other representative political institutions. An arduous process of reaching complete consensus is required in which all are expected to participate, all present must give their final approval for a decision and, by extension, participants have the ability to block a decision being made. Such decision-making requires a high level of interpersonal skill in arriving at decisions without recourse to hierarchy or the un-emotive calculative ideal of managerial decision-making (Brown and Hosking, 1986). Leadership, although regarded with caution because of its managerial and hierarchical connotations, may nevertheless emerge in attempts to make decisions. This is not leadership as a prerogative of a managerial elite, but rather takes the form of ‘influential contributions to order... achieved through the exercise of skill’ (Brown and Hosking, 1986: 76). Even here there is often discussion of the potential inequalities arising from the differing capacity of individuals to make such contributions.

Maeckelbergh (2012) gives an illuminating account of this consensus decision-making in her analysis of the European Occupy movement, particularly as observed in Barcelona in May 2011. She uses the term ‘horizontal’ democracy to denote the particular form of deliberative decision-making evident in these occupations. Specifically, horizontalism ‘refers to the active creation of non-hierarchical relations through decision-making processes’ (Maeckelbergh, 2011: 211). This involves constant movement between small group meetings (based on neighbourhood affiliation) and a larger assembly. The innovation of hand signals in the large assembly to enable large numbers to signal agreement or

disagreement is also described: a widespread technique across other Occupy sites.

The arduousness and difficulties that accompany consensus decision-making (Maeckelbergh 2011) have led some to argue that the price of freedom is the endless meeting (Polletta, 2002). However, two factors militate against paralysis. Firstly, the result of consensus not being reached in a group is likely to stimulate further work on reaching a more acceptable decision. It may sometimes result in the formation of new groups in which consensus is achievable. In addition, affinity groups (McDonald, 2006) are predisposed to consensus as they are formed out of 'a shared desire to accomplish a specific task' (Murray, 2010: 477). There is also no reason why such groups should endure beyond their original purpose unless members choose to make it so. Using permanence and institutionalisation as criteria for judging organisational success reflects the kind of conventional thinking about organisation that I seek to escape in this paper. Unlike the unitarist assumptions underlying much organisational theory, conflict and disagreement are more likely to be seen as legitimate and essential aspects of anarchist organisation, a rejection of the principle of 'univocicity' (Maeckelbergh, 2012: 225) exemplified by Ahrne and Brunsson's complete organisation. The acceptance of such conflict also enables challenges to the various forms of domination and authority that tend to re-emerge without constant vigilance.

The enactment of deliberative democracy at a large scale challenges the assumption that more complex organisation requires features such as permanent hierarchical structures. The numerous groups that make up the anti-capitalist movement have managed to organise large scale coordinated actions, including recent protests against the G8 and G20 and the Occupy actions. These actions were based upon the bonds and practices developed in smaller groups and assemblies which were then extended via federative networking without recourse to imposed forms of authority (Ahrne, 1996; Castells, 2012; Chatterton, 2010; Haug, 2013). Such networking is often facilitated by the ease of access to information that the internet provides, in itself sometimes hailed as an exemplar of anarchist principles (Marshall, 1993). Certainly movements allied to the anti-capitalist cause have not been slow to take advantage of it, and organisations such as *Indymedia* share the characteristic deliberative democratic structures described above whilst also providing an alternative perspective on world events for anti-capitalists (Pickard, 2006). One can see a striking example of the power of information networks within the anti-capitalist movement in the early influence of the Zapatista movement in the mid-1990s (Kingsnorth, 2004). Despite the seeming obscurity of an uprising of indigenous Mayan peasants in a poor region of Mexico, the use of novel anarchist organisational techniques was globally

disseminated, making this movement a source of inspiration and organisational ideas (Maeckelbergh, 2012).

The typical organisational practices of anti-capitalist movements contrast strongly then with those of the 'complete' organisation. They tend to be

segmentary (composed of many diverse groups, which grow and die, divide and fuse, proliferate and contract); polycentric (having multiple, often temporary, and sometimes competing leaders or centres of influence); networked (forming a loose, reticulate, travelling, overlapping membership, joint activities, common reading matter, and shared ideals and opponents). (Pickard 2006: 320)

They are also held together by 'personal identity relationships' (Pickard, 2006: 320) rather than by hierarchy, authority and other conventional structural elements. These anarchistic organisational features have been argued as enabling the anti-capitalist movement to be flexible and highly adaptive to the changing political landscape. As a result the movement has often been able to build effective coalitions between those with widely divergent interests, backgrounds, levels of involvement and lifestyles to both pursue their own particular chosen form of activism and forms of life at a local level but also to collaborate with sometimes global level action. Such loose networks of overlapping memberships can, therefore, simultaneously coalesce (for political campaigns or joint projects such as festivals), but also fragment as a result of disagreement or new personal ties leading to shifts in affinities (Chatterton and Pickerill, 2010; McDonald, 2006; Melucci, 1989). Such groups tend to be both intensely local (because they rely on various forms of conviviality to maintain affinity bonds) and engaged in global issues, using information and communication technologies to extend networks to national and international levels (Castells, 2012; Pickard, 2006; Wall, 2007).

The role of personal identity bonds as the basis for organisation and collective identity contrasts strongly with the frequently assumed necessity of leadership, authority, regulation, sanctions and the subordination of individual autonomy in favour of the collective. Some argue that these bonds are forged through a shared lifestyle. Although lifestyle politics may be disparaged as a dilettante pursuit of a shallow self-gratification, they may also be more positively framed as an aspect of the symbolic struggles that accompany the material struggles within new social movements (Bieler, 2011). Saunders (2008), for example, argues that significant subcultural practices reinforce a collective identity derived from 60s counter-cultural norms that enable a shared way of life. McDonald identifies the festival culture as a key site of such lifestyle reproduction and as being the medium by which 60s counter-cultural norms have been passed on to new generations. Festivals constitute 'a cultural laboratory centred on developing new nomadic

lifestyles, an eclectic culture including urban radicals, the rave and drug scene, dance culture, sound systems, festivals, spirituality, squats, vegetarianism, environmentalism, as well as mystical feminism' (McDonald, 2006: 51). Lifestyle may then be considered another way of enacting politics, one in which subjectivity is a core political issue. It exemplifies the sought after harmony within anarchism between individual autonomy and community, where personal experience, embodied actions, personal ties, autonomy, creativity and consensus decision-making are all aimed at both self-production and the realisation of the common (Kinna, 2005).

Others have argued that, although lifestyle is significant it is not sufficient to explain the form and strength of solidarity within anarchist influenced social movements. For one thing participants in large-scale movement actions (such as protests against the G8 or the Iraq War, for example) are much more diverse than the stress on shared lifestyle would suggest. Fominaya (2010) observes that, far from being the hedonistic drop-outs that the stress on lifestyle might suggest, activist lives are frequently characterised by a significant sacrifice of time, energy and income sometimes resulting in frustration and stress as well as economic insecurity and social instability (Chatterton, 2010). Indeed active opposition to neo-fascists or riot police involve risking one's body in sometimes violent conflict. Fominaya (2010) instead argues that collective identity and solidarity is built through participation in assembly and decision-making. A reciprocal identification is produced through commitment to particular causes enabling members to forge bonds of solidarity 'through shared leadership, organisation, ideologies and rituals' (*ibid.*: 380). It is thus the skill and commitment that members bring to participation in the assembly that determines the extent to which a sense of collective identity is achieved. Likewise Chatterton and Pickerill (2010) argue that activists 'attached importance to group sustenance and nurturing capabilities, in effect developing resilience, empathy and coping skills that build community as a bedrock for more oppositional identities and actions' (*ibid.*: 481).

To summarise this section, some distinctive characteristics of anarchist organisational principles and their application within various strands of contemporary anti-capitalist social movements have been identified. These pose a challenge to the usual assumptions regarding the prerequisites for organisation to take place: i.e. that decision-making and an ability to act purposefully upon the world are the preserve of the complete organisation and require hierarchy, stable structure and authority in order to do so. They also challenge the idea that organisations are distinct entities with certain independent attributes in which organising takes place and which can be studied as things in themselves. Rather organisation emerges as a set of processes undertaken by individuals choosing to

engage with each other in pursuit of joint purposes but further that the act and form of organising is constitutive of individual agency and collective action. In short that organising is a form of politics entirely embodied in complex processes of social relations undertaken by various agents. Organisations are thus simultaneously an outcome and a means of individual and collective action.

The possibilities of impossible organisation

In this final section I outline the implications of an anarchist perspective on organisation for a critical organisation studies. The first and most obvious of these is that there are alternatives to the managerial model of organisation both theoretically and on the ground. As I identify above, there is a small if growing interest from some critical scholars in this alternative tradition (Parker et al., 2007), albeit it is often treated in a rather abstracted fashion. There are two areas where this could usefully be extended and that seem necessary to me in order for the possibilities of impossible organising to be realised. The first is the undertaking of more in-depth studies of the quotidian practices of the various sites and groups engaging in prefigurative politics and their accompanying organisational innovations. The second is a sustained and determined attempt to move beyond the usual analytical frameworks that constitute our discipline. If we do not make this attempt then it is all too easy to fall back upon these frameworks and so to miss what is significant about the alternatives we study. To evaluate alternative organising according to the assumption that that the goal of all forms of organisation is to institutionalise: i.e. to compete, to grow, to endure through the imposition of structure and authority by a permanent leadership, to achieve collective instrumental goals that transcend those of individual members and so on is to miss the point. The poststructuralist turn in organisation studies was one such attempt to reframe the theoretical basis of the discipline (Adler et al., 2007; Barratt, 2004; Reedy, 2008; Spicer et al., 2009) and was generative of a large body of intriguing and useful work. It has, however, perhaps been less productive in a more positive theoretical project of proposal and the study of alternative practices. Nevertheless the emergence of post-anarchist theorising (Springer, 2012) suggests that a convergence of anarchist experimentation with these insights could provide a rich seam that critical organisational scholars are well-placed to exploit.

Anarchism also suggests a different set of evaluative criteria for thinking about the everyday practices of alternative organisations. Even the simple but rarely considered idea that organisation should primarily exist in order to meet the material, existential and social needs and desires of its participants creates an evaluative space that moves us beyond the usual consideration of struggle and

resistance in conventional workplaces. We can seek to formulate how we might organise in order to create free spaces for becoming, for exploring possibilities of selfhood usually denied in the characteristically conformist and authoritarian organisations in our contemporary world. Part of the critical theoretical project should then be to argue that the anarchist ideal of radically democratic self-organising should be at the core our concept of organisation rather than being quarantined from it by entirely distinct theoretical categorisations such as ‘partial organisation’ or ‘network’, useful as these might sometimes be.

In this regard, critical organisation scholars could learn a good deal from the work in human geography, sociology and politics that I draw on above. In other words there is already a body of work based on a sustained engagement with the everyday organisational practices of alternative forms of organisation within an anarchist theoretical framework. Not to do this is to miss an opportunity to learn from a potentially far more significant challenge to managerial authority than the various instances of micro-resistance in the workplace so beloved by critical management studies. The survival and flourishing of pockets of anarchistic organisation point to the stubborn survival of an entirely independent but submerged tradition of self-organisation by the marginal and dispossessed with its roots in centuries of struggle that calls into question the necessity and desirability of managers and management (Reedy and Learmonth, 2009). Sadly this rich tradition of non-managerial organising from the ground up, including its contemporary manifestations, rarely figures in the ahistorical pseudo-scientific organisational studies that dominates our discipline. Detailed study of this tradition and its everyday practices is a more positive project than simply cataloguing the various oppressions of corporate organisational life.

As well as invigorating our own critical project there may be ways to support and assist the strivings of movement organisations for new ways of life and a transformative politics. There is little evidence that critical management studies has had much impact on its traditional corporate targets (Parker, 2002a) or that publishing articles in academic journals read by almost no-one is likely to bring about change. My own admittedly limited recent engagements with activists suggest that a large degree of humility on the part of critical academics is in order here. The theoretical and practical expertise of organisation I encountered was substantial and I felt I had a great deal more to learn than to contribute. There may, however, be some possibility for enabling such groups to forge weapons of symbolic resistance in the way that Bourdieu (1998) suggests. Critical management studies has generated an impressive theoretical framework for understanding the subtleties of power and domination in organisational settings that might assist in constructing organisations that are free from the worst effects of these.

We might also start closer to home with the practice of prefigurative politics and begin to think about what the academy would be like if we started to apply anarchist organisational principles to it. The vision of an egalitarian and self-managing community of teachers and learners open to all, free of authority and hierarchy and intent on exploring the history and potential of organisation purely for the pleasure of learning in conviviality is one well worth considering. Rather than occupying our usual stance as disengaged academics studying the struggles of others, what actions ought we to undertake in the here and now? To turn our critique on our own organisation of critical scholarship would be a good start, beginning with an alertness to the reproduction of our limited thinking about organisation within our own scholarly community. Universities free of both state control and of corporate interests would seem to be another kind of impossible organisation but there might already be practices that can prefigure such a transformation in the way we write, teach, learn and resist the encroaching tide of corporate managerialism. The dissenting academies of the 18th century were a self-organised solution to the exclusionary and elitist power of the official universities of the time (Parker *et al.*, 2007), perhaps we can begin to create the free universities of the future?

Demanding the impossible is an incurable anarchist habit (Marshall, 1993) and so we as critical organisational scholars should not balk at seemingly impossible organisations but rather seek to consider them seriously in their own terms as challenges to our own understanding and scholarly practice. We should not forget that the daunting monolithic difficulty of change may itself be a chimera. The recent financial collapse, the most recent in a long line of political and economic crises within the neo-liberal order (Harvey, 2005; 2010) suggest that all that is solid may melt into air faster than we expect and when it does, to have alternative arrangements ready to hand, forged in everyday lives at the margins may yet prove to be indispensable.

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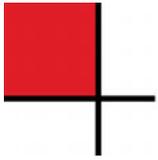
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Rethinking organizational hierarchy, management, and the nature of work with Peter Drucker and Colin Ward

J. Christopher Paskewich

‘Philosophical anarchism is a defensible position in theory. The only trouble with it is it never works.’ (Drucker, 2010: 40)

‘We have to build networks instead of pyramids.’ (Ward, 2008: 33)

Peter Drucker (1909-2005) has always romanticized the role of the manager. For the so-called ‘father of management’, the manager ‘stands between civilization and barbarism’ by helping institutions make society’s resources productive (Beatty, 1998: 104-5). The manager is the one element that organizations cannot do without. The anarchist Colin Ward (1924-2010), however, viewed management as a coercive ‘technique’ that drained workers of spontaneity and initiative (Ward, 2008: 48). He did not fear that managers were not competent or knowledgeable – some might very well be both. The fear is that they forced those beneath them to behave passively and perform tasks solely to satisfy evaluation standards. Drucker and Ward are at odds on the role of the manager in organizational hierarchy. Comparing their ideas, however, shows some common ground, at least initially.

Both of them seek an approach to organization that can solve society’s needs, but with less exploitation of those involved. Drucker tries to humanize capitalism by taming its excesses, but he ultimately admits the system can only allow minor reform. While Drucker is not so disgusted by capitalism that he rejects it, he finds himself at an impasse: seeking worker empowerment that does not seem possible within the boundaries of the capitalist organization. Ward shares Drucker’s misgivings about business and goes much further. While freer

organizations can exist within a capitalist economy, he argues, they cannot themselves be capitalist. Ward would stress that Drucker's impasse occurs because Drucker seeks an outcome that capitalism simply cannot provide, whatever the quality of the organization's management. Ward shows how anarchist theory can provide organizations that actually accomplish goals of worker empowerment and involvement that Drucker sought. Ultimately we find that management theory cannot transcend its capitalist framework and offer workers a free organization. The coercion from management and the alienation of the workers will remain.

Colin Ward, one of the great British anarchists of the twentieth century, is a useful representative of anarchism to explore when studying organizations. He wrote many stimulating essays and books, but his 1973 masterpiece – *Anarchy in Action* – criticizes managerial approaches to industrial production, offering instead actual examples of anarchist practice within organizations. His expertise was in architecture and urban policy, but his writings touched on self-determination in nearly every facet of society. He defined anarchists as:

people who make a social and political philosophy out of the natural and spontaneous tendency of humans to associate together for their mutual benefit. (Ward, 2008: 24)

His understanding of anarchism can be approached from two observations (Goodway, 2012: 316). The first is a response to a view from someone like Drucker: anarchism will never work. Ward observes that anarchism already exists and already works. People in every country around the world have created some spaces or groups that are self-determining and non-hierarchical. The focus here should be on expanding these spaces or adding to these groups. Much of his research was to document examples of autonomous action, that people might see how possible it is (White, 2007).

The second observation he had was that people have been encouraged to misunderstand their own natures. Many might claim that we live in a dog-eat-dog world of constant competition: how could we ever shed our self-preserving 'human nature' to all work together in some anarchist utopia? Ward observes we already are working with each other with a high degree of cooperation. Any corporation would disintegrate if not for a sense of sharing and collaboration, at least in some areas. Here he follows Peter Kropotkin, the nineteenth century anarchist, and his idea of 'mutual aid' in evolution (Ward, 2008: 10). Those who survived were not always the fittest, but were those who worked together. Ward pushes his readers to expand these areas of cooperation in their own lives: to join self-determining groups and to build on the already-existing cooperation they have in their lives.

Drucker and Ward have competing approaches to organizational culture and hierarchy. In a 1981 lecture, Drucker observes that organizational structure is best approached by one of two paths (2010: 83-4). The first path is that of the ‘constitutionalist’, which brings to mind the checks and balances or separation of powers in the American Constitution. This approach emphasizes an organization’s institutional restraints that limit wrongdoing and its institutional supports that encourage desirable outcomes. Drucker believes this approach was so prevalent during the twentieth century that it led to lopsided results (an over-reliance on limiting power through organizational structures) (2010: 84).

To correct this dependence on organizational ‘constitutionalism’, Drucker focused more upon the second path: character formation. He calls it ‘the education of Christian princes’, a reference to a body of thought from political theory that is found in ancient authors like Plato, through medieval authors like Erasmus, and beyond into the Enlightenment era. He asks: how does one socialize people to work hard and be trusted to do the right thing? Drucker believes that this ‘formation of people’ needs to be carefully examined and applied, as it cannot be done without (2010: 84). The formation could occur through an organization providing training programs, through the organization’s culture, or through some outside source (like an MBA).

Ward takes a very different approach here. He equates the ‘formation of people’ with brainwashing. While Ward does believe that a general tone of compassion and reason is needed in a community, he does not seek a carefully-crafted organizational culture. He would dismiss this as empty jargon designed by ‘out of touch’ managers. Ward’s rejection of the creation of an organizational culture gets to the heart of the anarchist critique of hierarchy. The state rules in an authoritarian way over citizens’ bodies (e.g. police force, incarceration, etc.), but also their minds (discouraging spontaneity, encouraging dependency, etc.). The state passes this authoritarianism to all hierarchical organizations throughout society (Ward, 2008: 33). This kind of oppression includes organizational culture, essentially a way to indoctrinate workers to function like robots.

Ward’s view would be less interesting if the only criticism of organizational hierarchy and culture is that it removes autonomy. He sees another problem: hierarchical institutions rob people of initiative and efficiency (Ward, 2008: 35). It is not that organizations are oppressing workers so that they can get the most effective work from them. It is that organizations are ensuring they do not get the best work out of their workers by having such a hierarchy. When asking what keeps workers most productive, one faces two alternatives: a high degree of autonomy or a manager above who will keep him or her focused. Ward reasons that initiative and efficiency increase as autonomy increases because the ‘whole’

worker is being involved, not just a few isolated skills. Decision-making abilities become honed. Creative solutions and experimentation are tried out in practice. One invests more in a project that one has more control over. In practical terms, a worker closer to the project has a clearer sense of what the limitations are and what might be a waste of resources.

Flattening pyramids into networks

This approach to organizing is important to Ward because of the choice it makes – a choice away from more hierarchies and toward less hierarchies. Ward was a student of organizations and the way order can emerge in non-hierarchical situations. Instead of hierarchy, he prefers networks without a center that have shifting leadership (Ward, 2008: 33, 66). Instead of being reduced to passive robots, individuals in the work place may thus act as individuals, charting their own course. The wellbeing of workers mattered to Ward because he connected each individual decision we make in the workplace – or anywhere else – to whether society becomes more anarchistic. Rather than advocating immediate and violent revolution for an anarchist utopia, he wants to gradually expand the capacity and space for self-determination. David Goodway characterizes Ward's views in stating that:

[there is] a prolonged situation of dual power in the age-old struggle between authoritarian and libertarian tendencies, with outright victory for either tendency most improbable. (Goodway, 2012: 316, 320)

Ward observed that an anarchist society will never be consented to by all of the people, thus the state will remain (White, 2007: 13-4). What people are able to do, however, is take on as much responsibility themselves as possible, while giving as little to the state as possible. Choosing 'authoritarian solutions' continues to delegate power to a centralized authority, whatever sphere of life that decision takes place in. If people continually choose libertarian solutions over authoritarian ones, there are increasing amounts of self-determination.

In contrast to the authoritarian position, Ward favors individuals making as many decisions as they possibly can, it makes for better work and a better society. He believes responsibility for oneself is taken on through 'direct action'. Direct action is, according to Ward, one of the essential elements of a non-hierarchical organization. It refers to actions that immediately realize an end, rather than an action that entrusts some other entity or force to realize that end. The example Ward borrows from David Wieck is that of a butcher who cheats in the weighing of meat, that he may charge the customer more. 'Indirect action' is contacting the Department of Weights and Measures, and hoping they may eventually do

something about it. Direct action would be to ‘insist on weighing one’s own meat, bring along a scale to check the butcher’s weight, take one’s business somewhere else, help open a co-operative store’ (Ward, 2008: 34). Ward observes that once one looks for opportunities for direct action, more and more opportunities are found. Workers learn how to take on new responsibilities and how not to thrust all their problems on a central organization.

The main point here is that networks or groups working within an organization need continuous practice in taking on responsibility. Each decision they take must reinforce that they are decision-makers. Otherwise, the decisions appear to not matter, the stakes decrease, and individual leadership will give way to passivity. Ward offers many such examples of ‘spontaneous order’ emerging without hierarchy and he cautions that they do not immediately coalesce from chaos into order. Groups of adults – and even groups of children – will organize themselves, with one another as leader and led. The problem is that this can take a substantial amount of time. Some of the organizations he describes required 8 months or more to find the decentralized order emerging (Ward, 2008: 41). It is emphatically a learning process, where one discovers how to have different relationships (Ward, 2008: 30).

Within an organization, groups would need to learn through trial and error how to share leading and being led (Ward, 2008). New attitudes are formed and behaviors befitting this kind of group emerge. Many different personality and administrative problems must be encountered, that the group will learn how to govern itself. The amount of time required for this may be difficult to grant in some organizations, especially if money appears to be continually draining without anything to show for it.

Clearly, then, there are practical hurdles to implementing the sorts of groups Ward prefers, but there are also more fundamental philosophical problems. He often shows glimpses of a somewhat essentialist view of human nature, where a common view of human nature leads one to diagnose common problems and common solutions. More recent work – such as that from Todd May (2005), Richard Day (2005) and Saul Newman (2011) – has helped anarchist thought move beyond its somewhat under-theorized condition, especially with regard to essentialism. This has been an important gain for anarchist theorizing, given that previous approaches to anarchism (like Ward’s) bundle essentialist anthropologies into their critique of hierarchies. Another problem is that his understanding of management is somewhat outdated. He tends to view management as supremely centralized (reflecting his experience of the institutions of the Cold War era), while many organizations have increasingly adopted varying degrees or blends of decentralization (see Ward, 2008: 65).

Ward's view of the economy is also rather industrial at a time when many economies are increasingly postindustrial. Part of his optimism about decentralization comes from a factory-based view. When discussing whether total control by workers is possible, he writes that:

there are no technical grounds for regarding workers' control as impossible... [D]ecentralization is not so much a technical problem as an approach to problems of human organization. (Ward, 2008: 35)

The mechanized nature of industrial production lends itself more easily to self-management than knowledge work, insofar as determining the amount of production, the duration of it, etc. are more concrete kinds of decisions. Ward has his examples of anarchist approaches to knowledge work, to be sure, such as an architecture firm whose design process seemed to completely avoid traces of egotism, professional rank, or even experience level (Ward, 2008: 52). All that seemed to matter was the quality and appropriateness of the design. Nevertheless, these knowledge-work examples of his are brief and do not give a clear sense of how the teams involved handled challenging tensions: dynamics between junior and senior workers, how the group understood merit, how the group decided on the 'best' approach, etc.

Splicing management theory and anarchism

This line of thinking of course recalls the logic of decentralizing an organization and empowering lower layers of management. The difference here is that Ward does not seek to empower the lowest managers – which only makes cosmetic changes to a still-intact hierarchy but to empower all workers. Thus, he anticipates self-managed and self-directed teams. Both kinds of teams work together in accomplishing common goals, often rotating leadership and handling many different steps in a process. The key difference between the two kinds is this: self-managed teams pursue goals set outside the team, while self-directed teams pursue goals set by the team. The latter is of course closest to Ward's vision. However, he and other anarchists were writing about these decentralized socialist approaches decades before capitalist versions of teams were tried in corporations or praised in works such as Tom Peters' *Liberation Management* (1994). Students of management like Drucker and Peters were of course not anarchist – or even sympathetic to any socialist vision. They did, however, find themselves attracted to a similar approach for organizing.

Despite Drucker's reservations about the viability of autonomous groups, he in fact supplements Ward's analysis of them. As noted above, Ward's understanding of organizations was largely an industrial one: he focused on

coordination in factories. The sorts of behaviors Ward imagined workers needed amounted to somewhat intuitive ‘virtues’: being tolerant, humble, willing to be led, willing to lead, etc. In an era of white-collar (capitalist) organizations, Drucker would add quite a bit to that list. A departure point would be the sorts of topics covered in his 1967 book, *The Effective Executive*. One would have to have a sophisticated understanding of how to budget time, to know what one’s strengths are and how best to use them in each context, to know which part of the task to put first, which elements must be accomplished at all costs and which could be jettisoned if need be, and so on. Drucker wants his team leader to maintain productivity and generate results. Consequently, each member of the team must be like that team leader (i.e., cross-trained as a manager). If only one member had that training, that person would end up creating an informal hierarchy. Each member must be able to gauge the strengths of each person on the team, see the big picture beyond their specific contribution, know how to understand what time should be allocated for (beyond one’s specific contribution), etc. Management becomes self-management (Drucker, 1999: 84).

Self-management must take place within an organization that can foster it. A continuum can be posed for a single organization, ranging from a more authoritarian organization to a more libertarian one. What ultimately pins an organization down in this continuum is not whether different layers of managers have autonomy, but how individuals make decisions. Do they seek answers or permission from some part of the structure above them because they are required to do so or because they choose to do so? Or, do they tackle problems, in a libertarian way, by addressing the problem themselves? Drucker believes that so many American organizations remove decision-making from most individuals because most early organizations originally borrowed structural elements from the American Constitution (Drucker, 2010). This set a structural precedent for subsequent organizations. More than merely resembling the states institutional hierarchy, these structures reinforce it (Ward, 2008).

Drucker has something to offer here. He understood that smaller, self-directed groups were emerging. He knew the enormous discipline they would need for self-regulation (Flaherty, 1999: 312-3). Self-directed groups seem to bring Drucker and Ward closer together. A difference, however, is immediately clear as Drucker insists on the need for a team leader. This is his romanticized manager’ figure: the team leader may not know how to play the instruments of the orchestra, but will get them to play together a single piece of music. His alternative to this view of ‘large organization as orchestra’ is to view it as a jazz combo that creates its own score as it goes along. He points out that no one knows how to intentionally make these jazz combos in their organization (Beatty, 1998). Drucker remains resistant to removing all hierarchy, even as some groups

become smaller and more autonomous. As always with his work, Drucker's view is a humble and nuanced one: he admits to not knowing the best form hierarchy should take or even if one is needed (2010: 86). He simply points out that many semi-decentralized groups cannot coordinate well within a hierarchical corporate structure, but cannot do with it either. As has often been true in practice, the interface between the self-managed/directed team and the rest of the organization poses the toughest problem.

Drucker's famous 'management by objectives' (MBO) approach is consistent with these kinds of teams (Drucker, 1993: 430). It is useful for teams to focus on their broader objectives, as opposed to any one person emphasizing their specific contribution. The way the team completes its objectives should be unregulated, given that the process might appear unusual or even counter-productive. If someone does not flourish, this means they are on the wrong team (and need a different dynamic) or have been taking on the wrong tasks. Either way, this process requires a high degree of self-knowledge on the part of each member, as well as a highly insightful person to assemble the team.

MBO could be self-applied by some groups, to the point that MBO is essentially stood on its head. It will always be limited, as Drucker conceives it. Typically with MBO, the objectives are set from above (as with self-managed teams). In setting objectives, however, a better strategy is to borrow from the anarchist approach to federation. Federation allows groups to coordinate in broader ways without creating hierarchies. Ward describes federation like this:

[U]nits would federate together not like the stones of a pyramid where the biggest burden is borne by the lowest layer, but like the links of a network, the network of autonomous groups. (Ward, 2008: 34)

Instead of assigning objectives to various autonomous teams, their autonomy should be extended by encouraging them to work together, as with self-directed teams. Here, MBO would find the objectives determined by the group and each other group it works with. Drucker seems to resist a commitment to autonomy like this as impractical. However, one could imagine breaking down a complicated production process into many steps that are spread over a few groups. Consequently, each team would have to determine how to coordinate with other teams, how to adjust objectives to what they learn about other teams, how to rearrange processes in light of what other teams do, and so on.

Rather than self-directed teams that exist in a small autonomous space within a hierarchical framework, there would be many teams whose cooperation and coordination replace much of that hierarchical framework (see Ward, 2008: 72, 74). The decision-making norm would shift from hierarchy toward the

individuals doing the work. Whatever benefits an organization may find in creating self-directing teams (or even self-guiding teams) could be found in greater scale by insisting the teams interface with each other, rather than with the hierarchy. Drucker was reluctant to jettison his 'effective executive', but that figure is not needed. The elements that go into making the effective executive need to be shared, so all could take on some of that managerial work.

The divergent goals of management and anarchism

The ideas of Ward and Drucker are illuminating to consider in tandem. Whatever their approaches to decentralization may share, a fundamental fact must be recognized: Peter Drucker ultimately supported corporate capitalism and Colin Ward rejected it. If we assume that Ward's anarchist approach understands something fundamental about people and their incentives, that understanding must ultimately be situated in today's economy that allocates goods and services via a market system driven by self-interest. Capitalism puts limitations on decentralization that Ward would not. Most of the organizations Drucker discusses are businesses, designed to supply profits to owners or shareholders. Those who provide the capital to the business will be treated differently than labor – profit-sharing, work councils, etc. will be treated less seriously within the organization.

When looked at from this angle, there simply is a disconnect between anarchist values and partially-decentralized businesses that openly embrace their role in the capitalist economy. Ward is an unapologetic critic of capitalism and yearns for its demise. Drucker hopes for a kinder, gentler free market, but nonetheless wants his markets and wants them free. Some common ground remains, however: both Drucker (the capitalist advocate of management) and Ward (the socialist advocate of anarchism) unambiguously prefer the increasing decentralization of production, even if not to the same degree. They also agree that the closer an organization gets to decentralization, the less management is needed. From Ward's perspective, one can see this as an essential element a more radical direction for organizations.

A problem that remains is whether anything really comes of management's empowering of workers: does the increased autonomy really mean anything? The French philosopher Gilles Deleuze views this as many do who take a skeptical view of just how much empowerment and autonomy is really involved. Although he does not explicitly describe himself as an anarchist, Deleuze (especially with Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*) appears sympathetic as his writings often seek a withdrawal from hierarchies. In 1990, he describes the

transition from an industrial economy to a post-industrial one, and the new sorts of incentives that management provides:

There were of course bonus systems in factories, but businesses strive to introduce a deeper level of modulation into all wages bringing them into a state of constant metastability punctuated by ludicrous challenges, competitions, and seminars. If the stupidest TV game shows are so successful, it's because they're a perfect reflection of the way businesses are run. (Deleuze, 1995: 179)

Capital ultimately has the final say for Deleuze, as he finds employees continually exerting themselves in the pursuit of monetary prizes and new job titles. It seems as though the training opportunities, competitions, etc. are to benefit the workers, or at least keep them interested. Deleuze, however, sees these 'employee of the month' challenges as simply adding a layer of control (see also Costea, Crump, and Amiridas, 2008). Management no longer only demands that you show up and work at such-and-such a pace. Now, it controls how well you are invested in the outcome by dangling various prizes in front of you.

For Deleuze, the goal of management begins with a particular situation, where the workers may waste time on the job, feel periods of disillusionment about their work, only give partial effort to the job, etc. They must creatively use various incentives to bend the wills of the workers so that they give themselves over entirely to their work. Integrating decentralized groups into the workplace could function as a similarly manipulative tactic – you'll finally have some freedom and the boss won't be watching your every move. Ultimately, firms may only employ decentralization if they believe their employees perceive it as a gift or if it makes them more productive workers. This is generally the logic that Drucker employs with much of his approach to management, though he shows greater sensitivity and concern for the welfare of workers than some other pro-business thinkers do.

Ward would certainly not claim a corporation that simply adds decentralized groups is being more humane to its workers – what about everything else happening in that corporation and the economic system it functions within? When we confront the anarchist Ward with the pro-business Drucker, it seems to cast organizational decentralization in a cynical light: whatever keeps the worker bees happy is fine with the management. The problem here is bigger than the management of a given firm: it extends to the very existence of management. Capitalist society becomes arranged into large organizations, and the moving parts of each organization are coordinated by management. The managers direct these various groups of people in their organization so that they do more together than they could have done separately. Society's resources become that much more productive, at least in theory. As Ward asks, however, 'is

management necessary'? In a capitalist society, it is necessary if one must coordinate diverse groups of people in pursuit of a goal that many of them have not chosen and may not want. The pursuit of profit requires many people to act as automatons and encourages dependence. It also requires that many of those people have access to less of society's resources than others. With so many people born into a world where they join the workforce in a somewhat uncritical way, management is needed to keep them motivated, organized and always moving forward.

Quoting from Nigel Balchin, Ward frames the issue this way: 'industrial psychologists must stop messing about with tricky and ingenious bonus schemes and find out why a man, after a hard day's work, went home and enjoyed digging in his garden' (2008: 117). The answer is that this person has complete autonomy over his garden, how he works it, and for what ends. Large factories and other organizations could put aside their 'ingenious bonus schemes' and become worker-operated, much like one's garden. Ward recounts examples of a tractor factory and some mines that were coordinated by the workers themselves, 'without supervision' or 'paternalistic management techniques' (2008: 123, 127). He emphasizes that these examples of complex production and resource extraction were carried out with productivity and efficiency that was comparable to their hierarchically-managed counterparts.

Ward, anticipating the famous Deleuzian notion of a line of flight, observes that the state had to be weakened by the 'strengthening of other loyalties, of alternative foci of power, of different modes of human behavior' (2011: 17). As noted above, he believed anarchism doesn't arrive some day in the future or at the conclusion of a bloody revolution. Anarchism already exists, it 'is', it flourishes right now in certain spaces. His goal was to expand those spaces, so those networks of people making decisions for themselves also expand. Increasingly decentralized organizations could contribute to this. One could imagine that sampling a kind of false empowerment at one's job today might well whet the appetite for a more real empowering tomorrow. If one accepts Ward's premise that a violent revolution for an anarchist society is repugnant, one is left to find a more gradual embrace of autonomy. Ward does suggest that a shift to a decentralized organization can offer greater productivity in many cases. In other cases, the productivity is comparable, but the outcome is far more desirable: greater freedom and an approach to work that moves from servitude to creation.

Conclusion

This logic may appear more persuasive when thought about as a broader trend against the state and capital: the internet and other digital technologies have created greater potential for decentralization across society. The sheer presence of decentralization (or technologies that suit it) does not mean that it will happen or that the state won't exert its own authority through those same technological channels. However, Ward insisted that anarchism took place on a continuum, with areas of less autonomy on one side and greater autonomy on the other. This kind of decentralization of business does cultivate the 'other loyalties' and 'alternative foci of power' that he mentioned. Workers carrying out projects they have greater control over are relying less on the guidance of the state and of corporate management. These efforts toward decentralization are quite obviously not anarchistic in and of themselves, but it could provide a glimpse to many workers of what could be. With less managerial interference, many workers could entertain more genuinely radical views. In today's pervasive climate of neoliberalism, this can be difficult to imagine. However, Ward encouraged a continual optimism in making small transitional changes, building upon what is already being done. A push for worker autonomy could become more than a management tactic for incentivizing hard work.

Regardless of whether a more radical future arrives, post-industrial economies require greater attention to a worker's state of mind and even to that worker as an end, not as mean. As we find an increasingly educated workforce doing knowledge work that is difficult to track (compared to industrial work), anarchism may provide a better model than a more hierarchically-based one. As Ward and many anarchists pointed out, less hierarchy could encourage more initiative and creativity, while honing decision-making skills and responsibility. Having teams that are composed of members trained as managers/executives and given time to build a group dynamic together in a leaderless fashion could offer a more productive work environment. More importantly, that environment would be more humane and satisfying, allowing for creativity, self-expression, and a better quality of life.

Anarchist theory, ever concerned about the spontaneity and autonomy of the worker, might provide the answer Drucker never really found. Popular culture – ranging from the movie *Office Space* to the two television versions of *The Office* – mock office drones. The popular perception this sort of entertainment taps into portrays employees that seem sucked dry, with no freedom to act and utterly menial tasks to complete. A more serious cliché about organizations (like the corporation, the military, etc.) focuses on how many have engaged in unabashedly unethical behaviors. Drucker's question is silently answered in the

popular views. What is the legitimacy of white-collar work? There is none. It provides income, but nothing more. A greater preponderance of such approaches as self-directing teams that coordinate across organizations might very well lead to a greater legitimacy: drones might gradually be seen as workers who hold real decision-making power. Blending some of the views of anarchists like Ward with mainstream organizational and management theory might help workers find legitimacy in what they do. It might also set the stage for workers to find lives that are productive, engaged, and creative.

It is not clear whether groups such as self-managed/directed teams will continue to grow in the future or not. For Drucker's part, as he watched the twenty-first century come into focus, he observed how little people know about how to manage knowledge work and how to keep knowledge workers productive. Always an astute observer, he had found a permanent problem of capitalism. Corporations can really only scare or bribe people to be more independent or more productive. Drucker knew that this is not a good solution, but he had nothing left to offer. A better solution is to pursue the freedom that emerges from moving beyond the concept of work used here (a kind of servitude to someone else) and to one that emphasizes creativity and freedom. Completely decentralized organizations are capable of providing that – Ward spent a lifetime collecting examples of them from around the world. Building toward these decentralized organizations requires constant, gradual changes that allow people to take on greater independence. Looking beyond mainstream approaches to organizational theory and management is a way to begin.

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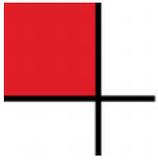
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Autonomist leadership in leaderless movements: anarchists leading the way*

Simon Western

abstract

Autonomist Leadership is the name given to the non-hierarchical, informal and distributed forms of leadership found in emancipatory social movements, and, in particular, in networked social movements. This paper establishes how Autonomist Leadership has emerged from anarchist theory and practice, and thrives in the digital and physical networks of contemporary social movements, utilising mobile communications and digital platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. This paper situates Autonomist Leadership in the critical leadership literature and sets out five principles that make it a distinct form of leadership: *Spontaneity, Autonomy, Mutuality, Affect* and *Networks*. Autonomist Leadership is both enacted and, at the same time, disavowed by activists, which creates dissonance and internal tensions. The paper argues that activists' affective attachments to the identity of being leaderless is a barrier to the development and agency of social movements. I conclude by arguing that by naming and acknowledging the Autonomist Leadership they have pioneered, activists can transcend the fantasy of being leaderless and develop beyond being protest movements to engage in social change with greater agency.

Introduction

I receive and I give – such is human life. Each directs and is directed in his turn. Therefore there is no fixed and constant authority, but a continual exchange of mutual, temporary, and, above all, voluntary authority and subordination. (Bakunin, 2012/1882: 33)

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What Bakunin describes is an early articulation of anarchist-inspired leadership. This paper defines and describes a specific form of anti-hierarchical, informal and distributed leadership that is distinctive to emancipatory social movements, named as 'Autonomist Leadership' (Western, 2013: 79-84). This develops my earlier work on Autonomist Leadership by setting out the five principles that make Autonomist Leadership distinctive, i.e. Spontaneity, Autonomy, Mutuality, Affect and Networks. In recent times, anarchist-inspired leadership has re-emerged, after a period of being marginalised by the 20th century successes of communism and capitalism, and can be observed flourishing in the digital networks and physical spaces of contemporary networked social movements (NSMs). Social movements become networked when they use digital technology as a main tool to communicate, a political expression and manifestation of the today's networked society¹ (Castells, 2000, 2012; Quan-Haase and Wellman, 2004; Juris, 2004). NSMs have imaginatively utilised social media, mobile communication and digital platforms such as Twitter, which enables the rapid diffusion of information and increases autonomy in communication and actions. Social movements have always used the communication tools of their day, often seeing opportunities that mainstream society has not yet fully realised. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the new communication technology, in the form of the printing press which was successfully utilised by radical dissenters with great effect through pamphleteering (Hill, 1972). New technologies do not only impact on communication, but have wider effects on society. W. Lance Bennett (2012), for example, discusses how new technologies have contributed to a 'personalisation of politics', which also impacts on NSMs as I will discuss later. NSM's activity is not only restricted to the virtual realm, but, as Manuel Castells argues, 'from the safety of cyberspace, people from all ages and conditions moved towards occupying urban space, on a blind date with each other and with the destiny they wanted to forge, as they claimed their right to make history' (2012: 2).

Contemporary activists aim to develop radical participatory social movements utilising new network capabilities, but they have a problem to overcome. They must fill the gap which remains when hierarchy and traditional leadership are removed. This problem has been addressed in three ways. Firstly, NSMs organise by maximising participative democracy, drawing on experience from previous social movements and anarchist theory and practice. Secondly, they have innovated a new form of Autonomist Leadership that thrives by embracing

1 Network Society-Castells refers to how society has changed whereby social structures and activities are organised around digital and virtual information networks. Social networks process and manage information using micro-electronic and mobile based technologies.

participatory democracy, enabling individual autonomist leadership and mobilising a collective leadership agency without contradicting their ethos. Thirdly, the gap is filled with a utopian fantasy whereby activists claim that their movements are 'leaderless', disavowing all forms of leadership, which creates further problems that are addressed later in this paper. Drawing on Lacanian theory, the term leaderless operates as an 'objet petit a', an object that temporarily fills a gap, but which is also a symptom of the lack, rather than a sustainable replacement for the lost object. Lack is a cause of desire and the symptom 'leaderless' points to the desire for leadership. Discarding traditional leadership creates a lack and leaves a gap. Utilising the signifying term leaderless to celebrate the absence of leadership does not fill this gap, but temporarily covers it over. For a short time the anxiety and desire created by the lack is displaced by the temporary enjoyment gained through the identification of being 'free protestors'. However, this enjoyment is short lived, for to fill the gap will take new and innovative forms of leadership, not the celebration of its absence.

This paper discusses this emergence of Autonomist Leadership, setting it firstly in the context of anarchist theory and practice, and then within critical leadership literature, before addressing the challenges created by the paradox of Autonomist Leadership being enacted in so called leaderless movements. Autonomist Leadership has delivered powerful results within protest movements, as seen in the Arab Spring revolutions and the Occupy and Indignados movements, yet these large movements have struggled to move beyond the phase of protest. A key reason for this is the disavowal of all leadership (including autonomous forms) that occurs within these movements. When activists associate all forms of leadership with hierarchy and authoritarianism, the Autonomist Leadership they enact takes place in the context of a paradox that creates a cognitive and emotional dissonance. This leads to internal tensions and conflicts (often in passive aggressive forms) limiting and displacing the movements' agency and constraining them from developing the form of non-hierarchical leadership they have pioneered. As shown later in this paper, this dissonance problem could be overcome by adopting a critical leadership theory approach which reveals how leadership can be distributed, informally and non-hierarchically (therefore removing the contradictions). Yet in spite of this, the disavowal of leadership continues, and this paper claims that this is due to the strong affective investments activists have to being leaderless. Affective attachments override cognitive-rational considerations, particularly when the affects are associated with what Jacques Lacan calls *jouissance* (a particular type of enjoyment). Yannis Stavrakakis (2007) shows, for example, how consumer society and nationalism draw on the affective attachments of enjoyment (*jouissance*) to fuel their cause; my observations and research show how activists attach powerful affects of enjoyment to their identification as leaderless protesters. When this occurs, the

affective attachments are very difficult to displace, hence the problem activists have in recognising the autonomous forms of leadership they have pioneered.

I conclude that the paradox of leadership being enacted in leaderless movements needs a disruptive intervention, which can be achieved by naming and defining their specific forms of non-hierarchical leadership as Autonomist. The prefix Autonomist undoes the affective attachments to being leaderless, as it breaks the emotionally binding ties that link leadership with hierarchy, elitism, authoritarianism and coercion.

Autonomist Leadership names and describes a specific form of leadership existing within emancipatory movements, which can then be scrutinised and developed. By naming and owning Autonomist Leadership, the inner conflicts associated with denial are removed and activists can re-attach their affective investments to the object they really care about and which initially engaged them in these movements, i.e. their emancipatory aims. When Autonomist Leadership is transparently acknowledged, tensions and conflicts do not disappear, but become developmental rather than regressive. This means working through difficult challenges such as addressing power dynamics and struggling for meaning and ideas, which contrasts with the regressive dynamic of imposing constraints on themselves in regard to taking up leadership in order to maintain the fantasy of being 'leaderless'.

The paper will now situate leadership in the context of anarchism, before defining Autonomist Leadership that has emerged from this tradition and is found in Networked Social Movements.

Anarchism and leadership

Anarchists have always had an ambivalent, often negative, relationship towards leadership, highlighted by the anarchist slogan 'No Gods, No Masters!' Yet, radically democratic forms of leadership have always been present (if not named) within anarchist circles, both in terms of famous leaders, e.g. Bakunin, Kropotkin and Proudhon, but also in terms of their understanding that individuals and groups take temporary leadership autonomously and on behalf of the wider collective, without assuming a formal position of power or authority over others (Bakunin 2012 [1882]; Joll, 1979; Woodcock, 2004). Bakunin captures the anarchist's view of leadership:

At the moment of action, in the midst of the struggle, there is a natural division of roles according to the aptitude of each, assessed and judged by the collective whole: some direct and command, others execute orders. Hierarchical order and

promotion do not exist, so the commander of yesterday can become a subordinate tomorrow. No one rises above others, or if he does rise, it is only to fall back a moment later, like the waves of the sea forever returning to the salutary level of equality. (Bakunin, cited in Joll, 1979: 92)

Anarchists developed innovative forms of leadership without naming it as leadership for two reasons. Firstly, the capacity to lead was historically seen as a rarity and only for specific domains, e.g. the military and governing emperors or kings (Wilson, 2013). The contemporary usage of the term leadership has become widespread and now is found in business, sport, politics and social arenas; therefore, anarchists wouldn't have used the term leadership as it is used today. Secondly, the terms 'leader' and 'leadership' have become synonymous in mainstream thinking with the Messiah leadership discourse (Western, 2008; 2013), where charismatic, elitist and powerful individuals have influence over others, which doesn't fit with anarchist understandings of leadership based on egalitarian principles.

Past forms of anarchist leadership have not delivered huge success, in contrast with more traditional and hierarchical forms of leadership displayed within certain socialist, communist and capitalist systems. However, anarchist critiques of hierarchical forms of leadership have been proven right over and over again. Anarchists point to Stalin, Mao, Mussolini, Hitler and also to contemporary 'democratic' political leadership in the west that reproduces the power-elites that dominate within neo-liberal capitalism. From an anarchist's perspective, the problem is not just bad leaders, but leadership itself, which creates a 'power-over' (Ricoeur, 1990) dynamic that inevitably reproduces coercive relationships and diminishes the autonomy of 'followers'. Engels wrote that the Paris Commune of 1871 effectively ended serious anarchist ideology because their '[...] ideological forms were inappropriate for making decisions of state [...] making way for a single "Marxism"' (Engels, cited in Badiou, 2006: 263). Yet, today's networked society reveals a turn towards horizontal rather than vertical forms of organisation. Marxist and capitalist traditions of hierarchical elite leadership are increasingly challenged by participatory forms of leadership, underpinned by anarchist theory and practice (Newman, 2001).

Whilst many anarchists denounce leadership, those with theoretical insights distinguish between being anti-authoritarian and anti-leadership. Ehrlich states 'Anarchy is not without leadership, it is without followership' (1979: 108), yet this lesson seems to be forgotten in today's NSMs, where leadership is conflated with being governed by another. Proudhon, the French anarchist famed for his slogan: 'Property is Theft', establishes the anti-authoritarian position of anarchists and expresses their antipathy to being governed:

To be governed is to be watched over, inspected, spied upon, directed, legislated at, regulated, docketed, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, assessed, weighed, censored, ordered about, by men who have neither the right nor the knowledge nor the virtue [...] That's government, that's its justice, that's its morality! (Proudhon, cited in Joll, 1979: 55).

Anarchism comes in a variety of forms, and it is mutualism and syndicalism that offer the clearest examples of anarchist leadership in practice. Kropotkin, in his famous text *Mutual aid* (2012 [1902]) presented an evolutionary perspective of mutualism, challenging social Darwinism: 'There is an immense amount of warfare and extermination going on amidst various species; there is, at the same time, as much, or perhaps even more of, mutual support, mutual aid, and mutual defense [...] Sociability is as much a law of nature as mutual struggle' (Kropotkin, 2012 [1902]). Contemporary anarchist Kevin Carson (2014) explains mutuality as follows: 'All relationships and transactions are non-coercive, and based on voluntary cooperation, free exchange, or mutual aid [...]'. Mutualism offers a balance to excessive individualism that can be found in anarchist circles. The principles of mutualism are central to the anarchists' approach to leadership, whereby leaders do not hold power over others and any formalisation of a leadership position is temporary, open to recall and dissolvable at any time. Leaders and followers/participants mutually co-produce leadership, and positions are exchangeable: a leader can be a follower and vice versa at any appropriate moment. Leadership in anarchist environments has been tried and tested with various successes and many failures in small communes, co-operatives, anarcho-syndicalist collectives and in war zones such as the Spanish Civil War (Thomas, 2001).

Tracing the ambivalent anarchist relationship to leadership, we see that two strands of thinking and practice occur. Firstly, following an acknowledgement by Bakunin and later anarchists that leadership always exists, the questions they pose are what kind of leadership do we want and how can leaders be empowered without disempowering others. Secondly, the term leadership has accumulated negative connotations by anarchists and is conflated with hierarchical governance and authoritarianism and, therefore, any form of leadership is discarded as not being compatible with anarchism. This second point reflects a purity in anarchist thinking that idealises a natural social harmony that could be achieved if the state or powerful elites are removed. Saul Newman writes: 'Anarchism is based around this notion of the purity of the revolutionary identity. Human essence and natural human society is anarchism's uncontaminated point of departure, the pure place of resistance that will overcome power' (Newman, 2001: 48). It is this tradition of purist thinking that is re-enacted through the idealism of being 'leaderless' in today's NSMs.

The 1960s counterculture saw a re-emergence of libertarian and egalitarian idealism and anarchist-influenced movements appearing in society. Social movements emerged and organised around collective identity politics, e.g. the feminist, peace and environmental movements, whilst at the same time a more generic ‘hippy’ movement championed individualism, anti-establishment and anti-institutional sentiments. Radical feminists and peace activists denounced leadership as a form of patriarchy and a central tool of capitalist control. Many of these movements drew heavily on the anarchist stance of privileging individual autonomy over party discipline. Leaderless movements became popular within the counter-cultures of the 1960s and later, which have in turn informed today’s NSMs. Yet the lessons learnt from these movements seem to have been lost. Contemporary anarchist, Chaz Bufe, reflects that leadership is inevitable in social groups:

In the 60s and 70s many leftist, anarchist and feminist groups agonised over how to eliminate leadership, equating all leadership [including temporary, task-based leadership] with authoritarian leadership. Their fruitless efforts confirm what the more astute anarchists have been saying for over a century – that it’s a mistake to think that any kind of group or organization can exist without leadership; the question is, what kind of leadership is it going to be? (Bufe, 1988: 21)

As Bufe makes clear, being ‘leaderless’ is a myth, propagated to support an ideological position to which activists become affectively attached: for leadership always occurs but it is not always transparent (Barker et al., 2001; Gerbaudo, 2012). Jo Freeman, in her polemic ‘The Tyranny of Structurelessness’, articulated her observations of leaderless groups in the feminist movement, finding that removing leaders and clear structures simply masked power and created very negative dynamics:

[S]tructurelessness becomes a way of masking power and within the women’s movement was most strongly advocated by the most powerful. Awareness of power is curtailed by those who know the rules, as long as the structure of the group is informal. The most insidious elites are usually run by people not known to the larger public at all. Intelligent elitists are usually smart enough not to allow themselves to become well known [...] Friendship and informal power networks dominate and exclude ‘out-groups’ within such movements and organizations (Freeman, 1972: 156–157).

Activists from various egalitarian traditions became wedded to the idea of being leaderless, and contemporary NSMs have followed this stance. Yet, as Freeman shows, the impact of a wholesale rejection of leadership is detrimental because leadership and power relations don’t disappear to create pure social harmony, they simply get driven underground and become enacted in hidden ways by ‘insidious elites’.

NSMs draw on anarchist and egalitarian social movements' traditions and are against hierarchical forms of leadership and organising structures. The rejection of power being concentrated in elite leadership positions has led to innovations in how NSMs organise, including how leadership is enacted. New forms of anarchist-inspired leadership have re-emerged and flourish in these networked movements. However, the problem remains that these novel forms of leadership remain hidden because of the continued disavowal of all leadership. Before addressing this challenge, the paper will now define and describe Autonomist Leadership.

Autonomist Leadership

Autonomist Leadership is an important innovation in leadership, found in contemporary, emancipatory protest movements and, in particular, NSMs. The impact of 'leaderless' protest movements has caught the imagination of the wider media, as evidenced by Time Magazine making 'The Protester' person of the year in 2011, following Tahrir Square, Indignados and Occupy Wall Street protests. These Networked Social Movements are contagious, inspiring one another, sharing experience and creating a networked solidarity through new technologies that enable a new found global connectedness. However, mainstream commentators and many scholars have failed to recognise the leadership that takes place, preferring to propagate the romantic myth that these movements are leaderless (Gerbaudo, 2012). Autonomist Leadership currently plays a vital part in these protest movements and can be increasingly important in wider contexts beyond protest movements considering what many perceive to be a cultural shift towards horizontalism emerging in society. To fully account for how these movements organise, it is vital to name, define and describe this new form of leadership, which enables researchers to scrutinise it and activists to develop it. Five principles define the parameters of Autonomist Leadership²: Spontaneity, Autonomy, Mutualism, Networks and Affect. Together, they differentiate Autonomist Leadership from other forms of leadership. I will address each principle in turn.

Spontaneity

2 These principles are arrived at through participative observation in anarchist and other 'leaderless' groups over many years, combined with reviews of contemporary literature, texts and activist websites as well as through informal interviews with activists participating in NSMs, such as the Occupy movement. I am not claiming these principles offer a fixed definition of Autonomist Leadership, but they offer a heuristic device and I encourage dialogue and further research. This definition has been developed and expanded from an earlier version (Western, 2013: 80) with the addition of two principles: Affect and Networks.

Leadership arises spontaneously, is temporary, without fixed roles and does not stabilise in any key actors or form of governance. It emerges and falls away as contexts arise, and actors take up leadership in diverse ways (both as individuals and collectively). A strength of this spontaneity is that it perpetuates unstable networks of individualised-collective action, thereby keeping movements agile and potentially able to utilise the leadership talents of all activists, rather than be limited to the talent of small elites.

Autonomy

The principle of autonomy applies to leaders, followers and all participating actors. Anybody and everybody can take up leadership, there is no ranking or hierarchy and there is a heightened awareness and commitment to the autonomy of all, guarding against coercion and the manipulation of power. The principle of autonomy reflects many anarchists' belief in individual freedom as a cornerstone of social justice, in contrast to socialist/communist privileging of collective allegiances over individual autonomy. Leaders or followers are interchangeable and both participate autonomously to co-create the enactment of leadership.

Mutualism

Leadership is enacted with mutual consent, mutual responsibility and for the mutual benefit of the movement/group. When functioning well, Autonomist Leaders are upheld and supported to act in the best interests of the movement. Mutualism is the counter-balance to over-zealous individual autonomy (found in some anarchist groups that can become narcissistic, and end up promoting self-interest). Any enactment of Autonomist Leadership always works between the two tensions and forces of mutualism and collaboration, on the one hand, and competing individual and group interests, on the other.

Networks

Autonomist Leadership is embedded within networks as an active leadership dynamic that is fluid, changing and dispersed throughout the network. This differs from traditional leaders who may engage with and utilise networks; for example, when political leaders engage with and mobilise networks to gain support or fundraise. This is not Autonomist Leadership. Autonomist Leadership is a multiplicity and is rhizomatic (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987); it pops up, disappears, reappears, is beyond any single individual or elite group and is potentially within all individuals. Networked Autonomist Leadership can make these movements appear 'leaderless' to those looking for orthodox leadership structures. Whilst social movements have always used social networks to organize, the digital age has created new virtual platforms enabling a

mobilisation of Autonomous Leadership in ways which were inconceivable before. The connectivity between virtual and physical networks has been one of the key innovations of NSMs and is transforming how social movements organise.

Affect

The importance of affect is amplified in NSMs in contrast to mainstream organisations. This is due to the strong personal affective investments that draw individuals to these emancipatory movements. Activists have personalised self-narratives and emotional attachments that draw them to ideals such as freedom and to fight against oppression and abuse of power. Reciprocally, these movements generate powerful collective affects: feelings such as hope, solidarity and love that arise from the idealism, camaraderie and unity expressed within them. An individual's personal affective attachments are reinforced and shaped through the networked conversations and exchanges that take place. Within NSMs, sub-groups are formed that appeal to diverse individual needs, desires and passions. Autonomist leaders act upon their personal affective investments and are mobilised by others into taking courageous or utilitarian acts of leadership. NSMs are charged with libidinal energy that arises from these affective investments and when attached to the emancipatory object, this produces and sustains pluralist and fluid forms of Autonomist leadership. However, when affective attachments become disinvested from the emancipatory object and become attached to fantasy objects such as being leaderless, the movements are weakened as activists' energies become displaced and Autonomist Leadership is curtailed.

There are two clear reasons for the recent emergence and success of Autonomist Leadership in contemporary NSMs. The first is due to the new zeitgeist that has emerged within the networked society, giving these movements opportunities for new forms of connectivity and activity in the digital realm that are later enacted in public spaces. Newman captures this zeitgeist:

The situation is changing, and the new forms of autonomous politics that are currently emerging demand the use of another term: anarchism. Shipwrecked on the craggy shores of state power, anarchism is now moving to the forefront of our political imagination. There has been a certain paradigm shift in politics away from the state and formal representative institutions, which still exist but increasingly as empty vessels without life, and toward movements. (Newman, 2011)

The second reason is due to the 'personalisation of politics' (Bennett, 2012; Bennett and Segerberg, 2011). Bennett claims that the demise of social loyalties and institutional ties (Putnam, 2000), alongside the impact of the

personalisation of society expressed via consumerism and social media activity, have also impacted on political engagement. Today, networked individuals (Castells, 2007) discover a new autonomy on the internet which they enact in the wider world, and which activists apply to the political sphere. Bennett writes:

Among the most interesting aspects of this era of personalisation has been the rise of large-scale, rapidly forming political participation aimed at a variety of targets [...] The more diverse the mobilisation, the more personalised the expressions often become, typically involving communication technologies that allow individuals to activate their loosely tied social networks. (Bennett, 2012: 21)

This personalisation of society becomes a personalisation of these movements, which have less rigid identifiable causes, political programmes or collective identities than previous social movements. This facilitates wider participation so that individual activists can personalise their political commitment. The Occupy movement epitomised this. Its 'We are the 99%' slogan embraced everybody (except the evil 1 per cent). This enables individuals to personalise the movement to their own ends. Individuals form intimate networks and sub-groupings, they create personalised blogs, tweets and Facebook identities and attract like-minded individuals (Gerbaudo, 2012). Autonomist Leadership often begins in cyberspace and transitions to the public squares which then offers new opportunities and new demands for Autonomist Leadership³. The experience from previous anarchist-led movements is present in the discourses that shape the practices in these gatherings, the General Assembly at the Occupy movement being a good example. Autonomist Leadership fits with these movements' ethos 'to practice in the present, the future changes they seek' (Melucci, 1989: 5-6), i.e. it enacts non-oppressive and participatory forms of leadership; sadly, they have not yet fully embraced their own success. Autonomist Leadership is always aspirational, never a pure form, and the five principles act as a description of the parameters, not a rulebook. Working within these parameters is an ongoing contestation that is at the heart of any radical democratic process (Gobetti, 2000). Having defined and discussed Autonomist Leadership, I will now situate it within the critical leadership literature which provides explanatory theories that accommodate and will help research and shape this new form of leadership.

Situating Autonomist Leadership within Critical Leadership Studies

Autonomist Leadership can only be recognised, developed and scrutinised if situated within a Critical Leadership Studies (CLS) expanded view of leadership

3 See Castells (2012) for a full account of this movement, from network to public square.

that challenges the mainstream leader-centric view (Jackson and Parry, 2011). The mainstream organisational literature and popular view of leadership can summarised as: Leadership = Person + Position + Authority (Western, 2013: 80). Firstly, leadership is situated within a person, i.e. individuals are attributed innate transformational or inspirational qualities (Bolden and Gosling, 2006; Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Burns, 1978). Secondly, leaders hold formal positions in hierarchical structures, e.g. CEOs, priests or political leaders who influence followers both through their personality and from their position. Thirdly, leadership relates to exercising authority over others, either using soft-power (Nye, 1990) or overtly using coercive forms of authority that range from economic levers (pay and promotion) to despotic leaders wielding authoritarian control. CLS scholars argue that leadership is not only defined by what individual leaders do (Hosking, 1988) but that many actors in a network interact to produce the agency of leadership (Gronn, 2002; Bolden, 2011; Latour, 2005; Law, 1993). CLS scholars emphasise leadership as a process, which corrects the mainstream imbalance towards the individual. The leadership definition below is formulated from the CLS literature, and it is through this lens that Autonomist Leadership is made visible. The following definition, drawing on CLS, can be offered: *Leadership is a psychosocial influencing dynamic.* (Western, 2013: 36)

To clarify:

- **Psycho:** refers to the psychodynamics of leadership, referencing that leadership occurs both within and between people. Leadership and followership stimulates unconscious and emotional responses within us, and relational dynamics between us.
- **Social:** refers to the social construction and social dynamics of leadership. Leadership goes beyond relational dynamics; it also references social power and authority that operate through discourses shaped by powerful elites. The social field, and how it influences and controls material and symbolic resources, must be accounted for in our understanding of leadership.
- **Influencing:** leadership signifies the specific agency of influencing others. Influencing is a wide-ranging term, and leadership draws on a vast array of resources, from personality to coercive power to influence others.
- **Dynamic:** refers to the dynamic movement within leadership. Leadership cannot be fixed to a single person, group or formal position, or reduced to a set of behaviours, skills or competencies. Leadership moves between

people (and things) as a dynamic social process, and can often emerge where least expected.

Autonomist Leadership, when viewed through the mainstream leadership lens, is rendered invisible, as no individual or group holds position, power or authority over others. Whilst CLS provides the explanatory theory that accommodates Autonomist Leadership, very little is written about leadership in NSMs in the critical literature⁴ (Einwohner, 2007: 1307; Reger, 2007). For example, the Sage handbook of leadership (Bryman et al., 2011), a comprehensive publication with contributions from sixty-four leading scholars in the field, with chapters on 'Leadership and cults', 'Spirituality and leadership', and 'Transformational leadership', does not mention leadership in social movements, nor is there mention of social movements in the index. Because social movements, and NSMs in particular, are a growing force as political-social actors, this gap in the literature should be of great future interest to CLS scholars. Two exceptions to this omission in the CLS literature are Neil Sutherland, Chris Land and Steffen Böhm's (2013) paper on 'Anti-leaders(hip) in Social Movement Organizations', and Paolo Gerbaudo's (2012) book *Tweets and the streets*. Sutherland et al.'s research affirms the ambivalence towards leadership in anarchist groups and their paper upholds, I would argue, the commonly held belief that leadership is a bad thing in anarchist circles. It also confirms that activists discuss leadership from within the mainstream Messiah discourse (Western, 2013), i.e. as a power-over form of elitism that leads them to an 'ideological rejection' of leadership (Sutherland et al., 2013: 10).

They position leadership as being discursive and a process, and claim that 'just because an organisation is leaderless, it does not necessarily mean that it is also leadershipless', (*ibid.*: 1) concluding that 'although individual leaders were not present, there was still evidence of leadership occurring' (*ibid.*: 16). This clearly supports the position that these movements are not leaderless; however, this stance of having leadership without leaders is problematic. They argue the CLS line that leadership is not confined to stabilised positions or individual actors, but is a process. When addressing individual leaders, however, they revert to the mainstream view that constrains individual leaders to being in stable, power-over positions. For example, they seek to understand how the meaning-making work of leadership 'is done in the absence of permanent and stable leaders', (*ibid.*, 2013: 8) yet do not ask how leadership is done with individual leaders acting within the participatory ethos of the anarchists groups, i.e. via Autonomist

4 Social movement studies include discussions of leadership in social movements, but do little to address an Autonomist Leadership perspective. This paper will be limited to discussing leadership in CLS.

Leadership. Their paper argues for leadership but without leaders, and in order to achieve this, leadership is limited to being a discursive function of meaning-making and individual leaders are substituted by 'leadership actors' (Fairhurst, 2008). This presents two challenges. Firstly, leadership occurs in many diverse forms and cannot be limited to a meaning-making discursive function (Drath, 2001). Secondly, individual leaders can have agency without being reduced to being stable individuals with position power. The term 'leadership actors' is not specific enough to identify the particular form of leadership taken by individuals because it is a generic term that can denote anybody taking an informal leadership role (which may be progressive, reactionary, coercive or manipulative). It is, therefore, important to recognise the specific form of emancipatory leadership enacted by individuals in NSMs that contributes to the wider embedded process of Autonomist Leadership in these movements.⁵

By eliminating individual leaders, a kind of decaffeinated leadership is described, where leadership is desired, but it is not the real thing,⁶ and the theoretical nuances of having 'leadership without leaders' are difficult conceptually to enact in practice. This affirms one of the criticisms of critical theory in general, i.e. that it is too remote from practice (Cooke, 2008). Sutherland et al.'s research affirms that in spite of the attempts to make leadership disappear, stealth leadership often takes place as a 'return of the repressed' and this happens in dysfunctional ways. To quote an anarchist from their research:

It got to the stage where whatever they said [...] was what we did. They'd already chatted about most of the agenda points, so just reiterated that without giving anybody else time or space to air their thoughts. It wasn't aggressive, and most of us didn't realise it for ages [...] but they became so powerful. (Sutherland et al., 2013: 15)

A similar example of stealth leadership is reported in the Zuccotti Park Occupy camp by a New York activist:

I'm hesitant to say that it's non-hierarchical, that there's no leadership, because I do really think that there's a core of people – the media and press team – who are doing a lot of the organising and shaping the public image [...] I think it's denying the real power dynamics that are at play now. (Sacks, cited in Strauss, 2011)

Gerbaudo (2012) also challenges the notion of leaderless movements. He writes: 'I argue that far from inaugurating a situation of absolute "leaderlessness", social

5 Further to this discussion, CLS author Fairhurst (2001) critiques the splitting leadership and leaders, the individual and the collective, while Uhl-Bien and Ospina (2012) argue that leadership must be looked at through a number of prisms to see it clearly.

6 To play with Žižek's insights (2002).

media have, in fact, facilitated the rise of complex and “liquid” (Bauman, 2013) forms of leadership which exploit the interactive and participatory character of the new communication technologies’ (Gerbaudo, 2012: 13). Gerbaudo says that leaders within NSMs subscribe to the ideology of horizontalism and are ‘reluctant leaders’ or ‘anti-leaders’: ‘they do not want to be seen as leaders in the first place but whose scene-setting and scripting work has been decisive in bringing a degree of coherence to people’s spontaneous and creative participation in the protest movements’ (*ibid.*: 13). This affirms the claim in this paper that leadership is enacted whilst being disavowed. Gerbaudo claims these reluctant leaders ‘become ‘soft leaders’ or choreographers, involved in setting the scene, and constructing an emotional space within which collective action can unfold’ (*ibid.*: 5). I agree with Gerbaudo’s assertion that the leaderless myth is compounded because ‘social media are turned into a ‘fetish’ of collective action [...] endowed with mystical qualities that only obscure the work of the groups and organisers using them’ (*ibid.*: 8). However, his metaphor of leaders as choreographers can be interpreted (and he warns against this danger) of another form of ‘stealth leadership’ happening behind the scenes. Clearly, stealth leadership occurs when leadership is denied and hidden, while some form of organised leadership undeniably takes place. For example, the editors of *Adbusters* called for the Occupation of Wall Street⁷. Using their media savvy, they called for ‘a Tahrir Moment’, bringing the energy and inspiration of the Egyptian experience to mobilise activists in the USA. Yet this was not stealth leadership, it was overt. They did not choreograph the actions; rather, they emotionally engaged the protesters and took a transparent Autonomist Leadership role (amongst many other actors) drawing on their particular talents and resources (Yardley, 2011). The term choreographer does not describe the diverse, plural and fluid forms of Autonomist Leadership that occur within these movements. Autonomist Leadership operates as an emergent process, not as scripted or choreographed from behind the scenes like a planned piece of theatre. A strength of these movements is the embedded Autonomist Leadership that responds adaptively to fast changing contexts, precisely because there is not a hierarchy or group of choreographers co-ordinating the action. On the other hand, collective and individual Autonomist Leaders may plan, strategize and organise, sometimes within consensual participatory structures, sometimes in a cell-like rhizomatic way, outside of traditional organisational structures and sometimes with complete spontaneity, e.g. the first anarchist in the crowd to throw the rock!

Both Sutherland and Gerbaudo’s work support the notion that anarchist organisations and NSMs are not leaderless, and both offer different accounts of

7 <https://www.adbusters.org/blogs/adbusters-blog/occupywallstreet.html>

what leadership means in these movements. This paper adds to this literature claiming that emancipatory movements are filled with Autonomist Leaders who aspire to act within the specific parameters set out in the five principles.

Autonomist Leadership has proved to be a key strength in NSMs through mobilising distributed and informal leadership which enables autonomist actions and fast adaptive responses. The lack of traditional individual leaders and power elites make Autonomist-led movements exceptionally difficult for their opponents to contain or control. A weakness within these movements is the disavowal of leadership caused by the affective attachments to being leaderless. This creates tensions through the dissonance of experiencing leadership happen (and engaging as a leader/follower), whilst at the same time having to repress awareness of it. Prohibitions of the self occur to avoid being seen as a leader and subtle or coercive prohibitions of others occur by self-appointed activists who 'police' the 'leaderless' space. The prohibitions involve power games and envious attacks and sabotage that undermine morale and the emancipatory cause. In this scenario, acts of Autonomist Leadership are encouraged, welcomed and celebrated (under another name), and are also condemned and constrained. Heroic activist actions are narrated and shared on the internet and in camps, while successful mobilisations and victories are stories often retold, yet discussing leadership openly remains a taboo subject.

Autonomist Leadership clearly sits within, and draws upon, CLS literature, whilst also opening new areas for further research. Three examples of research stand out: firstly, how leadership influence operates where conventional power-over relations and hierarchical structures of governance are actively discouraged; secondly, how individual leadership is enacted and its relation to distributed leadership processes that are emergent within these networks; thirdly, how leadership moves between digital networks and physical spaces, e.g. do the same leadership actors operate in both domains? Are there different codes of normative practice and behaviours for leaders and followers, or are they the same in both domains?

Having defined Autonomist Leadership and situated it in the critical literature, the paper will now discuss the impact that the disavowal of leadership has on the enactment of Autonomist Leadership and on the agency of these movements.

The disavowal of leadership: Autonomist leadership in leaderless movements

Autonomist Leadership clearly exists within these movements, yet the disavowal⁸ of all forms of leadership persists in order to support the activists' ideal of 'leaderless' movements. This paradox creates a dissonance that leads to tensions and a displacement of energy that undermines a movement's agency and prevents them from developing beyond their protest mode. Two main reasons account for this disavowal. Firstly, all leadership is seen as hierarchal and authoritarian, ignoring other contemporary forms of non-hierarchical and informal leadership as identified within critical leadership studies. Secondly, leadership is disavowed due to activists' strong affective investments in the term 'leaderless'. The first reason is easily addressed, because the knowledge of new forms of non-hierarchical leadership that overcome the traditional symbiosis between leadership and hierarchy are readily available and known to many activists. However, it is the affective attachments to being leaderless that override the conscious knowing that non-hierarchical leadership exists, and this knowing becomes disavowed. Affective investments fuel individual and collective libidinal drives that create the solidarity and commitment to act in political and social movements (Ahmed, 2013; Stavrakakis, 2007). These affective attachments are often stronger in NSMs than in other social movements or political organisations due to the blurring of collective political demands and the network capability that enables a greater personalisation of engagement (Bennett, 2012; Castells, 2007).

It is, therefore, the libidinal economy, i.e. the conscious and unconscious emotional dynamics and drives that shape and energise these movements that must be addressed if new forms of Autonomist Leadership can fully develop. The strong affective attachments to being leaderless becomes the enactment of an ideological ideal, a purifying pact that binds these movements together. The term 'leaderless' has become a master signifier that signifies activists' ideals of creating a world free of oppression, hierarchy, elitism and power itself. 'Leaderless' is perhaps the only term that universally defines these movements, in the absence of a manifesto, a political party, a collective identity or a programme of demands. 'Leaderless' appeals as it signifies a disruption of the cultural norm, it challenges the hegemony of the past and present order, whether capitalist or socialist. To be leaderless is to evoke the possibility of a new world order. To be leaderless is to seek the pure anarchist ideal of a natural harmonious

8 I use the term disavowal to indicate the psychoanalytic meaning, where we have knowledge of something yet it is not consciously available to us.

society without unnatural interference from external governance (Newman, 2011).

Drawing on the psychoanalytic work of Jacques Lacan, the disavowal of leadership represents a desire for a world that is freed from authoritarianism and power-relations. The affective investment in being 'leaderless' is to unconsciously seek pure *jouissance* (Lacan, 2007), which means to unconsciously identify with the fantasy of obtaining excessive enjoyment, a utopian fantasy that is unobtainable. The idea of being leaderless acts as the *objet petit a*, the object that temporarily offers relief by filling the gap, and at the same time symptomatically points to the lack of, and the repressed desire for, leadership.

The gap created by the discarding of traditional leadership can be developmental when it leads to innovative participatory forms of organising (such as the emergence of Autonomist Leadership). When the striving for a utopian ideal acts as a motivation, rather than an end in itself, and is translated into innovative practices and actions, this is developmental. However, the disavowal of leadership is regressive because it represses conscious knowing that leadership is taking place, in order to pursue the fantasy of attaining pure *jouissance*. When this happens, affective investments become displaced from their emancipatory ideals and become attached to seeking the excessive enjoyment of being a protestor. They act out a 'celebrated self', which is paradoxically dependent on identifying with their 'wounded self' (Western 2013: 3-12), i.e. their freedom as protestors, is dependent on being oppressed. Activists try to enjoy too much, and aim for an imaginary capturing of *plus-de-jouir* (the excess of enjoyment found in relation to the lack of leadership). This requires staying in utopian mindsets and enjoying the protest carnival, rather than tackling the more difficult developmental task of addressing what is lost or lacking. Slavoj Žižek observed this at the Occupy camp in Zuccoti Park and warned activists 'to go beyond enjoyment and carnival, not to fall in love with themselves' (Žižek, 2013). When protesters fall in love with themselves, they take 'pleasure in their displeasure' enjoying being protesters too much, enjoying their oppression and in doing so maintaining the binary status quo of the oppressed and the oppressor, rather than working on creating a better society.

When leadership is disavowed, two potential outcomes occur. Firstly, stealth leadership occurs whereby elite in-groups or powerful individuals take leadership without it being named, and without consent (Freeman, 1972-1973). Stealth leadership often occurs under a different name, for example, a co-ordinator or communication role may emerge, but the role may also be a cover for leadership. Secondly, Autonomist Leadership occurs alongside, and in spite of, stealth

leadership, yet it is not acknowledged openly, therefore undermining the movement's potential.

In these movements, when leadership is disavowed, a displacement of energy takes place, and activists engage in endless debates about power, equality and consensus politics, which can produce paralysing politically correct groups, bureaucratic slow decision-making and the sabotaging of talent and agency. As one Occupy activist I interviewed said: 'we planned some really exciting actions but these were sabotaged, particularly by the anarchists, who always blocked things, saying that any ideas that were put forward were being forced on others [...] it got ridiculous, and many left the group'.

Scholars and media commentators also share the contagious enjoyment of the ideal of being leaderless. For example, Castells (2012) reveals the confusion and dissonance in these NSMs which he identifies as being leaderless. In the Occupy movement, he boldly states: 'there were no leaders in the movement, not locally, not nationally, not globally' (Castells, 2012: 179), and he describes their General Assembly as a 'horizontal, leaderless, consensus-based open meeting'; he continues with fervour in his disavowal of leadership: 'there was no traditional leadership, no rational leadership and no charismatic leadership. And certainly no personalised leadership'. (*ibid.*: 180) In the Indignados movement, Castells reports: 'Commissioning of all sorts sprung up spontaneously. Some took care of logistical problems [...] sanitation, water, food [...] others deployed Wi-Fi networks [...] No leaders were recognised: everybody represented just him/herself' (*ibid.*: 113). Yet, what Castells is describing is Autonomist Leadership, individuals acting autonomously and spontaneously, collaborating with others for the mutual benefit of all, without hierarchy or fixed positions. Turning to the Egyptian revolution, the activist Noha Atef explained how he uses the internet to communicate with others 'to increase their anger, this is my favourite way of on-line activism [...] when you ask people to go and to demonstrate against the police they were ready because you had already provided them with materials, which made them angry' (in Aouragh and Alexander, 2011: 1348, cited in Castells, 2012: 58). Activists like Noha lead autonomously and spontaneously, connecting through digital networks, encouraging others to demonstrate by providing resources to produce the necessary emotional engagement required influencing others to act. This is a precise example of Autonomist Leadership, achieved without a formal position, being enacted by an individual alongside many other leadership actors engaging in their own personalised forms of activism, online or on the streets. Castells continues with his confusion over leadership when discussing the Tunisian 'leaderless' revolution, saying, 'The protesters generated spontaneously their own ad hoc leadership in specific times and places. Most of these self-appointed leaders were in their twenties or thirties'. (Castells, 2012: 26,

emphasis my own). Castells then cites three key ingredients of the Tunisian revolution: a strong cyber-activism culture, a relatively high diffusion of internet use and 'the existence of an active group of unemployed college graduates who led the revolt, bypassing any formal, traditional leadership' (*ibid.*: 26, emphasis my own) Autonomist Leadership seems to be a much-needed term to describe the informal forms of distributed leadership that Castells describes yet at the same time disavows.

Conclusion

Acknowledging Autonomist Leadership to overcome the disavowal of leadership

In this paradox where Autonomist leadership exists within 'leaderless' movements, something has to give. The disavowal of leadership creates a dissonance and internal tensions that are unsustainable and undermine the capabilities of these movements as social change actors. As being leaderless is a fantasy position, the only positive way forward is to acknowledge the Autonomist Leadership that is practiced. By using Autonomist as a prefix to leadership, the relationship between leadership and authoritarianism and hierarchy is broken. By describing the five principles that describe the parameters and reflect how Autonomist Leadership is practiced, a space is opened whereby activists can determine how Autonomist Leadership is being enacted in their specific contexts and how it can be developed. Addressing Occupy activists, Slavoj Žižek said:

Don't be afraid of words like work, discipline, community and so on. We should take all this from the right-wingers. Don't allow the enemy to take from you to determine the terrain of the struggle. (Žižek, 2011)

I would argue that the same applies to leadership.

Thus far, Autonomist Leadership appears to have been very successfully utilised as a resource to help mobilise protest movements to become vital actors in the embryonic stages of social change. Yet these NSMs seem to lack the ability to get beyond protest groups and to go further, hence the failure to sustain gains made in the Arab world as the spaces they created were quickly filled by political actors with traditional organisation and leadership. The Occupy and Indignados movements also petered out without making substantial gains (Žižek, 2012; Castells, 2012). This paper claims that a key reason for these movements' inability to develop beyond protest is because their agency is diluted and constrained by the continued disavowal of leadership.

Engaged scholars seem to agree that NSMs and anarchist/egalitarian-inspired social movements are not leaderless as claimed, but have different forms of leadership happening within them (Sutherland et al., 2013; Gerbaudo, 2012; Bufe, 1988). Even Castells, who claims NSMs are leaderless, references many leadership acts and offers contradictory statements pointing to movements that are led by activists. What has not been agreed in the literature is how Autonomist Leadership is enacted by individual leaders, and how this manifests in the emergent forms of collective leadership and distributed leadership processes that occur across fluid networks of actors in these NSMs. Part of this problem is that the literature lacks a term and description for the specific form of leadership found in NSMs. Thus, by naming Autonomist Leadership, and acknowledging the role taken by individual Autonomist leaders, this paper aims to move this dialogue forward.

This paper contributes to the field in five ways. (1) There is a gap in the literature, which the term Autonomist Leadership fills, naming and describing the specific form of leadership enacted in NSMs and other emancipatory movements. This enables leadership to be made visible where previously hidden and, therefore, opens new possibilities for research and critical dialogue. (2) Autonomist Leadership offers anarchists and social movements a leadership term which they can adopt and utilise as their own, diminishing the impulse to disavow all leadership and helping to move them beyond the limitations of remaining as protest movements. (3) Autonomist Leadership is a form of individualised collective leadership, i.e. it is embedded in networks and enacted by autonomous individuals and groups. This paper offers an example of leadership that bridges the polarised split between the individual leader and collective leadership or leadership as a process. (4) The paper highlights the role of affect in Autonomist Leadership as one of its five core principles. Affect is much under-researched in the leadership and social movement literature and this paper points to more research on affect and the libidinal economies of NSMs and, particularly through a Lacanian lens, developing theories of the politics of enjoyment (Western, 2014; Stavrakakis, 2007). (5) The social-political zeitgeist is moving from vertical to horizontal relations, from rigid structures to networks, resulting in new organisational forms and new forms of leadership. Whilst Autonomist Leadership is specific to egalitarian-inspired NSMs, it also resonates with other developments, such as informal and distributed leadership in organisations and networked grass roots leadership in political campaigns. Advances in our understanding of Autonomist Leadership can also be applicable and transferable to other areas.

Transcending the fantasy

Žižek asked Occupy protesters to address the truly difficult questions, ‘not about what we do not want, but about what we DO want. What social organisation can replace the existing capitalism? What type of new leaders we need?’ (Žižek, 2012). This paper claims that the answer to the leadership question is already clear: activists need to develop the Autonomist Leadership that already exists in their movements, but first they must acknowledge it. Reclaiming leadership on their own terms is to transcend the fantasy of being leaderless, to go beyond utopian desire and to re-focus on their emancipatory aims. Once Autonomist Leadership has been acknowledged, the other questions posed by Žižek, ‘what do we want?’ and ‘what social organisation can replace capitalism?’ can be addressed, utilising Autonomist Leadership as a resource to help engage in these developmental questions.

The radical emancipatory task is to live openly with the knowledge that authoritarianism and other misuses of power are potentially within us all, a social symptom in all social relations. The challenge is to contain the excess and to work towards the desired emancipatory society, whilst acknowledging that it is never to be founded in its purest form. Stavrakakis (2007) claims that only when the negative (the lack) is faced, the work of building radical democratic and participatory structures and alliances can take place. For networked social movements to realise their full potential, they must first acknowledge and then develop their unique forms of Autonomist Leadership.

I leave the last words with an anarchist Autonomist Leadership collective, The Invisible Committee, who wrote *The Coming Insurrection*:⁹

The pioneers of the workers movement were able to find each other in the workshop, then in the factory. They had the strike to show their numbers and unmask the scabs [...] We have the whole social space in which to find each other. We have everyday insubordination for showing our numbers and unmasking the cowards. We have our hostility to this civilisation for drawing lines of solidarity and of battle on a global scale. (The Invisible Committee, 2009: 99)

They urge activists to ‘Get going[...] Find each other [...] Get organised [...] Form communes’ (*ibid.*: 95-103) and argue for autonomous actions that are self-organised claiming, ‘Proliferating horizontal communication is also the best form of coordination ..the best way to put an end to hegemony’ (*ibid.*: 124). Finally, they make the point that it is affect, not rational or democratic decision-making that is the crucial factor in social change:

9 Mason (2013: 189) calls this booklet ‘the modern equivalent of the Communist manifesto’.

“The democratic character of decision making” is only a problem for the fanatics of process. It’s not a matter of critiquing assemblies or abandoning them, but of liberating the speech, gestures, and interplay of beings that take place within them. We just have to see that each person comes to an assembly not only with a point of view or a motion, but with desires, attachments, capacities, forces, sadnesses and a certain disposition towards others, an openness. (*ibid.*: 2009: 123)

The Invisible Committee are calling for Autonomist Leadership on a global scale, utilising digital connectivity as a new space to act.

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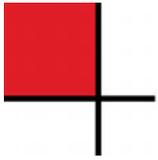
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Anarchism and business ethics: the social responsibility of the anarchist is to destroy business*

Benjamin Franks

abstract

'Anarcho'-capitalism has for decades occupied a small but significant position within 'business ethics', while the anarchism associated with the larger traditions of workers and social movements has only had a spectral presence. Social anarchisms' forms of opposition and proposed alternatives to standard liberal business practices, identities and presuppositions have appeared only fleetingly in mainstream business ethics. In the light of these anarchist hauntings, this paper identifies and explores social anarchism's critique of dominant forms of business ethics, and business practice. It applies anarchism's critical insights to market-based ethics, of which Milton Friedman's influential essay, 'The Social Responsibility of the Businessman is to Increase Profits,' is used as an exemplar. This paper differentiates the anarchist critique from the criticisms of corporocentric, economic-liberalism emanating from social democrats and advocates of corporate social responsibility. It demonstrates the pertinence of social anarchist approaches to re-thinking the co-ordination of the production and distribution of goods, highlighting inadequacies in state-centred managerial responses to the harms and deficiencies of Friedman's free-market.

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Introduction

Milton Friedman, the influential Chicago School scholar and Nobel prize winner, wrote ‘The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits’ (henceforth ‘The Social Responsibility’), an essay which has become a highly influential text within contemporary business ethics. Friedman’s work holds a ‘determinate position of prestige; organizing and mobilizing so many theoretical and practical conceptions of what might be the responsibilities of business’ (Jones, 2007: 512). Even theorists of corporate social responsibility, citing Friedman, prioritise profitability and legality over the ‘ethical and philanthropic’ (see A. B. Carroll’s, Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility, reprinted in Schwartz and Carroll, 2003: 204). Friedman’s essay was published originally in *The New York Times* in September 1970¹ and has been reproduced in many different locations and cited (according to Google Scholar) nearly 8000 times². Despite the many commentaries on this text, and the rise of the academic specialism of business ethics in general, explicit anarchist engagement with the discipline and text has largely been absent. This omission is particularly surprising, given that, as critical management theorists such as Stephen Dunne (2007) point out, there is much to be gained from radical engagement with managerialist writings.

Similarly, business ethicists are largely ignorant of, or silent on, anarchism. The major texts on business ethics have few references to anarchism: for instance, there are no references to it in Andrew Crane and Dirk Matten’s *Business Ethics* (2010) or R. Frederick, ed., *A Companion to Business Ethics* (2002). A keyword search finds it is absent from journals such as *Business Ethics: European Review*, *Business Ethics Quarterly* and *Business & Professional Ethics*. On rare occasions when business ethicists use the terms ‘anarchist’, it is often as a modification of Nozickian propertarianism, which is anathema to the anti-hierarchical, anti-capitalist principles of actual anarchist groups (see, for instance, the papers in Machan and Long, 2008). This is not to say that anarchism is entirely absent, but that its presence is spectral, it *haunts* texts as an unacknowledged force for benevolent social change and virtuous collective practice, and as a potential threat to the ideological presumptions theories, practices and ambitions of business advocates and theorists.

1 The version used here is from *Corporate Ethics and Corporate Governance* (Springer, 2007).

2 Google Scholar lists over 7800 citations as of 14 March 2014, <http://scholar.google.co.uk/scholar?q=Milton+Friedman+%22The+social+responsibility%22&hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5> (approximately 3.5 citations a week since it has been published).

The notion of haunting is borrowed from Jacques Derrida's *Spectres of Marx* (2006)³. Derrida's contemporary non-Marxist Marxism (*ibid.*: 62) echoes many of the longstanding themes of the libertarian socialist tradition (Jun, 2011). Anarchism disrupts and alarms current practices, with possibilities of alternative futures. It points to suppressed past and present contradictions (Derrida, 2006: xix-xx, 1-2). In response dominant powers reshape the spectre into a position they can understand (*ibid.*: 5, 8-11). As Jon Simons (2000) in his account of hauntology, notes:

Such spectres remind us that "the time is out of joint", that there is something wrong with the time we live in that is obscured [...]. Marx understood that capitalism is out of joint because it contains fundamental contradictions which he explained, among other things, as class conflict.

The spectre, which Derrida (2006: 7) distinguishes from mere spirit, is not just ideational, but interacts and takes material form, influencing social practices as a result. In Karl Marx's original allusion, it takes a 'holy alliance to exercise this spectre' (Marx and Engels, 1977: 34). This alliance is made up of state and pseudo-state agents, conservative ideologues, reactionary and liberal representatives. They were identified in Marx's day as 'Pope and Czar, Metternich [conservative politician] and Guizot [anti-socialist liberal statesman], French Radicals and German police spies' (*ibid.*: 34). A contemporary alliance of hierarchical institutions and ideologies is similarly armed against the spectre of anarchism.

In the light of these hauntings, this essay's main argument demonstrates that social anarchism has a coherent and compelling critique of dominant business ethics and business practice. It applies anarchism's critical insights to market-based ethics, of which Friedman's essay is used as an exemplar. It will show the pertinence of sophisticated anarchist approaches to re-think the co-ordination of the production and distribution of goods, highlighting inadequacies in state-centred managerial responses to the free-market. In this regard the argument follows an older and much marginalised tradition in business ethics, from Aristotle and Marx, that considers business practice to be inherently unethical, as opposed to the Enlightenment position, following J. S. Mill and Immanuel Kant that views it as a consensual, productive activity, though open to individual malfeasance (Frederick, 2002b: xiii-xiv). In order to develop my argument I will clarify several key terms – 'business', 'management' and 'anarchism' – basing the interpretation of the last of the three terms on historical and existing

3 Campbell Jones (2007) identifies deconstruction at work in Friedman's text - drawing out the contradictions, silences, slippages and tensions that exist within the text.

anarchist movements and texts, rather than the standard academic construction of ‘anarchism’.

Anarchism in outline

In the same way that a child who is scared of the real threats posed by the adult world will conjure up superstitions to explain and provide an aura of control over complex social phenomenon, so too academics whose disciplines and presuppositions feel threatened by anarchist critiques and practices construct a spirit of anarchism disconnected from core anarchist writings and movements (for a wider discussion see McLaughlin, 2007: 1-21; Franks, 2012; Jun, 2013). The mythic version of anarchism (linked to Nozick’s misnamed ‘libertarianism’) is a legend that has been repeated so often that it has become, in some quarters the only account of anarchism. It is a dogma reduced to a single criterion: the absolute rejection of coercion (see for instance R.P. Wolff, 1970; Nozick, 1974), with a corresponding subsidiary axiom of benign essentialism to explain how anarchists deal with the possibility of conflict (e.g. J. Wolff, 2006: 76). This amounts to little more than a straw man, as few forms of anarchism are based on such a thin principle. *Lack of coercion*, as a sole principle, is inadequate as it omits manipulation and structural forms of domination. Benign essentialism is also epistemologically and ontologically suspect. In the first place, it is epistemologically suspect as there is no reliable way to discover a universal human essence, which is made up of so many distinct and fluid drives and instincts (Malatesta, 1984: 73-5; Kropotkin, 1992). In the latter case it is inconsistent with the anarchist anti-foundationalism (see Malatesta, 1984: 75; Sheehan, 2003: 57-79; Jun, 2011: 143-51). Anarchists reject the idea that there are god-given or fixed principles, but that stable moral values emerge from the interchanges between subjects and their material contexts and social practices.

By contrast, in this paper, anarchism is based on the stable, pervasive but not necessarily universal principles found consistently in the historical and contemporary libertarian socialist or class struggle anarchist groups (see Quail, 1978: x; Franks, 2010: 140-2). The first is a contestation of hierarchical social structures, including economic, political and social forms, which demarcates anarchism from right-libertarian (propertarian) ideologies as well as statism. Capitalism is regarded as being based on and maintaining economic inequalities and requiring coercive institutions, of the state (or state-like institutions) to enforce ‘voluntary agreements’ (Kropotkin, 2013: 39-52; Chomsky, 2005a).

Second is a social view of the self. This views individual identity as fluid but largely constructed by social institutions and the recognition from – and

interaction with – others. As such, it views individuals as interconnected, materially grounded and mutually interdependent, rather than abstract and independent as in liberalism or Egoism. It reveals itself in slogans such as that from the Anarchist Black Cross that ‘no one is free until all are free’ and the Industrial Workers’ of the World’s refrain that ‘an injury to one is an injury to all.’

Third, anarchism privileges prefigurative action, in which the aims are embodied in the goals, such that organisations geared towards the contestation of hierarchies of gender, race or class, should themselves be anti-hierarchical (Guillaume in Bakunin, 1984: 7). This places anarchism outside of instrumentalist political traditions like Leninism and social democracy in which authoritarian methods are justified if they meet libertarian-egalitarian goals. In anarchism, by contrast, actions are not just evaluated in terms of social outcomes, but whether they generate immediate shared mutual goods (these are compatible with virtues even if they are not always explicitly identified as such) (Franks, 2010). It is found, for instance, in the expansive use of virtue-related language in anarchist critiques, with its emphasis on values such as bravery, compassion and justice (See, for instance, Q. SHAC in SchNEWS, 2009; SchNEWS, 2010; SchNEWS, 2011), rather just on protecting possessive rights or producing revolutionary outcomes. These principles of anti-hierarchy, a social view of the self and prefiguration are consistent features of past and contemporary anarchist organisation (see, for instance, Rocker, nd [1938]: 16; Solidarity Federation, 2013).

The fourth feature, found consistently in classical anarchist works such as those by Michael Bakunin, Errico Malatesta and Naom Chomsky, is a rejection of a universal epistemology. No single branch of knowledge can demarcate universal principles for the liberation and operation of all other social practices (Bakunin, 1970: 34-37; Malatesta, 1984: 151-52; Chomsky, 2005b: 178-9). Thus, as Bakunin highlights in his example in support of open authority, it is legitimate to accede to the boot-maker when shoes need to be mended, or to an architect when a building needs to be designed, as they can openly demonstrate their skills within a particular set of practices (stable, but adaptable goods-rich, rule governed social activities) (Bakunin, 2010: 32; for an account of a ‘social practice’ see MacIntyre, 2003). Different practices have different categories of experience, truth conditions, discourses and rules, and whilst they frequently intersect, no single practice and its underlying norms takes priority. Thus, it would be illegitimate to comply with authority, and that expert to expect compliance, outside of the domains for which they can transparently demonstrate (and thereby share) ability.

Because anarchism operates in, through and against specific practices in particular temporal and spatial locations, some principles become more significant in some locations than others. For instance anti-statism might become more peripheral, where the democratic state's role is more progressive than the domination by capital (Chomsky, 2007). In the critique of business practices, by contrast, all of these key principles are highlighted.

Business and business ethics

For the purposes of this article, 'business' is defined as the activity and/or institutional practice of producing and selling goods and services primarily for commercial exchange. This is not to ignore that like the vast majority of pertinent concepts, 'business' is a disputed term. There are important efforts by critical management theorists to disentangle 'business' from simply commercial operation in order to open these activities to reflective analysis and potentially transform organisational governance (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992). Some enterprises also refer to themselves as 'not for profit business', although this simply reaffirms that those businesses which are not so prefixed are 'for profit'. Further, even 'not for profit' companies can still be operating on the principles of maximising returns, but using the surpluses to increase pay for its operators and organisational expansion. The limited use of 'business' to the more standard interpretation based on privileging commercial exchange, is consistent with the now dominant account of corporocentric business behaviour.

In this orthodox account of business, every product or service has a good (a use-value), but it is realised, under market-principles, only when its exchange-value is met. Under capitalism, exchange-values take priority over use-values. In the production of commodities the aim is to maximise returns on investment (Marx, 1885; Cleaver, 1979: 72-5). Businesses produce commodities (material goods or immaterial services) which have use values as well as exchange values. It is undeniable that the rationale for starting or operating a business is not always, solely, the generation of surplus value. For instance, a spouse of a farmer might diversify by operating a holiday bed and breakfast facility, which is partly for the purpose of overcoming social isolation. The more the enterprise is aimed at satisfying shared interpersonal needs and desires (internal goods) rather than external economic ones, the less it is operating as a business. So, whilst production of use values and exchange values do occasionally coincide, there are inevitably points where prioritising income (shorter term, intermittent but more profitable lets) comes into conflict with satisfying the social goods of communal interaction (longer, sustained bookings).

The terms 'business' and 'management' tend to be used interchangeably by some anti-hierarchical activists. Class War (1992: 58), for instance, identifies the class enemy as the managing class as they seek to impose business priorities over the inter-subjective interests of the workers. The Andersons (1991) also see management in terms of one class having a domineering power-relation onto others in order to exploit the economically weaker. Although potentially erroneous, it is not surprising as there is a general tendency to regard management as the development and sustenance of relationships that co-ordinate business objectives (see, for instance, the definition of 'management' from the online Businessdictionary.com, 2013). As 'business' is defined solely in terms of maximising return on investment (in short, medium or longer terms) then management, in this sense, is rejected by anarchism. However, regarding management solely in terms of a hierarchical, capitalist relationship or forms of manufacture that are more oppressive than those under capitalist modes of production (slavery, for instance) risks overlooking the production of goods that are co-ordinated in a non-hierarchical manner, and these too can be considered a form of 'management'.

Anarchism promotes, through central notions such as 'solidarity' and 'mutual aid', collegial productive activity (Kropotkin, 1998; Kropotkin, 2013). Productive practices that operate under norms distinct from capitalist production (certain forms of co-operative, mutual aid, friendly and informal goods generation) also need co-ordination and as such, these types of formal and informal organisation can be considered to be examples of management. Co-operative production is sometimes classified as 'self-management', 'democratic management' or 'anti-hierarchical management'. Sometimes 'self-management' simply means the internalisation of capitalist governance principles (Negation, 1973). Similarly, Lopdrup-Hjorth et al. (2011: 97-104) recognise the risk that self-management can be a means of self-alienation, but they rightly recognise too that self-management need not be reduced to management based on capitalist norms and identities. However, many theorists associate 'management' primarily with 'business', so when Burrell (1992: 80) examines carnivalesque co-ordination of communal well-being, in contrast to the hierarchical and repressive production of goods, he uses concepts like 'reciprocity', 'interdependence', 'mutual[ity]', 'anti-structure' and '*communitas*' rather than 'management'.

The identification of 'business' and 'management' with privileging commercial exchange can be seen in the dominate discourses of commercial administration. Throughout the 1980s and early 90s, as Burrell (1992: 69-70) points out, there was a rise of 'management' courses within education based on promoting the structuring of production on neo-liberal norms. The pervasiveness of the new title of 'manager' within even junior ranks of an organisation led to those seeking

higher esteem within such hierarchies to identify themselves as ‘business administrators’, and especially as ‘masters’ in such a discipline.

Business ethics categorises, identifies and evaluates the principles by which commercial practice takes place; it is thus narrower than management or organisational ethics, and by necessity privileges market values as core to our understanding, even when it critiques them. In this respect Friedman’s essay provides an excellent example of business ethics, a kind of *corporocentric* value-system based on the flourishing of business institutions, in the same way that *biocentric* ethics seeks to protect the inherent value of all living entities.⁴ This identification of a *corporocentric* ethic may seem surprising given that some interpret Friedman’s essay as a rejection of ethics. The phrase ‘business ethics is an oxymoron’ is often used in relation to Friedman and those who follow him (see, for instance, Duska, 2000; Shepard, Shepard and Wokutch, 1991) as his argument appears to suggest that there is a conflict between economic self-interest and wider ethical considerations and that the latter is subservient to the first (Swanson, 2002). However a sympathetic reading of Friedman’s essay, suggests that it does contain a narrow ethic, which limits deeper and more sophisticated values. It is not his amorality but his flawed moral position that is the basis of the anarchist critique.

Friedman in outline

Friedman’s essay, ‘The Social Responsibility’ was published in a largely modern liberal newspaper in 1970, three years before the crisis of Keynesianism catalysed by the OPEC oil price shock. As a result of its time and audience it makes a number of concessions to social democratic tendencies, making a play for their commitment as part of the wider and largely successful ideological battle of the following decade. Such compromises were unnecessary 10 years later, as the intellectual and popular climate turned against Fabian socialism and New Deal liberalism (Friedman and Friedman, 1980: 283-90). In ‘The Social Responsibility’ Friedman argues that the employee of a corporation (‘a businessman’, to use Friedman’s gender-partial language) has two moral responsibilities: first, to obey the law and, second, to meet their contractual obligations. Whilst, not formally acknowledging an overt moral philosophy, it does identify specific norms to guide social behaviour, with reference to wider

4 ‘Corporocentric’ is preferred to Bevan and Werhane’s (2011: 47) term ‘firm-centric’, because although it too places the commercial organisation at the centre, it is predicated on them maintaining relationships of diverse stakeholders potentially on different criteria than profit. Corporocentric is specific to regarding all such relationships with stakeholders as ultimately being based on financial self-interest.

justificatory principles, and thus minimally meets the criteria for an ethic. The two principles Friedman refers to are consistent with a neo-Kantian ethical code. These obligations are absolute and binding, with no other principles or set of principles able to challenge their supremacy (Friedman, 2007). Friedman largely limits his discussion to corporations, those owned by shareholders, excluding the self-employed ('individual proprietors') and organisations run for reasons other than profit ('eleemosynary' institutions such as charitable hospitals) (*ibid.*: 173).

Friedman condemns those who promote the notion that employees have wider ethical considerations than making profits as 'unwitting puppets of the intellectual forces that have been undermining the basis of a free society these past decades' (*ibid.*: 173). Although Friedman does not name these intellectual forces in this essay, it is likely to be the social paternalists, the dominant and increasingly crisis prone ideologists of the dominant class, who are the subject of his wrath. They are more overtly identified as such in *Free to Choose*. The social democrats are considered more of a threat than Marx (who is firmly associated, in the period of authorship with the unpopular statist Leninist/Maoist tradition) and thus poses little intellectual challenge (Friedman and Friedman, 1980: 99-100 and 284). The left-libertarian currents of the American New Left, that argued for forms of inter-dependent, co-operative social practice that avoid or contest economic pressures, are absent from Friedman's essay. Indeed the ultra-left only appear as agents of capital, in the figure of the wildcat trade unionists who wish to break government imposed wage-restraint (Friedman, 2007: 176). Friedman, in his account of the conscientious labour militants who reject government interference into market forces, excludes the details that they were frequently anti-capitalists, who were willing to break employment contracts because they were made under conditions of economic coercion: positions that are rejected by Friedman (Friedman and Friedman, 1980: 236-8).

For Friedman, these dupes who believe in social responsibility are guilty of three argumentative flaws: first, they fail to adequately identify 'social responsibility', making the term so nebulous as to be meaningless; second, they assign responsibilities to an entity that has no direct responsibilities. For Friedman, a corporation is not a moral agent; it is only individuals that have responsibilities. Third, they ascribe to 'businessmen' the wrong duty and in doing so bring about damaging ends (Friedman, 2007: 173-4).

The first of Friedman's criticisms arises from the fluidity of the term 'social responsibility'. Such a term emerges because there are myriad social tensions and the term fixes responsibility for these problems on corporate actors. Friedman's initial point is that term is used chaotically. Yet many key terms have fluid meanings depending on context; this does not make them meaningless, but

does require more careful clarification. Second, Friedman himself provides a basic interpretation, which is clarified further by his critics, like Joel Bakan and Andrew Crane and Dirk Matten, in which corporate social responsibility (CSR) is viewed in terms of non-maleficence (limiting harm to others) and beneficence (doing good for others), even when there is no contractual obligation to do so (Crane and Matten, 2010: 48-9, for further discussion of the distinctions within CSR and the development of corporate social responsiveness and performance see ten Bos and Dunne, 2011). So basic is non-maleficence to virtuous practice – it is, for instance, the cornerstone of benign human interaction and professional codes of conduct, dating back to the Hippocratic Oath ('first do no harm') – that its absence in 'The Social Responsibility' becomes the start-point for Bakan's (2004: 57) portrayal of corporations as psychopaths.

Friedman's second criticism is that only individuals, not collectives like corporations, can have responsibilities. Friedman argues that as the corporation is as an aggregate of workers and owners, any obligation must be on either the shareholder or the employee. There is little discussion of the obligations of shareholders other than that their primary duty is to maximise profits, and that any individual failure to do so would make them uncompetitive and lead to business failure (Friedman, 2007: 173). To pursue secondary goals at the expense of primary duties, which have not been agreed by the shareholders (owners), is a violation of a freely entered contract and constitutes theft. Thus it is impermissible for an employee to seek to reduce pollution by putting in additional, non-statutory environmental safe-guards. For Friedman, such action is illegitimate as it takes potential profit from shareholders without their consent (Friedman, 2007: 174; cited in Bakan, 2004: 43). This is a categorical violation of contract (promise) and of trust.

The employee by signing a contract has only two duties: to do what the owners wish and to obey the law. This basic neo-Kantian (deontological) position is defended by Friedman. Individual sovereignty, viewed in terms of negative rights (rights of non-interference), is given priority. Autonomous subjects are free to make the contracts they wish to make without coercion and without regard to the benefit of others, so long as negative rights are not violated. The state is the ultimate protector of sovereign rights, so the law has to be respected. So if the individual wishes to pursue beneficial social goals – and this is Milton Friedman's sop to the social democratic audience – this can be pursued through private political action (Friedman, 2007: 175). Later, though hinted at in this text, Friedman is more convinced that free markets alone are best placed to resolve social problems, with which state power can only ineffectively interfere (Friedman, 2007: 176-7).

A corporation is thus restricted from pursuing beneficial goals unless one of two conditions is met. The first is that it is compelled by government so to do; the second, if it is in corporate self-interest. So in the first case a company should reduce pollution if the law compels them. Similarly a company might pursue socially benevolent goals, if it is likely to increase profit, by enhancing consumer loyalty or attracting better job candidates (*ibid.*: 177). It is this form of CSR that Friedman approves of, as it is done intentionally to maximise profits. This appeal to enlightened self-interest, that benevolent action will have better economic returns in the future, is also one to which his critics turn.

Although, as will be discussed, Friedman's critics return to enlightened self-interest, it should be pointed out at this juncture that Friedman's justification here is principally non-ethical. The first, acting benevolently or non-malevolently because of compulsion (fear of government sanction) violates the principle that moral behaviour is freely (at least minimally) chosen or willed. The second, the appeal to self-interest alone, flouts the principle that ethical action is primarily concerned with the treatment of others. Thus Friedman's position in support of enlightened self-interest is primarily anti-ethical. However, his overall stance is not wholly amoral: it is instead minimally ethical as it gives a supreme priority to Kantian rights, maintaining promises (contracts) to which an autonomous agent has freely entered into. It should be noted, too, that discordant with this largely rights-based position (which is sceptical of consequentialism) (*ibid.*: 176), Friedman, using Adam Smith's concept of the invisible hand (*ibid.*: 176), smuggles in some utilitarian considerations, arguing that market economies produce best outcomes.

Also consistent with neo-Kantian ethics, Friedman initially appears critical of companies who 'window-dress': that is, cynically dupe customers by portraying themselves as being motivated by socially responsible goals rather than profit. He sees such duplicity as undermining the honesty needed for a free-society (*ibid.*: 177). However, whilst calling such dishonesty over intentions 'fraud', Friedman would see no grounds to have sanctions against it (*ibid.*: 177), unlike more standard Kantian jurisprudence (Kant, 1790). Nonetheless, there is an ethical disdain for dishonesty, and admiration for brave assertion of unpopular, honest self-identity. Friedman's argument might prioritise the wrong ethical principles, but it is not entirely amoral.

Responses to Friedman

Friedman's essay has also generated considerable critical response, though little utilising contemporary critics of liberalism from more standard political

philosophy⁵. Instead, amongst the most popular is Bakan's book and co-authored popular documentary *The Corporation* (Dir: Mark Achbar and Jennifer Abbott, 2003). Friedman himself appears in the film alongside luminescent critics such as Howard Zinn, Noam Chomsky and Naomi Klein, and is positioned as the primary advocate of corporate self-interest. One of Bakan's major criticisms is based on Friedman's claim that corporations have no specific duties other than to maximise profit and as such must not do anything that undermines such self-interest. They have structured their legal framework so that this is now obliged of them (Bakan, 2004: 37). Corporate institutions, thus, encourage the development of psychopathic personalities. They are the epitome of unvirtuous agencies.

In Friedman's account of corporations, they are structured to enhance economic self-interest, with only government as an external control (*ibid.*: 80). However, as Bakan identifies, control by government is insufficient. Corporations are committed to self-interest and are in competition with other self-interested institutions; as a result, corporations have to undertake a cost-benefit analysis as to whether they comply with law. The commitment to legality is hypothetical rather than categorical. If a corporation obeys costly law, when evasion would increase their profitability (taking into account risk of successful prosecution), and a competitor act self-interestedly on the same calculation, then the competitor gains advantage (*ibid.*: 79-83). In further competition for resources the law-abiding corporation is at an economic disadvantage: compliance with regulatory standards is just another factor to be considered in cost-benefit analyses.

With corporations having greater sway over Western governments, it is not a surprise that corporate self-governance replaces the regulatory system. The regulatory system repeatedly fails 'because of lax regulation and ineffectual enforcement' (*ibid.*: 84). These lapses are not accidental but actively encouraged by corporate bodies (*ibid.*: 96-110).

In response to corporate psychopathy Bakan advocates four main strategies to encourage corporations to be socially responsible, that is to consider the interests of other entities. These tactics are: 1) improve the regulatory system, 2) strengthen political democracy, 3) create a robust public sphere and 4) challenge international neo-liberalism (*ibid.*: 161-7). The first two promote representative-democratic control of corporations, through the constitutional process, the third

5 For instance, in the last decade (March 2004-March 2014) in the journals *Business Ethics Quarterly*, *Business Society Review* and *Business Ethics: European Review* Joel Bakan is cited with significantly greater regulatory than such influential political philosophers as Iris Marion Young and Philip Pettit combined.

and fourth are realised in ethical consumption and are subservient to the first two methods. So although Bakan positions himself as a critic of Friedman, the strategy he proposes are actually the methods Friedman endorses in his article. Bakan, thereby, re-shapes the spectre of anti-capitalism back into the familiar corporeal form of business.

Bakan initially discusses promotion of ethical consumption. Consumers, as private citizens, should make retail decisions based on the corporation's ethics. Business in return, to protect its bottom line will act to meet these ethically concerned demands (*ibid.*: 144-45), hiring socially responsible business managers (*ibid.*: 143-44). Nonetheless, whilst welcoming and promoting consumers' power to economically punish corporate malevolence, Bakan recognises that this response on its own is inadequate (*ibid.*: 145). Ethical consumption is an inadequate response for a number of reasons. The first is that because of poverty a significant portion of the public has little or no consumer power. Secondly, once an enterprise operates as a business, its 'moral concerns and altruistic desires must succumb to [a]... corporations overriding goal' (*ibid.*: 53). Compassion, which is based on self-interest, is only hypothetical and collapses back into solipsistic self-regard. Ethical shareholding (*ibid.*: 147) also involves no conflict in duties as they, like a single proprietors who pursues social responsibility, are 'spending their own money' (Friedman, 2007: 177). Shareholders who wish to forego profit to pursue an eleemosynary goal are not involved in theft. However, as Friedman's division of organisations highlights, an enterprise committed primarily to charitable goals rather than profit is no longer a business. In addition, like Friedman, Bakan recognises that in the absence of monopoly position, there is little a corporation can do which is beyond self-interest without harming their competitive position (Bakan, 2004: 147; Friedman, 2007: 177).

Instead Bakan's first two main strategies are: 1) improving the regulatory system and 2) strengthening political democracy. Bakan's goal is to promote representative-democratic control of corporations, through the constitutional process:

Government regulation, unlike market-based solutions, combines authority, capacity and democratic legitimacy to protect citizens from corporate misdeeds. Through it, governments can pursue social values – such as democracy, social justice, citizens' health and welfare, environmental integrity, cultural identity – that lie beyond the narrow goals of self-interest and wealth maximization that dictate the behaviour of corporations and markets. (Bakan, 2004: 149)

This, too, reiterates rather than challenges Friedman. Friedman might reject government regulation in his later work, but in 'The Social Responsibility...' he

argues that corporations should be subservient to the law, and that this is the appropriate place for concerned individuals to pursue social goals. Though even in this more social-democratic piece, he highlights the dangers to business, and thus to a successful and wealthy society, of government interference (Friedman, 2007: 174-5).

Although earlier in his book Bakan (2004: 102-04) details how corporations manipulate representative government through lobbying and how corporate self-interest results in companies transgressing laws if this is the most profitable action (*ibid.*: 80), he nonetheless considers state control as the most suitable method for controlling corporations, and without this tactic all other methods are redundant.

The movement against corporate rule would be impossible, even senseless, without robust nongovernmental institutions, community activism and political dissent, the belief that these can be a *substitute* for governmental regulation, rather than a necessary complement to it, is dangerously mistaken. (*ibid.*: 151)

Bakan's recognition of state inadequacy whilst advocating a state-centred strategy could be a simple contradiction; however, a more generous reading is that Bakan, though seeing the spectre of anti-capitalist alternatives, prefers to hold to the supposed pragmatism of existing institution. Representative democracy is, for Bakan, a potentially progressive, enabling force, which can avoid succumbing to corporate interests through the intervention of an active citizenry, having learnt from the errors of previous eras. As it is the state that produced and protects the corporation, for Bakan (2004: 153-5) it is the state that controls them, with the citizenry shaping the direction of the state.

Bakan defends this liberal-democratic strategy in instrumental grounds, as corporations are 'remarkably efficient wealth-creating machines' (*ibid.*: 159). A future without them, he claims, is impossible to imagine. As Bakan's tactics reinforce the control of existing economic institutions, what is needed is a system to keep them in check (*ibid.*: 159). These include tighter laws on acquisitions and mergers, stakeholder representation on boards (including workers' representatives) and executive responsibility to take stakeholders into account. Other proposals include greater enforcement of democratic legislation protecting public goods, like a healthy, diverse ecological environment and public health (*ibid.*: 160-2).

To ensure democratic control Bakan looks to his final two main tactics: 3) the creation a robust public sphere not answerable to corporate interests or operating on business principles which, 4) challenges international neo-liberalism (*ibid.*: 163-4). Seeing the spectre of the anti-capitalist movement as a challenge to

corporate-rule (*ibid.*: 22-3, 141, 166), Bakan nonetheless encourages this menace back into the familiar institutional forms of the liberal-capitalist order (corporations, representative legislature, centralised enforcement) and its primary social relationships (consumer-producer, citizen-government). The radicalised citizenry's job is to influence governments, corporations and transnational institutes such as the World Trade Organisation (*ibid.*: 164) not to undermine and replace them. Bakan exorcises not the malevolence of the corporation, which remains intact, but the spectre of a transcendent alternative: the shades of anti-capitalist identities, practices and principles.

Unsurprisingly, Bakan is by no means unique in critiquing Friedman's encomium for self-interested corporations and the system of neo-liberal global governance they have spawned. Crane and Matten (2010: 49), for instance, argue that Friedman's account of corporate agency and responsibility is inaccurate. Corporations are more than just amalgamations of individual interests: 'every organization has a *corporate internal decision structure* that directs corporate decisions in line with pre-determined goals' (*ibid.*). Whilst it is possible to track back decisions to groups of individuals, it is rarely a single individual alone who has responsibility in corporate decision making. Corporations have a structure for decision-making based on an established *purpose* for action that 'clearly transcends the individual's framework for responsibility' (*ibid.*: 49). The corporate goals are set beyond the scope of particular individuals and only operate because there is collective agreement. Further corporations generate a culture that (partially) forms an individual's identity and a set of criteria by which problems are identified and solutions are framed. Whilst formal methods for constructing and maintaining a business culture exist (for instance, in the manufacture of corporate identities and adoption of formal codes of practice), most features of an institutional culture is informally, unconsciously and inter-subjectively generated.

In addition, Crane and Matten highlight how there is significant history of CSR (*ibid.*: 56), especially in the absence of socially benevolent government (*ibid.*: 68-9). They raise the possibility of 'corporate citizenship as a framework for business ethics'. As corporations are frequently trans-national, they can encourage and protect social, political and economic freedoms. This is not just that corporations out of CSR should dedicate resources (which could go to shareholders) on promoting social, political and economic rights but that they are best placed, in a globalising economy, to use their significant resources to promote these goals. Again, however, there is the underlying suggestion that corporate citizenship benefits the bottom-line for business, through helping build up new, responsive and responsible businesses that assist the company's

supply chain, and develop social infrastructure for future expansion (Valente and Crane, 2009: 80-81). As such, it reinforces, rather than challenges Friedman's account of corporate self-interest and hidden-hand benefits.

A different set of criticisms are raised by business virtue-theorist Robert C. Solomon. He argues that Friedman misconstrues the moral character of the corporation as one based on greed (and by implication Bakan's critique is erroneous too). Although Friedman is not named, Solomon's (2002: 31-2) criticism of avaricious (self-interested alone) behaviour from those who follow Smith's economic analysis (*The Wealth of Nations*) without his corresponding virtue theory (*Theory of Moral Sentiments*) appears to be aimed at Friedman and his Chicago School adherents. Solomon associates Friedman's account of successful corporate practice with the traits of 'competitiveness, individualism, and economic self-interest' and these are destructive of harmonious, social communities. Businesses require other virtues that Friedman overlooks (*ibid.*: 33). Solomon (2002: 35), citing Abraham Zeleznick, considers business as a repository of virtues such as ingenuity, and considers it a mistake to think of them as only motivated by greed. Friedman, by concentrating on only one supreme virtue, turns it into a vice as it is not-moderated by the other virtues essential to good business practice.

Anarchist responses

Having outlined Friedman's main argument and some of the major criticisms from his mainstream business ethics critics, here I develop an anarchist response to these, based on the core concepts of a contestation of hierarchical social structures, the social, malleable view of the self, commitment to prefiguration and a rejection of epistemological universalism. In addition I shall respond to some potential replies to these anarchist criticisms.

Bakan's book ends with an appendix, an interview with Noam Chomsky that promotes a critique which is quite different to the one Bakan offers. There are some features of the anarchist critique which is shared by the other critics of Friedman: for instance, anarchists share a rejection of a purely deontological account of ethics and also view Friedman's ideal-form of business as promoting social vices. The anarchist critique goes deeper; it questions the notion that markets are models of consent, instead identifying them as coercive and discriminatory. Rather than see the state as a rival institution to constrain the corporation, anarchists consider the corporation as intimately interconnected with state power, being manufactured and mutually reinforced by the state. Furthermore, the reliance on state power assumes an immodest and

epistemologically-suspect promotion of a universal or trans-traditional structure and governance principles. So in addition, they reject Bakan's and Crane and Matten's solutions to corporate power and also consider Solomon's defence of corporate virtues to be inadequate. Instead the virtues are best protected and enhanced through the methods Bakan eludes to but considers ineffective; the promotion of radical, anti-capitalist social practices.

Anarchism and Friedman

Friedman's defence of the supreme protection of the profit-motive is deontological. Agents have voluntarily agreed to work for a company, and part of their voluntary agreement, is to pursue the interests of the corporation, which is profit maximisation. Any external interference in these arrangements is a violation of negative freedom. Placing the question aside for one moment of whether the voluntary obligations of sovereign subjects is the *supreme* principle, it is not just anarchists, but other theorists too, who consider negative rights an inadequate account of freedom, posited on an unjustified and flawed account of a fixed, ontologically-isolated individual.

Freedom is not just about freedom *from* interference, but also about freedom *to do* and *to be*. As Emma Goldman (1969: 53-5) points out, without access to resources, a pauper has little or no freedom, and little chance to develop into a fully-rounded, free individual, even if no one is explicitly interfering. Whilst it is usually the inadequacy of the liberal concept of freedom that provokes criticism from political philosophers such as Pettit, Quentin Skinner and Charles Taylor, anarchists anti-hierarchical principles identify markets relationships, based on negative freedom, as themselves coercive.

Markets are not realms of freedom, despite Friedman's assertion, because of *enclosure* (privatisation): many of those in economically subservient positions have no choice but to sell their labour. There is a choice as to who to sell it to, but, under capitalism, there is no reasonable choice, for those in a vulnerable position in the economic hierarchy, as to whether they sell their labour. It is for this reason that the anarchist anthropologist David Graeber (2004: 70-1) resurrects the notion of 'wage-slavery' (see also Kropotkin, 2013). Similarly, under capitalism, to gain goods people must enter into market relationships. Where there are commons or co-operative economies there are alternative relationships of production and distribution (see Ward, 1973: 95-109 and 138-42).

Although there are weaknesses in Susan L. Brown's (2003) existentialist account of anarchism, she rightly identifies that anarchism resists the identification of the individual with one particular identity, especially that of Lockean possessive

individualism. As anarchism recognises that individuals are, at least in part, socially produced (structured by and responding to the social practices they inhabit), the individual can and does re-shape their identity according to context: at times being a 'contributor', 'lover', 'colleague', 'comrade' and many other practitioner roles, without ever being reduced to just one. Thus, reducing individual agency to Friedman's simplistic position based a possessive account of the individual (and a supposed binary opposition between state and capital), obscures and represses the spectral presence of alternative anti-state, anti-capitalist actors.

Anarchists also deny that markets are responsive and utilitarian. Friedman's argument is that if a good is deemed valuable (like a healthy environment) then people will be willing to buy goods that protect it. Anarchists, however, point out that markets have incentives for generating social problems in order to provide profitable remedies. Indeed the creation of unnecessary scarcity, by copyrighting and controlling manufacture, can maximise profits, rather than increasing production, which might lower the price (Chomsky and Achbar, 2004: 195-6; Gordon and Griffiths, 2007: 85). In addition, markets are not responsive to need, but to demand. A homeless person has a need for a house, but no demand, whilst those with high demand, have their desires (even if only a minor interest) catered for. The controversial UN happiness index, which surveys the attitudes of population, found the happiest countries were those with a high degree of socialised access to goods. The usually economically liberal *Time* magazine, quoting the *Washington Post*, concedes that 'The U.S. has had a three time increase of GNP per capita since 1960, but the happiness needle hasn't budged. Other countries have pursued other policies and achieved much greater gains of happiness, even at much lower levels of per capita income' (van Gilder Cook, 2012).

This disconnect between increase in production of external goods leading to no greater (and possibly even declines in) happiness, so long as basic needs for social living are met is explained by the *Anarchist FAQ*. Even if market arrangements do increase production of external goods, capitalist social relations undermine the types of truly valuable relationship.

In other words, while a society may become materially better off over time, it becomes worse off in terms of real wealth, which is those things which make life worth living. Thus capitalism has a corrosive effect on human relationships, the pleasure of productive activity (work), genuine freedom for the many, how we treat each other and so on. The corrosive effects of economics are not limited simply to the workplace but seep into all other aspects of your life. (Anarchist FAQ, 2013)

Turning all complex social practices and relationships into ones governed primarily by the narrow norms of deontology and the corresponding limited set of ethical-political identities, undermines goods-rich behaviour. Such instrumentality undermines the generation of prefigurative goods, and places everything under the hierarchical control of the bourgeois class (Marx and Engels, 1977: 38).

Thus, Friedman's defence, like that of Robert Nozick (1974: 250-3 and 326-7), that free markets allow for different models of production, including those based on anarchist models of co-operation, is inadequate. Friedman and Nozick argue that if consumers are willing to pay the excess to support co-operatively produced goods (a description that can be accommodated under CSR), then as long as there is a market to secure it, then the business will succeed. Thus, one can have workers' self-management so long as there is consumer demand. If there is no market then: 'His customers and employees can desert him for other producers and employers less scrupulous in exercising their social responsibilities' (Friedman, 2007: 176).

It is to this that Jason Brennan's 'anarchism' also appeals. He is one of the few business ethicists to engage with anarchism and recognise its difference from Nozickian propertarianism (Brennan, 2013: 273); he nevertheless considers anarchism to be compatible with market relationships. Brennan suggests that reciprocal production through voluntary mutual aid is acceptable, so long as the interaction between the different anti-hierarchical practices abide by the rules of the market (*ibid.*: 278-80). So, for instance, the acquisition of material for the maintenance of anarchist social practices has to abide by neo-Kantian market principles.

There are a number of problems for consistent anarchists with Brennan, Nozick and Friedman's argument that markets allow for productive and distributive practices that are internally governed by anti-capitalist principle. The first, as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and his commentators such as Iain McKay (2011) point out (and later picked up by Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis [1986: 68-71]) labour is not as free to build production based on egalitarian social forms as capitalists are on hierarchical ones. This is because the labouring class lacks access to financial resources under as favourable and competitive manner as existing capitalists and those based primarily on exploiting labour to the maximum. It is for this reason that Proudhon attempted to develop a People's bank to assist in cooperative production – and its subsequent failure due to its inadequate assets rather than lack of members (McKay, 2011, 57; see also Dana, 1896).

The second is that even when there are diverse, anti-hierarchical practice intersect they must, according to liberals like Friedman, Nozick and Brennan accede, at least initially, to neo-Kantian principles. These market principles are universally prior and apply across all intersecting networks of social activities. All social practices must initially at least agree that the principles of market distribution and exchange are universally prior.

Anarchists and free-market liberals like Hayek agree that knowledge is always partial and incomplete and that no single central mind can investigate, gather and assimilate all relevant information. However, Hayek (1945: 526) argues that a single mechanism, that of the pricing system provides the most effective and efficient means for co-ordinating supply and demand of goods. Yet such a system itself relies on universal principles to govern the interchange of all social action, those of universal property rights. If, as Hayek contends, universal knowledge is not possible, how is it possible to deduce the universal principles that underpin market mechanisms? The extension of claims of authority beyond that supported by legitimate knowledge leads, as Bakunin notes, to 'slavery and absurdity'.

The assumption that capitalist principles are universal is an assertion that recurs in both Friedman and his business ethics competitors. It is an 'incantation [that] repeats and ritualizes itself, it holds forth and holds to formulas, like any animistic magic' (Derrida, 2006: 64). It is part of the ceremony of capitalism to reassure itself in the presence of the spectre of anti-market alternatives.

Anarchism and Friedman's critics

Bakan's text is critical of the anti-state solutions, though they remain as shades, inadequately enunciated. Chomsky's appended interview, seemingly included to support Bakan's main position on the dangers of corporations, includes a clear critique of Bakan's solution. Despite Bakan's hostile portrayal of the corporation as a psychopathic entity which produces significant social ills and malignly alters human character to fit with its self-serving goals, he argues that corporations are too important to resist. His solution shares many of the key features of Friedman's approach in regarding the proper function of the state and indeed of the possibility of enlightened self-interest.

Bakan (2004: 151) contrasts his pragmatic response with the utopianism of his left opponents, not named as anarchists but clearly consistent with anarchism as they have abandoned government and a belief in progressive legislation in favour of direct protest. Bakan argues that the anti-statism of the anti-globalisation protestors assists corporations as the state is the only thing that can control them (*ibid.*: 151). Bakan develops a dichotomy between corporations with or without

state control, the former being benevolent and democratic, the latter malevolent and unresponsive.

The first criticism anarchists make is that Bakan's division is a false dichotomy: there are alternatives to corporate power for the production and distribution of goods. Much anarchist literature, from Kropotkin (2013: 1939) to more recent radicals (see, for instance, Ward, 1973; Gilroy-Scott, 2007; Gordon and Griffiths, 2007; Shantz, 2010) outlines how goods can – and are – generated without the primacy of managerial hierarchy or the law of value. Second, to quote John Holloway (2002: 12), the 'record in practice' of Bakan's social democratic model 'has differed very little from overtly pro-capitalist governments': to continue to hold on to the progressive possibility of a statist solution is more utopian than the supposed 'impossibilist' remedy he rejects.

Chomsky explains why corporations cannot be altered through appeals to enlightened self-interest or the influence of state. Even if corporations do act to meet social needs, out of enlightened self-interest, this is not a morally desirable outcome as the populace is still dependent on benevolent tyrants (Chomsky and Achbar, 2004: 181). In addition, shifting the legal position of corporations is unlikely to resolve matters as the institutions of law are themselves oppressive. Finally, as Bakan himself notes copiously throughout the rest of the book, corporations seek to alter law and influence or overthrow unsympathetic governments.

Bakan's project requires that the public are organised and dynamic; that they are engaged in activities that are rich in critical virtues (bravery, wisdom, compassion, and justice), such that plural bodies of civil society can investigate and publicise corporate excess and pressure them to alter their products, and to ensure that the state behaves responsively and progressively. Yet, if such strong, inter-linked but non-statist practices exist there is no need for the state or production based on business principles.

Corporations cannot be the origin of virtuous action as if they act in virtuous ways before there is sufficient consumer interest, then they will be replaced, as Friedman rightly argues, by those competitors who do not waste resources (Friedman, 2007). Further, as raised above, with the example of rural service enterprises, businesses – institutions that have the profit-motive as its *nomos* (guiding rule) – undermine the generation of external goods. This is not to rule out the possibility of virtuous, anti-hierarchical practices generating external goods (like a surplus), but these external benefits are not the sole motivating intention (although they could be foreseeable consequences).

Anarchism's critique also rejects Crane and Matten's account of corporate citizenship being an enabler for socially progressive, democratic government. First, anarchists, like Chomsky, point to the anti-democratic tendencies within corporate practice. Corporations are more likely to undermine democratic process, restricting information harmful to their corporate interests for instance, than support them. Where it does support them, because of popular pressure or other facts influencing material self-interest, it is hypothetical and epiphenomenal. If self-interest means undermining civil virtues, as it so often does in economically competitive situations, then the corporation must act unvirtuously or cease to be a business. Thus, the anarchist replies, business should be destroyed to allow virtuous relationships to flourish.

Second, where a citizenry is actively engaged in contesting and evading corporate-state practices, then to encourage them to re-engage with psychopathic enterprise will only diminish the generation of virtuous counter-power. The social hierarchies of state and corporate power undermine virtuous activity, rather than sustain it. Virtues are best realised in anti-hierarchical social relations. Wisdom, for instance, is the shared generation and distribution of knowledge, to lessen hierarchies of expertise. Hoarding of specialist knowledge under license is promoting the vice of ignorance.

Solomon's account of corporate virtues is inconsistent with virtue theory. There is no denying that some businesspersons might be trustworthy and honest (Solomon, 2002: 33) or prudent (Machan, 2002: 93), however, for an activity to be truly virtuous there has to be consistency between the virtues. A salesman, for instance, is under no obligation to point out the commodities faults, only not to lie, if asked. Solomon identifies desirable social characteristics (not all of them moral ones) such as innovation, generosity and toughness. Yet when these occur within the context of a business exchange, they are no longer goods because they are not mediated by other important virtues (such as benevolence, sociability and honesty). The businessperson's innovation is used to maximise material advantage and thus for domination, rather than for developing benevolent social relations.

Finally, the growth of corporate activism and a corresponding corporocentric ethic, as Stephen Harper (2012: 15-16) rightly points out, has not been an adequate response to the crises of governability. Neo-liberalism has been wrongly associated with the decline of state-power, and thus of greater individual freedom and responsibility. However, governments have not become less powerful as myth suggests, but merely more active in their support of corporate interests. Under state guidance institutions are transformed into corporations, generating not more virtuous institutional behaviour but more vice-like ones. Burkard

Sievers (2008) identifies in his analysis of Friedman-like psychopathic institutional development within academia, that universities have increasingly prioritised the external goods of profit over the internal goods of the academic disciplines they were originally set up to protect and enhance, undermining educational virtues in the process.

Conclusion

Friedman's essay and the range of criticisms against it have influenced organisational behaviours. By clarifying key terms such as 'business', 'management' and 'anarchism', Friedman's *corporocentric* ethics is identified alongside some of the critiques it generated from Bakan, Solomon and Crane and Matten. These counter-analyses rather than encouraging deeper reflection on the limitations of business norms (in the orthodox sense) return repeatedly to the very principles and institutions they correctly identify as inadequate. In its place anarchism's critique is applied against Friedman and standard approaches to business ethics.

Anarchist responses point to the thinness of Friedman's ethical principles and the inadequacy of the epistemological grounds that maintain them, such as the unjustified claims to universality. Anarchism draws out the contradiction in Friedman's account of freedom and the damaging social institutions and identities it produces. Anarchism also provides, albeit in still shadowy and incomplete forms, alternative productive and distributive practices where both internal goods (virtues) and external goods (surplus) can, and are, generated on anti-hierarchical, prefigurative principles. Such an approach can thus assist those critically-engaged in re-thinking practices and relations of production.

The 'unholy alliance' of the economic-liberal Friedman and his apparent statist and progressive critics are haunted by the transcendent possibilities of alternative social practices based on anti-commercial, anti-hierarchical norms. Alternatives, such as anarchism, are suppressed or re-shaped in attempts to control and negate them, but they still continue to haunt capitalism – and may still take a more corporeal, anti-corporate form.

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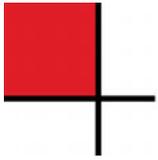
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Ethical anarchism, business ethics and the politics of disturbance

Carl Rhodes

Introduction

Milton Friedman famously said ‘there is one and only one social responsibility of business – to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits’ (Friedman, 1962: 133). The sole moral limit to this freedom was for corporations and their executors to conform ‘to the basic rules of the society, both those embodied in law and embodied in ethical custom’ (Friedman, 1970: 32) and to do so ‘without deception or fraud’ (Friedman, 1962: 133). Friedman was of course not just issuing a scholarly commentary, his ideas came to be ‘crystallized into a coherent and powerful message of political and economic reform’ that has resulted today in the political and economic dominance of ‘a guileless faith in the efficiency of free markets and their virtues’ (Jones, 2012: 89 and 19). At play here has not only been the expansion of market rationality to all spheres of social, political and economic life, but also the establishment of an ethical position that configures ‘morality entirely as a matter of rational deliberation about costs, benefits, and consequences’ (Brown, 2003: 15). This is a market morality that sees the pursuit and enactment of market freedoms by individuals and corporations as something that is righteous.

Nowhere has the reality of this market morality been more starkly illustrated than in Google Inc.’s tax dealings in Britain in recent years. Instead of paying the standard 20% corporation tax on its US\$18 billion UK revenues between 2006 and 2011 Google paid just US\$16 million; less than 0.1% (Public Accounts Committee, 2013). The complexity and deviousness of Google’s tax avoidance practices garnered widespread criticism in the press, in political circles and amongst the general public. ‘Immoral tax avoiders’ was the headline in *The Daily*

Mail (Campbell, 2012). ‘When Google goes to extraordinary lengths to avoid paying its taxes, I think it’s *wrong*’ said Labour Party leader Ed Miliband (in Wright, 2013, italics added). Google’s Executive Chairman Eric Schmidt’s response to this criticism issued a catch cry for a quite different moral position. ‘I am very proud of the structure that we set up’ he opined, ‘*it’s called capitalism*. We are proudly capitalistic. I’m not confused about this’. Echoing Friedman he went on record as saying: ‘what we are doing is legal [...] I view that you should pay the taxes that are legally required’ (in Topham, 2013, italics added). Schmidt’s is a moral defense, a statement that champions market morality as it translates into the valorization of corporate freedom as both economically prudent and morally righteous. This is a morality that attests to a state of affairs where no person, community or state should intervene in the pursuit of capitalism; where no morality beyond that of the market should impinge on the exercise of corporate freedom.

With this paper I want to dwell not on the specific goings on in Google, but rather on considering an ethics that would dispute the market morality that this case illustrates. To do this I will consider in some detail Emmanuel Levinas’ conception of an-archy (1996 [1968]; 1998 [1974]; 2003 [1968]) as it relates to an ethics that involves an ‘opening up of existing political identities, practices, institutions and discourses to an Other which is beyond their terms’ (Newman, 2010: 7). As well as outlining Levinas’ an-archic ethics, its implications for corporations will be investigated. This investigation leads to a position where an-archy forms the basis of justifying dissent as an ethically necessary engagement with the excesses of corporate freedom (cf. Ziarek, 2001). Such engagement forms a ‘politics of disturbance’ (Caygill, 2002) that pursues a horizon of radical democracy (Newman, 2011) through critique, resistance and opposition to the self-interested sovereignty of business and to the pretense of corporate immutability in the name of capitalism.

Ethical anarchy

In his paper ‘Substitution’ Emmanuel Levinas (1996 [1968]) notes that our conscious apprehension of other people is organized in an idealized way. It is idealized in the sense that once we seek to understand others we do so using the themes and categories that we apply to them. In consciousness other people are not individual or particular but rather are understood as they relate to the ‘types’ we use to compare and categorize them. Levinas writes that the unknown other, in one’s apprehension of it, becomes ‘cast in the mould of the known’ (*ibid.*: 80). Levinas refers to this assessment of others in relation to categories of knowledge as ‘thematization’; it is the very basic and unavoidable act of consciously knowing

another person. There is, however, more to other people than just knowing them in one's own terms. Levinas retains that exposure to the other person is not limited to consciousness and thematization. The other person can never be fully exposed through symbols, images and language. The spiritual dimension of the encounter with the other is, for Levinas, that which exceeds our ability to know them categorically; it exceeds any principle that would apply. To such a principle Levinas attributes the Greek work *arche*: an ideal principle imagined to be able to define experience prior to its occurrence.

To engage with another person without or prior to the imposition of a principle is to engage that person in proximity such that they are not reduced to being the same as anyone else; the other is not thematized. Such a proximate relation with the other is, in Levinas' use of the word, *an-archic*; it lacks the application of principle. He describes this proximity as 'a relationship with a singularity, without the mediation of any principle or ideality' (Levinas, *ibid.*: 81). The ethical anarchy that this entails is such that our relationship with others cannot be fully contained by consciousness and reason. Proximity 'suppresses the distance of consciousness' (Levinas, 1998 [1974]: 89) and serves to disturb knowledge and thematization by invoking both the coextensive infinity and the immediacy of alterity.

Levinas makes clear that he is not using the term anarchy to refer to 'disorder as opposed to order' (Levinas, 1996 [1968]: 81), but rather to that state of relations that is beyond and before thematization as well as beyond our own conscious intentions. Ethically anarchical relations are 'prior to the Ego, prior to its freedom and non-freedom' (Levinas, 2003 [1968]: 51). Critically, for Levinas, this is the point where ethics arises through the reception of a 'responsibility prior to all free engagement'; prior also to consciousness, thought, cognition, logic and symbolization (*ibid.*: 52). Levinas points to a self that is not the same as that which is conceived of consciously and represented in discourse; a singular identity that defies thematization.

Ethical anarchy is not something we can organize or know in a conscious manner; it is that to which we are wholly passive and which cannot be controlled by our intention. In ethical anarchy the ego is stripped of 'its self-conceit and its dominating imperialism' and returns to the 'passivity of the self that came prior to it' (Levinas, 1996 [1968]: 88). Passivity, as a mode of non-freedom, is not that which the ego controls or takes action, but rather that with which 'the ego can be put into question by Others' (Levinas, 2003 [1968]: 51). This question is ethics.

The self as located in the 'an-archy of passivity' (Levinas, 1996 [1968]: 89) is where responsibility arises in that our own subjectivity comes to us first from the

other. We are responsible to other long before we ever know ourselves. Accordingly, 'to be a 'self' is to be responsible before having done anything' (*ibid.*: 94). Responsibility is not a matter we decide on through the exercise of free will, but rather that which we receive passively 'beneath consciousness and knowledge' (Levinas, 2003 [1968]: 50). For Levinas this anarchy gives us 'a responsibility without freedom' and prior to freedom. From ethical anarchy we get 'the fact of human fellowship' (Levinas, 1996 [1968]: 91) before freedom or servitude, order or disorder, are even possible (Levinas, 2003 [1968]).

It is from proximity that our knowledge of the other is relegated as inadequate as we see a 'trace of the Infinite' (Levinas, 1996 [1968]: 91) in the other person's face. This is a down-to-earth spirituality that shines through the other person who is before me and who I cannot adequately know in my own terms. Before knowledge lies exposure where one can feel 'pity, compassion, pardon and proximity in the world' (*ibid.*: 91) and where the other person 'concerns me despite myself' (Levinas, 2003 [1968]: 57). But because it is before language we cannot 'know' this ethical anarchy as if it can be satisfactorily thematized in language and cognition. Instead what we recognize is its trace in language such that ethical anarchy is necessarily ambiguous and enigmatic; it is 'signalled in consciousness' through a language that both conveys and betrays it (Levinas, 1998 [1974]: 194).

The business of ethics and justice

Why then might this understanding of ethics and responsibility as passive and anarchic be of any relevance to business organizations? To begin consider this we can go back to Levinas' earlier work in *Totality and Infinity* (1969 [1961]) where he specifically addresses issues of labor, work and commerce as being both necessary for, and in tension with, ethics. Levinas understands labor as a mode of accumulation that enables the self to sustain itself in relation to the uncertainty of the future. This sustenance is central to the self's ability to engage in ethical acts of generosity to the other, lest there be nothing to give and nowhere to give it from. In Levinas' words: 'No human or interhuman relationship can be enacted outside of economy: no face can be approached with empty hands and closed home' (*ibid.*: 172). Indeed, engagement with economy is necessary such that we might actively respond to the ethical obligation that we passively receive.

Labor, thus valorized, still gives way to work, the latter understood by Levinas as an engagement in the same 'thematization' that ethical anarchy precedes and disturbs. With work the self's particularity is undone as it enters into a system where labor is exchanged for money in relation to the work of the others.

Commerce exacerbates this as it constitutes a trading of selves through systems of exchange and reciprocity. Levinas thus emphasizes that ‘the ethical relation can never be an exchange of goods and services with an intended profit or value as purpose’ (Muhr, 2010: 77). It is in this sense that work can be considered centrally as an activity connected to ethics, while at the same time the *organization* of work through the market mechanism puts distance in place of the proximate ethical relation. With work, labor and organization we see the inevitable tension between ethical anarchy and the need for knowledge in and of the world.

The tension between the anarchic origin of ethics and the practice of organized work has not gone unnoticed in the academic disciplines of organization studies and business ethics. On the one hand the ethical necessity of work and its organization are acknowledged as a requirement for being to be sustained, it is a ‘necessary precondition for being able to be “for the Other” in any material and effective way’ (Byers and Rhodes, 2007: 239). What Levinas (1969 [1961]: 176) describes as the ‘anonymous field of economic life’ operates through ‘a humanity of interchangeable men’ that does not acknowledge or respect the ethically anarchical basis of subjectivity, and as such ‘makes possible exploitation itself’ (*ibid.*: 298).

Such a possibility emerges in that organization, in its very nature, involves the comparison of people, a comparison that requires ethics to be tempered by knowledge and thematization (Byers and Rhodes, 2007; Rhodes, 2012). This is so because decisions need to be made under conditions of ‘the impossibility of meeting the needs to everyone’ (Aasland, 2005: 57). Yet with this comparison each individual cannot be approached as distinct and particular in their alterity; cannot be approached without the pretense of *arche*. Once thematized, compared and traded, the understanding of others is located in relation to categories, and inevitably ‘judgment relative to that category [. . . and . . .] through this move the “Otherness” of the Other, the exceptional, is neatly bracketed and “covered over”’ (Introna, 2003: 212). What was received passively as responsibility is now solidly cloaked by the instrumental functioning of the knowledgeable ego. Even if, in this organized scene, an other were recognized in proximity the problems would not dissipate because ‘to put one other first is to put all others behind’ (Aasland, 2005: 75).

In one sense these considerations of ethical anarchy might lead use to promote ethically based justice in organizations (see Aasland, 2005, 2007; Rhodes, 2013) in that organizations and those who manage them might become beholden to negotiating the demands of all the others in the spirit of recognizing the origin of ethics in the anarchic responsibility to the other. This is indeed the predominant

response that has been made in relation to organizational and business ethics; one that builds on Levinasian ethical insights in order to develop a set of normative implications for how organizations might be managed such that they enable 'continuous improvements towards always more justice' (Aasland, 2007: 220). That is not to say that such approaches are managerial, on the contrary the common thread is a critique of ethical instrumentalism so as to suggest an approach to management and leadership that might be different to its current state. The focus is on what people who manage organizations might do, for example by pursuing a 'Levinasian managerial ethics' that would 'delimit alterity as the locus of the ethical and work on unfolding the practical conditions of managerial responsibility' (Bevan and Corvellec, 2007: 213). Managers are thus bound to take on personal responsibility in the context of organizational roles such that ethics might come to be enacted in organizations in ways that account for yet exceed the following of rules and regulation (Muhr, 2008). The 'ethical leadership' that would follow is one that is argued to be 'of value to corporate business if it is to establish a culture that is not inimical to the kind of management behavior that has been associated with corporate scandal' (Knights and O'Leary, 2006: 135).

Ethical and political anarchism

While attestations to the need to strive for ever more just modes of organizing is commendable, by itself it suffers from the problem of assigning potential agency only to those in formal positions of organizational authority; typically managers understood somehow as being 'inside' and organization and representative of it. To begin to work through the broader implications of Levinas' ethical anarchism for business and organizational ethics we can consider its relationship with political anarchism. The conception of ethical anarchy that we learn from Levinas is not the same as the notion of anarchism in political discourse, even though it can be said that it 'concerns and affects politics' (Abensour, 2002: 5) and has been drawn on in developing anarchist political positions (e.g. Newman, 2010). Railing against the suffering and injustice invoked by state rule and the rules of states, political anarchism works under a conviction that both collectively and individually people would be better off without such power-laden intrusions (Marshall, 2010). Levinas himself relates his own conception of ethical anarchy to this as follows:

The notion of anarchy we are introducing here has a meaning prior to the political (or anti-political) meaning currently attributed to it. It would be self-contradictory to set it up as a principle (in the sense that anarchists understand it). Anarchy cannot be sovereign, like the *arche*. It can only disturb the state; but in a radical way, making possible moments of negation *without any* affirmation. The state then

cannot set itself up as a Whole. But, on the other hand, anarchy can be stated. Yet disorder has an irreducible meaning, as refusal of synthesis. (Levinas, 1998 [1974]: 194n3)

Underlining this we can concur that the implication of Levinas' ethical anarchism can be formulated as a 'politics of the trace, a politics of disturbance' (Caygill, 2002: 138, see also Abenour, 2002) that is prior to the constitution of an organized politics, including anarchist politics (Newman, 2010). More importantly ethical anarchism disturbs the state by decentering its authority in favor of the authority of and responsibility to the other, to sociality (Abenour, 2002) and to the other's freedom. The disturbance that reverberates from ethical anarchism is one that 'involves the opening up of existing political identities, practices, institutions and discourses to an Other which is beyond their terms' (Newman, 2010: 7). Ethical anarchism is thus political not because it necessitates a particular political and ideological position (anarchist or otherwise) but rather because it undermines the authority of any such position by calling it into question. The solid ground of one's own pretense to such authority retreats in the name of the other person.

While Levinas states that his ethical anarchism is prior to the political meaning attributed to anarchism, that does not mean that anarchism cannot be reconsidered in relation to that prior relation; in other words it is possible to read Levinas, as a non-anarchist, in an anarchist tradition (Jun, 2012). In particular a 'postanarchist' appreciation of Levinas is one that is 'thoroughly compatible with the anarchist ethos of permanent suspicion towards authority' (Newman, 2010: 53) and the insistence that 'a program of resistance must be ongoing, fluid, and ever-vigilant' (Jun, 2012: 113). Translated organizationally, this means that what might be stimulated by ethical anarchism is not just about the internal re-organization of managerial action, but rather a disturbance of organizational order – of assumed organizational sovereignty – that arrives from the outside, from ethical anarchism. In the service of business ethics the postanarchist drive for the 'political disturbance of state sovereignty' (Newman, 2010: 89) can be translated as the *political disturbance of corporate sovereignty*.

This disturbance, as a feature of the life of organizations, serves to contest the corporation through resistance and critique (Fleming and Spicer, 2007). Indeed while Levinas' comments echo the anarchist distrust of state power, such distrust is to be extended to contemporary corporations whose power lends them the sovereignty to ride rough shot over individual rights and state politics in the name of capitalism. Suggested is an ethically-based demand to decenter assumed power through disturbance by bringing forth the trace of ethical anarchism. In the context of globalized capitalism it is indeed the case that the power of

corporations vies with that of states for political domination on a global scale, such that corporations can increasingly be seen as political rather than just economic institutions. If there are ethical grounds that invoke the disturbance of political power then corporate power cannot and should not be excluded as an object to be disturbed.

The ethical anarchy that might inform such disturbance comes before the freedom expressed by the ego while its trace disturbs that freedom in demanding responsibility to the other without recourse to any 'authoritative structure' (Caygill, 2002: 149); without recourse to organization. Ethics is engaged with in a 'pre-conscious, non-intentional, state of affectivity in which the very distinction self-other is not yet established' (Diamantides, 2007: 2). Moreover it is this relation that asserts and identifies the 'weakness or defectiveness of the ego' (*ibid.*). Specifically, ethical anarchy is an 'affective excess to the ego that opens it up to the dimension of ethics' (*ibid.*: 12); an opening up that occurs through the disturbance of the ego's self-assumed completeness. The idea of disturbance is key in that ethical anarchy as present in proximity is that which interrupts the hubris of rational and conscious order reflected in and organized by the ego. Ethical anarchy tends to politics in the sense that it disturbs politics and tyranny (Abensour, 2002) through 'the continual questioning from below of any attempt to establish order from above' (Critchley, 2007: 123); the order of business organizations being a paradigm case. *It's called capitalism?* It's not good enough!

Ethical anarchy and dissent

Having reached this point, we can say that the disturbance of ethical anarchy is not foreign to political anarchy. This is so because 'political radicalism ultimately finds its origin in this anarchical responsibility to other people', by standing up on behalf of other people and for the other's justice (Verter, 2010: 80). Ethical anarchy 'affects politics' (Abensour, 2002) because it suggests the ethical necessity of resisting and subverting power and domination. In practical terms this ethical anarchy infers a form of political activism where the anarchic moment of ethics is 'the disturbance of the status quo' (Critchley, 2007: 13). By implication activity derived from ethical anarchism would be that which provokes a continuous questioning of and resistance to the awesome power of the contemporary corporation. Anarchy here is in the form of 'ideological dissent' (Dunphy, 2004) that contests corporate sovereignty and power. This suggests the absolute ethical necessity of resistance to corporate power, anti-organizational protest, and political dissensus. Such a requirement is not to be based on an idea that we might be graced, *deus-ex-machina*, by a new form of self-management where all forms of oppression dissipate; no fantastical utopias. Instead it involves

a recognition that the space between sovereign organization and anarchic ethics must be maintained. Politically, this favors dissensus as a practical ethico-politics over utopianism as an impossible dream. Such an ethics is enacted through a 'project of ethico-political resistance and critique that works against forms of coercion, inequity, and discrimination that organizations so frequently and easily reproduce' (Pullen and Rhodes, 2012: 12) ... and so frequently justify in the name of competitive market capitalism.

It may be the case that 'corporate leaders also do not like anarchism' because 'the familiar order of managerial control is lost' (Martin, 2003: 2) but there are even more reasons that they would not like ethical anarchism. These reasons relate to how all organizational action would be under ethical scrutiny in a drive against corporate sovereignty. This calls for a business ethics that rather than seeking to gain the consent of business to adopt it, is based on dissent from the outside. This is what we might term 'anarchic business ethics', an ethical position determined to question the ethics of business without ever pretending that business will be ethical.

Business ethics is not the responsibility of business, it is the responsibility of the societies in which business operates, in other words, it is 'our' responsibility. Such ethics is located in the democratic process especially as it relates an understanding of radical democracy characterized by the non-violent expression of political differences and a preparedness to engage in political conflict (Mouffe, 2000). This 'democracy is a forever-protean process, where resistance to the integral logics of sovereignty, law, and capitalism becomes a politics of gesture' whose pursuit does not cease (Springer, 2011: 531). Business ethics does not need moralistic managers or do-gooding CEOs, it needs a civil society that will disturb corporate power in the name of ethical anarchism, and that is in opposition to the imposition of sovereign corporate power justified by neoliberalism. While it is clearly the case that the focus of much recent politics is on consensus based engagement it is through political dissensus that this can be realized (Mouffe, 2000). In one manifestation this is the role taken up by political activists and protestors against neoliberalism (Graeber, 2002). But the seeds are present too in more general realms of civil society, ethical anarchism can emerge through both radical and liberal politics.

Response to Google's tax avoidance is one recent example of civil dissent, as are public debates over executive remuneration in the finance sector and questions over corporate funding of right wing political parties. In each case what is disturbed is the normalization of corporate greed and the arrogance of corporate freedom afforded by neoliberalism. In terms of tax avoidance the ethical affront is to a corporation that believes it can rise above civil society to take what it wants

without responsibility for contributing in the ways that others have to. The pursuit of the self-interest of the corporate self is the ethos in question. *It's called capitalism!* Even the state has attempted to intervene, with CEOs of the world's most respectable companies being castigated over tax avoidance by ministers of the British Parliament at the Public Accounts Committee in 2013 (see Public Accounts Committee, 2013).

The close relations between corporate power and the contemporary democratic state (for example, in Britain) however suggest that the capacity of the state to adequately disturb corporate power are limited. What is important though, and what would no doubt attract the attention of political parties, is that these are not matters just of minority or radical politics, but are of concern to many citizens. Such matters make headlines in the press, and families discuss them after the 5 o'clock news. It might even be seen if such matters become the subject of debate in University classrooms or on the ephemeral pages of academic journals. These are but a few brief examples, but they serve to illustrate that business ethics reaches its apogee in the public sphere, in democracy, and it is here that it can be best developed and potentially even radicalized. It is in this sphere that business ethics must be located as a form of disturbance to corporations. It is in this sphere that it should be practiced and researched.

Conclusion

If we remove the normative dimensions, it seems that Milton Friedman was partly right: the primary responsibility that business takes is to make profits, although the question of whether this is done within ethical custom is questionable. *It's called capitalism!* As Friedman's credo is upheld with stated pride through the networks of globalized neoliberal capitalism one might wonder what might be left for responsibilities to anything other than profit, or to anyone other than the mythical shareholder. One direction is to expect businesses themselves to embrace a broader set of social responsibilities and ethical demands as if moved by the goodness of their corporate hearts. The evidence that this might happen is wafer thin (see Fleming and Jones, 2013). But outside of the clutching hands of business, business ethics can be conceived of as materializing in a politics of resistance to organizations (Pullen and Rhodes, 2013) that is exercised in the context of a radical democracy formed through dissent (Ziarek, 2001). This is a vision of radical democracy that attests to the ethical demand to disturb authoritarian and exploitative institutions without assuming that the state is the center of democracy (Newman, 2010). It is in civil society itself, in our collective relations, that ethical anarchism is to be found and hence where political action in response to it emerges in one way or another. This is a

business ethics of the street, not of the boardroom. A business ethics of the citizen and not the executive.

The ‘market fundamentalism’ that rings through Schmidt’s pride in an inevitable capitalism is precisely the form of neoliberal ideologizing that an anarchic business ethics would seek to undermine. In question is the ideology that neoliberal capitalism is the right and only ‘possible direction for human historical development’ (Graeber, 2009: 3). *It’s called capitalism!* So justified in the words of Google’s CEO that he can assert that his organization is proud of being capitalistic. In direct contention to such self-important hubris, it is in the spirit of human fellowship and respect that ethical anarchy teaches us we might have a healthy disrespect for the ethical possibilities of a single sovereign institution or organization. It teaches us too that business ethics is far too important to be left in the hands of business. Work and commerce are needed for ethics to be sure, but through their organization on a global level we encounter the inherent possibilities of oppression, exploitation, discrimination, deception, greed and selfishness on a huge scale. All justified so long as they can be conducted without contravention of the laws of the state. It is the trace of the ethically anarchical appreciation of the other person that might lead us away from and against such possibilities; a primal respect for the unknowability of the other. This ethical anarchy prompts the need to disturb and decenter corporate power, lest it continues to get carried away with itself. It is this political disturbance that marks the space of an anarchical business ethics that practices political anarchism.

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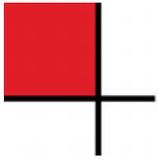
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A critical appraisal of what could be an anarchist political economy

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Conflated with anti-statism, anything goes, chaos, violence and terrorism, anarchism is probably one of the most misconstrued and demonized political ideologies of our times. Anarchist writings have long been the preserve of activist subcultures, while attracting only marginal attention in academic circles. The tide seems to have changed alongside the widespread disillusionment with the authoritarian neoliberal state and sweeping Orwellian surveillance apparatuses in the wake of the current crisis. Particularly, the political momentum of horizontalist social movements with anarchist traits, taking to the squares and demanding ‘real democracy now’, has spurred renewed academic curiosity in anarchist ideas and practices. Much of this ideological appreciation might be of a transient nature only, flirting with what David Graeber (2002: 72) referred to as ‘small-a anarchism’. Notwithstanding, the reinvigorated interest in anarchist thought epitomizes the search for an alternative socio-economic order – an order that goes beyond reformist and parochial conceptions of what is commonly considered politically acceptable and feasible.

The (re-)production of everyday life through work lies at the foundation of every economic and political system, including of what could be an anarchist one. What alternative views on the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services does anarchism offer? What are the virtues and pitfalls of an anarchist organisation of the economy? Anarchism might not be celebrated for its distinguished views on the economy; yet a range of anarchists has outlined fairly concrete views on how to organise alternative forms of production, and for that matter, an alternative socio-economic order that is non-capitalist in essence. This note critically discusses the merits and limits of anarchist utopias and real

existing examples of what one could call anarchist economic organisation. It will be argued that the anarchist legacy has much to offer when envisaging anti-capitalist alternatives but that there are also important shortcomings.

Leaving the comfort zones of mere capitalist critique and envisaging a non-capitalist anarchist future may seem a dauntingly naïve endeavour. We should not forget though that an integral part of critical scholarship is not only to explain and criticize structures of the existing social order, but also to formulate coherent visions of alternatives that transcend this order (Cox, 1996). Arguably, alternative visions, whether anarchist or not, will always be incomplete and imperfect. As Emma Goldman (1927: 7) reminds us, anarchism is not ‘an ironclad program or method on the future’. Solutions to societal problems are rather to be found in a dialectical interplay between thought and action, or what the Zapatista movement termed *preguntando caminamos* – walking we ask questions. An important set of questions is rooted in the longstanding and multi-faceted antagonism between anarchism and Marxism. The purpose of this contribution is not to (re-)produce orthodox platitudes or to reconcile what may or may not be reconciled, but rather to exploit some of the tensions that arise from the different ontological foci underpinning anarchist and Marxist views and their ramifications of transformative action (see also Wigger and Buch-Hansen, 2013).

Anarchism as emancipatory theory and praxis

Anarchist theory encompasses a heterodox compilation of ideas, which mean different things to different people and which are constantly in flux and evolving. Referring to an authentic and homogeneous anarchism would therefore be as much of a misnomer as referring to a genuine Marxism (White and Williams, 2012: 1628). For the brevity of this note, some broad generalisations will be inevitable nonetheless. When stripped to its quintessence and deprived from its various qualifying adjectives, anarchism boils down to a profound scepticism towards skewed and coercive social power relations, be it alongside class, race, gender or people with different sexual orientations (McLaughlin, 2010). Anarchists aim at maximising individual autonomy and collectivist freedom by ‘reducing fixed hierarchies that systematically privilege some people over others to a minimum’ (Albert, 2012: 327).

Anarchism is frequently associated with a profound distrust of formal organisations – the state in particular. Anarchism is however not simply anti-state or anti-government. The state as an ensemble of rules and institutions is considered but one source of skewed social power relations. As Schmidt and van der Walt (2009: 71) put it, ‘antistatism is at best a necessary component of

anarchist thought, but not a sufficient basis on which to classify a set of ideas or a particular thinker as part of the anarchist tradition'. The thorny question of the state has become a bit of an elephant in the room, particularly among so-called small-a anarchists who are inclined to belief that the Leviathan still can be tamed as Thomas Hobbes suggested, and advocating instead a radical democratization of the state. Capital letter 'A' anarchists are wholeheartedly anti-capitalist and consider the state inseparable from the capitalist system. The capitalist state is criticized for codifying, legitimizing and representing social inequalities through a hierarchical and authoritarian concentration of power in hands of ruling classes (Williams, 2007: 300; McKay, 2008: 1633). As capitalism would succumb without state regulatory apparatuses and the centralised condensation of power, the branch of self-proclaimed 'anarcho-capitalists', favouring laissez-faire capitalism without a state, cannot be considered anarchist (see Shannon, 2012: 280). Overcoming capitalism thus unequivocally implies overcoming the state, or, in the view of anarchist Gustav Landauer (2010: 179), the state is a social relationship: 'a certain way of people relating to one another', which can be destroyed by 'people relating to one another differently'.

The commonalities between anarchism and Marxism are crucial: both condemn the capitalist exploitation of labour and nature; both view the state as an instrument of class domination and picture communism as stateless; and both share a principal commitment to a more just and egalitarian society. Anarchists however lack a distinct analysis and critique of global capitalism and often draw on Marxist insights (both positively and negatively), which is why anarchism is sometimes pigeonholed as Marxism's poorer cousin. The engagement is frequently not reciprocal and overtly conflict-ridden. Many of the vestiges of the First International in 1872, where Karl Marx expelled Mikhail Bakunin and other anarchists, latently live on to date (see Bakunin, 1998 [1950]; McKay, 2008: 1668-1693). Condescension can be found in both camps. Anarchists sometimes draw on crude reductionist views on Marxism (see Schmidt and van der Walt, 2009), neglecting that Marxism offers both an analysis of the social world and political project, while not all Marxists necessarily embody both dimensions. Marxists, in turn, frequently seem preoccupied with theorizing and analysing capitalism and its crises, while either ignoring anarchist works altogether, or despising them as eclectic, theoretically shallow and conceptually imprecise. Illustrative in this regard is Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm (1973), who has vociferously ranted at anarchist ideas and movements, which he deems ineffective, primitive and destined to failure.

This long-standing antagonism is unfortunate as the growing body of literature on alternative anarchist economic production is serious and sophisticated (see Shannon et al., 2012; or the voluminous and detailed work by McKay, 2008).

This up-and-coming literature gives particular emphasis to the fact that capitalist critique should be followed by the dialectics of developing alternatives and action instigated to a post-neoliberal and post-capitalist order. Social change and the emancipation of the oppressed constitute anarchism's linchpin: structures, processes, practices and identities of social inequality should not only be criticized but also defied in daily struggles and actions. While Marxists might have produced brilliant theoretical discourses, usually sheltered by academia's cosy ivory towers, anarchists are said to have focused more on getting things done (Kinna and Prichard, 2012; Williams, 2007). Based on first-hand (positive) experiences in laboratories of lived anarchist practice in small groups, communes and councils, anarchists usually tend to be slightly more optimistic about the prospect of overthrowing capitalism, whereas their Marxist cousins frequently lack similar experiences and tend to be intellectually more pessimist. This is why anarchism is sometimes also portrayed as the passionate, idealistic heart in contrast to Marxism's sober and realistic head (Kinna and Prichard, 2012).

The anarchist answer to Lenin's famous question 'what is to be done?' differs from traditional Marxists politics in important points. Although there is no common anarchist position on how to organise the passage from capitalism to what an anarchist would call libertarian communism or anarcho-communism, anarchists see no role for authority and power centralization in the form of an elite vanguard party or a red bureaucracy by proxy of the proletarian masses that would temporarily seize the state as a site of political transition. Anarchists do not believe that the state would at some point miraculously wither away, as so-called classical Marxism, and in particular its Leninist branch, would suggest. For anarchists, form is content and content is form. In the spirit of building tomorrow today, the emergence of a new avant-garde that arises from within popular struggles ought to be prevented at all costs and at all times.

With the exception of an insurrectionist branch propagating an instantaneous revolutionary upsurge of popular masses, anarchist strategies for social transformation tend to be both non-revolutionary and non-reformist in nature. Anarchists see social change as incremental, taking place here and now, and not in the form of some grand transformation that would liberate all humanity at once in some distant future – a stance generally ascribed to Marxists politics. John Holloway's *Change the World without Taking Power* (2003) and *Cracks of Capitalism* (2010) very much reflect this view. As capitalism developed in the interstices of feudalism, the transformation towards a non-capitalist and anarchist society is too believed to evolve cumulatively through enlarging social spaces with alternative organizational forms. As the struggle to overcome capitalism cannot be imposed or delegated from top-down hierarchical and

formal systems of power, such as the state or political parties, bottom-up grassroots struggles that aim at changing micro-relations in everyday life are considered cutting edge for changing macrostructures. The ethos of 'prefigurative direct action' and 'propaganda by the deed' is pivotal in this respect (see Maeckelbergh, 2011): new forms of social organisation ought to be realised straightaway, while the means of social change must prefigure the anticipated anarchist future (prefigurative direct action). Moreover, through exemplary political actions exposing anarchist practices as positive (propaganda by the deed), anarchists seek to stimulate solidarity activities and imitation, hoping that this would eventually coalesce into a broader movement and suffocate capitalism at some point (Carter and Moreland, 2004; Gordon, 2008). Anarchism thus needs to be understood as a way of living in the present as well as a goal for the future (Ferguson, 2011).

Sketching the contours of an anarchist political economy

The (re-)production of social life is essentially a collective endeavour, which engenders social power relations. Like Marxists, anarchists fundamentally challenge the skewed social power relations within capitalism between the wealthy few, controlling the means of production, and the working many, selling their labour. Committed to horizontal organising, anarchists seek a radical redistribution of wealth and power, striving to create the material conditions for a non-exploitative and egalitarian society with communal ownership structures of the means of production. What is also referred to as libertarian communism, or mutualism would be based on the free experimentation of different types of economic arrangements – arrangements that go beyond production for the sake of profits and that generally revolve around (direct) democratically managed and decentralised horizontal production collectives. As anarcho-syndicalist Rudolf Rocker (2009 [1938]) suggested, different organizational forms of production might operate side by side. This plethora of autonomous and self-organized production sites would not exist in isolation. Voluntary associations or contracts with others would be formed, resulting in horizontal clusters or networks in which products and services would be exchanged. As anarchism cannot be forced upon people, there would always be an uneasy contradiction between individual and collective self-organization. Moreover, democratic decisions for a hierarchical organization of production would have to be respected. Thus, degrees of horizontal organisation and autonomy would vary among different production collectives.

Values and principles central to anarchist thought, such as autonomy, voluntary cooperation and mutual aid, as well as equity, solidarity and mutual respect,

would prevail in the organisation of economic activities. While voluntary cooperation in the realm of the economy refers to arrangements between economic entities that focus on joint projects and reaching common goals, mutual aid concerns altruistic and solidary practices aimed at enhancing the welfare of economic entities without the aid provider directly benefitting from it (see Wigger and Buch-Hansen, 2013). Anarchists from the classical canon like Bakunin were convinced that cooperation would be the prevailing form of social organisation. Likewise, Kropotkin (2006 [1902]) criticized social-Darwinist logics based on the idea of the survival of the fittest, and argued that voluntary cooperation and most notably mutual aid were much more successful traits in human survival than egoistic behaviour. Kropotkin moreover recognized that humans have both selfish and social instincts but saw none as the main determinant. Accordingly, a system that gives primacy to the always rationally calculating and utility maximizing *Homo economicus* can be as much socially conditioning as a system that gives primacy to the features of the *Homo socialis*.

A range of anarchists have worked out rather detailed visions on how such democratically managed and socialized production forms would look like. A canonical overview would exceed the scope of this note. Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel's (1991) work on a participatory economy, in short Parecon, is probably one of the best-known but also one of the most criticized accounts (see also Albert, 2003; Hahnel, 2005). Several authors and branches of literature could be mentioned that also centre on egalitarian cooperative forms of self-managed production, albeit without an outright commitment to anarchism, such as work on 'post-growth societies' (Daly, 1996; Jackson, 2008; Latouche, 2009), a 'humanized economy' (Restakis, 2010) and 'real utopias' (Wright, 2010). The extensive literature on the 'commons' with collectively shared access, use and ownership rights also falls into this category. Suffice it to say that all of these visions can be a source of inspiration for an anarchist organisation of the economy.

Collectivist decentralised and democratically planned production would allow for what Karl Polanyi (1944) called the re-embedding of the economy in social relations, rather than running society as an adjunct to the market, as it is the case under contemporary capitalism. Production would be organized according to need. As Peter Kropotkin (2008 [1892]: 201) outlined in his vision of anarcho-communism: 'Before producing anything, must you not feel the need of it? [...] Is it not the study of needs that should govern production?' The question of a needs-based economy also stands central in Marx and what he termed 'use-value' – rather than production for the sake of commercial gain or 'exchange-value'. A needs-based orientation would break with the imperative of relentless capital accumulation and economic growth, as well as the hedonistic consumerism of

the privileged, which, as Bookchin (1986: 21) accurately observed, ‘pacifies but never satisfies’. Surplus production, necessary for creating stocks for times of economic insecurity or scarcity, would be still necessary but kept at bay. Certain domains would be relatively small-scale or local or regional in orientation, particularly in the area of foodstuff and basic products. This would render not only production but also the distribution and consumption less alienated, enhance local autonomy and sovereignty and reduce energy-wasteful long-distance trade. This would however not mean that large-scale industries making use of advanced technologies and profiting from economies of scale or trade would have to be abandoned altogether. The appropriate scale of production (and trade) would have to be determined democratically, taking into account the objective needs of production and those who work in and live alongside the production processes (McKay, 2008).

Anarchists deem sufficient leisure time essential for the conscious creation of a balanced life. As Kropotkin (2008 [1892]: 63, 172) emphasized, economic production should be geared towards the ‘well-being for all’ by ‘giving society the greatest amount of useful products with the least waste of human energy’. In an anarchist organisation of economic production, a new division of labor would surface. The workplace would not be fixed, allowing for a balanced composition of tasks. Workers would engage in participatory planning and take decisions that concern the organisation of the day-to-day work, including also decisions to leave production collectives at free will. The workplace moreover would constitute a site of creativity, self-esteem, mutual learning and knowledge sharing, allowing for personal growth, work satisfaction and the appreciation of good craftsmanship. In that sense, the Fordist-type factory setting forms the antithesis to an anarchist mode of production: the machine-paced assembly lines and coercive Taylorist managerial structures not only suppress the autonomy but also the self-esteem of the workforce, while concentrating power in the hands of those who control the assembly line (Scott, 2013).

Assessing the virtues and limits of an anarchist political economy

Horizontally organised, self-managed production sites where workers take direct democratic decisions and own the means of production have existed all over the world throughout history. Various types of consumer and producer cooperatives, cooperative banks, sustainable communities such as ecovillages (Alperovitz, 2005) or temporary autonomous zones (Bay, 1985) can also be found in contemporary capitalism. Estimates suggest that there are currently 1.4 million cooperatives with nearly one billion members worldwide (Monaghan and Ebrey, 2012: 29). Examples can be found in the Emilia Romagna region in Italy, home

to 8.100 cooperatives producing 40 per cent of the region's GDP; India with over 239 million people working in coops, or the UK, which counts 13 million coop members (*ibid.*).

Coops of every imaginable sort are certainly less exploitative and frequently allow for precious zones of worker's autonomy, basic income rights, (more) equitable remuneration schemes, sustainable employment and high degrees of community liveability (see Bateman, 2012). Operating at the margins of capitalism however, cooperatives cannot easily evade the imperatives of the competitive accumulation of capital. Illustrative is the renowned Mondragon Cooperative Corporation in the Basque region of Northern Spain. As part of its expansionary strategy, Mondragon outsourced production to affiliated subsidiary companies in China, Mexico, Poland, Brazil or the Czech Republic in order to profit from cheap unskilled or semi-skilled labour, while many of the 120 linked enterprises are not organised as cooperatives (Errasti et al., 2003). Rather than enhancing North-South cooperation through Greenfield investments, Mondragon primarily expanded through joint ventures and takeovers, while restricting actual cooperative membership and 'one-worker-one-vote' rules to Basque plants only (*ibid.*). Overall, only a third of the more than 80,000 full time employees are members. Furthermore, for the sake of efficiency, crucial decisions are no longer taken by direct democratic structures but by a management board held accountable through yearly elections.

As Noam Chomsky (1999) argued, the roots of a successor project of capitalism and its neoliberal organization will have to be constructed within the existing economy. Arguably, present-tense experiments will always be imperfect (see also Nathan, 2011 for pitfalls of real-existing cooperatives in former Yugoslavia and South Africa). What's more, anarchist production sites, which develop at the verge of capitalist competition, always risk regressing back into capitalism. Bakunin warned already in the 1870s that the capitalist sector would conquer the non-capitalist one, and that coops would eventually adopt a bourgeois mentality. This is why Bakunin, as a representative of the revolutionary anarchists, did not believe in a gradual and peaceful systemic transformation. Democratic structures at work are not a sufficient key to a non-capitalist order either. As noted by Joseph Kay (in Shannon et al., 2012: 282), 'the assets of a co-op do not cease being capital when votes are taken on how they are used within a society of generalized production and wage labour'. Production collectives do also not automatically break with the exploitation of non-renewable natural resources or stop environmental depletion. In order to survive and maintain market shares, adjusting to market logics, such as buying cheap and selling dear, or minimizing costs and maximizing profits, is not only tempting but at times even unavoidable. Coops cannot easily evade the coercive forces of capitalist competition and its

depreciating effects on labour when being confronted with competitors and price wars. In times of economic downturn and fierce competitive pressures, coops can suffer from collective self-exploitation through ‘democratically’ imposed austerity measures in the form of longer working days, decreasing income, and redundancies in the worst case.

Capitalist competition is in many ways an anathema to anarchist values and principles. Not many anarchists have paid attention to the social ramifications of the competitive accumulation of capital (exceptions are Albert, 2003; McKay, 2008). The freedom to compete is frequently confused with political freedom and individual self-determination. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1988 [1846]: 272), one of the first self-proclaimed anarchists, saw a clear role for competitive behaviour among worker-owned firms in his version of market socialism, arguing that competition ‘is the vital force which animates the collective being: to destroy it, if such a supposition were possible, would be to kill society’. The idea that outperforming others would bring out the best in people might be genuinely appealing and politically motivating. It disregards however, as Marx (1973 [1939]: 650) argued, that ‘[i]t is not individuals that are set free by free competition; it is, rather, capital which is set free’. By giving primacy to grass roots collective self-organisation, the terrain of anarchist social struggles tends to be ontologically limited to changing micro-contexts only, while competitive capitalist logics operate at the systemic level. This raises important questions about whether a genuine societal reorientation towards an alternative organisation can emerge from the micro-level alone (see also Wigger and Buch-Hansen, 2013). It furthermore remains questionable whether in a non-capitalist economy competitive pressures could be eliminated. The particularistic interests of producer communities to acquire more privileges can easily encroach on higher ethical goals, also in an anarchist political economy. Although there is nothing wrong with producing better and more innovative products in a competitive sportive spirit, competition eventually disintegrates more than it unites. Apart from being highly stressful, competition can put people fundamentally at odds, disrupt social relationships and undermine solidarity and common projects. Not everyone who plays can win, and failure or humiliation can lead to anxiety, hostility or outright aggression, which interferes with performance and creativity (Kohn, 1986).

The downsides of competition are certainly intensified under capitalism. An anarchist organisation of the economy could seek to diminish competition. This would require social institutions that seek to protect the cooperative commonwealth from creeping capitalist logics. Contrary to what is frequently assumed, anarchism is not opposed to organization or establishing institutions. Social institutions and venues where people meet, discuss mutual expectations or

take decisions are indispensable for any society (see also Albert, 2012). Anarchist institutions would however look different from the current institutional architecture that regulates economic production and exchange. Institutions would enshrine values and principles central to anarchism, such as equity, solidarity, voluntary cooperation and mutual aid. Anarchist institutions, like any institution, would certainly limit the much praised autonomy and freedom, and there would always be a minority dissenting with the established consensus, which cannot be coerced into a given institutional setting. Nonetheless, anarchist institutions would seek to maximise autonomy and collective, egalitarian self-management, and be subjected to decentralized democratic mediation and open to periodic re-evaluation and adjustment by people participating in and/or affected by these institutions.

Horizontally organised and democratically run collectives might offer patent solutions for the organization of production at micro-level. Direct democratic consensual decision-making structures, which are already premised on rather omnipotent humans, would become impossible for tackling macro-level problems that exceed the local or the regional. Anarchists, ranging from Bakunin to Proudhon or Bookchin as well as a many anarcho-syndicalists, have always been committed internationalists, and acknowledged the necessity of higher-order nested governance institutions for the coordination of public affairs beyond the local. Federal structures are generally considered to be the macro-systemic complementary to self-management and direct democracy at micro-level. Based on a bottom-up organisation of re-callable delegates, larger units in the federation would have the fewest powers and be subordinated to the lower (local) levels, ideally leaving confederal councils with the task of mere coordination. To what extent such federal structures would ultimately resemble state structures as we know them can certainly be debated.

Conclusion

Bottom-up initiatives of self-managed production collectives exemplify without doubt anarchist prefigurative politics, and can be essentially emancipatory and empowering in nature. However, anarchist organising values and principles, such as cooperation and mutual aid, as well as other forms of empathic and solidary behaviour, always risk to be subordinated to notions of winning and narrow and short-term interests in the presence of cut-throat (capitalist) competitive pressures. Anarchists, by giving ontologically primacy to micro-level social struggles, can learn from the Marxists macro-systemic view, departing from the standpoint of the totality, and thus, global capitalism. The centrifugal forces of competition are but one critical aspect that risks distorting an anarchist

economy. Other aspects that have not been discussed here would be scarcity and economic uncertainty; whether or not the exchange of goods and services would be monetized; or merely the fact that the aggregate effect of individual decisions can produce circumstances against the interest of those subject to them, amounting to booms and busts, overproduction and overinvestment (see McKay, 2008).

Although clear-cut blueprints about an anarchist political economy and concise roadmaps on how to get there are impossible to draw up, anarchist utopias provide valuable inspiration for prefiguring an egalitarian distribution of wealth and power in a society. If we understand utopianism as ‘perpetually exploring new ways to perfect an imperfect reality’ (Niman, 1997: 302), then the mere possibility of envisioning a different world already holds the prospect of it becoming a viable project (see Eckert, 2011: 69). Such utopias should however not be unduly romanticized or idealised as they can easily transmute into dogmatic orthodoxies (Ferguson, 2011: 154). Importantly, utopias always have to be re-envisaged in the light of past and real-existing practices.

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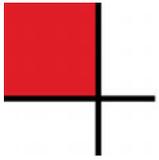
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Farewell to consumerism: Countervailing logics of growth in consumption

Andreas Chatzidakis, Gretchen Larsen and Simon Bishop

Introduction

The logic of growth is dominant in the contemporary political economy and in various notions of social and cultural prosperity (e.g. Friedman 2006; IMF, 2014; Alam, 2008). Under all sorts of regimes, from advanced capitalist market economies to planned economies, progress is usually understood to be dependent on economic expansion through the increasing use of natural resources, the creation of technology, organisational efficiency and the stimulation of consumption. However, increasingly, this dominant logic faces challenge. Ongoing environmental degradation and uneven global economic growth have led to considerable deliberation on the finite nature of growth. This has translated into a variety of countervailing logics and concepts, from the development of 'stagnation', 'equilibrium' and 'post-growth' economics (e.g. New Economics Foundation, 2010) to discussions on whether prosperity without growth is possible (Jackson, 2009) and whether we should speak of agrowth or 'degrowth' as a response to societies where growth has become the secular religion (Latouche, 2006; 2009). Political debates around degrowth now come in many variants, from modest claims made even by conservative groups and 'prudent' economists to more radical treatments that view degrowth as incompatible with capitalist modes of production and consumption (e.g. Ott, 2012). It is the latter notion of degrowth that is increasingly intertwined with general anarchist thinking and modes of prefigurative action.

Corresponding to macro-level debates about degrowth, contemporary consumption has also been subjected to a series of countervailing logics. Concepts such as anti-consumption and consumer resistance (e.g. Lee et al.,

2011), green and ethical consumption (e.g. Devinney, Auger and Eckhardt, 2010; Harisson, Newholm and Shaw, 2005), downshifting and voluntary simplicity (e.g. McDonald et al., 2006; Shaw and Newholm, 2002) are now part of both academic and everyday discourse. Although the ideological underpinnings of such consumer movements are equally diverse, some of these are explicitly informed by radical variants of degrowth and prefigurative action (e.g. Chatzidakis et al., 2012; Portwood-Stacer, 2013). This is in line with general anarchist thinking emphasising how degrowth ‘...should be a collectively consented choice of life, not an externally-imposed imperative’ (Cattaneo and Gavalda, 2010: 581). For various anarchist scholars the transition to a degrowth society should therefore come from the bottom-up, as a consequence of autonomous social and political organisation rather than top-down parliamentary action (cf. Latouche, 2009). Such an approach not only foregrounds everyday action (and consumer culture) as fundamental to a degrowth agenda, but is also in line with more culturally sensitised accounts of structural transformation that assert the intersection of micro-level logics and practices with macro-level socio-political change. In the context of voluntary simplicity (i.e. ‘the foregoing of maximum consumption and possibly, income’; Shaw and Newholm, 2002: 169), for instance, Alexander (2013: 288) argues that ‘the legal, political, and economic structures will never reflect a post-growth ethics of macro-economic sufficiency until a post-consumerist ethics of micro-economic sufficiency is embraced and mainstreamed at the cultural level’. Here we wish to explore how emerging countervailing logics of growth in consumption already reflect contradictions in the notion of limitless growth, hence carrying the seeds for further socio-economic and cultural transformation.

We begin by identifying three logics of growth. Firstly, we outline the dominant logic of cultivated growth, and point to multifarious contradictions that are causing tensions within this logic. Secondly, we outline sustainable growth as the logic presenting the main challenge to the dominance of cultivated growth. Thirdly we highlight the more radical alternative logic of degrowth, which is currently at the margins of mainstream theory and practice but increasingly a key political slogan in various bottom-up movements and grassroots mobilisations. We then move to discuss the insights into everyday contemporary consumer culture which are gained from delineating the different macro-level logics of growth.

Three logics of growth

We differentiate the three logics of growth (summarised in Table 1) on three important dimensions. First, each logic is underpinned by certain assumptions

regarding the relationship between the market and society. Second, the dominant actors in each logic speaks to issues of power relationships inherent within each logic. Third, each logic defines the role of consumption in markets and societies differently, in accordance with underpinning assumptions, which is in turn, manifest in a particular logic of consumption.

Logic of Growth	Underpinning assumptions	Dominant Actors	Consumption Imperative	Logic of Consumption
Cultivated growth	Economic rationality, Adam Smith’s invisible hand, neoclassical theories of economics	Multinational, world-wide market elites, governments.	Mass consumption: use up, use more (when possible) and throw away.	‘Consumer Ethic’ Self-interested, sovereign consumers’ position in society is defined through consumption.
Sustainable growth	Market and society interact and impact upon one another	Multinational, world-wide market elites, governments and middle class	Ethical consumption: buy ethical and green; reduce, re-use, recycle	‘Ethical Consumer-Citizenship’ Socially aware, sovereign consumers’ role and identity in society defined by consumption of ethical goods
Degrowth	Society resists the domination of market logics	Citizens and Activists	Post-consumption: don’t buy anything, produce what is needed within small communities; alternative hedonism	‘Post-consumerist Citizenship’. Role in society defined by social participation

Table 1: Logics of growth in consumption

Cultivated growth and the consumer ethic

Cultivated growth is the dominant, normative logic of growth which underpins capitalist, market economies and which emerges from, and is embedded in, neo-classical economic theory. It is the liberal market discourse which tends to view the free-market as an effective and efficient mechanism of exchange that is devoid of serious injustice. For example, Libertarian principles of distributive justice argue that a liberal, free market arrives at a just distribution of benefits and burdens, because it satisfies the conditions of just exchange (Lamont and Favor, 2007; Larsen and Lawson, 2013a). Thus the distribution of social and economic resources is maximised through the realisation of unrestrained, individual preferences of rational, 'economic man'. According to this logic, the bigger the market, the more benefits there are for society, thus growth is not only unbounded, but is actually pro-actively cultivated.

The associated logic of consumption is the 'consumer ethic', which Bauman (1988) explains is a life normatively motivated by consumption, where fulfilment, autonomy and freedom are sought through consumption. Central to the 'consumer ethic' is the notion of 'consumer sovereignty', which is commonly understood to mean 'the consumer is king'. The origin of the term is generally attributed to Hutt (1936), and refers simply to 'consumers tastes as the goal (or end) of production and distribution' (Rothenberg 1962: 271). Consumer sovereignty could therefore be achieved through various economic structures, even a planned economy, if production and distribution is governed by consumer tastes and preferences. However, in contemporary consumer culture, consumer sovereignty has been predominantly conflated with the principle of 'freedom of choice', and as such, has served to legitimate the idea of the 'free market' within which unimpaired choice could be exercised by sovereign consumers. Various marketing practices and consumer policies encourage consumers to exercise what is framed as their 'right to choose' in order to reap their fair share of benefits/value from the market (Larsen and Lawson, 2013b). The distribution of these benefits is therefore determined by the individual's access to resources, such as income, that are required to participate in market exchanges, and which reflect their ability to contribute to the economy. The culmination is a culture in which consumers are encouraged to use up, use more and throw away, in order to play their part in the economy and society.

The powerful and alluring logics of cultivated growth and the consumer ethic dominate contemporary consumption and consumer research; it does so even as contradictions inherent within it are plainly recognised. It is widely acknowledged that markets periodically fail in ways which mean that producers, rather than consumers, are sovereign. Producers' pursuit of growth and market

share can lead to practices and tactics that are deemed anti-competitive, such as the formation of oligopolies and monopolies. Under these circumstances, it is clear that there is no 'freedom of choice' for consumers, but it is also likely that profit takes precedence over consumer wants in determining production and distribution. Sovereignty is also negated for 'failed consumers'. Bauman (2007) describes these as people who, for a variety of reasons centred on their inability to pay, cannot become consumers and therefore fail to enact their growth-cultivating consumer duties of buying, consuming and disposing of an ever-increasing number of products. As failures, these people are excluded from the increased benefits that economic growth might deliver, thus widening the gap between the rich and the poor even further. Despite these contradictions, these logics of 'cultivated growth' and the consumer ethic are normative and hegemonic. They underpin approaches to development in almost all parts of the world, and also the austerity policies pursued by many governments in response to the economic crises of the early 21st century.

Sustainable growth and ethical consumer-citizenship

Sustainable growth is an increasingly visible and accessible countervailing logic of growth, which attempts to address the detrimental impacts that unchecked economic expansion can have on the physical environment, a problem that is now part of mainstream political debate. For example, in his seminal book *Small is Beautiful*, Schumacher (1973) problematised the notion of limitless economic growth. Part of his examination was a forecast of the uneven increase in demand for natural resources (specifically fuel) between wealthy and poor populations globally, which raised the question of whether it was even plausible to assume that a supply was available for the consumption levels he was forecasting. Schumacher's warning, four decades ago, was that the wisest approach was to maintain 'permanence' at the centre of economics. Economic activity could be deemed sensible only as far as its continuance could be assured. Thus, Schumacher argued, there could not be unlimited, widespread growth. One response to these concerns has been the emergence and advocacy of the notion of 'sustainable growth'. Under this logic, governments and concerned consumer-citizens emphasise production and consumption practices, policies and strategies, which facilitate a market in which only environmentally and ethically sound organisations can thrive, thus preventing the worst excesses of unimpeded growth. Growth per se is not necessarily brought into question, as long as it is achieved in an environmentally sustainable manner, such as through the development of eco-efficient technologies that save energy, carbon or other finite resource.

The logic of consumption that is in line with 'sustainable growth' is that of 'ethical consumer-citizenship'. Ethical consumer-citizens aim to leverage their sovereignty to improve the market by forcing businesses to be ethical and socially responsible (e.g. Devinney et al., 2010; Harisson et al., 2005). This is achieved by making consumption choices not on the basis of individual tastes and preferences, but on the basis of ethical and moral principles such as the minimisation of waste, the re-use of products and recyclability. A community ethos resonates in 'ethical consumer-citizenship', as it is through local networks that reduce, re-use and recycle can most easily be achieved and there is an awareness that the actions of the individual impact upon the group. Ethical consumer-citizens consume purposefully to improve the system and their behaviour is a manifestation of their sense of sovereignty and freedom of choice (Denegri-Knott et al., 2006) albeit in a re-purposed manner.

The logic of sustainable growth appears to have been predominantly adopted and promoted by actors who can be seen to gain from maintaining the capitalist-based economic and social order, but who are also under pressure to recognise the unsustainability of 'cultivated growth'. For example, political parties and other bourgeois groups whose legitimacy is tied to addressing environmental damage. This logic is reformist in nature, seeking only to improve the system and to make growth less threatening (Fournier, 2008), rather than to question existing normative attitudes regarding the desirability of growth. This is visible in such acts as Al Gore and David Bloods recent 'Manifesto for Sustainable Capitalism' which presents a 'framework that seeks to maximize long-term economic value by reforming markets to address real needs while integrating environmental, social and governance metrics throughout the [organisational] decision making process' (Gore and Bloods, 2011). Although this may appear an attractive proposition to those who wish to mitigate the destructive nature of unbounded growth, the contradictions inherent in the logic of cultivated growth remain present in notions of 'sustainable growth' and 'ethical consumer-citizenship'. Adopting these ideals could in fact be seen to exacerbate the fundamental concerns (e.g. Littler, 2009) by acting as a palliative yet doing little to address the long term consequences of linking our understanding of social progress to ongoing economic growth.

De-growth and post-consumerist citizenship

De-growth is an emerging countervailing logic which argues that a continued pursuit of growth is an untenable position in a materially finite world (Harvey, 2010) and thus we must develop a system of de-growth (Latouche, 2009). De-growth centres on moving from unsustainable economic growth to a reduction of

growth in financial terms, whilst increasing quality of life and other kinds of wealth. It is about simple living and localisation of production and consumption, as opposed to a globalised economy. In a de-growth society small, self-organised communities would produce and consume what is needed, and the wealth that is produced would not be defined in economic terms, but through quality of life, social relations, equality and justice. Thus, de-growth is not about negative economic growth, but about abandoning the belief in growth and development as the ultimate goals of the economy and society. Achieving this requires a 'virtuous circle of quiet contraction' (Latouche, 2009) involving the systematic realisation of several interdependent goals:

- re-evaluate. The logic of de-growth argues that the values upon which our society is based need to be re-evaluated. In a de-growth society, altruism and co-operation should replace egotism and unbridled competition, the pleasure of leisure and the ethos of play should replace the obsession with work, social life should take precedence over endless consumerism, the local over the global, the appreciation of good craftsmanship over productive efficiency, nature over technology, and so on.
- reconceptualise. The re-evaluation of values allows us to see the world in a different way and we must therefore reconceptualise such concepts as wealth, poverty, and scarcity. For example, as nature is appropriated and commodified by the market in the pursuit of economic growth, natural abundance is transformed into scarcity through the creation of artificial shortages and needs. This then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy and those natural resources actually become scarce.
- restructure. Production and social relations need to be adapted and restructured according to the reconceptualised values of a de-growth society. The restructure will necessarily be quite radical as the underlying value system has been destabilised.
- redistribute. Restructuring production and social relations automatically means there would be a redistribution of access to resources globally, between the North and South, and locally, between classes, generations and individuals within each society. This will reduce the power of the 'world consumer class' and remove the motivation for conspicuous consumption.
- relocalise. In a de-growth society, production would be on a local basis, according to local needs and resources. The movement of commodities

and capital would be greatly reduced. This is not just an economic issue, but a rediscovery of the local roots of politics, culture and community.

- reduce. Both production and consumption need to be reduced to negate the impact on the environment. The working week would be shortened, in order to provide work for all. This should go hand in hand with flexibility in work to respond to changing local needs and interests. This also then gives citizens time to enjoy the other kinds of wealth a de-growth society would produce, such as creativity, time with family and friends and so on.
- re-use/recycle. Re-use and recycling are fundamental to reducing levels of production and consumption.

The associated logic of post-consumerist citizenship centres on a denial of consumption as a central, meaningful act in and of itself (Soper, Ryle and Thomas, 2009). Of course, consumption is not and cannot be absent in any society, but in a de-growth society the primary focus is social and community participation, rather than consumption. Critics of de-growth claim an inherent contradiction within the logic, which emerges from the view that it is human nature to desire power, and that therefore, such communal, egalitarian forms of society and economy would be impossible to sustain. Post-consumerist citizenship has however been adopted in various social movements and ‘new consumption communities’ where people withdraw as much as possible from the market-place by voluntarily and collectively simplifying their lives (Bekin, Carrigan and Szmigin, 2005). The imperative of degrowth is further reflected in various forms of consumer-oriented activism deployed by anarchist movements (Portwood-Stacer, 2012) and has been used as a key political slogan in several anti-capitalist and anti-consumerist spaces, e.g. within the Athenian neighbourhood of Exarcheia (Chatzidakis, Maclaran and Bradshaw, 2012). An increasing number of people are being drawn towards de-growth as a radical alternative to the status quo, despite facing much resistance from those who benefit from current economic systems premised on growth, i.e. owners of capital and those seduced by the promises of capitalism.

Discussion and conclusion

For Castoriadis, one of the key influential thinkers on degrowth, ‘the fetishism of growth is broader than the fetishism of GDP and has deep structural (political–economic) and cultural roots that interconnect the macro level of financial, property or labour institutions to the micro level of individualistic, utilitarian

values and imaginaries' (Castoriadis, 1985, cited in Kallis, 2011: 877). By relating macro-level ideologies of growth to the micro level of everyday consumption, we have three aims in this note. First, we aim to foreground de-growth as a countervailing ideology that is informing and reflected in everyday consumer logics and practices and which should not be conflated with more reformist modes of sustainable and ethical consumption. For instance, whereas de-growth often forms part of the agenda in grassroots-level socio-political struggles the same cannot be said for more conventional forms of green and Fair-Trade consumption. According to Cremin (2012: 57), for example, such models of consumer-citizen activism represent a 'pseudo-individualised quantum of politics proper' that in effect leave the material base of capitalism unaffected. From our perspective, they also reproduce rather than challenge dominant ideologies of growth. To decouple radical forms of consumer-oriented activism from their mainstream counterparts is therefore a necessary condition for the construction of discursive spaces that are more firmly aligned with alternatives to societies of growth.

Second, we believe that the advancement of a degrowth agenda is even more pertinent in the face of 'forced' de-growth taking place in countries such as Greece, Portugal and Spain. As Latouche cautions,

sought for degrowth and undergone degrowth are not the same. The second one (recession) leads to crisis, starvations or wars. The first one, or chosen sobriety, means inventing a new society, which will make the world a happier place to live.... (<http://www.degrowth.org/degrowth-whether-you-like-it-or-not>)

Corresponding to such macro-level observations, logics and practices of 'voluntary simplicity' or 'downshifting' (e.g. Shaw and Newholm, 2002) contrast sharply with new types of 'forced' simplicity and downshifting noted at the level of everyday consumption in depression or recession economies. These do not necessarily lead to less materialistic but more fulfilling lifestyles as envisioned in Latouche's work or parallel concepts such as Soper et al.'s (2009) alternative hedonism. They may still provide the impetus for the emergence of new political subjectivities, but they also come along with dramatic falls in standards of living and the anxieties of nearing and falling below the poverty line.

Third, we hope our commentary will provide inspiration for further research at the intersection of everyday consumption logics and practices with the macro context of political economy. For instance, there is scope for research into the ways in which individual actors produce social, rhetorical and theoretical work (Lawrence, Suddaby and Leca, 2008) to propagate alternative logics in light of contradictions in the current socio-economic system. Discussion of questions such as whether economic growth is essential for well-being in Parliamentary

contexts (e.g. <http://appgwb-eorg.eventbrite.com/>), for example, would arguably be inconceivable a few years ago. Similarly, the current economic and environment crisis opens up new possibilities for (consumer) action and shapes the context in which opponents of the status quo seek to effect change. This is reflected in the divergence of grassroots and institutional actors involved in the agenda of de-growth:

At first glance, degrowth is an idea that is debated in society, even in the mainstream media, and receives much more support than usually believed if we remain at disinterested political level. There is a constellation of groups and networks explicitly existing for degrowth. Practitioners, activists and researchers act and interact in multiple levels and dimensions. There are minorities in some organizations, like trade unions and political movements (or parties) actively supporting degrowth. There is then a much larger group consisting of people and collectives which both contributed to the rise and conceptualization of the movement and which adopt degrowth as the horizon of their action. (<http://www.degrowth.org/short-history>).

Such ‘cracks’ (Holloway, 2010) are increasingly appearing in the contemporary hegemony of limitless growth and can contain within them the seeds of future socio-political and cultural change.

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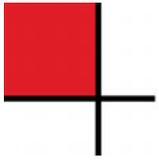
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Abstract hacktivism as a model for postanarchist organizing

Simon Collister

It has been claimed that historically, anarchism has adopted a ‘highly ambivalent’ relationship with technology, ‘oscillating between a bitter critique driven by the experiences of industrialism, and an almost naive optimism around scientific development’ (Gordon, 2008: 111-113). Early influential anarchists, including Malatesta, Goldman and Kropotkin, viewed technology as providing workers with an emancipatory potential from capitalism, while oppositional readings of technology from the likes of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, however, reinforced the pessimistic view that technology can only have ‘the needs of capital encoded into it from the start’ (*ibid.*: 129).

Within such a deterministic reading of technology what space is left for models of anarchist organizing in the twenty-first century? We currently live in a society where technology is ubiquitous and increasingly responsible for mediating most, if not all, aspects of our lives. What space is left for a contemporary, technology-enabled organization of society along anarchist principles, if any?

Rather than seeking answers within these binary positions, this note will suggest a more complex reading of technology through its inculcation with contemporary social practices. Such a view will aim to reveal how any earlier ambivalence between anarchism, organization and technology can be fruitfully explored and potentially resolved through the adoption of contemporary anarchist perspectives, such as postanarchism, as well as recent approaches to technology, such as abstract and critical hacktivism, which permit more open and complex readings of technology’s latent, socially progressive and radical potential.

Before we can address such issues, however, it is helpful to first offer a short commentary on some recent anarchist engagements with technology, such as Cybernetics, Web 2.0 and Network Theory. Such debates, while moving closer to more pragmatic accounts of the contemporary technology's radical potential have also revealed deterministic limitations similar to those experienced by earlier anarchist thinkers.

Cybernetics, web 2.0 and self-organization

One of the earliest anarchist interventions in the history of modern, computer-mediated technology can be seen with the emergence of cybernetics in the mid-twentieth century. Limited space in this note prevents a thorough exploration of cybernetics fascinating and diverse origins within the fields of biology, information sciences and organizational theory, but cybernetics first comes to the attention of anarchists through the work of neurologist, roboticist and 'anarchist fellow-traveller', William Grey Walter, who published on the subject in the British anarchist Colin Ward's journal, *Anarchy*, in 1963 (Duda, 2013: 55).

Cybernetics, understood as technologically-managed systems capable of supporting 'evolving self-organizing' networks within 'complex, unpredictable environment[s]' and characterized by a 'changing structure, modifying itself under continual feedback from the environment' (McEwan, 1963 cited in Ward, 2001: 51), offered anarchists, such as Walter and Ward, a fecund connection between a theoretical model for anarchist organization and its application at a social-scale.

Explaining how cybernetic technology can lead to practical, leaderless forms of social organization, Ward cites the work of management theorist Donald Schön who, he argues:

like the anarchists sees as an alternative [to the centre-periphery model of government], networks "of elements connecting through one another rather than to each other through a centre," characterised "by their scope, complexity, stability, homogeneity and, flexibility" in which "nuclei of leadership emerge and shift" with "the infrastructure powerful enough for the system to hold itself together... without any central facilitator or supporter..." (Schön, 1971 cited in Ward, 2001: 51-52)

Beyond Ward's bold vision, cybernetics was seen as offering a clear technological solution for the implementation of an 'anarchist conception of complex self-organizing systems' (*ibid.*: 50). For John McEwan, cybernetic systems were 'not a metaphor to be used to think or imagine the political more clearly; on the contrary [McEwan] genuinely believe[d] in the effective applicability of models

and experimental results from management science and computer-aided learning to the anarchist project' (*ibid.*: 64). Similarly, drawing on the cybernetic tradition American anarchist Sam Dolgoff asserted that with cybernetics, '[t]here are [...] no insurmountable technical-scientific barriers to the introduction of anarchism' (Dolgoff, 1979: 46).

Despite the initial zeal for cybernetics, subsequent critical examination has taken the edge off its potential. Duda (2013) observes that in approaching cybernetics and anarchist practice we must, unlike early proponents, be careful to ensure 'we avoid reifying self-organization into something distinct from, above or behind, the actual immanent development of a self-organised social movement' (Duda, 2013: 57).

Anarchist evangelists of cybernetic systems, however, seemed to overlook the risks of idealizing the presence of an inherent agency within the technology itself. As a result, the view that cybernetics, in isolation, was capable of implementing a reorientation of organizational practices and social structures came to the fore.

Such technological determinism is present within Ward's more measured approach to cybernetics, which he saw as offering 'a kind of revolution politics without the need to make the revolution' (Ward, 2001: 58). For Ward, cybernetics was responsible for 'valorising and prescribing [...] prefigurative strategies' (*ibid.*) of anarchist organization where cybernetic systems act 'as a kind of acceleration towards a threshold' at which modern liberal democratic society will transition into a fully functioning anarchist one (Duda, 2013: 67).

While recognizing the necessity of an incremental change, such a reading retains a technological determinism that continues to overlook the distribution of cybernetic systems in wider society and thus hold up any transition. As Duda notes, following such a reading, 'the progress of the new society will depend greatly upon the extent to which its self-governing units will be able to speed up direct communication [enabled by cybernetic systems] – to understand each others problems and better coordinate activities' (*ibid.*: 69).

While such critiques focus on the limited distribution and up-take of cybernetic technology, the broader forces structuring such activities also feature in critiques.

Kleiner (in Wilson and Kleiner, 2013), observes that just because decentralized forms of technological organization are technologically possible it doesn't necessarily mean they can exist at scale. Ward's and others' excitement is tempered by the fact that '[i]t cannot be a free network that leads to a free society,

[...] rather only a free society can produce and sustain a free network' (Wilson and Kleiner, 2013: 78).

More problematically, capitalism's normative drive for profit means that the self-regulating logic of cybernetic systems risks direct appropriation by capitalism itself. In Tiqqun's excoriating critique of cybernetics it asserts that Ward's prefigurative strategies for anarchist organization have been turned on their head: 'whereas after the 1929 crisis, PEOPLE [sic] built a system of information concerning economic activity in order to serve the needs of regulation [...] for the economy after the 1973 crisis, the social self-regulation process came to be based on the valorization of information' (Tiqqun, 2001).

Rather than freeing individuals from capitalist, market democracies, information – created, distributed and managed through cybernetic systems – instead entraps, commodifies and leverages individuals as consumers exploiting their productive capacity to further ensure capitalism's dominance. Beradi (2009) extends this logic to argue that cybernetic networks – as a normative model for contemporary society – creates technologically-enabled flows of endless 'semio-capital' (*ibid.*: 193) producing not a self-organizing society, but rather an inescapable 'social factory' (Negri, 2005).

Such critiques of cybernetics are, to an extent, a precursor to more recent debates concerning a second wave of technology emerging primarily from capitalism's drive for global production, trade and organizational coordination and known colloquially as Web 2.0, or alternatively the 'networked information economy' (Benkler, 2006) or 'Network Society' (Castells, 2001; Castells, 2010). While a technological system premised on capitalist logic may seem an unusual starting point for an analysis of anarchist organization, it has the distinct advantage of ensuring that technologies necessary for anarchist organizing are already widely distributed and embedded in day-to-day lifestyles.

Benkler's (2006) vision of a networked society, for example, exists in the spaces outside both the market and the state and is based around a collaborative, peer-to-peer 'gift economy' (Benkler, 2006: 91-128). This produces a social domain where 'a person whose life and relations are fully regimented by external forces is unfree, no matter whether the regimentation can be understood as market-based, authoritarian or traditional community values (*ibid.*: 20)¹.

1 It should be noted, however, that – somewhat confusingly – Benkler's ultimate position is neo-liberal and despite his support for directly democratic, non-market and non-state organizing he rejects the suggestion that his theoretical approach is either 'radical anarchism or libertarianism' (2006: 20)

Similarly, Castells argues that Web 2.0's 'multi-model communication networks' (Castells, 2009: 301) are a de facto public space for twenty-first century society. Crucially, Castells' 'public space' moves beyond a neo-Habermasian discursive public sphere by arguing that such self-organizing 'horizontal communication networks' (*ibid.*: 302) are an 'insurgent politics' (*ibid.*: 301) designed to enable cultural and political system change by reclaiming political practices from dominant and hierarchically-organized elites.

Castells and others use this self-organizing potential of Web 2.0 to account for a range of social change, from the open and free production and reproduction of cultural and commodity forms (Lessig, 2004; Moglen, 1999) to forms of social and legal justice and welfare (Benkler, 2006: 301-355) and even revolutionary collective action seen in former Soviet and Arab countries (Rovira, 2011; Shirky, 2011) and the eventual establishment of direct democracy (Dahlgren, 2013).

Critics of such idealistic perspectives point out that as a result of its consumer capitalist origins (Kleiner, 2007; Scholz, 2008), Web 2.0's very potential for anarchist organization and social change is limited by the fact that its constitutive 'platforms are owned and controlled by telecoms and media corporations whose agenda focuses on profit and corporate interests, rather than participation, empowerment and social justice' (Milan, 2013: 1). This argument returns us to one of the core limitations of cybernetics: 'so long as capitalism is the dominant mode of production, it will produce platforms that reproduce it' (Wilson and Kleiner, 2013: 79).

Web 2.0's ubiquitous presence in supporting horizontal, self-organizing practices across social, political and cultural realms, however, arguably differentiates it from the earlier, more abstracted reading of cybernetics' potential for anarchist organizing and opens it to a greater range of critiques. Terranova (2000; 2004), for example, offers a detailed, empirical account of the ways in which the culture-centric economy of late capitalism has co-opted the horizontal and self-organizing mechanisms of Web 2.0.

Challenging the notion that networked communications technology entails a new politically insurgent public space (Castells, 2009) Terranova echoes Tiquun's (2001) excoriating critique of cybernetics, by arguing a twenty-first century, networked and self-organized society doesn't embody 'the means to self-fashioning and communal liberation' (Terranova, 2000: 35); rather, it has become a society totalized by capitalism expropriating value from the entire range of lived and virtual social, cultural and political spaces of individual and collectives experiences.

States, too, recognizing the revolutionary potential for Web 2.0-based self-organization, have taken steps to surveil and undermine collective action (Morozov, 2012b; Greenwald, 2013). While the tactics deployed by global state and government actors around the world vary from Egypt's crude attempts to 'turn off' the internet (McQuillan, 2011; Dunn, 2011) to Western governments' more subtle forms of mass intelligence gathering (MacAskill, Borger, Hopkins et al., 2013; Hopkins, 2013) and online disinformation operations (Greenwald, 2014) designed to disrupt any self-organization it deems threatening to the dominant 'centre-periphery' model of society (Schön, 1971 cited in Ward, 2001: 51-52).

Postanarchism, hacktivism and anarchist organizing

Returning to Gordon's argument that technology is intrinsically and inescapably shaped by capitalism from the outset, we find that any proposed response from anarchism which seeks to act as 'contemporary anarchist Luddism [...] understood as a[n] [...] abolitionist resistance to new technological waves which enhance power-centralisation and social control' (Gordon, 2008: 129) is problematic. Does such a 'new luddis[t]' position, while historically valid, offer a desirable position from which to approach twenty-first century technology? Is an engaged resistance to 'bad' as opposed to 'good' technology an adequate response? Given the ubiquity of technology and its embeddedness in day-to-day life it can be argued that such a reading can be challenged on two counts.

Firstly, given the current, deeply rooted interaction of technology and everyday practices, is it a productive use of energy – or even possible – to attempt to monitor and police the development, adoption and application of technology? Secondly, and more importantly, it's possible to argue that viewed through the lens of postanarchism, any reductive distinctions we seek to make, whether between good and bad technology, market and state, market and society, physical and virtual, etc. becomes increasingly unrealistic.

Postanarchism, according to Brucato (2013) is an 'anarchism that disavows essentialism and universalism, is oriented towards practice and experimentation, and poses situation-specific interventions as an alternative to grand narratives that explain causes and consequences of the prevailing orders of power' (Brucato, 2013: 35). Postanarchism, then, enables us to view society as an immanent space in which hierarchical ontologies or categories of existence become irreducible to fixed or generalizable concepts or processes. Such a space replaces any discrete or deterministic interpretation of events with a framework that accounts for inter-related processes of emergence and creation.

As a result, any notion of anarchist organization must be initiated in response to the contingent circumstances in which fluid models of power or authority emerge. More specifically, this immanent domain of social reproduction and political struggle is inseparable from the relations and forces of capital that dominate contemporary society. Attempts to step outside of technology and capital to occupy an objective Luddist watchdog role become not only undesirable but also untenable.

In its place, it is possible to understand anarchist organizing in our technologically mediated era as an immanent and prefigurative function requiring an experimental approach which recognises and opens up the latent capacities possessed by technology when it comes into contact with social practices and vice versa. As Truscello and Gordon note, 'Anarchists must theorize revolutionary conjunctions with technology even as we experiment with technological invention and destruction' (Truscello and Gordon, 2013: 10).

From this postanarchist standpoint we can begin to articulate a theory of twenty-first century anarchist organizing. To do so, however, we need to recognise the role that 'hacktivism' (von Busch and Palmas, 2006; McQuillan, 2012b) plays in reinvigorating debates around technology and social practice.

Originating in computer hacking, the term hacktivism is, on one level, a contraction of the terms 'hacking' and 'activism' and understood as 'the online strategies and tactics of activists that more or less follow the autonomous anarchist tradition – squatters, phreaks, scammers, crackers, and cultural jammers engaged in anti-globalisation, direct action, and resistance' (von Busch and Palmas 2006, 10, emphasis in original). Interpreted as such, the term can be read as part of the New Luddism evoked earlier: hacktivism is a practice rooted in the defacing, disruption or destruction of technology developed, operated or appropriated by capitalism.

Marking a 'radical break' from this interpretation, von Busch and Palmas (2006) suggest a renewed understanding of hacktivism as an 'abstract hacktivism' that moves beyond the online, virtual tactics of the earlier definition and refocuses attention on the ways in which 'the abstract mechanisms enacted in actual computers are adopted elsewhere, in non-computer contexts' (*ibid.*: 19).

Rejecting earlier social, political and technological theories premised on the dichotomous stability or terminal instability of universal concepts abstract hacktivism instead must be seen as a constructive, generative and experimental practice which organizes new socio-technical assemblages as 'situation-specific interventions' to constitute and critique 'the prevailing orders of power' (Brucato,

2013: 35). Constituted by an entanglement of human and nonhuman components drawn from an immanent social space, von Busch and Palmas' hacktivism, crucially, occupies a position consistent with postanarchism.

Given this new focus on emergence and construction it is possible to point towards a theory of anarchist organizing premised on creating new configurations of social practice from within the immanent milieu. Citing the Science and Technology Studies pioneer, Bruno Latour, von Busch and Palmas assert that:

The critic is not the one who debunks, but the one who assembles. The critic is not the one who lifts the rugs from under the feet of the naïve believers, but the one who offers the participants arenas in which to gather. (Latour, 2004: 246 cited in von Busch and Palmas, 2006: 17)

Abstract hacktivism, then, can be understood as a theory rooted in praxis; a prefigurative framework for twenty-first century anarchist organizing which offers a rich potential for experimentation and the creation of socio-technological solutions out of the immanent, irreducible social space of postanarchism.

McQuillan (2012b) builds on von Busch and Palmas' early work and articulates a 'critical hacktivism' to account for the ways in which radical re-organizations of existing socio-technical values, cultures and infrastructure are used to 'prototype[e] a new society in the shell of the old'. At the heart of McQuillan's approach is 'an active reassembling that draws on the unexpected affordances of technology for constructing socio-technical structures' (*ibid.*).

McQuillan traces the outline of such prototype structures in real-world examples, such as the People Finder Interchange Format (PFIF), a digital tool and process developed to locate missing people following 2005 Hurricane Katrina that inflicted significant damage to the South Coast of the United States. Drawing on first-hand accounts of those involved in the PFIF project, McQuillan states how the project emerged when 'geeks start[ed] screen scraping databases and bulletin boards with information about hurricane survivors' (Zuckerman, 2005 cited in McQuillan, 2012c) and grew organically through online communication networks, such as blogs and IRCs², as volunteers, survivors on the ground and other, remote participants connected with each other.

This technologically-enabled and socially-aligned process created an emergent socio-technical assemblage of individuals – ranging from technologically skilled

2 IRC (Internet Relay Channel) is a publicly open, online communication network which is not particularly well known or used by members of the public.

'geeks' to volunteer aid workers and survivors – who hacked together commercial and open source software to create a system for identifying names of missing people, integrating existing databases and lists of missing people and connecting concerned friends and relatives with both the databases and relevant public and voluntary services. Crucially, McQuillan notes that such a process operated successfully outside of the centrally-organized institutions present in the post-disaster landscape, such as the International Red Cross and government agencies (McQuillan, 2012c), which sought to take control of the situation to further accrete state and/or commercial power.

It's worth noting, however, that while the emergent, dynamic and volunteer-resourced assemblage of the PFIF are beneficial in maintaining the agile functionality necessary to remain autonomous and resist potential 'choke points' (*ibid.*) of government, aid agencies and commercial contractors, such conditions can be problematized. For example, how can an open, responsive and socially oriented socio-technical form of organization be assembled effectively so that it remains autonomous and free from coercion by the dominating forces and actors (identified above) that are particularly active in the field of disaster relief (Kenny, 2007; Klein, 2008; Donini, 2010)?

While such a tension is a real concern, McQuillan points to the replication of the PFIF during the 2010 Haiti Earthquake. Here the PFIF assemblage directly inspired the grassroots response which was further hacked by new volunteers and participants from the Hurricane Katrina project using existing and newly developed technology (McQuillan 2012c). Moreover, the autonomy of the organizational assemblage during the Haiti response was sustained despite the presence and participation of a greater number of institutional relief agencies than during Katrina and specific efforts by the NGO community to 'capture' the 'post-event narrative' (*ibid.*).

Such examples of socio-technical innovation can be read constructively as one half of the call for a twenty-first century anarchist organizing that 'experiment[s] with technological invention and destruction' (Truscello and Gordon, 2013: 10). Similarly, it is possible to look to the existence, organization and actions of the online network, Anonymous, to gain an understanding of the disruptive and destructive side of abstract hacktivism.

Unlike McQuillan's 'hopeful hybrids' (McQuillan 2012c) where socially progressive volunteers, grassroots development activists and geeks self-organize to form supportive and productive socio-technical assemblages, Anonymous, can be characterized as 'a loose alias [...] of skilled hackers' who reject conventional moralities and established values (McQuillan, 2012a). Embodying the ontological

status of postanarchism and abstract hacktivism, Anonymous can be described as a movement that, according to Coleman, resists analysis ‘using traditional analytical categories [...] It purports to have no leaders, no hierarchical structure, nor any geographical epicenter. While there are forms of organization and cultural logics that undeniably shape its multiple expressions, it is a name that any individual or group can take on as their own’ (Coleman, 2011).

Anonymous’ origins lie in the disruptive environment of the bulletin board, 4Chan, where members - distinctly lacking a ‘political intentionality and consciousness’ - routinely participated in trolling³ internet users for the ‘Lulz’⁴ (*ibid.*). From 2008, however, the group’s actions become ‘catalyzed and moved forward by a series of world events and political interventions’, such as the popular uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt and the commercial sanctions applied to the whistle-blowing website Wikileaks, and moved rapidly from practical jokes to disruptive political actions, including a series of global street protests against the Church of Scientology and DDoS attacks⁵ against a range of commercial and government websites.

In keeping with the ethos and function of abstract hacktivism’s socio-technical assemblages already described, Coleman discusses how Anonymous operates through online communication networks to plan self-organized virtual and real-world actions, thus reducing previous tensions between on and offline organizing into a smooth immanent space. Moreover, the glimpse we get of Anonymous in action reveals a commitment – however loose – to forms of organization that evokes an explicitly anti-authoritarian position. For example, while hierarchy is present in the form of IRC ‘operators’ who have the power to eject people from the online community, such power is not based on technical ability and is widely dispersed throughout the network, which, at the least, ‘modulates, even if it does not fully eliminate, the concentration of power’ (*ibid.*).

Other organizational practices consistent with anarchist principles are visible within Anonymous’ communities. Through observational research Coleman has identified collaborative decision-making through the use of shared-editing software – co-creative production of activist materials, such as communiqués, press releases and informational videos – while discussion between group

3 Trolling is an online practice where ‘Trolls’ intentionally post offensive or irrelevant messages or content designed to misdirect and disrupt discussion and internet use.

4 An intentional misspelling of the pluralization of the internet cultural acronym ‘LOL’ (laugh out loud).

5 Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks occur when software is used to direct a significant volume of communication traffic to a ‘target’ website. This results in the website either failing to function effectively or crashing.

members reveals a sense of prefigurative reflection more akin to ‘a group of seasoned politics activists, debating the merits and demerits of actions and targets’ rather than a group of online practical jokers (Coleman, 2010).

Perhaps more intriguingly, the very nature of Anonymous’ identity and its conscious self-representation reinforces its position within a postanarchist framework. Akin to the strategic anonymity of groups using the Black Bloc tactic, Anonymous operates as a non-identity with the actions of the group irreducible to their members. Such a reading of Anonymous and its organizational and operational logic echoes the nature of socio-technical assemblages central to abstract hacktivism. As McQuillan notes, when ‘elements come together in an assemblage new capacities emerge, that become characteristic of the emergent whole. The assemblage is not reducible to its parts’ (McQuillan, 2012c). Or, as Anonymous itself articulates in a communiqué: ‘Anonymous is not Unanimous’ (Anonymous, 2011).

This can present problems, however, if abstract hacktivism is to deliver an approach to prefigurative organizing that can ‘prototype[e] a new society in the shell of the old’ (McQuillan, 2012c). For instance, Anonymous consciously adopts a strategic duplicity that is used to misdirect the public and media, fool people into revealing personal information and as cover for hacking activity. While on one level this can be read as a political practice that challenges assumptions about identity and representation that cut to the heart of contemporary democracy’s limitations (Coleman, 2011) it also raises concerns about abstract hacktivism as an ethical mode of organization.

Similarly, the openness of Anonymous’ organizing and opportunities for easy, granular ‘micro-actions, such as participating in DDoS attacks by simply downloading software has further raised ethical criticisms. This has resulted in cases where committed – but not necessarily technically-skilled – participants have taken part in unlawful Anonymous actions and consequently exposed themselves to law-enforcement agencies (Coleman, 2011; Menn, 2011).

Conclusions?

Where, then, does this leave abstract hacktivism as a model for postanarchist organization? On one-hand, abstract hacktivism offers a potent practical model for understanding how the interaction of human, social phenomena and nonhuman, material technology can produce dynamic socio-technical assemblages characterized by an experimental self-organization continually prototyping new forms of social and technological agency. Moreover,

theoretically such organizational logic viewed through the lens of postanarchism's immanent space ensures that any such hacktivist assemblages are ultimately irreducible to universal identities, concepts and practices thus resisting any dominant forms of political, economic, technological, social or other 'striation' (McQuillan, 2012b).

As such, abstract hacktivism offers a potent and powerful model of anarchist organizing and arguably moves us beyond the dichotomous and deterministic limitations of previous debates. By destabilizing and challenging traditional anarchist organizational practices and theories abstract hacktivism brings us closer to the prefigurative notion of anarchist organizing outlined by Truscello and Gordon (2013). These authors argue that 'as we build techno-social assemblages for life beyond capitalism, we cannot project their proliferation in society as a blueprint onto a blank canvas' (Truscello and Gordon, 2013: 17). Instead, a 'more generative anarchist approach to technology might therefore emphasise experimentation with new conjunctions of humans and nonhuman actors ... [to] aid reconstruction, destruction, and sabotage.' (*ibid.*). Abstract hacktivism's compatibility with the productive assemblages of disaster relief outlined by McQuillan (2012b; 2012c; 2013) and disruptive assemblages of Anonymous (Coleman 2010; 2011; Coleman and Ralph 2011) highlight such organizational experimentation.

Conversely, however, the complex human/non-human properties and emergent logic of such organizational structures present challenges for those seeking to sustain such or initiate abstract hacktivist experiments. While at least one scholar has documented attempts by grassroots activists to generate a more conventional, sustainable and regulated social movement on top of a hacktivist assemblage, (McQuillan 2012c) critics could argue that such a project – necessarily designed to maintain a level of stability, control and replicability – neatly demonstrates the limits of such dynamic, fluid organizational forms.

Politically, too, the adaptive and elusive identities of hacktivist assemblages can be read problematically. Whether the 'hopeful hybrids' reconstructing societies along progressive principles or Anonymous activists destroying corporate property and sabotaging unjust practices can be understood as operating within a conventionally defined anarchist politics is hard to determine. As Coleman and Ralph (2011) assert, the postanarchist rejection of essentialist political ideologies means that all we can be clear about is that the politics of abstract hacktivist assemblages is radical in as much as it operates at 'the boundaries of, transgress[es] and even question[s] the law' (Coleman and Ralph, 2011).

Yet perhaps such tensions merely reinforce the need for contemporary anarchism to experiment with radically dynamic and adaptive forms of theory and practice that addresses the real and urgent twenty-first century concerns of ‘a world that is already toxic and in various stages of collapse’ (Truscello and Gordon 2013: 17). Abstract hacktivism arguably rises to such a challenge by offering up the potential for human activists and nonhuman technology to fuse together and act on the ‘prefigurative refusal to leave the construction of alternatives until “after the revolution”’ (*ibid.*: 10).

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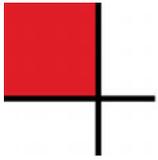
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The stream of self-determination and *autogestión*: Prefiguring alternative economic realities

Marcelo Vieta

abstract

This article maps out a possible genealogy of *autogestión* – workers’ self-management – through ‘the stream of self-determination’ that historically grounds and flows through it. While its practices among working people long predate the modern capitalist era, theoretical and political considerations of *autogestión* as the cornerstone of an alternative society began to be mapped out most fully with 19th-century classical social anarchists. For them, the practices of self-managed workers’ organizations and cooperatives stimulated ideas about the other society free from capitalist and state exploitation. Influencing 20th- and 21st-century theories and practices of alternative economic arrangements, notions of *autogestión* have continued to prefigure and advance, implicitly and explicitly, the self-determination of people’s own productive lives. The first section of the article posits that freedom for self-determination via *autogestión* finds its wellspring in classical social anarchist economics. Subsequent sections of the article address the continued relevance of the stream of self-determination for 20th-century theories and practices of *autogestión*, ultimately leading to a theory of a ‘new cooperativism’ for the 21st century. The stream of self-determination coursing through *autogestión* – first articulated by classical social anarchists – continues to prefigure a different socio-economic reality for the future in the present.

Introduction

There is a stream of radical economic thought that courses through theories and practices of *autogestión*, or workers’ self-management: Working people must free themselves from the oppressions inherent to hierarchical forms of power that, in capitalism, is embodied to a great extent in wage slavery and its exploitative mode of production. The pursuit of this freedom is nothing less than the struggle for

workers and communities to self-determine their own productive lives. This stream of economic thought begins with 19th-century classical social anarchism and threads through 20th- and 21st-century notions of an alternative economic reality. For social anarchists,¹ this struggle for self-determination becomes particularly pertinent when a small group – capitalists – have most of their needs and wants met via the labors of a vastly larger group – workers – that remain with many of their needs and desires unmet. A continuing faith in human beings' capacities for cooperation via the self-management of their productive lives has been at the heart of this vision for the free society for the better part of the past two centuries, influencing other libertarian socialist ideas and movements. This can be conceived of as *the stream of self-determination* coursing through the theories and practices of *autogestión*.

The stream of self-determination in *autogestión* is inspired by real historical moments of resistance by the self-activity of laboring people. It taps into an alternative historiography that recognizes that, for far longer than capitalism has existed, working people have created and sustained commonly owned and cooperatively based economic models rooted in solidarity and mutual aid, always already pushing back against ideologies and practices of hierarchical control and coercion. This 'other' history in a genealogy of *autogestión*,² paralleling the evolution of capitalism, can, for instance, be traced back to pre-capitalist and indigenous societies that were based on community production led by reciprocity, householding, and other forms of non-market redistribution (Heilbroner and Milberg, 1998; Kropotkin, 1989; Polanyi, 1957); rural people's ongoing resistances to the enclosures of common lands and traditional ways of

1 Alternatively called 'communist anarchism', 'anarchist communism', 'socialist anarchism', 'libertarian socialism', or other variants, for this article 'social anarchism' is the anarchist tradition that considers the struggle for personal freedom to be deeply entwined with social struggles against the state, capitalism and its inherent wage system, and their multiple forms of oppressions. In turn, collective action and 'mutual aid' permeate its politics (Berkman, 1929; Kropotkin, 1989). While deeply critical of the state and its institutions (as with more individualist inclined anarchisms), believing that they are 'destructive to individual liberty and social harmony' (Berkman, 1929: 4), social anarchists also critique the role played by the capitalist system, its wage-based coercive apparatuses, and the privately owned means of production that uphold modernity's hierarchies of control, inequality, and exploitation. Moreover, social anarchists contemplate, aspire towards, and struggle for 'ownership in common and joint use' of the technological, productive, and distributive components of the economy (*ibid.*: 140-150).

2 By *genealogy* I mean, as it does for Burawoy et al. (2000), a 'tracing [of] how we got to where we are' (*ibid.*:5). For the purposes of this article, a 'genealogical approach' looks for historical moments and conjunctures that trace a *possible path* for the emergence of *autogestión* without trying to find the 'authoritative' history of its 'origins' (Day, 2004: 720).

life by the encroaching capitalist system (Bookchin, 1990; De Angelis and Harvie, 2014; Thompson, 1991); the Luddites' struggles against changes in working life wrought by early industrialism (Noble, 1993); and early working-class struggles for better working and living conditions that led to the first trade union and cooperative movements (Craig, 1993; Hobsbawm, 1964; Thompson, 1991; Zamagni and Zamagni, 2010).

Community- and worker-led struggles for self-determination and experiments with *autogestión* are, of course, still very much present today. Indeed, interest in labor-managed firms and cooperatives have experienced resurgence in the past two decades due, in no small part, to ordinary people's struggles against neoliberal enclosures and crises (i.e. Atzeni, 2012; Parker et al., 2014; McNally, 2007; Ness and Azzellini, 2010; Vieta, 2010a, 2010b; 2015; Zevi et al., 2011; Zibechi, 2011). In mapping one possible genealogy of *autogestión*, this paper begins with classical social anarchist visions for the economically liberated society. In later sections of the article, I sketch out a continued unfolding of *autogestión's* stream of self-determination throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. By the last pages of the article, we will come to know today's stream of self-determination within *autogestión* as 'the new cooperativism'.

Defining two key concepts

Before setting out on this genealogical exploration, I offer orienting definitions of the article's two key concepts: *autogestión* and *prefiguration*.

The term *self-management* is arguably the inadequate but well-accepted English translation of the French and Spanish word *autogestión*, which has a Greek and Latin etymology (Farmer, 1979). The word *auto* comes from the Greek 'autós (self, same)' (*ibid.*: 59). *Gestión* comes from the Latin 'gestio (managing)', which in turn comes from 'gerere (to bear, carry, manage)' (*ibid.*). More evocatively and literally, one can conceptualize *autogestión* as 'self-gestation' – to self-create, self-control, and self-provision; in other words, to be *self-reliant* and *self-determining*. In this etymology there are deep connections, in practice and in theory, with proposals for the self-determination of working lives that resonate across social anarchist and libertarian socialist economics. Taken together, *auto-gestión* – self-management – alludes to a processual movement of self-creation, self-conception, and self-definition. It is pregnant with ethico-political relevance for the struggle for freedom from hierarchical and autocratic systems of control and exploitation, drawing on the ancient philosophical notion of *potentiality* – an evolution into something other than what one is in the now (Feenberg, 2002; Marcuse, 1964). When practiced by a collective of people living in capitalist

economic conjunctures, *autogestión* points to a future possibility of becoming something other than waged-workers relegated to spending life producing for others within the capital-labor relation. Echoing aspects of Peter Kropotkin's vision for the emancipated 'communist' society that I will touch on shortly, a worker from Argentina's contemporary worker-recuperated enterprises movement offers an insightful definition of *autogestión* from the perspective of someone living it:

Autogestión is the possibility that we – all people – have to realize ourselves professionally, economically, and, in our capacities to labour. It emerges from within ourselves and together with the people with whom we want to share this realization, but without sacrificing personal freedom, without sacrificing personal dignity, and from our own developmental potential. It is, in other words, about the possibility of the full development of the person. (De Pasquale, in Vieta, 2015)

Prefiguration, in turn, is an historical undercurrent in *autogestión's* stream of self-determination. It earmarks an ethico-political standpoint that charts aspects of a post-capitalist world by interlacing alternatives with the ethics, values, and practices that are being struggled over and desired, creating the new inside of the shell of the old (Boggs, 1977; Franks, 2006, 2010). It suggests the foreshadowing of another world within the present one, affirming that workers' self-activity and self-directed resistances to capital have an educative force for shaping a different socio-economic reality for the future in the present.³ As Benjamin Franks recently explained, prefigurative social practices 'reflect, as far as possible, the desired goals' by delineating value orientations that parallel the ends sought while, at the same time, striving not to reproduce 'economic or political hierarchies, or [generate] new, detrimental power relations' (Franks, 2010: 102).⁴

3 As I argue elsewhere, a theory of prefiguration can also be intuited in 19th- and early 20th-century socialist thought. For classical social anarchists such as Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin (and even in moments in Marx's and Gramsci's writings) worker- and community-based organizations become spaces not only of resistance to the status quo, but also for *experimenting with* and *learning how* to self-organize alternative forms of economic and social arrangements that embody the desired self-managed society (for more on this socialist intellectual history of prefiguration, see Vieta, 2015: chapter 4).

4 In order to theoretically articulate the politics, desires, and strategies of today's radical social movements against globalization and neoliberalism, contemporary anarchist, post-anarchist, autonomist, and other libertarian socialist thinkers have recently theorized the prefigurative potential of radical ethico-political commitments and practices for mapping out alternatives to capitalist logics, hierarchical power relations, and institutions that systematize oppressions (see Critchley, 2007; Day, 2005; Franks, 2010; Gordon, 2007; Graeber, 2004; 2009).

Autogestión's stream of self-determination in 19th-century socialist thought

Two common sub-themes course through the stream of self-determination in a genealogy of *autogestión*:

- (1) That the struggle for *freedom from* the exploitative society is, more profoundly, the *struggle to* shape the 'self-governing society' (Horvat, 1982: 11; Marshall, 1992), where working people and communities would be, in some way, co-responsible for the economic realm, as well as for their own reproduction as human beings;
- (2) That there are experiences of workers in the present already sketching out *prefiguratively*, in degrees of opacity and clarity, aspects of the future emancipated society.

It is my contention that the stream of self-determination that has long run through practices and notions of *autogestión* recognizes that these two notions – the struggle for freedom in the self-governing society, and prefiguring the desired reality – meet in the *lived experiences* of laboring people (Vieta, 2015). They particularly resonate with the historically consistent desire and struggle of workers to self-manage their laboring lives, *paralleling* and, in the very resistances of workers, striving to *move beyond* the rise of capitalism and its underlying liberal ideologies of competition in 'free markets'.

19th-century socialist thinkers, living through the adolescent stages of capitalism, were keen on laying bare the consequences of this system's exploitative tendencies. On the other hand, their envisioning of alternatives to the rising capitalist system were also inspired by the myriad forms of workers' combinations and self-managed organizations that were emerging throughout Europe and its colonies during this period, including friendly societies, mutual associations, cooperatives, and trade unions (MacPherson, 2007; McNally, 1993).

Among 19th-century socialist thought, it was classical social anarchists that most convincingly merged the critique of the capitalist system with proposals for alternatives to it. Rather than the reform of capitalism or the seizure of power by the takeover of the state, what drove classical social anarchists was the radical re-creation of social and economic life through a deep faith in human abilities and people's instincts for self-determination linked to cooperation and mutual aid. Indeed, it was Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1972, 1989), Mikhail Bakunin (1990) and Peter Kropotkin (1995) who would level severe critiques at the emergent capitalist system and the role of the state in upholding this unjust system while, at the same time, proposing political and economic alternatives grounded in federations of producer communities and political communes that would return control of the means of production and consumption to workers and local communities (Marshall, 1992). As I will outline next, for Proudhon, Bakunin,

and Kropotkin, workers' associations such as cooperatives, as locally rooted, broadly federated, and collectively owned productive entities, were vital for outlining the creation of alternatives to the capitalist-state system and for the self-determining and self-managed society.

Self-determination, cooperation, and classical social anarchist economic thought

Classical social anarchist economic thought realized early on that the freedom for self-actualization and self-determination in a capitalist-controlled world was to be first struggled over in the economic realm. Because economic considerations have such a privileged position in the project of modernity, it is, to follow Rudolf Rocker (1997), in the radical transformations of the economic arrangements of society where the vital site of struggle for eventually winning the freedom of self-determination for the rest of life begins.

19th-century social anarchists brought together the search for freedom from the capitalist-state apparatus with the struggle for economic self-determination, perhaps being the first socialist thinkers to begin to most fully formulate – if not using the term themselves – the concept of *autogestión*. They too, as with the utopian socialists before them, envisioned economic freedom to be rooted in some form of cooperative organization, usually co-managed by the direct producers themselves (Marshall, 1992). For them, alternative economic arrangements were closely tied to a new political reality; for them cooperative societies were to be the bulwark from which a greater federation of producer cooperatives and communes would replace the capitalist nation-state (Woodcock, 2004). Moreover, these cooperatives and federations were to take on infinitely less hierarchical organizational forms by being managed by workers' and people's councils via recallable delegates. On shop floors and in the fields, workers were to control decision-making directly and democratically. In the greater community, political entities such as communes, villages, and townships were to be the sites where councils of workers, tenants, and peasants would co-manage production, distribution, and political life (Marshall, 1992).

Proudhon, for example, drew inspiration for such a social system from his own proletarian background and from the self-activity of working people, such as those in the craft trades, factory workers, and peasants. He used these experiences as his model for *mutuellisme* and its proposals for equitable systems of exchange, popular banks, private possessions over personal property, and 'collective property' of workers' associations (i.e. worker/producer cooperatives) (Proudhon, 1969: 153). Proudhon's *mutuellisme* was in ways similar to Owenite labor exchanges, where labor time, via labor notes, would be the currency in circulation, managed by 'people's banks' (Woodcock, 2004: 110). These were to

be Proudhon's keys to a more economically just society (Horvat, 1982: 118; Proudhon, 1979). While he viewed large associations such as nationalization schemes, trading blocs, state apparatuses, or other hierarchical forms of economic institutions as constraints to individual liberties and the free society, Proudhon did favor grassroots-based associations such as the producer cooperative, what later anarchist writers would call a 'syndicate', 'collective', 'producers' commune', or an 'association of producers' (Anarchist FAQ, 2009: I.3.1). These were, in essence, what we would today call worker cooperatives, which were beginning to emerge during Proudhon's most intellectually fruitful years in France (Gide, 1905; Vuotto, 2011). Proudhon would eventually conceptualize his economic system as an 'agro-industrial federation' where the political functions of the state would be reduced to making economic and industrial decisions (Proudhon, 1979: 67).

Proudhon's arguably contradictory proposals for centralization of all economic organization in the form of a reduced state entity on the one hand, and his search for individual autonomy on the other perhaps made his *mutuellisme* ultimately unworkable in practice. More specifically, unresolved tensions between individual freedom/competition and community/personal responsibility are consistently present in Proudhon's proposals. Whether or not a continued state entity, however reduced and federated, could be relegated to only making economic decisions, how centralized this system had to be, or, most crucially, whether the economic can ever be decoupled from the political, remain points of contention with Proudhon's vision for the future society. And while Proudhon's politics disdained outright revolutionary violence, preferring gradual change, Proudhon's proposals for alternative organizational arrangements beyond capital were among the first in modern socialism to both critique capitalism and the coordinating market and state mechanisms that upheld it, and offer worker-led alternatives to it (Price, 2011: chapter 1, section 2)⁵. Undoubtedly, Proudhon's ideas would be central to inspiring the struggle for workers' self-management henceforth. His visions for an alternative economics grounded in *autogestión* are strong early articulations for a society rooted in human freedom from exploitation and the re-embedding of economics back into the social sphere. There is also no doubt that a more economically just and more humane reality for working people was top of mind for Proudhon.

5 Proudhon's proposals for the treatment of women and labour unions also leave much to be desired. But I agree with Wayne Price when he writes that, despite these serious shortcomings, Proudhon was the first who 'worked out the concept of decentralized-federalist socialism' (Price, 2011: chapter 1, section 2), and is thus deserving of place in any genealogy of *autogestión* worth its salt.

Drawing inspiration from Proudhon, Bakunin viewed winning the struggle for self-determination by otherwise oppressed people – workers, peasants, and the poor and dispossessed – as key for attaining the truly free society. For him, the full development of *all* human beings and their capacities to self-organize and act cooperatively were crucial to his revolutionary visions for a better society. Indeed, economic justice, equality amongst all, and cooperative work fit hand-in-hand with his vision for freedom in the post-revolutionary society. ‘Man (*sic*) is truly free’, Bakunin would write, ‘only among equally free men’ (in Marshall, 1992: 37). For him, as with Kropotkin, liberty consisted of ‘the full development of our potential’ (*ibid.*: 39). Ultimately for Bakunin, as with Marx in a moment of agreement, while ‘cooperative societies’ were susceptible to being co-opted by the capitalist-state system, ‘[c]ooperation in all its forms’ was also for him ‘undeniably a rational and just mode of future production’ (Bakunin, 1990: 201). Foreshadowing the notion of the post-scarcity society that would be proposed a century later by Herbert Marcuse, Ivan Illich, Murray Bookchin, and others, Bakunin believed that ‘human beings’, with the imaginative and technological capacities at their disposal, ‘can... free themselves from the yoke of external nature through collective labour’ (Marshall, 1992: 291).

Anticipating yet another theme that was to be picked up later by Kropotkin, cooperatives were also for Bakunin important *sites of learning* for how to organize the liberated society. Here, Bakunin was also close to Proudhon’s (1989) hopes for cooperatives as ‘the open school, both theoretical and practical, where the workman (*sic*) learns the science of the production and distribution of wealth, where he studies... by his own experience solely, the laws of... industrial organization’ (*ibid.*: 78)⁶. In this regard, both Proudhon and Bakunin prefigured the early and mid 20th-century anarcho-syndicalist (e.g. Rocker), guild socialist (e.g. G.D.H. Cole), and council communist (e.g. Pannekoek and Mattick) ideas of ‘canalizing’ social change through ‘industrial action’ (Woodcock, 2004: 118), and even (while more reformist in political ambitions) the early cooperative movement’s fifth Rochdale principle of ‘Education, training, and information’ (ICA, 2013). Proudhon and Bakunin also foreshadowed our current understanding of workplaces – particularly worker coops – as sites for the fostering of worker solidarity that also witness rich and collaborative forms of workers’ informal learning (Smith and Dobson, 2010; Garrick, 1998; Livingstone and Scholtz, 2007; Larrabure et al., 2011; Sawchuk, 2008; Vieta, 2014).

6 Perhaps surprisingly, Antonio Gramsci’s (2000) considerations of workers’ associations and even V.I. Lenin’s later writings on cooperatives (see, for example, Lenin, 1923), had similar hopes for the educational possibilities of cooperatives and workers’ associations for the working class.

Kropotkin, in turn, viewed cooperatives, ‘village community institutions’, and communes such as the Russian *artel* and the *mir* (Kropotkin, 1989: 238, 271-3), the Swiss cantons, professional guilds and early workers’ combinations, labor unions (262), friendly societies and social clubs (274), and other forms of ‘federated’ human associations (238) and economic and social collaborations as continuations of the evolutionary nature of human beings’ inherent need to cooperate. For him, ‘mutual aid’, rather than competition and the capitalist distortions of the divisions of labor, were essential human practices that could be traced back throughout human history and pre-history. For Kropotkin, human beings naturally draw to and always already privilege cooperation rather than competition. If, for Marx, human beings were at core *homo fabers*, for Kropotkin, they were at core *homo mutuus*. The possibilities for cooperation usually gave way, when people were left to self-organize their own affairs, to the ‘essentially mutual aid character’ (in Buber, 1996: 43). This character catalyzed for him all cooperative endeavors. In Kropotkin’s view, the Rochdale cooperative pioneers and the worker-managed factories of the Paris Commune of 1871 were prime examples of the self-help nature of people that compelled them to come together into cooperative relations. Indeed, the mutual aid characteristic of human beings prefigured for Kropotkin the truly free modern society – ‘communism’ (*ibid.*: 43). ‘The fullest development of individuality’, Kropotkin would write when conceptualizing his vision of a decentralized and federated communism,

[will] combine with the highest development of *voluntary association* in all its aspects, in all possible degrees and for all conceivable purposes: an ever changing association bearing in itself the elements of its own duration and taking on the forms which at any moment best correspond to the manifold endeavours of all... creat[ing] regional and autonomous life in the smallest of its units – the street, the house-block, the district, the parish. (in Buber, 1996: 43, emphasis added)

Certainly, then, for classical social anarchists such as Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin, some form of cooperative arrangement of the means of production and economic activity, via workers’ syndicates broadly defined, was vital for attaining real human freedom in the alternative society. They were the first to begin to articulate the theoretical and practical implications of an *autogestión* motivated by and deeply infused with workers’ self-determination. For classical social anarchists, cooperation and cooperative activity could be the way forward to the ‘communist’ society, a new social order rooted fundamentally in less-dominative forms of organizing work and production.

***Autogestión* and workers' power into the first half of the 20th century: Towards aggressive encroachment**

By the last half of the 19th century, the notions and practices of *autogestión*, first articulated by the classical social anarchists, would merge with movements of worker cooperatives, organized labor, and democratized workplaces, growing in importance for envisioning the post-capitalist society. This was witnessed in, for example, the First International's endorsement of producer cooperatives (Horvat, 1982; Marx, 1978). The possibilities exemplified in the short-lived worker takeover of factories and shops during the Paris Commune of 1871 also did much to inspire revolutionary socialist and anarchist visions of the post-capitalist society of cooperatives, equally impressing Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Marx. In the US and Canada during the last quarter of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century, the nascent union movement would merge with worker cooperative experiments and other workers' collectives with the Knights of Labor and the IWW (Curl, 2009). Emerging out of revolutionary-syndicalism, anarcho-syndicalism would eventually become the predominant position of early 20th-century French, Spanish, Argentine and other labor movements that viewed the general strike and workers' takeover of factories as the first steps to the transformation of society. The more reformist British shop stewards movement of the early 20th century⁷ would also center social transformation on the self-managed shop floor, embodying 'the resentment of the craft unions against certain encroachments of power by capitalists' (Bayat, 1991: 17). For all of these early movements and proposals for workers' control, organizing workers into associations of laborers at the point of production was seen as central in raising working-class consciousness and as the key point of struggle, the first step towards transforming society (*ibid.*: 15).

For a brief time in the immediate years following World War I, a broad European movement of bottom-up shop floor organizations such as factory committees and workers' councils proliferated in countries such as Italy, Russia, Hungary, Poland, Germany, and Bulgaria. At first, they tended to emerge as direct reactions by workers and their representatives to the deplorable post-war socio-economic conditions. These workers' actions and the new organizations they brought forth in countries such as Italy, Hungary, and Germany, would subsequently expand into broader political movements, sometimes in cooperation with parties of the Left. The 1917 Russian Revolution's roots – if short-lived – in directly democratic workers' committees, for instance, is often underplayed in official histories of the rise of the Soviet Union (Brinton, 1970;

7 Conceptualized politically as 'guild socialism' in Britain in the 1910s, primarily via the writings of G.D.H. Cole (1980).

Horvat, 1982). Factory seizures and the creation of workers' councils also followed general strikes in Germany in January-February 1918, for instance, while the seizure of industry by workers in Northern Italy during the *biennio rosso* (1919-1920) witnessed a general strike of upwards of 200,000 workers, many of them also occupying and collectively running their factories (Forgasc, 2000; Gramsci, 2000). And workers' and people's committees – heavily influenced by social anarchist thought – self-managed the entire economy in large swaths of revolutionary Spain between 1936-1939 (Dolgoff, 1974). Indeed, bureaucratic trade unions and leftist political parties' general failure to respond to or support these movements created political and leadership vacuums and situations of dual power that, although also encouraged by the Bolshevik left at the time, would nevertheless see in places like Italy the working class acting independent of hierarchical organizations or state institutions for a time (Bayat, 1991).

These related historical examples of worker-led and workplace-centered collective actions, promoted by anarcho-syndicalists, communist anarchists, and council communists alike, have come to be known as the 'aggressive encroachment approach' to workers' control (Bayat, 1991: 33). Aggressive encroachment theorists such as the council communists Anton Pannekoek (2003) and Paul Mattick (1967), and the anarcho-syndicalist Rudolf Rocker (2004), explicitly argued for workers' control as a bottom-up political movement that could ground 'the revolutionary self-organization of the working class' (Bayat, 1991: 38). In contrast to the centralist, vanguardist, and *etatist* proposals of the Bolsheviks and their overrunning of the workers', peasants', and soldiers' soviets by early 1918 (Horvat, 1982), councilists and anarcho-syndicalists believed that through workers' councils the working class itself could prepare and self-direct the eventual transformation of society.

Notions of *autogestión* in the second half of the 20th century

Already by the 1920s, theories of workers' control and self-management were taking a back-seat to *etatist* socialist and communist economic and political ideologies and practices. This situation was especially augmented after the defeat of the Left in Spain in the late 1930s and the Left's preoccupation with World War II, Stalinism, and their immediate aftermaths throughout the 1940s and into the early 1950s (Horvat, 1982). Broader usage of the term *autogestión*, together with growing interest in new theories of workers' control, would emerge amongst libertarian socialist thinkers by the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s (e.g. James, 1992; Marcuse, 1969).

While, historically, as I've been laying out so far, practices of *autogestión* long predate its conceptualization, the term was first used broadly in France by Marxist and anarchist theorists in the 1950s to denote both the potential of the Yugoslav model for an alternative to the capitalist and state-socialist systems of production, and to name historical events that saw workers take on both the control and co-ownership of economic and political life, such as during the Paris Commune of 1871 and the anarchist-influenced commune and cooperative movements in Catalonia and other parts of Spain during the civil war in 1936 (Arvon, 1980; Rosanvallon, 1979). It was then applied to describe the first months of the social and economic reorganization of Algeria's post-colonial economy in 1962 (Bayat, 1991). Thereafter, the term was adopted by protagonists and theorists of the emergent 1968 social movements to circumscribe their main demands and desires for a post-capitalist society (Gorz, 1973; Hunnius et al., 1973). And, as I will argue in the last pages of this article, the term has returned with similarly radical connotations in recent years with the newest social movements struggling for alternative economic and social transformation.

But the socio-political dimensions and possibilities of *autogestión* remain in tension and have been long-debated when conceptualizing what exactly the term entails for workers and society. First, to what degree do workers actually *control* the labor process when self-managing it? This is an issue of *management*. Second, do workers themselves *own*, collectively, the means of production, or do they 'share' ownership with private investors or the state? This is an issue of *property relations*. Both issues also force us to further ask: to what degree do workers freely decide production issues, what and how they work, how much they work, how they set up the labor process, if and when they can dissolve the firm, and so on? When *autogestión* is a question of how much *participation* workers have in *managing* the firm while the means of production continues to be owned by private investors or the state, the term's conceptualization tends to ideologically fall within liberal democratic or state socialist camps. Here, in other words, the degree to which workers can self-manage their work extends only to issues concerning the degree of participation they have been allowed or afforded by the owners of the means of production. Moreover, within liberal democratic perspectives, workers' control and self-management are usually always considered and constituted within a broader capitalist market system; the abolishment of this system is, for liberal democratic advocates of self-management, rarely top of mind. When, on the other hand, *autogestión* is also considered as an issue of the *collective* or *social ownership* of the means of production, private property relations are directly addressed while the direct management of the means of production by workers themselves is assumed (Vieta, 2015).

Some radical theorists, such as Mario Tronti (1973; 2010) and the French collective *Négation* (1975), specifically criticized *autogestión* for its continued reformist tendencies, falling far short, they argued, in its actual revolutionary potential of abolishing the capitalist system of production. For them, workers' self-management as an 'other' of capitalism borders on an impossibility because all labor within capitalism, as that 'special' commodity that valorizes more than it costs for the purchaser of labor-power, to paraphrase Marx, 'equals exploitation' (Tronti, 2010). Moreover, all labor within the capitalist mantle 'embodies the class relation' predicated by the labor process under capital (Tronti, 1979: 9, in Thoburn, 2003: 110). In addition, workers' self-management of the production of commodities that will ultimately be sold on open markets is still the 'management' of labor and leads to workers' 'self-exploitation' as 'collective capitalists'⁸. For these critics, as articulated recently by some Italian autonomists, the real freedom towards self-determination rests with the 'refusal of work', including 'exodus' from the compulsion to work and the puritan notion that any 'dignity' might reside in work (Weeks, 2005; 2011). The specifics of the alternative economic arrangements that would undergird a system rooted in the refusal of work, however, remain vague in contemporary autonomist thought⁹.

A more radical notion of *autogestión*, as it has been conceptualized in recent decades, takes these tensions into account and strives to move beyond them towards radical ends (Arvon, 1980; Miranda Lorenzo, 2011; Peixoto de Albuquerque, 2004; Rosanvallon, 1979). In its application by those that explicitly define their projects as one of *autogestión*, or in its conceptualizations by Left scholars that have theorized it, the term has been applied in a much more radical way than mere *workers' participation* in co-managing an otherwise capitalist firm.

8 On these themes, see also McNally (1993).

9 It deserves to be pointed out here, if in passing, that libertarian socialists (such as autonomist Marxists) and social anarchists decidedly agree on what a liberational self-management is *not*. The adoption of workplace participation schemes by *laissez faire* human resource management (HRM) programs, for instance, underscore the criticisms leveled at self-management by some on the radical libertarian Left. With roots in the Human Relations School of the 1930s, proponents of HRM openly advocate for workers' participation, especially as responses to employees' resistances to scientific management (Grint, 2005). HRM proponents recognize the efficaciousness of aspects of self-management for appeasing unions' demands for 'healthier', more 'participative', and more 'open' workplaces, for example. Far short of reducing exploitation in the workplace, of course, these reactionary self-management or workers' participation schemes have generally succeeded in investing workers more and more into the broader capitalist system and the workplaces that employ them and, thus, paradoxically, have served to extract more relative surplus-value from them while lessening the costly application and need of direct supervision (Bratton et al., 2003).

In its radical practices and notions, *autogestión* has paralleled the desires of workers to more fully self-determine their working lives beyond the mantle of hierarchical control, private gain, and private property. Indeed, in recent decades, the concept of *autogestión* has been recast within the radical stream of self-determination by more recent libertarian socialist and social anarchist theorists.

The French anarchist sociologist Henri Arvon (1980), for example, whose book was translated into Spanish in 1980 as *La autogestión* and had influence in introducing the term to Latin American countries such as Argentina (Wyczykier, 2009), posits that the desire for *autogestión* long predates the 1960s social movements. For him, the term parallels the ways that pre- and non-capitalist communities have self-managed their own productive and social affairs. For Arvon, however, the conscious demand for *autogestión* from workers, underscoring its roots in the stream of self-determination, only arises with the formal subsumption of labor within capitalist paradigms. As more self-determined and locally rooted ways of economic life like the commons and craft-based production began to disappear in Europe with the advent of capitalism, more and more workers began to demand greater participation in economic and productive life and, indeed, increasingly, as witnessed in the rise of worker cooperatives, autonomy from capital and alternatives to waged work. Here we find, according to Arvon, the first modern struggles for and experiments with *autogestión*, initially theorized most concretely, as I reviewed in the first section of this article, by classical social anarchists. Arvon's conceptualization of *autogestión* could also be conceived of using E.P. Thompson's notion of the moral economy undergirding the drive of marginalized people to self-determine their own economic and social lives and retain traditional and communal ways of provisioning for life's needs (Thompson, 1991). As Argentine sociologist Gabriela Wyczykier puts it, commenting on Arvon's historical analysis, the struggle for *autogestión* 'reflects a permanent hope for the human being' for self-determining socio-economic life (Wyczykier, 2009: 30). Most fundamentally, then, extending out from Arvon's assessment, the desire for *autogestión* is the historical human drive and demand to be free from exploitation (Bayat, 1991) and to collectively determine the direction of the socio-economic spheres of life (Horvat, 1982), all integral demands in the stream of self-determination.

Together with Arvon, another French theorist who had a role to play in further conceptualizing *autogestión* was Pierre Rosanvallon (1979). For Rosanvallon, *autogestión* is saturated in praxis and is an umbrella concept that moves the socio-economic transformation of society at large from state-capitalist centralization to more horizontal and directly democratic practices. For Rosanvallon, these practices at the local level, in tune with classical social anarchist notions of the prefigurative force of workers' self-directed organizations and theories of

aggressive encroachment, could then radiate out onto all socio-economic institutions. While for him the practice is not limited to workplace or industrial democracy, certainly workplaces would need to be democratized too for the emancipated society. In line with Arvon, before it became a doctrine of the New Left of the 1960s, Rosanvallon claimed, *autogestión* had already long been a socio-political practice (*ibid.*: 12). It was embodied in institutions such as cooperatives and in historical workers' movements such as the 1871 Paris Commune; the early soviets of the 1905 Russian Revolution; the Catalanian, Levantian, and Andalusian communes of 1936; and in the demands infusing the May '68 events. In the practices of the movements of '68, he argued, in contrast to the centralist and *etatist* positions of the French Communist Party and the French CGT union central at the time, the demands for *autogestión* promised a 'socialism of liberty'. *Autogestión* has thus been, from its beginnings for Rosanvallon, a prefigurative concept infused with 'promises and hopes for a different political and economic reality' (*ibid.*). For Rosanvallon, however, the demands for *autogestión* post 1968, in practice, turned out to be a disappointment. By the time Rosanvallon was reflecting on *autogestión* in the aftermath of the movements of '68, the concept encapsulated for him 'what could have been' and, implicitly, what can still be, rather than what *autogestión* had actually become (*ibid.*: 20). Nevertheless, the concept continued, for him, to be instilled with prefigurative promise for social change, which would be infused with people's direct participation in the socio-economic and political dimensions of society.

***Autogestión* and the stream of self-determination today: A 'new cooperativism' for the 21st century?**

Theorizing Autogestión today

More contemporary conceptualizations of *autogestión*, while not discarding the call for more widespread societal transformation advocated by Arvon and Rosanvallon post '68, tend to focus on the implications for transforming the economic realm and, more specifically, its productive entities as first steps to possible longer-term and broader social change. Basque social economy theorists Antxon Mendizábal and Anjel Errasti (2008), for instance, argue that *autogestión* is a dynamic concept rooted in libertarian and anarchist strands of workers' self-activity, further suggesting its conceptual roots in the classical social anarchist stream of self-determination. Mendizábal and Errasti position *autogestión* on two planes, taking into account practices of 'cooperative production' at the level of the enterprise and 'social and participative democracy' at the 'territorial level' (*ibid.*: 1). Historical experiences of *autogestión* within the economic realm have been about 'processes which look for the transformation of relations of production'

and ‘a process that articulates the different workers’ collectives to be coordinated and realized within productive structures of cooperation and solidarity’ (*ibid.*: 3). For them, in sum, *autogestión* entails four key characteristics:

- (I) the organizational nature of productive entities as social(ized) property;
- (II) the collective and directly democratic participation in the coordination of this productive activity by workers and, ideally, by all people affected by this activity in what they term ‘common solidarity’;
- (III) respect for the differences and autonomy of each productive entity and the people that work therein; and
- (IV) the social(ized) organization of such a system by some sort of federated political organ that, via a recallable delegate model, democratically configures the way production is to unfold socially.

As with Anton and Rosanvallon, Mendizábal and Errasti’s model of *autogestión* has its theoretical roots in the forms of cooperative and collective production practiced in parts of revolutionary Spain in 1936 (Broué & Témine, 1962; Rama, 1962), as well as resonating with anarcho-syndicalist and council communist proposals. With Mendizábal and Errasti, we also begin to see how the concept has actually been taken up in Latin America throughout the 1990s and early 2000s.

Contemporary Latin American theorists of *autogestión* suggest that the term most immediately invokes the democratization of the economic realm at the micro-level of the productive enterprise, such as workers’ coops and collectives, worker-recuperated enterprises¹⁰, rural producer collectives, family-based microenterprises, and neighbourhood collectives (Cattani, 2004). From out of these micro-economic experiments, often loosely federated territorially in some way, the state can then be lobbied to support them, and then, it is hoped, transformed into an entity responsive to the needs of worker-led firms and local community development. Such has been the approach taken up in Brazil in the past decades, for example, with the relationship between the state (via the National Secretary of the Solidarity Economy), many of the country’s unions, and rural and urban cooperative movements that emerged after the early, anti-neoliberal experiments with *autogestión* in the 1980s and 1990s, such as the landless peasant and worker movements (Singer and Souza, 2000; Gaiger and Dos Anjos, 2011). Eventually, this bottom-up approach, it is thought, could see the further proliferation of a people-centred solidarity or popular economy rooted

¹⁰ Formerly investor-owned or private firms taken over and self-managed by former employees (see Vieta, 2010a).

in economic justice and participative democracy (Coraggio, 1999; 2004; Pastore, 2010; Sarria Icaza and Tiribia, 2004).

One of Latin America's most influential theorists of *autogestión*, the Brazilian sociologist Paulo Peixoto de Albuquerque (2004), for instance, suggests this more 'gradual encroachment' approach to social transformation in his four-pronged definition of the term. For him, *autogestión* has:

- (I) a *social character*, where people within all social strata are engaged in the development of a new societal order grounded in self-determination and participation;
- (II) an *economic character*, where the social implications of production are taken into account and where work would be privileged over capital, as in the case of worker cooperatives;
- (III) a *political character*, where, as with Porto Alegre's participatory budgeting practices, all people affected would have a say in decision-making and collectively constructing some sort of popular power; and
- (IV) a *technical character*, which points to the (re)design and (re)deployment of non-exploitative and re-rationalized divisions of labour and production processes. (Peixoto de Albuquerque, 2004: 31-38)

Whereas Arvon and Rosanvallon refuse to specifically center on the economic realm and the firm when conceptualizing *autogestión*, preferring to remain at the level of sociological theorization and have the emancipated, self-managed society worked out by those living it immanently, Peixoto de Albuquerque and other contemporary Latin American theorists of *autogestión*, such as José Luís Coraggio (1999; 2004), Paul Singer (2004), and Luiz Inácio Gaiger (2003), have reversed the theorization, working from within the myriad bottom-up experiments of the social and solidarity economies across the region that have been responding to and moving beyond neoliberal enclosures in recent years.

In sum, the contemporary conceptualizations of *autogestión* that I have been sketching out in this section take into account implicitly three broad characteristics: (1) the *effectiveness* and *viability* of associated forms of social production for provisioning for life's needs and producing social wealth; (2) economic justice in some form of *democratic organization* of productive entities; and (3) the *social ownership* of the means of production.

In myriad examples today, the seeds of another world are being prefigured and are emerging, grounded in these three broad characteristics and gradually blooming into new worker- and community-driven experiments in *autogestión*.

From Italy's *centri sociale* (social centres)¹¹, to the degrowth movement, to Latin America's indigenous movement of self-managed villages under the auspices of the notion of *el buen vivir*, to India's Dalit women's agricultural cooperatives organized via village-based council's called Sanghams (Mookerjea, 2010), or to Argentina's worker-recuperated enterprises movement, *autogestión* is becoming, once again, a persuasive solution for the self-determined life for groups of formally and informally employed people around the world. Other promising modes of *autogestión* emerging around the world today include: Quebec's *cooperative solidaire* (solidarity cooperatives), Brazil's landless peasants' and workers' movements, guerilla gardening initiatives, the DIY movement, barter groups, community cash systems, neighbourhood assemblies, community dining halls and free health clinics, alternative media projects, collective farms and intentional communities, and housing coops...to name only a few¹².

This global community-focused movement in *autogestión* from below is both a reaction to the worst effects of neoliberal enclosures and prefigurative experiments beyond them. In these spaces, what is prime is not the pursuit of profit and self-interest, but the democratic control of the labor process, the sharing of surpluses, inter-cooperative networks of solidarity, and the deepening of concern for the needs and desires of people and surrounding communities beyond just the daily business concerns of the firm within values and practices of mutual aid. In short, they are alternative islands of solidarity economies within a sea of crisis-riddled capitalism that begin, from within and from below, to slowly corrode and highlight the deficiencies of the status quo socio-economic order. *Autogestión* today is most promising for the search for socio-economic self-determination when it both contests and begins to move beyond the logics of neoliberal markets and stimulates its own proliferation at the local level.

The 'new cooperativism'

Elsewhere, I have called today's resurgence in myriad forms of community-based projects of *autogestión* that prefiguratively point to paths beyond capitalist exploitation and circuits of production and exchange, 'the new cooperativism' (Vieta, 2010b).

The new cooperativism finds its historical roots in the social anarchist-influenced stream of self-determination and its suggestive potential for another world. The

11 Community-recuperated spaces emerging from once-private or abandoned and now occupied and 'commonized' buildings and factories.

12 For a wide range of examples of experiments in self-determination and *autogestión* today, see Buglione and Schlüter (2010), Cattani (2004), Parker et al. (2014), Gibson-Graham (2003; 2006), Miller and Albert, (2009), and Vieta (2010b).

new cooperativism today is a bottom-up, grassroots-driven movement of *autogestión* distinguished by five features:

- (I) It emerges as direct responses by working people or grassroots groups to the crisis of the neoliberal model;
- (II) Its protagonists do not necessarily have tight links to older cooperative, labor, or social movements, beginning their collective projects from out of immediate social, cultural, or economic needs rather than from pre-existing ideological sentiments;
- (III) Its politics tend to emerge at the level of the everyday and tend to take on, when compared to capitalocentric frameworks, more equitable ways of redistributing social wealth and more ethical ways of engaging with the other and the earth;
- (IV) It tends to involve strong practices of horizontalized labor processes and decision-making structures, often including collective ownership of social, cultural, or economic production; culturally- and gender-sensitive divisions of labor; and more egalitarian schemes of surplus allocation, certainly when compared to capitalist production, and even when compared to older or more traditional cooperative experiences; and
- (V) It has stronger connections with surrounding communities than capitalocentric economic models; many of them embrace clear social objectives and local initiatives of community development. (Vieta, 2015)

Both as direct responses to neoliberal enclosures and perpetual crises, *and* as real alternatives beyond, the new cooperativism puts into sharp relief how people's desires for self-determination and freedom in economic life can begin to be expressed and proliferate outside of the yoke of capitalist discourses.

A new cooperativist sentiment rooted in the kind of radical *autogestión* I have been mapping out so far is also implicitly (and at times explicitly) present in contemporary anarchist and post-anarchist writings, especially when drawing on today's prefigurative alternative experiments. While their debt to classical social anarchist economic thought and the stream of self-determination that I have been mapping out in this article resonates strongly in their writings, contemporary anarchist and post-anarchist thinkers often gloss over, assume, or under-theorize the self-management experiments they mobilize as illustrative of alternatives to the neoliberal capitalist-state system. Nevertheless, an *autogestión* that is deeply invested in the kind of new cooperative experiments I am thinking of here is similar to, for instance, Andrej Grubacic and David Graeber's 'new radical dreams and visions' of 21st century social movements rooted in 'decentralization, voluntary association, mutual aid, the network model' (2004: par. 2), or Richard Day's (2005) conceptualization of the 'newest social movements' that both resist neoliberal globalization and that also outline new,

non-hegemonic socio-economic realities beyond the politics of demand, or Uri Gordon's (2007) insightful analysis of the anti-authoritarian politics that ground the social movements, affinity groups, and alter-globalization movements of the 21st century.

In the remaining paragraphs, I'd like to begin to articulate theoretically the prefigurative practices that make today's *autogestión* so compelling for a growing number of social groups from around the world and that is encapsulated in the new cooperativism. To do so, I draw from recent autonomist Marxist thinking around self-management.

As I have argued elsewhere, new cooperative experiments in *autogestión* imminently transform *organizations, communities, and subjectivities* (Vieta, 2014). New cooperative organizations are driven by the possibilities of another kind of life, which eventually becomes clear to their protagonists praxically *from within their moments of struggle*; for them, their *politicization emerges out of their actions*, motivated often by the conjunctures of crises they find themselves in¹³. For the protagonists of the new cooperativism, their *hope grows from their responses to their difficulties* rather than from an enlightened vanguard; from below and within their moments of struggle, not from above or outside of them. Cándido González, labor activist and former member of Argentina's worker-recuperated firm Artes Gráficas Chilavert, eloquently articulates the immanent change in his own subjectivity that emerged from his own struggles in the trajectory of occupying, taking over the former capitalist workplace that employed him and his *compañeros*, and transforming it into a worker cooperative:

Early on in the fight to reclaim our work we started fighting for our salaries, for getting out of our severe debt-loads that the boss had left us.... But now I know, looking back on our struggle three years on. Now I can see where the change in me started, because it begins during your struggles. First, you fight for not being left out on the street with nothing. And then, suddenly, you see that you've formed a cooperative and you start getting involved in the struggle of others. You don't realize at the time but within your own self there's a change that's taking place, you don't see it directly at the time. You realize it afterwards, when time has transpired...doing things that you would never imagine yourself doing. (González, 2005)

Autogestión in the new cooperativism, to be sure, is not a ready-made solution for liberation from capitalist exploitation. Indeed, it remains always at tension within the existing capitalist economic status-quo and its supportive state apparatus. It lives uncomfortably within a 'dual reality' (Diamantopolous, 2012; Vieta, 2015) between market mechanisms that coordinate economic activity (and on a

13 For similar arguments emerging out of the struggles of 1968, see Marcuse (1969).

planetary scale) on the one hand, and the self-determination and radical democracy at the point of production and consumption it prefigures, on the other. As Marx (1992) also cautioned concerning cooperatives, paralleling Bakunin's warnings: 'Excellent in principle... and useful in practice', on the one hand, coops nevertheless, if limited to a 'narrow circle' of private work disembodied from greater struggles against capital, 'will never be able to arrest the growth... of monopoly, to free the masses' (*ibid.*: 80).

But we must also remember that the prefigurative potential of *autogestión* in the new cooperativism does not rest on its possibility for overthrowing the system *tout court*. Nor, at the same time, can a reformist model hope for the eventual proliferation of the cooperative economy at the expense of capitalism. The most radical moments of *autogestión*, I contend, happen in spite of the system, as pockets of possibility within planetary capital, increasingly offering a more compelling model for people to secure their economic and social needs and desires.

Autogestión in the new cooperativism is part of a focused trajectory of socio-economic practices that foster the continued expansion of solidarity economies and experiments, collaborative production, locally based spaces of mutual aid, extended networks of solidarity, and non-marketized socio-economic relations. Contemporary notions of 'the common', for instance, map out what this trajectory looks like in new cooperative practices today. For autonomist Marxists Greig de Peuter and Nick Dyer-Witheford, the prefigurative force of the new cooperativism rests with its possibilities for 'the circulation of the common', in contrast to 'the circulation of capital' (de Peuter and Dyer-Witheford, 2010: 45). For them, the interplay of three major areas of the commons are crucial for an alternative circulation: the 'eco-social commons', such as fisheries and nature reserves, protected watersheds, and commonly controlled forestry practices; the 'networked commons', such as 'non-rivalrous' digital goods, online resource pooling, and copyleft practices; and, most relevant for this article, the 'democratized organization of productive and reproductive work' in what they call the 'labour commons' most readily visible in worker coops and other labor-managed firms (*ibid.*). De Peuter and Dyer-Witheford illustrate how a new circulation of the common could unfold by reconfiguring Marx's circulation of capital formula:

C represents not a Commodity but Commons, and the transformation is not into Money but Association [A]. The basic formula is therefore: $A - C - A'$. This can then be elaborated into $A - C \dots P \dots C' - A' \dots$ (*ibid.*).

In fact, as a 'labour commons' (*ibid.*: 37-39), a worker cooperative's redistribution of economic surpluses and its worker-members' self-control of their labor

processes are *the* distinguishing characteristic of these labor-managed firms as *socialized* productive entities. In a worker coop it is, after all, labor – the direct producers – that *hires* capital, not the other way around as in capitalist businesses, permitting worker-members to potentially control the labor process and redistribute surpluses democratically (Craig, 1993: 94). And so long as worker cooperatives do not hire waged-workers that are not members, and so long as they redistribute earnings equitably amongst all members, surplus-labor too begins to be eliminated in these spaces (Vieta, 2015). In sum, for de Peuter and Dyer-Witthof, a labor commons transforms the workplace into ‘an *organizational commons*, the labour performed... [into] a *commoning practice*, and the surplus generated, [into] a *commonwealth*’ (de Peuter and Dyer-Witthof, 2010: 45, emphasis in original). These are all central features of the new cooperativism.

Rather than predetermined blueprints for alternative economic spaces, the model of the labor commons is instead inclusive of how experiments of *autogestión* in the new cooperativism can proliferate, within ‘new economic imaginaries’ that incite the creation of spaces of alternatives out of already established ones into something akin to what Gibson-Graham call the ‘generative commons’ (in de Peuter and Dyer Witthof, 2010: 46; see also Vieta, 2010b). An open-ended, generative vision of this alternative economic possibility reminds us of the open-ended, under-determined processual ‘becoming’ of *autogestión* introducing this article. Here, *autogestión* would not be a new ‘hegemonic imaginary’, as Stephen Shukaitis reminds us, but rather a generative process of ‘developing such spaces with the intent of *creating resources and possibilities to expand and deepen other struggles* as well’ (Shukaitis, 2010: 72, emphasis mine). Similarly, Ethan Miller (Miller and Albert, 2009) has called for the continual building of a ‘wider economic movement’, ‘an alternative [solidarity-based] ecosystem’ that ‘must generate interventions at every point in the economic cycle’ (*ibid.*: 13).

In sketching out how people are collectively provisioning for their needs and producing and distributing goods and services otherwise in short supply – that is in meeting their socio-economic needs – the new cooperativism’s practices of *autogestión* is, in the spirit of de Peuter and Dyer-Witthof’s, Shukaitis’, and Miller’s reminders, beginning to (re)imagine a world where bottom-up and community-based practices of *autogestión* and self-determination can flourish. And it begins to map, prefiguratively, another, self-determined socio-economic world in the process.

Concluding thoughts, continued prefigurations

The stream of self-determination infusing *autogestión* is part of the historical and conceptual DNA of today's social and solidarity economies, self-managed workers' organizations, and the new cooperativism. These contemporary experiments in self-management prefigure a self-determining society. They do this in their privileging of workers' full capacities to conceptualize and carry out production in association, in more equitable organizations of the division of labor, in their practices of mutual aid and their overall concern for the wellbeing of all members of the cooperative organization and surrounding communities, in their less-commodified labor practices as associates that co-own and co-managed production, and in the forms of non-market economies they begin to make possible through federated associations of productive entities that promote community economic development outside the firm.

Genealogically rooted in the stream of self-determination and classical social anarchist thought, new cooperative practices of *autogestión* have been emerging, prefiguratively, from out of the shell of neoliberal capitalist processes of production to start becoming something else. Not as a new totality – a new and detailed socio-economic model, ready-made to replace the old one – but, rather, as a set of future-oriented possibilities, experiments, or preliminary sketches that suggest alternative economic, productive, cultural, and social practices in the present *and* for tomorrow.

As the historical experiences self-managed workers' organizations teach us, the struggle for the society free from exploitation calls for human beings to collectively take back control of our very *productive capacities* and *economic imaginings* (Gibson-Graham, 2006) – that is, to win the freedom to self-actualize and provision for our needs and wants *in common*. It is true that *autogestión* could equally accommodate capitalist coordination and control. But it has also always been suggestive of, if not infused with, the stream of self-determination. As Kropotkin so clearly put it more than a century ago, the struggle for self-determination is the struggle for

a new form of society...[that] must take the place of the old one: a society of equals, who will not be compelled to sell their hands and brains to those who choose to employ them in a haphazard way, but who will be able to apply their knowledge and capacities to production, in an organism so constructed as to combine all the efforts for procuring the greatest sum possible of well-being for all. (Kropotkin and Brandes, 2009: 398)

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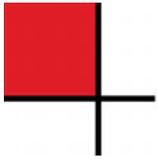
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‘Anarchy by the book? Forget about it!’: The role of collective memory in shaping workers’ relations to anarchism and work today*

Elen Riot

abstract

Anarchism is a source of inspiration for a number of social movements today. One question this raises is that of the influence of collective memory in shaping existing and new forms of organisations in relation to a value system. In the past, workers facing exclusion and job insecurity discovered and experimented with cooperative solutions. This paper uses the case of the history of the print union in France to inquire about the influence of collective memory on workers in the publishing and multimedia industry today. Observing that anarchist views on work and on standing by the collective have more or less been lost despite the current popularity of many practices anarchism introduced, it investigates the role of collective memory in framing anarchism as an open ensemble of original actions.

"If I had understood the situation a bit better I should probably have joined the Anarchists." George Orwell - Collected Essays.

"No middle class revolutionary can defend the barricades without a shower and a large capuccino". J.G.Ballard - Millenium People.

It is lunchtime on the second day of a summer university organised by a French popular education movement in the South of France. A self-managed workshop

* The author dedicates this work to Pierre Guillet de Monthoux, a dear friend and an inspiration. She is very grateful to the editors and the two reviewers for their kind vigilance and their precious help.

on action has just finished, and now participants have gathered to hear about the experience of two collectives: one opposed to shale gas exploitation and the other against the construction of a large tourism complex including extensive golf courses. Eating their ten-euro organic lunches, freshly delivered, about 100 people have just settled at large wooden tables in the dry moat outside the university, which is located within an ancient castle. As they unwrap their paper bags and take out their polystyrene boxes and plastic knives and forks, the workshop participants, women who look as if they are former demonstrators from May 1968 discuss the problems they have in acting effectively at local level: too many causes, thinly-spread action, short-termism. One of them says global problems are overwhelming whereas attempting to influence the authorities can be risky for local people with local interests. Joan is about to participate in the second *European Forum against Useless Imposed Major Projects*, taking place in Notre Dame des Landes, France (in the Loire Atlantique département, near Nantes) the following week. She has been following the opposition to the construction of a new airport since it started, about two years ago when the Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ) was created. 'The problem', Joan explains

is that some Tazists are looking for a fight with the police, especially the ones sitting in trees. They even undermine other opponents' plans. They wouldn't hear of us having a helicopter to headcount the human chain last May. They denounced our "collaboration" with the media. They're so aggressive, but still, they're only a minority.

At this point, someone asks who they are. Joan answers they are radical young anarchists who have clearly chosen to pull back from political action. Adda easily relates to this situation: 'I see what you mean, I know a few collectives, young squatters; all they want to do is dig the garden. They seem to have no political consciousness. They don't want to talk. They won't even read our leaflets'. As Joan and others nod, the two collectives (six men in their 50s) arrive: they are ready to talk about their action. And so the conversation ends there.

This exchange illustrates various dimensions of the present debates about anarchism in relation to organised action and values. It is characterised both by specific modes of organisation and a specific set of values. However, aligning ideas and values with everyday action is a challenge, and it is not easy to find the balance between adapting to present circumstances and resisting external influences. This also explains numerous disagreements between those who claim to be true to the ideal (radicals) and those who want to make the utopia real (pragmatists). One feature of such problems among groups is that they always seem to be happening for the first time, whilst at the same time they illustrate the traditional problem of finding a common frame. As a result one wonders if it

would change things if at least some people bore in mind the long succession of previous close encounters with 'the problem' when trying to find a solution.

This paper documents the role of collective memory as well as imagination (Graeber, 2001) in finding solutions to well-known problems at work: the changing power balance between agents resulting from technological innovation, the role of work in life and relations between individuals and groups. Such issues were important concerns for French print union members over two centuries in relation to anarchism, yet, after their profession declined in the 1970s, this action seems to have been largely forgotten by members of the creative class, publishers and developers. This paper reflects upon this situation, as anarchism recently regained its influence as a source of inspiration in the field of social action. First, it presents different views of anarchism in play at this moment in time. Then it investigates what contemporary workers have to say about anarchism. Finally it presents its findings and attempts to interpret this fieldwork.

Anarchism, action, values and the central role of collective memory in finding common ground

'Anarchism [is] the name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government – harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilized being' (Kropotkin, in Graeber, 2004: 1). This definition seems to have remained relevant over the years. Its central feature is that it combines two dimensions: the pragmatic definition of a mode of action (referred to in the text as various territorial and professional groups, production, consumption, needs) and the allusion to an ideal of society with no superior power figure (defined in the text as principle, theory of life and conduct, society without government, harmony and civilisation). Today, we may find various illustrations of these two dimensions: the problem is how to align them in real life. Most actors look for the right way by choosing a level of analysis, either micro approaches to anarchic situations in organisations or large-scale social movements looking at events from the macro-level of history. Good solutions fit because they find the right balance between past experience and present action, avoiding both dogmatic routines and reckless improvisation.

Both views have their interest, but they are also limited. I believe such limited views of anarchism are contributed to by the distortion they introduce. Possibly

lacking personal experience or appropriate examples borrowed from real life, people tend to downplay or overestimate the specific nature of anarchism.

One temptation might be to hybridise anarchic and non-anarchic modes of organisation by replacing the utopia of communal individuality with short-term goals. This pragmatic approach has become more popular in recent years, possibly because of the need for alternative models of organisation in the new age of capitalism (Boltanski and Chiapello, 1999). The problem is that its narrow focus on action leaves aside the power dimension and the issue of domination. For instance, in that approach, it would not be absurd for an ‘anarchist mode of organisation’ to be used simply to earn more profit for top management and investors to share.

The pragmatic approach to anarchy grew in parallel to another trend: the radicalisation of anarchism by agents who define its objectives as systematically opposed to current society. As such, they refuse all external power but idealise their own as being righteous in an immoral world (Invisible Committee, 2009; Bey, 2003). Just as the ambiguous use of brands such as Fred Perry (Orfali, 2003) can be seen as the symbol of a new conformism in radical groups (fascists and antifascists), the increasing media interest in social movements (Earl et al., 2004) favours radicalism by offering a permanent platform.

This idealisation of the group, with its action imprisoned in the autotelic message it feeds the crowd, appears to combine the two limits mentioned above: a narrow focus on action and the presence of an ideal power.

In fact, this desire to codify one’s engagement by signs and symbols is not so new, for instance it is well described in Dostoyevsky’s *Demons*. It illustrates the difficulty of aligning theoretical principles and values with everyday active commitment to a constructive long-term project. Besides, this opposition appears at group (meso)level, whereas (regrettably) many arguments for and against anarchy are grounded in a more micro or macro level.

At this group (meso)level, anarchism consists of a wide range of different ideas with a kind of fulcrum, which is: ‘the endless labour of achieving consensus’ (Graeber, 2004a: 26), since dealing with counter powers means doing without a durably stable social frame. However, this does not imply that action is necessarily bounded by its specific situation. Exploring the theory of value, Graeber argues in favour of imagination by people who ‘share a sense of social possibility, a feeling that people should be able to translate imaginary schemes into some sort of reality; a concomitant interest in both understanding what the full range of human possibilities might be – as well as in the nature of “reality”

itself’ (Graeber, 2001: 253). However, imagination can suggest an infinite range of different actions.

Reflexive collective action may prove central to distinguishing good ideas from speculation (Graeber, 2004b). This role of action and real-life experience is indeed a touchstone: ‘The idea, with its categories, is born of action and must return to action, at the risk of the degradation of the agent’ (Proudhon, 2002: 19). Nonetheless, using action to determine the final goal has its limits. To be understood, action should be contextualised, but then differing views on strategic action (Horowitz, 1964) may appear. People may agree on the final goal but disagree continually over strategy and tactics. Besides, even when they share the initial intention, ‘[...] energy is concentrated on immediate action’ (Ritter, 1980: 153) this tends to favour a repetitive, uncritical mode of action rooted in the present.

On the contrary, I would argue that collective memory is a good way to ground both experience and imagination in more than participative experience. It relates them to realms of values, for instance professional skills and local cultures, which agents re-enact and combine on many occasions. Far from its popular image of radicalism, as a social movement in action, it appears to be rather reformist and pluralistic (Den Hond and De Bakker, 2007). Considering the different approaches to anarchism and its broad range of practices (see table 1 below), I believe collective memory may characterise social anarchism in that it appreciates actual practices and attempts to come up with new, adaptive modes of action. As such, collective memory is experience-based, fuelled with practical obstacles and solutions. It consists in live creation; a series of arrangements combining action and imagination, the past and the present, commitment and resistance.

Various forms of anarchism (Horowitz, 1964; Nozick, 1974;	Social anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism	Isolationism	Individualism
Specific views	Unions focused on mutual aid, cooperative labour and self-management extended outside the workplace as well as within.	Separation from rest of society in small collectives.	Based on self-interest and often related to notions of ‘nature’ and personal leadership.

Common views

Consensus decisions-making, opposition to parliamentary democracy, direct action and 'propaganda of the deed', anti-authoritarian, Enlightenment values mixed with respect for local customs.

Table 1: Most political stands and collective action models are not a credo that individual anarchists would go by; nonetheless they share the criticism of existing forms of power.

According to Halbwachs (1997: 63) perceptions are anchored in collective memory. Memory is shaped by a group whose members must not only share the same initial impression but update them collectively on a regular basis so as to reconstruct the past (Halbwachs, 1994: 275). These groups constitute the intermediary (meso)level between individuals and their society. Historic memory is official, they are often written by experts. Individual memories are those that belong to us personally, outside the 'common domain' (Halbwachs, 1997: 92). Peer groups repeatedly sharing time and space make it possible to combine autobiographic and historical memories. If these types of memory are not combined continually, an 'imagined community' based on a reified past, lacking the shared interiority of collective memory between groups, might replace memory with the rigid frame of an idealised society (Anderson, 1982).

The problem of sharing collective memory while retaining a personal, engaged vision of the past and the present as the basis of one's own intentions is a 'labour of consensus' typical of the three main challenges of anarchism indicated above: the challenge of abstracting oneself from already existing frames of experience; the challenge of balancing individual and collective forces; and the challenge of aligning action and imagination. In my opinion, the current claims of anarchists that they know and practice good solutions to the problem of working and living together finds its test in their ability to find a basis in collective memory and to share this memory across generations and cultures. To realise such a test, this article takes the case of the anarchist tradition among printers as part of the print union movement over the past two centuries. After a brief description of the case, I will examine whether some collective memory of their action remains in an age when anarchism is very popular.

Methodology

This study uses an extended case-method to document the case of anarchism among printers, including participant observation in an attempt to 'locate everyday life in its extra local and historical context' (Burawoy, 1998: 4). The backbone of this study is mostly participant observation (Van Maanen, 2011), which allowed the author to contrast discourses with what people actually do in

relation to their actual frames of experience. This experience led to the research question: the present transmission of anarchist work experience via collective memory among workers in the so-called 'creative industries'. I investigate whether, as intellectual workers and social agents, they actually claim and enact the inheritance of anarchist unions, which were particularly active in the publishing industry. If such is the case, I also examine what exactly this transmission consists in.

This fieldwork is a combination of two different types of experience in various organisations. I have worked in publishing houses from 1994 in a range of 13 small companies and large groups in different positions (intern, reader, author, board member) (Riot, 2012). I also carried out four years of participant observation from 2005 to 2008 (Riot, 2009) in a digital art centre linked to a software industry innovation cluster.

After defining the research question, I complemented this fieldwork material with two other sources. First, I gathered archival data related to the history of print unions and printers mostly in France from 1780 to 1980. Then I carried out a series of in-depth interviews in spring and summer 2013. These ten additional in-depth interviews used the data triangulation method (Silverman, 2010), focusing on the specific issue of 'anarchism' and print unions. The informants (printers, publishers and authors as well as developers) were already familiar with the author's research and had previously had an interest in political issues related to lifestyle and organisation at work. Finally, I attended a series of four seminars in Paris (ETAPES seminars) where anarchists described their everyday practices at work and debated their key challenges. Few were publishers or printers, but most of them were craftsmen working in the food industry and construction. Most of them were also part of the CNT (anarchist trade union) and they were looking for specific solutions in reference to past anarchist traditions.

The history of printers: Anarchism and print unions in past centuries

Although the first print shop opened in La Sorbonne (Paris) as early as 1469, the growth of the printing industry as such dates back to the 19th century (Rebérioux, 1982). The growth of the industry was accompanied by technical progress and multiple innovations in terms of labour organisation. Print workers had a special status: many of them were also writers and thinkers (Jules Michelet, Pierre Leroux and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon himself). Typographers and typesetters pioneered the writing and publishing of 'little blue books' aimed at popular instruction as well as reviews dedicated to workers. Print workers, especially Parisian print workers facing unemployment, often had a different relationship with employers and the State from that of low-skilled workers and played a key

role in most of the French revolutions, particularly those of 1830, 1848 and 1870 (this role has been described and discussed by Kautsky [1924], Gramsci [1995] and Manheim [2013]).

Most revolts and strikes were caused by periods of low economic dynamism in conjunction with the introduction of new printing technologies. The introduction of these new technologies delimits three major periods: the press in the 1820s, composition print around 1900 and finally phototypesetting (the so-called ‘Hersant press’ introduced by the newly restructured press conglomerate). This last change caused the loss of 15,000 jobs between 1973 and 1978 (Rebérioux, 1982: 66). At the time of the 1976 ‘framework agreement’, 60% of the workforce in the publishing industry worked in production.

Although they were a minority after the creation of La Gutenberg (the main print union) and the institutionalisation of the Federation (Fédération Française des Travailleurs du Livre) in 1880, anarchists agreed with socialists on key original solutions to concrete problems as they were encountered: they created production cooperatives, cooperative shops and restaurants, labour exchanges and mutual funds (Rebérioux, 1982: 49 and 71). Such mutualised goods and services also existed in other professions, which made exchange and trade easy in small circles. However, printers were highly-skilled workers and they made books. Because they were especially influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment, which proscribed trade guilds and corporatism as hostile to equality between all men, anarchist printers advocated different values from those of traditional corporations (Chauvet, 1971). They introduced specific work methods so as to maintain past traditions while adapting to technological innovations.

	‘Viaticum’	‘Commandite’	Education through life
Definition	Sending emissaries all around the world to provide mutual support (network), for instance money in strikes or volunteers during the Spanish War in 1936. This was balanced with	Work brigades receive a collective wage and split it between them.	Unions were long torn between their interest in technical progress and the role of machines. However, this also challenged the specific advantage of highly skilled

	workers need for direct mutual aid (solidarity from their peers and ties to people they knew well).		workers. In their present situation, keeping control over rare know-how proved essential.
General intent (Rebérioux, 1982: 113)	Spread anarchist ideas by implementing ‘propaganda by the facts’. Promote a vision of universal solidarity (in line with the ideas of the Great Revolution) implemented in a step-by-step way (federation of local networks). Work on class issues via education (peer solidarity and workers’ university; equality of manual and intellectual labour).		

Table 2: Anarchist strategies.

Most of these solutions, however, were controversial among workers. Possibly the most important dimension of all (especially when considered in relation to collective memory, as we discuss below) is education. Through education, anarchist groups among printers were trying to solve one of their main contradictions, that of their wish to spread their ideas (free thinking) and their desire to limit the transmission of their technical knowledge through an apprenticeship structure. The spread of knowledge to other workers, such as accepting women in the work force (Burr, 1993) and the number of apprentices per worker (Rebérioux, 1982) were hotly debated issues. Despite the economic growth in the industry (the union had 60,000 members in 1937 [Rebérioux, 1982: 69]), the complex issue of the defence of highly-skilled workers against machines and a low-skilled work force as documented in Britain (Hobsbawm, 1984; Thompson, 1980) was also central in France. This possibly explains the growth of a highly centralised, reformist union keen on creating alliances with state institutions and the decline of the profession following the development of large media groups, new technologies (Rebérioux, 1986) and deregulation.

Anarchists seem to have been influential along with socialists and they were especially interested in complex situations such as those related to freedom of thought and censorship as well as the relationship between urban and rural life. Professions with a long tradition that are regularly faced with technical advances, such as printers and typographers, seem to be especially well-placed to deal with such issues. Although they held certain positions in common with radicals and socialists, such as solidarism (Audier, 2012; Touraine et al., 1987), they were always faced with the difficult problem of their position as a minority: their

distance from both the socialist and capitalist systems might explain the specific organisational choices made by anarchists who begged to differ, but at the risk of isolating themselves. For instance, two of the most original initiatives by anarchist printers were the consumer and work cooperatives of Charles Gide in Nîmes and the Godin Institute in Amiens (both under the influence of Rochdale), and the Freinet School where the children's comprehensive education included the use of a press for their own newspaper. These pioneering enterprises always remained a source of inspiration for modest local initiatives (combining craftwork, subsistence crops, a school and a press), which may explain their influence on other sectors of society (Maitron, 1975). Today, as we shall see, the anarcho-syndicalist positions of highly-skilled workers such as printers have little influence on contemporary agents. This profession is in decline due to the replacement of craftsmen by machinery and print by multimedia. However, we may have expected it to remain influential in highly-skilled, intellectual professions, given the close relations of publishers, authors and developers in producing and selling books. Yet as we shall presently see, the collective memory of anarchism still remains. At present, it looks like two transformed versions of the original, the first one a response to professional situation, the second a libertarian perspective on society.

Collective memory of past print unions in the French publishing industry today

Few printers and typographers are still active today in France: they mainly remain in the National Print House (Imprimerie Nationale) and in small provincial printers, generally old family firms, highly specialised in upmarket production (art books, brochures and pictures, small series). This grim picture of the industry contrasts with two centuries of unprecedented growth and the rise in power of the Print Union. The decline of the union was already clear in the 1970s due to technological innovation and the replacement of workers by machinery. Consequently, most of the anarchist legacy of this professional group is to be found in other subgroups in the publishing industry.

Large media conglomerates generally consider the more productive parts of the value chain as nonstrategic, as can be observed by the growing importance of sales and communication (Riot, 2012). Major publishers benefit from their central position, controlling publication and distribution systems. They strengthen this position by building Chinese walls between the various contributors to the object, the 'book' (author, designer and illustrator, proof-reader, printer, bookstore owner). The frequent use of part-time labour, subcontracting (Barley and Kunda, 2004) and outsourcing contributes to the

precarious living conditions of the creative work force where talent is the dominant value and competition is intense between individuals and publishing houses. An author comments:

I could very well say people like me are anarchists by necessity, because we receive no support from the State whatsoever and because we are isolated. This situation made me think more about these ideas and look back at some attempts to make things different.

In large groups, a few publishers are aware of printers and their craft. They want to keep these firms alive because of their tradition and their role in industry. All insist on the importance of printing in the meaning of the publisher's project and they refer to Mame, a very old printing house. Boulaire (2012) documented the case of this Catholic printer, reflecting on the quality of its craft and peculiar organisational methods. To this day, the combined influence of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church and of left-wing collectives is still very present in agents' representations of the print industry. More precisely, this influence seems to counter-balance the family-business, 'corporatist' orientation structuring the industry. To carry on the practices of important figures such as Pierre Seghers (Doucey, 2011) and François Maspero (Maspero, 1982), anarchists who worked closely with printers and devoted their life to discovering poetry and social science from all over the world. Two informants mention a specific work system similar to that of anarchist printers in the past, but they never identify it as such even though they are aware of it. Instead, the relationship is essential, especially under dire economic circumstances both parties describe:

The reason why I keep going is the fact that I work with SW [the publisher]. The books are beautiful; we talk about them with her on a regular basis. (Printer)

Working with P [the printer] is essential to my project; it has been ever since I created my publishing house. The specific nature of my books, as unique objects, the fact that P works the stock so we have no waste counterbalances my choice of large group distribution. I negotiate where I can how to make my books different. (Publisher)

Independent publishers are a very heterogeneous group (Noël, 2012). Some of them are 'militants', generally small houses working in close networks. They attend political events such as summer universities, congresses and the popular 'Fête de l'Huma' (a large left-wing festival organised every September). At the same time, they attempt to attract public support (mostly at local level but also from the Ministry of Culture and the National Centre for Books [CNL]). Their attitude can sometimes be opportunistic, an author comments:

[Small local publishing houses] benefit from State, regional, local funding, because they are a regional minority with a rare language. They are part of local economic

development but their cooperatives don't work so well. They are not open to everyone. What makes them anarchists are their slogans and what they write in their books against the State; not in French, mind you, so not everyone can read it. I call it biting the hand that feeds you.

More generally, small firms, depending on volunteer work and family support are in no real position to align their ideas with their practice. In fact, the overproduction of books and the creation of many small publishing houses was facilitated by the introduction of offset printing technology in the 1970s and free trade between European firms in the 1990s. This may explain the lack of interest in printers and their work conditions. An author remembers:

For [this founder of his publishing house], anarchism meant not paying anyone, authors or printers. You can call it a credo. In the end, a printer took him to court and won. After a while, L created a new publishing house along the same lines. And again. And again. On the other hand, Edmond Thomas was a well-known anarchist. He published poems by workers, poets he liked. To survive, he combined printing and publishing activities. He was always honest; it was not for profit, but you were always paid on time (Author).

Recently, such projects as writers' cooperatives have appeared. Author François Bon¹, who is familiar with anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist thinking, as well as being trained in typography, is an important influence on one of them, Remue.net, through training activities. For him (Bon, 2011), using websites increases publishing opportunities and at the same time defends the role of authors in society and the originality of the French system of authors' rights (as opposed to copyright). In his recent "autobiography of objects", Bon also pays tribute to the machines of the past, and to work places that insisted on socio-materiality as a source of inspiration for what he refused to call 'our virtual age'. The limit to the internet-based system is that its work organisation and its sharing system are based on voluntary contributions only, and most people only dialogue via the Internet.

It seems that collective memory about printers' and their organisations is more or less lost among people working in the publishing industry. It is more present among agents who were in contact with printers themselves, but it is seldom identified as such. What matters most are the craft traditions and a form of corporatism (Ingram and Simons, 2000; Maitron, 1975). Anarchism is an inspiration for many, but it is not really connected to from unionised anarchists' collective memory. Instead it is associated with either nostalgia or more radical forms of political engagement – the social memory of the official history of anarchism – 1870 and 1936 contrasting with a disappointing present age where

1 <http://remue.net>; <http://www.tierslivre.net>; <http://publie.net>.

agents feel trapped (Scott, 2012). As we shall presently see, very different reactions to anarchism can be found in software developers. They seem to be in the present, yet eager to find alternatives and utopias.

Collective memory of past print unions among software developers and multimedia workers today

Most software developers and multimedia workers began working when most printers had already disappeared, and they did not have a chance to witness the transition. They belong to a different world, also quite small. Most of them have postgraduate degrees from engineering schools, business schools and art schools. In line with their position and skills, most new technology professionals look at anarchism as a relief on norms unrelated to technological expertise. In the past, many highly-skilled printers would have the same position, promoting their work organisation and trade union as the most legitimate ground for society as a whole. Barley and Kunda (2004) have shown how this position tends to jeopardise developers' work conditions by conditioning solidarity to careers and skills.

Moreover, software developers in large corporations often identify anarchism with the skills of the founding fathers of dominant corporations such as Apple. They feel attracted to the freedom California represents, as opposed to the French suburbs where they work. One of them expresses this attraction as a feeling of inferiority:

All the creativity is out there in the open. They play Cowboys and Indians, free style. We are just a bunch of 'me-toos', we abide by the hierarchical rules in our little box. No wonder we never earned their respect. (Developer)

Many developers associate high tech and innovation with American libertarian culture, referring to Palo Alto and Steve Jobs as icons of this counterculture. As independent workers, who often call themselves 'entrepreneurs', they are often highly-skilled, proud of their superior craft and their independence. Although they identify with Silicon Valley tycoons because of their prowess, they have mixed feelings because of the use of what was initially counter culture to make money. They do not realise that their paradoxical love-hate relationship with innovative technology correspond to an old tradition among printers. They too alternated pioneering mechanics and inventions and Luddite actions (Jones, 2013) in defence of their jobs.

Other types of workers are no more capable of dealing with the contradictory nature of their position. They work in former state-owned companies and belong

to trade unions. They conform to the rules of oppositional activism and deplore the individualism of the profession (Roy, 2010). This last trait they associate with the 'anarchism of the market' as opposed to the powerful organisation of trade unions in national Telecom firms that impose stable, methodical rules.

Because they have no real memory to refer to, independent workers and large ex-public group employees share an ambivalent relationship with anarchism. They both identify anarchism with a radical 'no more rule' solution, one that does not really suit them because of their won love-hate relationship with technology and rules. In fact, anarchist ideas have been dealing with this paradox of working with machines (Orr, 1996) and the problem of finding a common ground to benefit collectively from advances in science and technology. The nature of the benefits and the question of property rights is also an issue. For lack of collective memory, workers also identify anarchism with the end of private property. Small entrepreneurs somehow focus on the defence of their property rights, and this may explain their hostility to 'anarchist ideas'. Open source developers are more engaged in defending hackers and pirates, although some of them argue that this is more of a 'style' than real commitment. One of them explains:

I am just a gamer; that's what I enjoy; of course, I know about pirates, hackers, they're cool, but to me it's like... Tolkien, I like because my friends like him too, so it's something we share. Let's put it this way, I don't share the rest, politics, fine art, and big stuff. (Developer)

Most multimedia workers refer to successful entrepreneurs and art movements such as Fluxus or Situationists (Careri, 2013) – especially artists working in collectives – but they fail to identify problems related to work systems (previously explored by anarchist unions) when they claim to have invented alternative ways of organising projects.

I tell you we built an online platform. To me this is more a sort of common ground to deal with anarchy than an anarchic solution. What would an anarchic solution be? (Entrepreneur)

They define these choices more readily in relation to constraints imposed by contracting and the necessity to be more flexible. The same is true for their international experience:

Now I prefer to work in India. Developers there work for cheap; there are no rules to prevent us from doing this and that. There is more space to invent new things. Call it what you like, international, libertarian; I have no time to read. So to me, anarchy by the book, forget about it! (Artist)

However, an artist-developer explains his anti-system position a little further:

Yes I defend open source technology, yes I am an outsider to all systems, and yes I claim anarchism as an inspiration but... I have two children; I live in Ivry (where there used to be many printers, I knew some of them, you know). I pay tribute to them here, as I try to earn money so I can travel around the world with my family. I'm more or less looking for escape. I wish I had more money. So where exactly do you draw the line of my engagement? (Another Artist)

When asked, agents often confide that, outside a close circle of family and friends, they do not have many opportunities to share more than goods and services in simple, short-term transactions. Although they regret it, they say this is because they don't have time and also because they get few opportunities to do so. They also mention dystopian views of the world (Ballard, 2003) in reference to anarchism as if they were bracing for the worst in the near future when using these ideas (Biagini, 2012). Still, in my opinion, most of their discourses display the influence of individual anarchism and libertarian ideas that sound both anti-system (Bookchin, 2003) and like those of the 'San Francisco boys'.

Finally, a possible evolution is taking place with the creation of fab labs (Gershenfeld, 2008); in the case of France (Bottolier-Despois, 2012), the makerspace model is associated with the renewed interest for the influence of Northern Europe successes such as the Fabriken in Sweden on production and design (Koskinen et al., 2011). It is an attempt to use technological progress for the benefit of the majority in production organisation, and participants are clearly aware of this. Participation and collectivism, the sharing of project tasks, are perhaps only possible because this is only a small part of most participants' activities, but the model can also prove more central and benefit from the international network which is currently expanding.

To conclude, in both cases, that of publishers and that of multimedia workers, actors adopt a wide range of attitudes when they refer to anarchism, few of them relate to the print union and printers as a source of inspiration for their present work and everyday life. However, people who work in the publishing industry are in general better informed than software developers and technicians, who have more or less replaced printers after the introduction of offset printing, computers and the Internet. This suggests the importance of collective memory and work experience in perpetuating the legacy of past ages: because publishers worked with printers for many years, they display a keen knowledge of their traditions whereas developers and software designers would sooner mention Luddites who made a lasting impression on post-enclosure history. This is in line with Halbwachs (1997) who describes collective memory as made up of encounters within the spatial framework of physical surroundings, whereas historical memory is more abstract and mostly shared by historians and intellectuals. All the professionals I interviewed tend to perceive anarchism as a radical and

ideological stand rather than a set of practical solutions. "Anarchy by the book? Forget about it." one respondent (an Artist and free-lance Web-designer) said, adopting a Libertarian stand on life because, she argued: "People today are selfish because they perceive their bourgeois, middle-class values might be under-threat." However, I also observe that in both professional groups, renewed interest in productive activities related to arts, crafts and specific skills, as well as in social organisations (cooperatives, disintermediation, short circuits, fair trade) has resulted in a wide range of independent projects, which are seldom related to the legacy of past anarchist workers. When listening to people and looking at what they were doing, I found they were not only rediscovering solutions and practices but actually building new frameworks, interesting and viable alternatives to more traditional work systems and ways of life. It may also point at a specific problem of anarchism: its more interesting dimensions, as a social force, are hidden behind an image of radicalism and disruptive tactics.

In line with recent transformation, a more cultural approach of the various strands of social movements (Polletta and Jasper, 2001) reveals a reformist stand aiming at practical solutions and pluralist alliances to deal with local problems. Although this micro-activism may fall under the radar of social movement analysts (Soule, 2012; Soule and King, 2008) because of its scope, it also shapes the strategic action field (Fligstein and McAdam, 2012). It contributes to the life and diversity of arenas of interaction (de Bakker et al., 2013) by challenging the ways issues are framed and by contributing a large choice of tactics in complement to the more identified ones of large NGOs (den Hond and de Bakker, 2007). Anarchist influence may be exerted in a more pervasive than radical way and it may be important to explain why it is so low-key in a loud, media age. We shall now examine the three reasons why anarchist collective memories and work traditions have been forgotten for a while. This phenomenon is related to actual practices and anarchists' preference for 'propaganda by fact' rather than discourse. However, rediscovering this rich material, spurred from instrumental appropriations, might prove essential to transform life at work.

Findings about the specific role of collective memory in present understanding of anarchism

As illustrated by the case of printers and their successors, the situated nature of their approach to the anarchic tradition makes it very difficult to share widely. The idea that this decline is to be explained by the disappearance of industrial labour, and that what succeeded it was the 'knowledge age' of capitalism, weakens the argument: printers and typographers were always 'knowledge

workers', 'intellectual producers' who had long been an ideal for many left-wing thinkers such as Walter Benjamin (1986). The declining collective memory of anarchism in specific professions and work systems is therefore a complex issue.

One reason is that, for centuries, anarchists attempted to limit the influence of myths and rites, superstitions and ideologies, so as to promote freethinking, practical skills and solidarity. Connecting to even the most glorious past by 'the manufacturing of tradition' (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 2012) is a problem, mostly because it excludes all those who are ignorant of this 'Great History'. The second reason is related to anarchists' interest for all local cultures; it takes pride in its local adaptability. It is of a discrete nature because of its dislike of dogma. Together, cultural values should always make up an open ensemble of original solutions. However, many of these memories and traditions prove to be incompatible. The third reason is related to the very nature of collective memory. My argument so far has been that collective memory of past experience proves more important to fuel the imagination (which is dear to Graeber), than social history (theories and traditions that can be found in books). However, collective memory cannot be shared by many: it is a small group preserve. When it spreads, it is often associated with radical alternativeness and isolationist tendencies. Its nature changes, and because it is no longer based on shared live experiences but on historical memories (Halbwachs, 1997), it comes to resemble tales many can share. I believe the three reasons for the difficulties to maintain collective memories in anarchism imply a very rich culture, which explains its influence in the social field and its importance in social movements. Consequently, the main challenge for anarchists now might be to prove that they can go beyond their criticism of the present state of society and fully engage in it even though their modes of action rely on small-group solidarity.

Anarchy: Looking for ways around the tall tale of skilled labour forces

Anarchists always seem to represent a side model, as a complement to the dominant frame of experience, combining different dimensions of life and simplifying the model (fewer beliefs, less expert knowledge, entrenchment of role models). However, after 1968, the broadening of social rights issues (such as minority issues) took place at the same time as anarcho-syndicalist traditions such as that of printers and typographers weakened. As Boltanski and Chiapello (1999) point out, the paradoxical appropriation by capitalism of certain anarchist ideas (mostly individualism and libertarianism) has weakened its most anti-capitalist dimensions by dismantling the coherence between rights and duties, individual and collective frames. One of the results of this evolution is that alternative work systems and self-help practices (as existed among anarcho-

syndicalists in general and printers in particular) have been more or less forgotten or misunderstood. They seem to correspond to specific practices and professional groups, which more or less belong to the past. To prevent these practices being transformed into ideas and limited to another written tradition (the dogmas of social history, according to Halbwachs), the pragmatic anarchistic method of dealing with power and knowledge at work needs to be remembered. This includes the way anarchistic printers challenged dominant streams in their unions and certain forms of organisation based on non-monetary trade as Graeber (2001) reminds us. Whereas he deliberately favours such foreign examples as Wampum among American Indians (shells that were used for trade and for peace treaties supporting a complex system of exchanges among tribes), the present research stresses the role of more familiar examples in the recent history of labour in the West (Lash and Urry, 1987).

A very important action in relation to collective memory was anarchists' interest in education as a way of fighting against domination and discrimination and promoting solidarity. Low skilled workers were not forever proletarian and they did not need to wait for the *Grand Soir*² either. Even so, our distance from the reality of these everyday practices helps to make them more appealing and arises today's imagination. Many workers were not so keen on sharing their knowledge and skills at the time. Still, I observed that actors who are or have been familiar with printers and their organisation are more capable of accounting for their choices. For instance, they argue that discrepancies between skilled and unskilled workers are a real problem for anarchistic organisations and training may be a (slow) preferable solution to simply going back to job specialisation. Learning is a collective process, but, as one member of an anarchist bakery pointed out, it is very difficult to support unskilled or unreliable workers in a tight economy, since their mistakes affect others also. However, rather than just firing them, collective memories of past arrangements and ideas can provide original solutions. Consequently, I would argue that what characterises anarchism is an ensemble of ideas and cases rather than a doctrine, its propensity to draw its inspiration for action from other sources, which it does non-dialectically in the sense that it is not trying to structure a problem in reference to a limited series of terms.

2 In English 'the Great Night', this French expression is used by Marxists and Anarchists who refer to a disruptive moment changing all power and all the rules of the social game in society. The birth of this new society is mentioned, for instance, in the International, the song written by Eugène Pottier en 1871.

Anarchism: Dealing with many kinds of traditions and memories

As illustrated by the different positions of actors with regard to the anarchistic past in highly qualified work groups, there are different ways of relating to that past by appropriating different ideas and methods. Although this particular professional group has greatly declined due to changes in the value chain and the introduction of different production methods, it should be pointed out that it still exists (demonstrating an alternative to books as short-term consumer goods) and that the printer specific working organisation is still influential in defining the difference between productive labour (technicians) and intellectual professions.

In the age of creative industries, professionals take up many different positions, and this has always been the case since Gutenberg's time. I observed that referring to the anarchist tradition is often a way for actors to claim a different approach to individual and collective relations. To them, it implies it is not just about business. Far from preventing them from taking part in work groups and action, this may on the contrary encourage interesting organisational methods and original approaches to specific problems. Although collaboration and beliefs need not be necessarily aligned (Shantz, 2009), anarchists who have good experience of creating chains of cooperation are free to take part in local action with people who face urgent problems (for instance the marginalisation of the unskilled workforce in Western countries).

This participation would be a problem only for purists who claim ownership of the anarchist label and want to follow tradition by the book, which is itself quite contrary to anarchism. However, if anarchists want to work on a common basis, collective memory is not enough. This is, first, because they may not be shared by all, depending on when they join and at what stage of their life (Neill, 1960), and second because sharing collective memory (in relation to common experiences) is not the way to deal with strong professional and cultural traditions if one does not believe in insurrection (Hernon, 2006), which would provide a complete and radical change. When adopting the transformation approach, one needs to find arrangements and rely on improvisation. Yet as Scott (2012) points out, such modest solutions work well in a middle class world where people share the same way of life. It is more difficult to find common ground when cultures are really different. One example given by an anarchist union member working in construction was the difficulties his union faced with immigrants who were tied to their families in the village back home and would still follow their traditions, myths and rites as well as religious dogmas. When they are shared between different groups, collective memories often conflict and contradict one another. Consequently, anarchists who take pride in refuting any supremacy of

dogmas or value hierarchies still need to work out solutions to deal with these conflicts and find common ground.

The role of collective memory in going beyond union parochialism to include society at large

As was already mentioned, anarchism is often identified with the absence of rule and with alternative time and space. Rather than referring to founding fathers and historical dates in an age of intense tradition manufacturing (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1992), collective memory refers to collective experience shared within a group on various occasions and adapted to present circumstances. In that regard, the memory of anarchists' unions at work may not be shared by many, but it possibly takes on all its meaning in the present. According to most informants, possibly the best argument in favour of this alternative model is the admission that something needs to change in their life. This should be related to their desire to restrict their commitment to a certain form of society where professions and corporations are central (Whyte, 1956), and look for viable alternatives. Referring to the anarchist ideal of the commune is a way of describing the problem: organisations are at present taking the commitment that should be devoted to the commune because there is no commune that would balance their intrusive spread in workers' life. As a form of prefiguration, people like to mention their various initiatives and everyday inventions to co-create this free space.

Collective memory supports such everyday life invention because it relates not so much to past traditions and actions – preserved in books and bibles (Goody, 2000) – but to practical ways of dealing with everyday life. Some choices made by anarchists support this claim. For instance, unlike the modernism of some revolutionaries in Spain, anarchists were interested in pre-capitalist collectivist modes of organisations to deal with, for example, the scarcity of resources in villages (Dolgoft, 1974). Anarchists did not so much reform these modes of organisations as favoured broader cooperative action between units based on their common approach to work and public property. These long-term modes of organisation seem to suggest a complementary dimension to what printers' unions can teach us today. One could argue that such traditional methods indicate a certain form of archaism and interdependence between family and community, which is precisely the reason why modern state-welfare structures are often considered less constraining. This objection is quite strong, yet there is no reason why politics and power issues should be set apart from the family, as long as they are not limited to this. In fact, looking at so-called 'archaic arrangements' maybe a good way to understand the relationship between what is

individual and what is collective, what is a small group sharing collective memory and what is society at large (Dubuisson-Quellier, 2013) outside state laws and market trading. A member of a cooperative restaurant pointed at this problem by saying that they struggled to keep in touch with their (poor) neighbourhood because, although their meals were cheap, they were organic. It appealed to the educated middle class who would come on purpose (as a sign of commitment to the ideas), but it repelled the 'locals' who would go to MacDonald's on the other side of the street. So it required a lot of time and effort to go beyond the limits of the close circle of aficionados and be part of the city streets. It also involved displaying great determination in sharing the burden of society with everyone and everything, while remaining different.

Just as Graeber observes the problematic origin of anthropology (as the corollary of Western domination), the key difficulty in anarchism should be pointed out: its attempts to invent forms that combine individual freedom and collective peace often failed, and resulted in the rejection of the past by new generations. It is also true that, contrary to Marxists (Crehan, 2002), failing to spread their ideas and modes of organisation may not be a failure in itself since anarchist approaches are often satisfied with limited influence and melanges. However, the ability to share their views and practices via collective memory seems essential. Otherwise they become part of the official history and are transformed or completely disappear. Pointing at the conformism of the children of the 1968 Generation, Doug Mc Adam claims that: 'Their lives now serve as a general account of the contemporary biographies of yesterday's activists' (1989: 747). Fortunately, as this article attempts to show, in line with Graeber's idea, there can be many other ways to live in the present and relate to the past than family stories and anarchism by the book.

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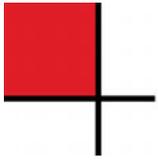
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No struggle, no emancipation: Georges Sorel and his relevance for Critical Organisation Studies*

Norman Jackson and Pippa Carter

Georges Sorel was a controversial theorist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and was usually labelled, though not necessarily accurately, an anarcho-syndicalist. He wrote prolifically on the emancipation of the proletariat, though is now largely ignored by the left generally, and, in particular, by critical organisation studies. It is suggested that, perhaps surprisingly (given when he was writing), much of his way of thinking and his ideas on organisation resonate with the concerns of today's Critical Organisation Theory. We examine a number of significant aspects of Sorel's work – particularly, his approach to language and to science; the centrality of the concept of myth in his work; and the role that he accords to agonistics – and consider his relevance for an emancipatory organisation theory.

Introduction

Georges Sorel (1847-1922) was a very unconventional man, in his personal history, in his practice, and, above all, in his thinking. He was, one might say, a man of many apparent contradictions. He started his professional life as an Engineer in the Department of Public Works and was employed there in the 1870s and 1880s. He achieved the status of Chief Engineer and became a Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur, but later became one of the foremost radical thinkers of the age, actively promoting revolutionary change. His domestic life belied the bourgeois style of his professional life, since he cohabited for many years with a semi-literate and very religious peasant woman, Marie David, and,

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after her death in 1898, although an atheist, he carried with him, until his own death 24 years later, a sacred image that she had given him (Berlin, 1979: 297). His first book was not published until 1889, after which he became a prolific writer, and a correspondent of some of the most familiar names of the time. He resigned from his engineering life in 1892, and moved to Paris. In 1899 he was an ardent Dreyfusard, but by 1909 he had become an opponent of the Dreyfusards, whose victory he saw as colonised by supporters motivated, not by a passion for moral justice, but by self-serving political reasons. He admired Mussolini (Sorel died before the 'March on Rome'), who reciprocated, and Lenin, who did not. His many detractors, of all shades of political opinion, characterise his thinking as erratic and weak. He also has, however, some notable supporters, and these find in his work threads that are both powerful and significant: for example, that creativity is the defining characteristic of being human; that there is no rational harmony in the world; that the proletariat is the carrier of true moral values; that there is no inevitable teleology of history, only the (unpredictable) outcomes that can be achieved through struggle; that to live is to resist, and that ceaseless struggle is the necessary precondition of emancipation. He was, in the words of Shils (1961: 16) 'a stern socialist moralist and an apocalyptic seer'. Indeed, for Humphrey, Sorel's 'place is beside Nietzsche and Freud as one of the great prophets of the modern age' (1971 [1951]: 218).

In this paper we propose to consider Sorel's relevance for contemporary critical organisation theory (COT). We find in Sorel a thinker who offers an analysis that is congruent with much contemporary thinking, especially poststructuralist thinking, in COT, but whose synthesis has something different and significant to offer: an emphasis on action. In a world so clearly teetering on the edge of disaster, where there is such a dire need for alternative thinking, and alternative action, but where it seems that many to whom we might look for such alternatives are like rabbits paralysed by the headlights, perhaps this is a good moment to revisit thinking that emphasises the importance, not just of understanding, but also of acting on the basis of that understanding.

Although Sorel was writing more than a century ago, Berlin, in his volume of essays *Against the Current* (1979: 331), comments that '(t)he world about and against which he was writing might be our own'. A similar point is made by others – see, for example, Portis (1980). We would suggest that precisely the same comment can be made today. Our intention here is to draw parallels between Sorel's thinking and some ideas which are central to much of COT. Clearly, COT is not a homogenised body of thought and contains much that is disputatious, disputable and contradictory. However, we suspect that most researchers in COT would subscribe to some, if not all, of the concerns of Sorel.

Llorente (2011; see also Llorente, 2012), lamenting the latter-day neglect of Sorel's work, summarises these concerns thus:

Sorel's works address[es] many of the central themes in emancipatory social theory: the permissible use of violence in political struggles; the possibilities and limits of parliamentarism; the role of intellectuals in revolutionary movements; the suitability of various revolutionary strategies and organizational structures available to the oppressed; the contrast between reform and revolution; the relationship between left-wing political parties and those whose interests they claim to represent; the transformation of the bourgeois state; and the moral aims of socialism. (2011: 1)

Given this apparent relevance, it seems strange that Sorel's work is so absent from COT, yet, as Llorente notes, notwithstanding the high regard that Sorel is held in by many, the contemporary political left appear to regard him as, generally, of little interest. We, too, would suggest that this is, to say the least, an unfortunate oversight¹.

More contradictions?

It is necessary to acknowledge that Sorel's work has often excited controversy. Sorel consistently declared himself of the left, but he has been claimed as their own by both left and right. He was involved, *inter alia*, with monarchism and with *Action Française*, he 'intrigued' Wyndham Lewis, and was claimed by Mussolini as a major influence. This ability to appeal to left and right is not unique – Nietzsche is a particularly well-known example and, more recently, postmodernism has proved similarly flexible. Sorel's writings appear to lack a coherent pattern, even though it could be – and has been (see, for example, Berlin, 1979) – argued that the idea of an emancipatory moral revival is a central motivating theme in his work. Sorel was, deliberately, not a systematic thinker – he despised system. Although focussed on a particular problematic, his method was to interrogate in depth relevant ideas, concepts and issues that had attracted his attention and interest. In a Deleuzian sense, his thought can be seen as nomadic. Sorel produced a large body of work much of which is not easily available, and its accessibility is also limited, from an Anglophone point of view, because much of it is not translated. His best known work and the one with which he is most closely associated (and our focus here), is *Reflections on Violence* (1961 [1908]), though Sorel himself did not regard it as his most significant work

¹ Although interest in Sorel seems to fluctuate, and is rare in Organisation Studies, there is a permanent and extensive interest located in the Société d'études soreliennes. The organisation maintains an archive of Sorel studies and publishes a journal, *Mil neuf cent: revue d'histoire intellectuelle*. See

<http://www.revue1900.org/welcome/index.php?accueil=1>.

(Berlin, 1979: 321; Meisel, 1951: 14). In *Reflections on Violence*, and of particular relevance to COT, he sees the emancipation of the working class achievable only through the conflict of the general strike. This has been seized upon to condemn Sorel, against the evidence of his own words, as the advocate of a mindless brutality. Our objective here is not to argue, *nolens volens*, for the relevance of Sorel's work, if only because some of it relates to historical conditions which no longer obtain. In any case, to do so would be contrary to the spirit of his writing. Rather, we look for relevance to our problematic of COT and treat Sorel, as we must, as a text.

Sorel is often labelled an anarcho-syndicalist, but although this seems highly appropriate in some respects, the fluidity of his thinking itself demonstrates the difficulties of such specific labelling, and his position on syndicalism changed over time, his early support for it later becoming criticism of it. Inevitably with thinkers not of our own time, no matter how timeless some of their understanding may be, there will be aspects that resonate only with the world as it was then. In Sorel's France most of industry was made up of small producers and the concept of syndicalism had real currency. The rise to dominance of the large, mainly capitalist, organisation was not typical of that era. However, since Sorel undoubtedly saw himself as a follower of Marx, and although he departs from some tenets of Marxism, we would suggest that Llorente's (2011: 4) argument for seeing him as an anarcho-marxist provides a more useful way of 'pigeon-holing' Sorel. Even so, it is important to be wary of any simplifications of Sorel's work. Ciccariello-Maher comments that study of Sorel discloses

a proliferation... of paradoxical pairings which constitute Sorel's positive project: to a science that is not science, we can add a progress that is not progress, a Marxism that is not Marxism, a violence that is not violence, a reason that is not reason,... a dialectic that is not the dialectic and... an anarchism that is not anarchism. (2011: 32)

Despite all these paradoxes, we would also note the comment from Stanley, that 'reading Sorel has become mandatory for modern scholars who wish an understanding of the theory of social science' (1981: 22). And, indeed, we will argue, for those who wish an understanding of modern organisations.

Reading Sorel

Just as there are contradictions in Sorel and in his work, there are also contradictions in Sorel scholarship. Some of the most basic of these relate specifically to issues of Sorel's work as text, and, especially of relevance in this instance, to issues of the text as translation. Although the *de facto* working

language of COT is English, it has been widely informed by scholarship which was not originally in English, but is used in translation. For some scholars this raises questions of the ‘purity’ of a text. However, from a poststructuralist point of view, purity of text is not really a relevant concept – a text is a text, it has utility, or not, for the reader, and this is what is important. Nonetheless, it can be both useful and instructive to examine some of the issues that arise from the relationship between an original text and its subsequent ‘life’ as a translation, and to consider how the selections and preferences of translators, and of commentators using those translations, might affect the signification of a translated text. This is particularly apposite in the case of Sorel.

With Sorel, there is no canonical literature, certainly with respect to an Anglophone organisation theory. There are two major works available in English translation: *Reflections on Violence* and *The Illusions of Progress*. The former first appeared in English as an authorised translation by T. E. Hulme, which was published in 1915². According to Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, of which there were several editions in French, originated in 1906 as a series of articles in *Le Mouvement Socialiste*. In the third edition, Sorel appended a short essay ‘Apology for Violence’, originally published in 1908 in *Le Matin*. This third edition would seem to be the basis of Hulme’s translation. Hulme’s translation has itself been the basis of subsequent editions of *Reflections on Violence* in English (see below). However, according to Jennings, in a new edition of *Reflections on Violence*, its earliest formulation was from 1905-6 in Italy, in Italian (1999: xxxv), (though Jennings [1985: 182] gives the 1906 *Le Mouvement Socialiste* articles as the origin). In this ‘new edition’ Jennings is styled as the book’s editor, but not as the translator. Indeed, no translation credit is given. However, in a short ‘Note on the translation’ (1999: xxxix) he says that ‘(t)he present text is a revised translation of that originally provided by Thomas Ernest Hulme. I had intended to use this translation in an unchanged form, but upon closer inspection decided that some, at times considerable, revision was necessary’. The implications of this are somewhat complicated when Jennings further informs us that ‘(t)he edition of the French text I have used is that published by Seuil in 1990, edited by Michel Prat. This itself is a reproduction of the eleventh edition, published by Marcel Rivière in 1950’ (1999: xxxix). He also notes, ‘(d)ifferent editions of the text have changed the order of its presentation. I have adopted what seems the most logical

2 We have opted for 1915, as given in the authoritative 1941 reprint published by Peter Smith in New York. However, other dates are also favoured, by others. For example, Meisel (1951) and Jennings (1999) both give 1914 as the first publication of Hulme’s translation in the US, and Meisel also gives 1914 for the UK, but Jennings gives 1916. Stanley (1969: ix) claims that it was translated by Hulme in 1920, or possibly (Stanley, 1976: 1) sometime soon after 1925, or possibly even 1950 (Stanley, 1981: 344). Unfortunately, Hulme was killed on the Western Front during World War I, in 1917.

pattern' (*ibid.*). Jennings does not develop his concerns about Hulme's translation and notes '... just one important example, I have translated Sorel's *lutte de classe* not as class war but as class struggle' (*ibid.*; see also Portis, 1980: 13). His only other example is his preference for retaining the French *syndicat* for trade union over Hulme's inaccurately anglicised 'syndicate'. Not highlighted by Jennings, but potentially more controversial, is his substitution of 'reformists' (e.g. Sorel/Jennings, 1999: 47) for Hulme's 'revisionists' (e.g. Sorel/Hulme, 1961: 64) – words with different signification now, but even more so when Sorel was writing. As regards Jennings's implication that he has reordered the text, in a comparison of the contents page of his and Hulme's versions the only substantial difference appears to be his preference for titling Chapter 2 as 'The decadence of the bourgeoisie and violence', which in Hulme was rendered as 'Violence and the Decadence of the Middle Classes'.

Before elaborating further on the significance of such issues for potential students of Sorel, it is appropriate to explain our own use of *Reflections on Violence*. As noted above, Hulme's translation was variously reprinted and the version which we have used is that of 1950/1961. This 'American' edition is the most comprehensive, with extra appendices by Sorel and an Introduction by Shils. A reviewer of an earlier draft of this paper questioned, quite reasonably, why we chose to use Hulme's translation, rather than the much more obvious, more modern edition by Jennings. There are a number of reasons for this.

As there is clearly no authoritative *urtext* as regards *Reflections on Violence*, commentators use a variety of sources. For example, Berlin (1979) uses a 1972 French version, whereas Jennings (1985), (as opposed to Jennings [1999] above), refers to a version published in Paris and Geneva in 1981. Horowitz (1961) uses the sixth French edition of 1925 (unfortunately, none of these record the name of the publishers). Meisel (1951) gives a useful overview of the various editions to that date. Some authors offer partial translations of their own, e.g. Stanley (1976). Since authors do not usually offer an explanation of their choice of source we must assume that they use that which they find most suitable for their purpose. As regards our own particular preference, we were attracted by Shils's very positive, well regarded and useful 'Introduction'. We find less utility in Jennings's 'Introduction', which is, we feel, unlike that of Shils, negative, calling the book 'profoundly disturbing' (Jennings, 1999: xxi). He continues,

Sorel not only takes violence as his subject but, more importantly, is prepared to equate it with life, creativity and virtue. Was this not Sorel's own illusion? And was it not, perhaps, one of the illusions that served most to disfigure the twentieth century? (Jennings, 1999: xxi)

It is this sort of superficial imputation that often obfuscates Sorel's work. Whether we like it or not, life, creativity and virtue are recognisable products of twentieth century violence, even if we deplore the fact that violence was their progenitor. We might point to the suffragettes, the recession of fascism, decolonialisation, advances in medicine, and, indeed, the artistic flourishing that has accompanied these. Yet Jennings then goes on (in our view, appropriately) to play down Sorel's advocacy: 'the violence endorsed by Sorel was not very violent at all' (*ibid.*), and to see it, (in our view, inappropriately), as amounting 'to little more than a few heroic gestures'; he continues:

at the centre of his thought was the distinction between the violence of the proletariat and that deployed by bourgeois politicians and their intellectual ideologues through the State. It was the politicians and ideologues, and not the proletariat, who resorted to wholesale acts of terror and repression in order to secure their own dominance. (Jennings, 1999: xxi)

Whether appropriate interpretations or otherwise, these comments do not seem to be consistent and his own conclusion would appear to make Jennings's initial concerns redundant.

There were other, more functional, but no less relevant, reasons for using the earlier version of Sorel's text. Since Jennings's version is relatively recent, there is much extant writing on Sorel which uses the Hulme translation. This becomes significant when we recall that Jennings is unhappy with this translation and has sought to reorder the contents, creating difficulties for comparing texts. It might be thought that, as Jennings has 'improved' on Hulme's translation, it is likely to be of greater utility to scholars and therefore worth the inconveniences noted. However, the provenance of the Jennings version is not clear, as he does not claim to have provided a new translation from the French, but to have revised Hulme's translation – in effect, a translation of a translation. Jennings has not expanded on his reason for this, other than saying it was 'necessary' (1999: xxxix). We can only speculate as to whether Hulme's translation was incorrect, dated or, perhaps, just aesthetically displeasing. Jennings's example above, and such comparisons as we have made ourselves, leave us unconvinced of the 'added value' of his 'translation'. The edition by Jennings does contain much useful information on Sorel, though, as with all claims regarding Sorel, it should be used circumspectly.

We have drawn attention to the above problems because they present a degree of undecideability which the student of Sorel must deal with. As noted later in this paper, this undecideability extends to *interpreting* what Sorel, or, perhaps more correctly, 'the Sorels', said – there is no single Sorel, only many Sorels. And this caveat applies, not just to different editions and different translations, but also to

issues of content. For example, we noted earlier that Sorel was made a Chevalier of the Légion d' Honneur, the ribbon of which he 'never failed to wear' (Meisel, 1951: 163). However, according to Horowitz (1961: 12), he rejected the award, as well as a pension from the government, though Stanley (1976: 6) claims that he did receive a state pension. There are other mysteries too: in our copy of the 1961 edition the translation is credited to Hulme and Roth on the title page, but to Roth and Hulme on the cover. Either way, there is no indication of what is Roth's contribution. However, according to Stanley (1969: ix), Roth contributed the translations of the three appendices, that is, Appendix 1 'Unity and Multiplicity', Appendix 2 'Apology for Violence', and Appendix 3 'In Defense of Lenin'. As one might by now expect, this also does not appear to be the case. 'Apology for Violence' first appeared in the third French edition, introduced by Sorel himself. It appears in translation in the 1941 edition, which means that Hulme was the translator, rather than Roth. The website of the venerable and learned American Historical Association (2014, <http://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/september-2003/in-memoriam-jack-j-roth>) is even more generous to Roth (born 1925): 'In 1950, along with T. E. Hulme, he translated Sorel's best-known work, *Reflections on Violence*'. However, Hulme was a casualty of the First World War, dying in 1917. Jennings (1999: xxxviii) mistakenly credits the 1972 reprint of the 1961 edition as the first appearance of the two extra appendices.

For Sorel's other major translated work, *The Illusions of Progress*, which concerns us less in this paper, the situation is less fraught than it is with *Reflections on Violence*, the translation by Stanley (1969) being the standard work. Similarly with the shorter work, *The Decomposition of Marxism*, translated by Horowitz (1961).

Our purpose in such an extensive excursion into the contradictions in Sorel scholarship is to alert the reader to the danger inherent in *any* authoritative statement on Sorel or his works (and that includes, of course, our own). Does this lessen the potential utility in Sorel for COT? We would argue that it does not. For example, many of the areas of dispute are issues of record, and might be, and, indeed, ought to be, eventually resolved. Equally, once the reader is aware of this variety, it is not a serious problem for a poststructuralist approach to Sorel's work – it just means that there are many texts, rather than only a few. It makes Sorel's *oeuvre* more extensive than it at first seems. We suspect Sorel would not be unhappy about this multiplicity, in that it makes his students labour to gain an understanding – he railed against simplistic, glib, superficial knowledge, and argued that what one *struggles* to understand is, in the end, better understood (see, for example, Sorel, 1961: 27). However, all this provides a graphic illustration of the signification of the phrase 'this is a text'. It is abundantly clear

that this text can be, and is, read very differently by different readers – hence, for example, how it becomes possible for both left wing and right wing thinkers to claim Sorel as an influence, and the attendant disagreements about whether Sorel himself was of the left or the right. The disputes and contradictions on the part of Sorel’s translators and commentators represent choices and preferences on *their* part, not on his, and, at some level, are intended to, and do, have an impact on how the work is read. So, now let us return to our own interpretation of this work.

Interpreting Sorel

It is relevant here to emphasise that we do not write as Sorel scholars, nor do we have any wish (impossible as it would be) to attempt to provide a definitive interpretation of Sorel’s work. We write as critical students of organisation, from an explicit poststructuralist perspective. Our intention here is threefold: to examine Sorel’s work as a text that can illuminate COT; to show the commensurability between Sorel’s work and a poststructuralist approach (see also Ciccariello-Maher, 2011³); and to illustrate its relevance to contemporary concerns in the theory and practice of organisation. To this end, we have identified four aspects of Sorel’s work, namely his approach to language, his view of the role of science in the social, the place of the concept of myth in his thinking and the significance of what we now call agonistics in his prescriptions for action.

Language

Sorel’s writing supposedly exhibits a ‘notorious vagueness’ (Meisel, 1951: 18), which has been seen by his critics as evidence of lack of rigour in his thinking. However, at least part of this apparent vagueness is attributable to a concern about the use of language that seems very familiar to contemporary ears. His approach to language was very particular, and he decried attempts to use

3 Ciccariello-Maher, writing from the ‘critical anarchist left’, has already affirmed a link between Sorel and poststructuralism. Indeed, he claims that ‘(t)he work of Georges Sorel simultaneously prefigures and surpasses later poststructuralism’ (2011: 30). His particular interest is focused on the resonances between Sorel’s work and that of Foucault, and he argues that it is Sorel’s ‘persistent but generally unfounded association with fascism’ that has prevented the author of *The Illusions of Progress* ‘from entering into the annals of poststructuralism’s prehistory’ (2011: 30), and finds that ‘(o)n both the question of reason and that of science, Sorel’s anticipation of Foucault is pronounced’ (2011: 32). We would agree that there are a number of points in Sorel’s work where the poststructuralist reader will think of Foucault, and, indeed, find that *The Illusions of Progress* is remarkably ‘Foucauldian’.

language so that meanings might be fixed and controlled, might constrain the boundaries of both thought and action. In defending himself against the charge of imprecision Sorel asserted:

We must beware of too much strictness in our language because it would then be at odds with the fluid character of reality; the result would be deceptive. (cited in Meisel, 1951: 19)

Sorel was opposed to reductionism, the creation of artificial order, of one-size-fits-all, the one best way, there is no alternative, dogmas. He was a theorist of uncertainty and disorder, of chaos, and opposed to consoling certainty and comforting unity. He bemoans the rules of scholastic writing where ideas are packaged to give the impression of symmetry, coherence and completeness, requiring no effort of comprehension, and which the reader absorbs uncritically, 'believing that they were based on the nature of things themselves' (Sorel, 1961: 27). Sorel requires effort on the part of the reader. There can be seen in his work, however, a poststructuralist approach to language and text, *avant la lettre*.

In particular, and deriving from this approach, it is important that the reader retains a critical awareness of the range of possible significations that can be attached to language and does not jump to the assumption that terms and concepts used by Sorel that have commonplace contemporary currency must, therefore, have commonplace contemporary meanings and significations. An especially relevant example is the meaning he attaches to 'violence'. It is ironic, given Sorel's awareness of the elusive quality of language, that, in the special instance of 'violence', he chose to 'adopt a terminology which would give rise to no ambiguity' (1961: 171). He uses the term 'force' to define the imposition of a particular social order by the state, which 'acts directly on labour, "to regulate wages", i.e. force them within the limits suitable to surplus value making, to lengthen the working day, and to maintain the labourer himself in the normal degree of dependence' (Sorel, 1961: 173, emphasis in original). The term 'violence' is reserved to define attempts to overthrow that order – in other words, to define *resistance to oppression*. Perhaps, had Sorel couched his arguments in terms of 'resistance', those commentators frightened by the very mention of 'violence' might have been less dismissive in reading his work.

'Violence' in Sorel's work cannot be seen simply as physical violence *qua* violence – and Stanley argues that 'Sorel is now generally agreed to have criticized violence more than he advocated it' (1981: 311) – but relates to the creative violence of inevitable resistance to control, oppression, repression, to force: force *enslaves*, violence *makes free*. Sorel was, for example, strongly opposed to sabotage and terrorism because they are, in essence, destructive (see, for example, Sorel, 1961: 118; see also various discussions in, for example, Humphrey, 1971: 184;

Berlin, 1979: 330; Portis, 1980: 72 and 102; Stanley, 1981: 240; Jennings, 1985: 40). 'Violence' is not aggression, it is resistance to force. Violence is action, and, as is the case with all action, what defines its value is function and motive: what it is meant to achieve and how it is meant to do that. Shils (1961: 17n6) comments: 'Sorel was no sadist and no admirer of brutality. Violence without the charismatic excitement and association with a sublime far-off end, was not regarded by him as genuine violence'. The same wider point can be made about the concept of the general strike, a far cry from the kind of event that such a concept might customarily evoke today (see below).

Sorel's conception of the ambiguity of text is central to his work and important in appreciating his approach. But his approach to interpreting the meaning of a text – a method which he called 'diremption' – has caused some uncertainty among commentators. An editorial footnote in Sorel (1961: 259) wails: 'Not able to find English equivalent – perhaps Sorel coined it'. This is not the case, however.⁴ Commentators often resort to repeating Sorel's own minimalist explanation without further development (for example, Meisel, 1951; Stanley, 1981; Jennings, 1985), or merely mention it in passing (for example, Horowitz, 1961; Portis, 1980). Hughes (1958), however, engages with the idea more fully. Diremption, he argues, consists in

wilfully wrenching out certain aspects of reality from the context that enveloped them and examining them independently one from another. To juxtapose a number of mutually incompatible statements, Sorel argued, meant to illuminate aspects of reality that might otherwise have passed unobserved. (Hughes 1958: 92)

Space precludes a full articulation of the link, but there does seem to be a strong resonance here with the concept of deconstruction so central itself to poststructuralism.

Science

Given Sorel's view of language, it is not surprising that he was anti-positivist – he argued that 'positivists... represent, in an eminent degree, mediocrity, pride, and pedantry' (Sorel, 1961: 142). He affirmed the value of science *qua* science as a

4 According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'dirempt' is recorded in English in the 16th century, and 'diremption' was used by the philosopher Thomas Hobbes in the 17th century. Usage of the term 'diremption' appears to be mainly ecclesiastical. By the 19th century it is found in theological/philosophical texts. It is currently to be found in philosophical writings, particularly with reference to Hegel, Heidegger and, interestingly, Derrida. However, it is used, principally, in its literal sense of 'tearing apart'. In distinction to this, Sorel's use is as a methodology, comprising, not just the separation, but also the interrogation, of that which has been dirempted. It is this *process* that suggests parallels with deconstruction.

creative process, and its potential to alleviate the profound drudgeries of work, insisting that ‘we should be mad if we handed the management of industry over to sorcerers, mediums and wonder-workers’ (Sorel, 1961: 149). But he was adamantly opposed to the penetration of science, and the adoption of scientific templates, in the realm of the social, the human. Specifically, he opposed the idea that the social could be measured by, explained by, and perfected in accordance with, natural science. He was happy to acknowledge an absolute science of what he calls ‘physical mathematics’, but beyond this, Sorel argued, is ‘the immense domain which occupies almost the entire reach of our consciousness: here the operations of our daily life take place. Here, logic operates very poorly’ (cited in Meisel, 1951: 266-7). Sorel was convinced of the role and significance of the irrational in human thought. Horowitz, in a useful summary of Sorel’s view of science, and its relevance to the social, notes:

It is clear to Sorel that if science cannot inhibit the forms taken by social practice, neither is science in a position to promote practice. It is therefore necessary to move beyond the orbit of science, beyond the probabilism of calculus, and locate the mainsprings of action in non-rational behaviour. (Horowitz 1961: 144)

Sorel opposed, root and branch, the view of the social, characteristic of functionalist Organisation Theory and which was already becoming prominent in his own time, as explicable by the rules, practices and methodologies of natural science. The purpose of such practice could only be to impose artificial order and control, to de-humanise, and to deny the inherent disorder and struggle of existence. The very idea that science can solve all social problems, Sorel argued, was ‘the *middle-class conception of science*’ (1961: 141, emphasis in original). He continues:

it certainly corresponds very closely to the mental attitude of those capitalists, who, ignorant of the perfected appliances of their workshops, yet direct industry, and always find ingenious inventors to get them out of their difficulties. For the middle class science is a mill which produces solutions to all the problems we are faced with: science is no longer considered as a perfected means of knowledge, but only as a recipe for procuring certain advantages. (Sorel, 1961: 141)

Sorel inveighed against what he called ‘little science’, ‘which believes that when it has attained clarity of exposition that i(t) has attained truth’ (1961: 142) and which characterises the then dominant Functionalism in sociology. He comments that ‘(t)he *little science* has engendered a fabulous number of sophistries which we continually come across, and which go down very well with the people who possess the stupid and mediocre culture distributed by the University’ (1961: 147). (For an interestingly commensurate contemporary view, see Lecourt, 2001).

Sorel was very well-read in the philosophy of, and developments in, the natural sciences and the emerging relativist paradigm – indeed Hughes notes that Sorel has been seen as ‘an inadequately recognised precursor of relativity in science’ (1958: 166). Thus, for example, he was influenced by Henri Poincaré’s insistence on the gap between nature and its understanding, and by his idea that ‘the evolution of scientific thought depends in large measure on accepting fundamental physical principles as “articles of faith”... which reside in the models of scientists rather than inhere as properties of nature’ (Horowitz, 1961: 143). Although contemporary developments such as The New Physics might elide these distinctions further, it is still an easily recognisable position today. Sorel’s ontology was based on a realist natural world and a relativist social one and that is a view that very clearly resonates with the understanding of science that commonly informs COT.

Sorel sees nature as chaotic, necessarily made comprehensible through an order imposed on it by humans. Some of this understood order may be derived from science, but, in the realm of the social, perceived order relies, not on science, but on religion, myth, tradition, fantasy, experience, the mystical, the subjective. Such an approach not only resonates with a poststructuralist understanding of sense-making, but also with aspects of the contemporary understandings of ‘physics as metaphor’, which have also had some influence in COT. The idea is neatly captured by Capra (1983: 339): ‘(s)cience does not need mysticism and mysticism does not need science; but men and women need both’.

Myth

One of the major influences in the development of contemporary COT was the emergence in the 1980s of an awareness of the importance of the symbolic in understanding organisation. One major element of this interest focused on myth. Although the use made of ‘myth’ was varied, there was an underlying theme of myth as sense-making – cognitive attenuator, analytical framework, ontological category, etc. (see, for example, Jackson and Carter, 1984). The concept of myth also has a major place in the work of Sorel. As a corollary of his view of the significance of the irrational in human behaviour, he was convinced of the power of myth, and, especially, of its power to motivate action: ‘myths are not descriptions of things, but expressions of a determination to act’ (Sorel, 1961: 50). In particular, he saw the development of a myth, or of myths, of emancipation as prerequisite to achieving revolutionary change. Myth, *qua* myth, motivates.

As noted, Sorel saw no progress without struggle, and the vehicle of struggle which Sorel advocated was the general strike – or, more specifically, the *myth* of

the general strike. What Sorel meant by this is not entirely clear, but the general strike should not be understood as a rational, analysable, programmable project. It should be seen as an idea, a vision, something to believe in, a motivating ideal to work towards. For Sorel, it bore no relation to the 'real'. Indeed, Sorel is quite clear that myth and fact should never be allowed near each other. However, as the general strike is a myth it can never happen. Thus, the general strike is, in a Derridean sense, undecideable (see also, for example, Baudrillard's [1995] *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*). What remains is some sort of instrumental action – for Hughes, Sorel defined 'social action as the visible expression of the psychological reality of myth' (1958: 96). Laclau and Mouffe note: 'Sorel's philosophy... is one of action and will' (2001: 38). Sorel further refines his argument by differentiating between the revolutionary general strike and the merely political strike. The political strike is not revolutionary in its aim, indeed it is more focussed on a renewal of stability. The political strike is a pursuit of concessions, of fine-tuning the status quo, of seeking incremental improvement or of minimising dysfunctions – what Berlin succinctly describes as 'mere haggling' (1979: 320). In the language of more recent theory, it represents an acceptance of the established discourse, an acceptance of the rules concerning what kind of questions are admissible. It is an acknowledgement of the given asymmetries of power (see, for example, Foucault, 1971). The political strike is merely an incremental step beyond, for example, collective bargaining – another of Sorel's *bêtes noires* – asking for oppression to be lessened. For Sorel, the general strike should not be about 'asking', nor should it accept any rules established by 'the enemy'.

Ironically, this understanding of the role and function of myth, as an idealised vision that motivates, though very rarely articulated as such, informs much of modern day organisation practice. But, in this context, rather than myth being emancipatory, as Sorel hoped, it functions equally well as a means of repression. So, for example, (something that Sorel would surely have found unsurprising, if deeply regrettable), today one problem for those with an emancipatory interest is to explain the persistence of class domination in a condition of mass enfranchisement: 'How can people possibly reach the point of shouting: "More taxes! Less bread!?"' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1984: 29). Are the working class deceived by repression disguised by an empty emancipatory rhetoric, the myth of consensual participation, constructed and delivered by the mechanisms of Derrida's (1994) 'techno-mediatic power', an unholy alliance of politics, mass media and academia? Or are they willing victims who prefer the material benefits of capitalism to autonomy, Deleuze and Guattari's insane capitalism, which has colonised desire? Myth as a motivator of action can function either as a revolutionary emancipatory force or as one of obedience and compliance – clearly, neither is inevitable. As Deleuze and Guattari have noted:

It is only too obvious that the destiny of the revolution is linked solely to the interests of the dominated and exploited masses. But it is the nature of this link which poses the real problem... It is a question of knowing how a revolutionary potential is realised, in its very relationship with the exploited masses or the "weakest links" of a given system. (1984: 377)

Clearly, the issues and concerns that energised Sorel more than a century ago are just as much to the fore in contemporary COT.

Agonistics

Contrary to a more orthodox Marxism, Sorel did not support the goal of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Rather, he advocated a continual struggle between class interests – what would be described now as agonistics. This could be seen as a counter-intuitive argument from someone so closely associated with the teachings of Marx, but was built on various modifications of Marx's thinking developed by Sorel. Indeed, Hughes suggests that 'for Sorel, Marxism... eventually became a body of imprecise meanings couched in symbolic form' (1958: 96). This was by no means to diminish the significance of Marx's work, but was 'to redefine it as "social poetry"... that almost always hit home' (*ibid.*). It was Sorel's view that, were the workers to gain absolute power, they would replicate the asymmetries of the bourgeois domination that he, and they, sought to overturn (history would seem to bear out this prediction) – Meisel quotes the Belgian Labour Party politician Emile Vandervelde as providing a succinct articulation of Sorel's position: 'If the workers should triumph without having accomplished the equally indispensable moral evolution, their reign would be abominable and the world would again be a place of suffering, brutality and injustice as bad as now' (cited in Meisel, 1951: 272). In the event of achievement of a 'dictatorship of the proletariat', Sorel anticipated an alignment of interests amongst the governing elites and a distancing from those they served, an understanding that prefigured what would soon be articulated by Michels as the *iron law of oligarchy* (1915 [1911]).

It was to be the struggle between enemies that would generate a creative dynamic:

Unless the enemy – not the parasitic intellectuals and theorists, but the leaders of the capitalist forces – are themselves energetic and fight back like men, the workers will not find enemies worthy of their steel, and will themselves tend to degenerate. Only against a strong and vigorous opponent can truly heroic qualities be developed. (Berlin, 1979: 313)

Although some commentators see in Sorel's work a desire for the utter elimination of the bourgeoisie (see, for example, Jennings, 1999: xv), others profoundly disagree with this interpretation – for example, Stanley (1976: 3)

argued that he ‘is not attacking the bourgeois class *per se* – only its degenerate form’. The elimination of the bourgeoisie would, as Berlin comments, deprive the proletariat of the conflict necessary to sustain its emancipation – ‘(o)nly conflict purifies and strengthens’ (Berlin, 1979: 313). The bourgeoisie, although morally corrupt and parasitically lethargic, also embodies an entrepreneurial spirit – which includes science – that, according to Sorel, needs to be retained and enhanced. Opposing this is the creative skill of the worker, the producer imbued with the ideals of socialism. Production is a creative, synergetic process from which social benefit and economic progress is derived, and, in the hands of the *free* worker, entails a virtuous morality. In Sorel’s schema, production is both the *raison d’être* of the workers and, morally, theirs to command:

The proletariat must work henceforth to free itself from everything except inner direction. It is by movement and action that the workers must acquire juridical and political ability. Its first rule of conduct should be: *to remain exclusively worker...* (Sorel, 1976: 93, emphasis in original)

This does not mean that they are also the best commanders of the state: ‘Least of all Sorel wanted the proletarians to conquer the government, Sorel did not believe in any need for the workers to possess the state...’ (Meisel 1951: 15). Let the bourgeoisie administer, since that is what they are good for. It is in this role that their class identity will be strengthened, and that will provide the engine of conflict that is necessary for proletarian emancipation to be realised and sustained.

Although sharing Marx’s desire for the triumph of socialism, Sorel did not share Marx’s teleology of capitalist development and worker emancipation. There was no inevitability of history for Sorel. Workers must fight for their emancipation and any compromise with the capitalist interest delays this emancipation – such compromise merely allows workers to be more thoroughly exploited, because they become complicit in their own subordination. Therefore, Sorel argued, it is crucial that workers reject the blandishments of capitalism, which ‘black ingratitude’ (Sorel, 1961: 91) will encourage the exploiters to withdraw their panaceas and intensify direct oppression, which will in turn reassure the workers of the need to resist utterly that oppression – and so the ‘cycle’ of emancipation can be energised. As Fredrick Douglass (1857: 22) noted in the context of nineteenth century slavery, ‘If there is no struggle there is no progress.... Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will’.

Sorel’s advocacy of the necessity of, and the inherent creativity of, the struggle again resonates with contemporary thinking. For example, Laclau and Mouffe (2001 [1985]: 36ff) enlist Sorel’s work in their riposte to the degeneration of class politics into Third Way unitarism, or, at best, a pluralism revolving round merely

technical differences. They seek to restore the idea of the centrality of inherent antagonisms, arguing that:

antagonisms are not *objective* relations, but relations which reveal the limits of all objectivity. Society is constituted around these limits, and they are antagonistic limits. (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001: xiv, emphasis in original).

They go on to argue further that this restoration of the centrality of antagonism

forecloses any possibility of a final reconciliation, of any kind of a rational consensus, of a fully inclusive “we”. For us, a non-exclusive public sphere of rational argument is a conceptual impossibility. Conflict and division... are neither disturbances that unfortunately cannot be eliminated nor empirical impediments that render impossible the full realization of a harmony that we cannot attain.... Indeed, we maintain that without conflict and division, a pluralist democratic politics would be impossible. To believe that a final resolution of conflicts is eventually possible... far from providing the necessary horizon for the democratic project, is to put it at risk. (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001: xvii-xviii)

Mouffe, in *Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?* (1999), clarifying the distinction between antagonism and agonism, also defines an agonistic model of democracy that is remarkably consistent with Sorel’s ‘perpetual’ class war. Distinguishing between ‘the political’ (antagonistic) and ‘politics’ (agonistic), she defines ‘the political’ as ‘the dimension of antagonism that is inherent in all human society, antagonism that can take many different forms and can emerge in diverse social relations’, while ‘politics’ is defined as ‘the ensemble of practices, discourses and institutions that seek to establish a certain order and to organize human coexistence in conditions that are always potentially conflictual because they are affected by the dimension of the “political”’ (Mouffe, 1999: 754). It might be thought that any mention of democracy would be antithetical to Sorel’s position, yet Meisel argues that it is not democracy *per se* that Sorel despises – it is the perverted manifestation of the democratic ideal ‘confectioned by and for the demagogues and orators for purposes of power politics’ (Meisel, 1951: 150) that is anathema to him. Sorel’s venom was focussed on *fin de siècle* France, but his criticism applies *a fortiori* to a twenty-first century democratic system committed to maintaining a politically illiterate electorate, propagandised by a right wing oligarchic news media, committed to support of a pro-business, privately educated, elite delivering a manufactured and artificial consensus. As Berlin notes, Sorel’s ideas ‘mark a revolt against the rationalist ideal of frictionless contentment in a harmonious social system in which all ultimate questions are reduced to technical problems, soluble by appropriate techniques’ (1979: 331-2).

In Meisel’s view, ‘Sorel rejects the democratic form, [while] retaining faithfully its essence’ (1951: 151). The task is to find an emancipatory praxis for democracy.

Mouffe, rejecting a Habermasian-style deliberative democracy, argues that it is not a question of abandoning consensus, because that is already only a myth, already does not exist. She insists that

the model of “agonistic pluralism” that I am advocating asserts that the prime task of democratic politics is not to eliminate passions nor to relegate them to the private sphere in order to render rational consensus possible, but to mobilise those passions towards the promotion of democratic designs. Far from jeopardizing democracy, agonistic confrontation is in fact its very condition of existence. (Mouffe, 1999: 755-6)

This could have been written by Sorel himself.

It is not surprising, given Sorel’s view of democracy-in-practice, that he also eschewed parliamentary socialism. He argued that participation in the parliamentary process leads to contamination by bourgeois values and the oligarchic tendency already noted. In what could be seen as a description of the British Labour Party of the post-war consensus, particularly New Labour (and its many imitators elsewhere), Sorel says that Parliamentary Socialists need simultaneously to fool the workers, ease the anxiety of the middle-class and placate the rich (1961: 120). The proletariat should never put faith in participation in the established political process, the status quo of the exploiters, to ‘negotiate’ emancipation:

We can... imagine what would follow from a revolution which brought our official Socialists of today to power. Institutions remaining almost what they are today, all the middle-class ideology would be preserved; the middle-class state would dominate with its ancient abuses.... (Sorel 1961: 96)

What is ‘given’ can always be taken away – emancipation can only be won, can only be taken. The classes are, and must be, separate and only this separation can provide the necessary energy for the struggle. This isolationism also extends to workplace relationships. Berlin captures Sorel’s uncompromising position thus:

proletarians who allow themselves any degree of cooperation with the class enemy are lost to their own side. All talk of responsible and humane employers, reasonable and peace-loving workers, nauseates him. Profit-sharing, factory councils that include both masters and men, democracy which recognises all men are equal, are fatal to the cause. In total war there can be no fraternisation. (Berlin, 1979: 322)

Sorel recognised that such ‘fraternisation’ was precisely what the exploiters sought to achieve:

history shows us that the whole effort of capitalism has been to bring about the submission of the masses to the conditions of the capitalist economic system...

(D)emocratic rulers adopt as their mission the accomplishment of... moral unity...
This moral unity is the automatic discipline of the producers.... (Sorel, 1961: 178)

The tendency of the past hundred years in the UK, both in politics and in labour relations, from the simple Whitley Councils to that most refined expression of the incorporated worker, Human Resource Management, has, of course, been precisely that which Sorel cautioned against. And he accurately predicted the kind of conditions that would ensue, a situation in which emancipation is still as much a distant dream as it was when he was writing.

Conclusions?

Our intention in this paper has been to suggest parallels between the ideas and understandings of Sorel and some interests and aspects of COT. If these parallels seem to be robust, what utility could we find in Sorel for COT?

The emergence of COT as a counter to the hegemony of a managerialist functionalism has furnished an impressive body of analysis of organisation(s) that has improved explanatory power, and which no longer takes capitalism as either a given or a good. But, although we understand much better the forces and the systems that dominate, there has, so far, been little effect on practice. The more we illuminate the mechanisms of repression, the more intense they become. Perhaps the inherent weakness of COT is its aversion to prescription. Sorel does not suffer from this debility. Sorel is convinced about what is needed and how it is to be achieved. It must be stressed, however, that Sorel's work is prescriptive about means, not about ends (another very Foucauldian stance – see, for example, Foucault 1980; 1991). As Berlin comments, '(h)e ignores practical problems; he is not interested in the way in which production, distribution, exchange, will be regulated in the new order, nor in whether there is any possibility of abolishing scarcity without performing at least some tasks that can hardly be described as creative' (1979: 314). Sorel is not prescriptive about what change should be achieved – that must, necessarily, be left to those who act to bring change about. What he does prescribe is the means to achieve it.

One of the more substantive contradictions in Sorel, as he was himself well aware, is that he prescribes action while remaining unengaged himself. More than that, he is a bourgeois intellectual insisting that the proletariat must act, while condemning those outwith the proletariat telling them what to do. He is not alone in this contradiction, the inevitability of being complicit in that which is analysed and criticised – it also afflicts, for example, the poststructuralists. And it is also a problem that besets COT. COT is a middle class preoccupation with, at least in part, a normative concern for the oppressed, including the working class.

However, given the limited possibilities for conducting anti-capitalist, anti-managerialist, emancipatory experiments in capitalist organisations, COT is restricted to suggesting alternative praxes. Starting from the assumption that the world is socially constructed (a view shared by Sorel), and the assumption that, therefore, things do not have to be the way they are, and convinced that enlightened action can ameliorate the human condition, the profound utility of critique lies in *the generation of possibilities*.

The thrust of Sorel's argument in *Reflections on Violence* can be summarised as follows: emancipation will not occur without a struggle on the part of the oppressed; as the powerful will use force to resist a challenge to their domination, those seeking to liberate themselves must also react with force (violence in Sorel's terminology); the necessary context in which this contest will be played out is that of the General Strike. Many western liberals today would have no trouble with this sentiment as applied to such phenomena as the Arab Spring, or, historically, to black emancipation or to women's suffrage. What is important here is acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the claim of such groups that they are the victims of oppression. What is not acknowledgeable is the legitimacy of the claim that workers within a democracy might be oppressed. If this were to be allowed, then the General Strike would become justified, and there could be nothing more terrifying to the bourgeoisie than the General Strike. Thus, notwithstanding intensification of labour, infantilisation of the workforce, mass unemployment, absence of a living wage, zero hours contracts, unsafe working conditions, it is unacceptable, within the dominant discourse, to claim that the working class should be seen as oppressed. It is, of course, hardly acceptable to speak of a 'working class' at all, since that belies the assertion that we are all the same, and 'all in it together'. The difficulty with this is that the bourgeoisie has everything to gain from acceptance of this assertion, and the working class everything to lose. But is emancipation really so scary? We must remember that Sorel seeks, not an elimination of class, but a strengthening of class identity. He sees a genuine plurality of interests between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie which he does not seek to elide. In the UK, in particular, the denial of any kind of class interest has been a feature of the dominant neo-liberalism of the last several decades, in favour of a myth of supposed equality of opportunity and a spurious meritocracy, organisationally given a dangerous legitimacy through a unitarist Human Resource Management. Sorel would not have been surprised by this. He believed that the UK was very unlikely to be the first place for emancipation to be achieved:

That the general strike is not popular in contemporary England, is a poor argument to bring against the historical significance of the idea, for the English

are distinguished by an extraordinary lack of understanding of the class war ...
(Sorel, 1961: 123)

In his 'Introduction' to the 1950 American edition of *Reflections on Violence* Shils makes a similar point:

The modern intelligentsia in all countries except Great Britain have, ever since the 18th century, been in various forms of opposition to the prevailing society and the authorities who rule it. (Shils, 1961: 13)

The immediate post-World War 2 period saw a revival of interest in Sorel, of which the Shils edition is an example. However, Shils sees the utility in Sorel's work in terms of the historical and the cautionary, and limits its validity to a dissensual society in crisis, a society that, for Sorel, had only two possibilities:

one, *decadence*, in which the ruling class of politicians and property owners, lacking in self-esteem, corrupted by the niggling procedures of the pursuit and exercise of office, and too cowardly to be violent, resorts to fraud and cunning to control a mass lost in hedonistic self-gratification and individualism

and another

renascence, in which the aspirants to rule or those already ruling, inflamed with enthusiasm, their minds on remote goals, caring nothing for the immediate consequences of any action, but performing it because it is morally imperative. (Shils, 1961: 17, emphases in original)

The society of *his* time, Shils implies, is not like either of these. But both such characterisations have more currency today than Shils could, perhaps, have imagined. Indeed, it may be that, once that is accepted, all that is now necessary is for the illusion of consensus to be recognised for what it is, and the dissensus characteristic of contemporary societies to be acknowledged. This then would offer a basis for change.

And perhaps then Sorel has something to offer. His ideas resonate with contemporary critical theory. The world we live in is, indeed, not dissimilar to the one Sorel predicted were capitalism to remain unchallenged, and it still needs change, in many ways and on many levels. Most of all, his emphasis on action distinguishes him as a theorist with ideas about how to achieve that necessary change.

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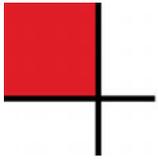
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Peter Kropotkin's anarchist vision of organization^{*}

Marius de Geus

Along with Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Michael Bakunin and Emma Goldman, Peter Kropotkin laid the foundations for anarchism both as a theoretical framework and an active political movement. In this piece, De Geus discusses the various aspects of Kropotkin's account of the ills of hierarchical organisation as well as the promise of an anarchist vision of society. The article is very much a work of its time in the sense that it connects Kropotkin's work to some of the key management theorists of the day, most notably Stafford Beer. Beer's organisational cybernetics (referred to in the text as 'bio-cybernetics') was picked up on by a number of anarchist writers in the 1960s and 70s. Colin Ward, for instance, wrote of it in his article 'Anarchism as a Theory of Organisation' (1966), which followed a discussion on the topic in *Anarchy*, the journal he edited (see Walter, 1963 and McEwan, 1963). These debates marked one of the periods where anarchism was taken most seriously as a theory of organisation. De Geus' piece here on Kropotkin does a remarkable job of underlining the core aspects of his work that are crucial to discussing anarchism alongside critical conceptions of management and organisation.

Introduction

Modern humanity inhabits a social environment which is dominated by large-scale and complex organizations. As Max Weber argued, the development of 'bureaucratic society' seems inevitable, but at the same time endangers the freedom of the organization's members (see Weber [1971: 330] and of course his

* Editors' Note: This is a translated and rewritten version of one chapter from Marius de Geus' 1989 book *Organisation Theory in Political Philosophy* (published in Dutch as *Organisatietheorie in de Politieke Filosofie*; the translation and revision was carried out by the author himself specially for this issue of *ephemera*). It highlights the elements of organisation theory in the work of the classical anarchist scholar Peter Kropotkin.

still impressive *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* [1976]). In current society individuals have become mere cogs in the hierarchic-bureaucratic apparatus. However, both in scale and structure these organizations are at odds with the much cherished principles of self-realization and individual freedom. Whereas the individual prefers participation, liberty and self-government, the organizational system of today demands hierarchy, central control and obedience by its members.

Aside from that, these hierarchic-bureaucratic organizations are not very effective and efficient. Notable absentees in the debate about these social issues are the classical political theorists, notwithstanding the fact that these thinkers have in a long tradition developed valuable theories about organizational (state) systems. Over the years I have learned that the views on organization of prominent political philosophers are often neglected in current organization and management literature, while at the same time their reflections are highly relevant to modern organization and management theory.

In earlier work I have explored a number of visions on organization as found in the history of political theory, analyzing the potential of these particular ideas in political philosophy for modern organization theory, organization sociology and psychology (See for instance De Geus 1989; 1998; 2003). In this contribution, however, I have been asked to focus on the fascinating organizational reflections of one particular political theorist: Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921). In my view, Kropotkin can be interpreted as being an intelligent predecessor of bio-cybernetic organization theory, as found in the work of theorists such as Stafford Beer, and also of the organizational ideas of prominent thinkers including Henry Mintzberg and Gareth Morgan.

Kropotkin is one of the founders of anarchist social and political thought, and definitely belongs among the most inspiring authors in this field. My analysis is carried out with the objective of achieving a better understanding of today's organizational reality and of conceiving viable alternatives. I shall clarify the knowledge and expertise which can be found in the often ignored anarchist heritage of political theory in the area of organization and management thinking.

Peter Kropotkin became first known as a geologist and anthropologist who travelled around the Russian Empire and reported his scientific findings in articles and academic papers, but in the course of his life he developed into the most influential author of anarchist social theory. Elaborating on the work of preceding libertarian thinkers such as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Michael Bakunin, he tried to provide anarchism with a rational scientific basis. Whereas Proudhon and Bakunin had not succeeded in designing a systematic and coherent theory of anarchism, Kropotkin devoted his whole life to fulfilling this

task, engaging in profound research and writing voluminous books. He endeavored to give the anarchist conception a high degree of coherence and unity, systematically making use of insights of the natural sciences. (For an excellent biography see Miller [1976]. A good introduction in the history and ideas of anarchism is Woodcock's *Anarchism* [1986].)

Specifically analyzing Kropotkin's work from an organizational point of view, I shall draw upon a variety of his books. The core of his organizational vision can be found in *Mutual aid*. Subsequently, the historic role of state organizations in *The state, its historic role* and several articles including *Anarchism, its philosophy and ideal*, *Anarchist communism* and *Modern science and anarchism* will be investigated. As the reader will find, the analysis of Kropotkin's innovative and surprisingly 'modern' organizational ideas will be completed by the indicative sketches of a future anarchist society which he provided in *Fields, factories and workshops* and also in *The conquest of bread*, as well as in a substantial number of articles and pamphlets.

The organizational principle of 'mutual aid'

Mutual aid (1902) must be seen as Kropotkin's *magnum opus*. The book contains his most serious attempt to found anarchist theory on a scientific basis. On the grounds of biological, anthropological, ecological and historical findings, he tried to clarify the importance of mutual aid, solidarity and cooperation in our evolution. Essentially, Kropotkin's utopian organizational vision is embedded in his encompassing social and political theory of cooperation and mutual aid.

As a result of his many geographical explorations in Siberia, it had struck Kropotkin that among animals belonging to the same species no bitter struggle for the means of existence could be found, while according to Charles Darwin's followers this struggle had to be considered the main factor of evolution. Kropotkin observed that among animals mutual aid and support played a prominent role and he realized that this could be crucial to the maintenance and evolution of species. He was strengthened in his opinion when he read an article by professor Karl Kessler, a well-known Russian zoologist. In 1880 Kessler had written an article arguing that next to the law of mutual struggle, there is also a law of mutual aid in nature (see also the general preface to Kropotkin [1914]).

When in 1888 Thomas Henry Huxley published an essay on *The Struggle for existence and its bearing upon man*, Kropotkin was provoked to react. Huxley, who was a strong supporter of Darwin's evolutionary theory, thought of animals: 'from the point of view of the moralist, the animal world is on about the same

level as a gladiator's show. The creatures are fairly well treated, and set to fight; whereby the strongest, the swiftest, and the cunningest live to fight another day', and in the same vein on primitive men: 'Life was a continuous free fight, and beyond the limited and temporary relations of the family, the Hobbesian war of each against all was the normal state of existence' (Kropotkin, 1914: 4 [all subsequent references are to texts written by Kropotkin]).

Kropotkin sharply understood what the consequences of these arguments would be. They were a strong weapon in the hands of the defenders of a central state and of authoritarian government. If warfare and oppression were accepted as the very essence of human nature, the call for a powerful Hobbesian sovereign authority which enforces peace in society, would become plausible. Anyone who, on the other hand, would be able to show that solidarity and mutual aid were the main factors in history, would have a convincing argument with which to renounce a dominant state organization.

Kropotkin begins with an analysis of the animal world. After an elaborate argument he comes to the conclusion that the vast majority of animal species live in communities and for that reason have the best chances of survival. There may be severe wars between species, but within the community struggle for life is limited (*ibid.*: 6). The animals that have developed the practices of solidarity and mutual aid are invariably the most numerous, the most prosperous and the most open to further progress: 'The unsociable species, on the contrary are doomed to decay' (*ibid.*: 293). Mutual struggle is detrimental to a species and therefore the fundamental law of nature is one of mutual aid. But can this law be applied legitimately to both animals and humans?

Kropotkin then shifts his attention from the animal world to the world of primitive humanity. First, he attacks English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and criticizes the assumption that for primitive humanity a constant war of each against all was the normal state of existence. Hobbes makes the error of imagining that primitive people used to live in small family groups. Ethnological studies, on the contrary, reveal that 'Societies, bands, or tribes – not families – were the primitive form of organization of mankind and its earliest ancestors' (*ibid.*: 79).

From prehistoric ages onwards, humans lived in more extended societies, in which they cooperated to provide for their basic needs. From these first beginnings, mutual aid and cooperation have dominated over individualism and egoism. The development of human kind is a direct result of the cooperative spirit that is inherent in human nature. This proposition is supported by examples of the life of 'primitive' tribes like the Native Americans and the Inuit.

In these tribes food is shared, people protect one another and controversies are dealt with in a peaceful manner, while these communities maintained themselves 'knowing no kind of authority besides the authority of public opinion' (*ibid.*: 87).

Village communities constituted the next phase in the history of mankind and the development of forms of mutual aid. Generally, these were groups made up out of families who held the land in common property. In this communal culture, people would hunt and fish together, cultivate the soil, construct roads, bridges and houses, and all this in good harmony. Disputes between individual members were considered a communal affair that had to be decided by independent arbiters. When it involved very serious controversial issues, the case would be brought before the 'folkmete', which was bound to pass sentence in accordance with customary law (*ibid.*: 162-163).

Finally, the village communities were usually part of smaller or larger confederations, according to need and preference. For instance, to defend the borders of a common territory, people would federate voluntarily with neighboring village communities. For centuries, these institutions stood firm, but at a certain stage they were replaced by the medieval cities. In the cities of the Middle Ages, Kropotkin sees the culmination of practices of mutual aid and support, especially in the guilds. Rather sketchily, he analyzes the emergence of feudalism and the struggle between feudal lords and nascent cities, a competition that in first instance was decided in favor of the cities. A new life of mutual aid and liberty started to develop within the fortified walls of the medieval cities. They formed sheltered 'oases' in a general environment that was victim to feudal domination.

The history of the Middle Ages is one of the best illustrations of the power of ideals and principles in human life. In Kropotkin's view, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries one could discern the domination of a conglomerate of four interdependent ideas: self-reliance, federalism, sovereignty of the group and the construction of the political body from the simple to the composite. These leading ideas were reflected in the emerging brotherhoods or guilds and new forms of political organization (*ibid.*: 220). With the continuous divergence of occupations, arts and crafts and the increasing trade with distant countries, new organizations grew up in which groups of carpenters, builders and tradesmen assembled in order to defend common goals.

The guilds had a social character. If one of the 'brothers' was struck by some serious misfortune, such as severe illness or a burned-down house, he could always count on the support of his fellow guild members. Within the

brotherhood, controversies were subject to guild jurisdiction and tried by a jury of the members according to the official statutes. As far as it concerned internal affairs, the guilds were sovereign and decisions were taken in the general meetings. In this way the guilds were organized on basis of the principles of mutual aid, self-jurisdiction and sovereignty (*ibid.*: 187-192). According to Kropotkin, the only problem was to conceive of an organizational form that would render a federation of the guilds possible, without interfering with the associations of village communities, thus 'to federate these into one harmonious whole' (*ibid.*: 177). When this combination was found, nothing could prevent the further success of the cities.

The medieval town was actually made up of a double federation (1977: 25). It consisted of a federative structure of territorial units of the city and next to it was a federation of the guilds. It should be noted that both groups, cities and guilds, maintained their sovereignty, were not directed from above and remained independent entities. Moreover, the towns united on a voluntary basis for purposes of trade (e.g., the well-known Hanseatic Towns in northern Europe), or for reasons of defense.

The period of the eleventh to the fifteenth century could thus be described 'as an immense attempt at securing mutual aid and support on a grand scale, by means of the principles of federation and association carried on through all manifestations of human life and to all possible degrees' (1914: 208). The federation spirit had permeated all spheres of life, with the elements of freedom, mutual aid and organization growing from simple to complex at its core.

The consequences of this development were immense. In the fifteenth century, the landscape of Europe had changed dramatically. Arts, crafts and sciences had begun to flourish in a spectacular way. Thanks to the guilds, the incomes were relatively high, the working days short and social facilities in case of illness and disability were introduced. The cities of the Middle Ages had become flourishing centers of culture and prosperity and Kropotkin concludes 'that never, either before or since, has mankind known a period of relative well-being for all, as in the cities of the middle ages. The poverty, insecurity and physical exploitation of labor that exist in our times were then unknown' (1977: 27).

In the course of the sixteenth century, however, cracks became visible in the federative structures. The system of voluntary cooperation between and within the cities gradually began to erode. 'Barbarians' were to destroy the sensitive network of federation. And who was this barbarian foe? It was the state: the triple alliance of the military chief, the judge and the priest that in one blow crushed the power of society.

The historic role of the centralized and hierarchical state

Towards the end of the fifteenth century a process of state formation became imminent in Europe. In the country, powerful feudal lords had been able to enlarge their territories. By force, scheming and sword, some feudal lords grew in power at the expense of others, and as a result the seeds of mighty states could germinate (*ibid.*: 31-36). Yet the decline of the medieval cities with their decentralized and federative structures did not come unexpectedly. Increasingly the cities were troubled by various internal problems. There were, for example, controversies between the families of 'burghers' and newcomers. The former had monopolized all benefits from communal trade and land: trade more and more became the privilege of the merchant and artisan families. Another cause was that most cities based their wealth uniquely upon commerce and industry, to the neglect of agriculture (1914: 220).

Notwithstanding, the major cause of the decay of communal institutions in the cities lay deeper. In Kropotkin's view, the dominant *ideas* and *principles* had gradually altered. Through the teachings of Roman law and the prelates of the church, a deep modification of leading ideas had taken place. In the preceding centuries, self-reliance, federalism and sovereignty of each group had been the leading principles, but from the eleventh century onwards, the conceptions changed:

For two or three hundred years they taught from the pulpit, the University chair and the judge's bench, that salvation must be sought for in a strongly centralized State, placed under a semi-divine authority; and that one man can and must be the savior of society, and that in the name of public salvation he can commit any violence. (*ibid.*: 221)

By these teachings, continually repeated and brought under public attention, the old federalist principle came under heavy attack. Bitterly, Kropotkin concludes 'that man fell in love with authority' and 'that the old federalist principle faded away and the very creative genius of the mass died out. The Roman idea was victorious, and in such circumstances the centralized state had in the cities a ready prey' (1977: 36). The spirit of initiative and free association was fading away and yielded to the spirit of discipline and 'to pyramidal authoritarian organization' (1914: 226). Thus the sixteenth century could be summarized as the era in which the powerful feudal lords, supported by the church, conquered the free cities and federations. After a prolonged and heavy struggle, in which the stronger lords subdued the less powerful ones, the victory of the centralized states over the communes was finally accomplished.

For the next three centuries these 'hierarchical' states systematically tried to weed out all federalist institutions in which the mutual aid tendency had previously found its expression. The village communities were deprived of their independent folkmotes, courts and administration; the guilds lost their freedom and were placed under the central control of the state. In the words of Kropotkin: 'the folkmote, the elected justices and administration, the sovereign parish and the sovereign guild – were annihilated; the State's functionary took possession of every link of what formerly was an organic whole' (*ibid.*). Henceforth, state and church took care of matters of general interest. It was taught in the universities and from the pulpit 'that the State alone could represent the bonds of Union between the subjects; that federalism and particularism were the enemies of progress, and the State was the only proper initiator of further development' (*ibid.*).

Citizens that used to be embedded in a rich network of cooperative social relations now became un-emancipated and isolated subjects of the nation-state. All intermediary associations were absorbed by the state and the federative principle was substituted by the principles of central control, submission and discipline (1977: 40). Towards the end of the eighteenth century, this development was completed and the free associations between neighborhoods, guilds, villages and towns were on the verge of extinction (*ibid.*: 27). The social, economic and political consequences were massive. Since the state, according to Kropotkin, is synonymous with warfare, Europe was devastated by wars (*ibid.*: 30). The states took over education and created a spirit of servitude in the minds of the individuals. The state destroyed existing forms of free organization and, last but not least, the state became 'the chief instrument for the few to monopolize the land, and the capitalists to appropriate a quite disproportionate share of the yearly accumulated surplus of production' (1975: 109).

In Kropotkin's analysis, this was as true for the monarchies of the sixteenth century as it was for the so-called 'democratic republics' of the nineteenth century. The elite of the republican nation states had changed names but had not altered essentially 'all that huge organization to assure and extend the exploitation of the masses in favor of a few privileged groups, which is the essence of the State institution' (1977: 53). The territorial and functional centralization, its pyramidal organization, its favoritism and its role as the creator of monopolies had remained exactly the same (*ibid.*).

As such, Kropotkin had little faith in so-called representative governments. He felt that the parliamentary system was never meant to be a free political organization for all citizens: 'Built up by the middle classes to hold their own against royalty, sanctioning, and at the same time strengthening, their sway over

the workers, parliamentary rule is pre-eminently a middle-class rule' (1985: 159). In his analysis, to every new economic phase corresponded a distinctive political system. Absolute monarchy corresponded to serfdom, while representative government corresponded to capitalism and the systematic exploitation of workers by the owners of the means of production (1970a: 52).

Interestingly, Kropotkin regarded the state and capitalism as two inseparable concepts, which had developed side by side in history, mutually supporting and re-enforcing one another: 'They are bound together not by a mere coincidence of contemporaneous development, but by the bond of cause and effect, effect and cause' (*ibid.*: 83). Hence, he concludes that whoever wanted to abolish capitalism, would also have to dispense with the centralized nation-state (*ibid.*). One cannot use representative government as an instrument to liberate economy and society, since a new form of economic organization will necessarily require a radically alternative political structure (*ibid.*: 84). Kropotkin realized very well that as soon as socialist economic principles were introduced, new forms of social and political organization would have to be invented. In his vision, progress cannot come about by the enlargement of governmental functions, but only by the abolishment of state authority. He concludes 'that true progress lies in the direction of decentralization, both territorial and functional, in the development of the spirit of local and personal initiative, and of free federation from the simple to the compound' (1975: 110). What Kropotkin exactly meant by this formula will be explained in the next section.

Radically new organizational tendencies

In Kropotkin's view, anarchism must be seen as an ideal of society that can indeed be realized in the future. Crucially, it is not merely founded on ideals, but on social and organizational trends and tendencies which are already developing in human society. Anarchism is based 'on an analysis of tendencies of an evolution that is already going on in society and on inductions therefrom as to the future' (*ibid.*: 66). Analyzing those trends and tendencies, one would find that at the end of the eighteenth century a strong centralizing and authoritarian tendency had taken place. Yet at the same time the mutual-aid tendency had been maintained and cherished among the masses (1914: 223).

In *Mutual aid* and *The conquest of bread*, Kropotkin shows extensively that the traditional basis of mutual aid and support had managed to survive and that anti-centralist and anti-authoritarian forms of organization were able to withstand the power of the state. Outside the domains of state and church there were countless societies, clubs and alliances for recreational purposes, study, research and

education. Nineteenth century Europe was covered with voluntary associations for agriculture, industry, charity, sciences and so on (*ibid.*: 279). Arguably, some of them were short lived, others had long and successful lives, but they all had one aspect in common: ‘All strive – while maintaining the independence of each group, circle, branch, or section – to federate, to unite, across frontiers as well as among each nation; to cover all the life of civilized men with a net, meshes of which are intersected and interwoven’ (1970a: 132).

These voluntary societies, clubs and alliances had gradually started to take over some of the functions of the state. The institutions of mutual aid re-asserted themselves in everyday life, notwithstanding the efforts of the state to destroy the traditional habits and customs of mutual aid and support. This was in fact the dominant development that Kropotkin observed in his days. Closely related to this was the century’s dominant tendency towards decentralization, home rule and free agreement, essentially the founding stones of Kropotkin’s libertarian organizational vision.

A closer inspection of Kropotkin’s anarchist organizational principles

Kropotkin’s ideal and free society of the future strongly resembled the decentralized and federative structures of the Middle Ages. In short, he conceived of a society without government: ‘All the mutual relations of its members are regulated, not by laws, not by authorities, whether self-imposed or elected, but by mutual agreements between the members of that society and by the sum of social customs and habits – not petrified by law, routine, or superstition, but continually developing and continually readjusted in accordance with the ever growing requirements of a free life stimulated by the progress of science, invention, and the steady growth of higher ideals’ (1957: 66). Also in his *Memoirs of a revolutionist* (1899), Kropotkin accentuates that the ideal society will constantly modify because it resembles a living, evolving organism (1971: 399). I shall now work out the basic principles of his anarchist organization theory: decentralization, self-government and free agreements.

Decentralization: economic and political

In various places, Kropotkin elaborates on the tendency towards decentralization. In *Fields, factories and workshops* he states that in industry as well as in politics, centralization has many admirers, but that in both spheres the concept of centralization needed drastic revision.

Firstly, in the sphere of the economy, large factories offer considerable inconveniences, as they are incapable of reforming their machinery according to

changing consumer demands. These immense factories were generally characterized by a military organization, a strict division of labor and very bad working conditions. For that reason, Kropotkin argued for a fundamental decentralization of production. The goods would be produced in small-scale factories and workshops, evenly scattered round the countryside and situated within walking distance of the fields and gardens. The result would be a small-scale society in which men and women would combine agricultural and industrial activities in ecologically responsible ways.

This would be a society in which a balance between intellectual work and manual work is achieved and the former division of labor has been put to an end. By raising the number of real producers of wealth in society (no more room for capitalist idlers...) and by increasing the productivity of labor with modern machines, more than half of the working day would become available to everyone for the pursuit of art, science or any hobby one might prefer (1904: 79). In this libertarian society, production is basically set up for the satisfaction of 'real needs', rather than for industrial growth, profit making or excessive accumulation. Work would become easy and pleasant and suited to everybody's individual tastes, as is exemplified in the following quotation:

Have the factory and the workshop at the gates of your fields and gardens, and work in them. Not those large establishments, of course, in which huge masses of metals have to be dealt with and which are better placed at certain spots indicated by nature, but the countless variety of workshops and factories which are required to satisfy the infinite diversity of tastes among civilized men. Not those factories in which children lose all the appearance of children in the atmosphere of an industrial hell, but those airy and hygienic, and consequently economical, factories in which human life is of more account than machinery and the making of extra profits, of which we already find a few samples here and there; factories and workshops into which men, women and children will not be driven by hunger, but will be attracted by the desire of finding an activity suited to their tastes, and where, aided by the motor and the machine, they will choose the branch of activity which suits best their inclinations. (*ibid.*: 217-218)

All in all, the libertarian organizational tendency which he envisaged was one moving towards human scale, independent and environmentally sound agricultural-industrial communities, where work would be short, varied and agreeable (1985: 110-120). Kropotkin believed that modern production techniques would multiply production in industry and agriculture and would ensure that regions could be self-sufficient. In many respects, this fundamental decentralization of the economy is advantageous: 'It is to the advantage of every region, every nation, to grow their own wheat, their own vegetables, and to manufacture at home most of the produce they consume. This diversity is the surest pledge of the complete development of production by mutual cooperation,

and the moving cause of progress, while specialization is now a hindrance to progress' (*ibid.*:189).

Secondly, turning to the dominant organizational forms of Europe in the Middle Ages, Kropotkin advocated a decentralized political structure, both territorial and functional. Territorially, according to him, the evident tendency was to form groups of autonomous communes, villages and towns (1975: 87-88). Functionally, he envisaged that tasks formerly carried out by the state would be left to, or taken over by, a multitude of organizations, associations and larger groups. In a natural way, a new form of society would evolve in which all these organizations collaborated for the sake of the satisfaction of economic, educational, intellectual and artistic needs (1975: 398).

The idea of 'self-government'

Under all circumstances, these associations, communes and wider groups fully maintained their independence and the right to arrange internal affairs. In this context, Kropotkin writes about 'home rule, even for the smallest unit or group' (*ibid.*: 86), or about 'self-government' and 'sovereignty of the group' (*ibid.*). All groups would approximate the organizational form of the guilds and neighborhoods of the Middle Ages, based on the active participation of the members in the general meetings.

Free agreements

Free agreements constituted the third leading principle of Kropotkin's anarchist organizational vision. As a matter of fact, in *The conquest of bread* he devotes a whole chapter to this specific subject. In his age free agreements between associations and groups had assumed an increasingly important role and were responsible for the abandonment of many of the state's functions. As striking manifestations he points to the railways and postal services in various European countries. They did not form an international railway or postal parliament, regulating the running of trains or postal affairs by law. The national organizations cooperated by free agreement, by exchange of letters and proposals, and by congresses at which delegates met to discuss matters of mutual interest. Specific issues were first discussed within the countries:

then they sent delegates acquainted with the special question to be discussed at the congress, and they sent delegates – not rulers. Their delegates returned from the congress with no laws in their pockets but with proposals of agreements. Such is the way now (the very old way, too) for dealing with questions of public interest – not the way of law making by means of a representative government. (1985: 68)

This all condensed into a flexible system of delegates meeting at congresses, debating issues and subsequently returning to their groups, not with a law, but with the draft of a contract to be accepted or rejected. In this, Kropotkin saw a revolutionary organizational principle that in the end would make the centralized state fully redundant (*ibid.*: 135). He underlined that not only the international postal services and railways functioned on the basis of 'free agreement and free aid', but also the Red Cross societies as well as the English Life Boat Association. These organizations all started from autonomous groups acting in concert for mutual goals, by means of delegates acting by free agreements (1970a: 53).

Two contrasting visions on organization

Throughout history, Kropotkin differentiates between two opposing organizational tendencies. On the one side there is the Roman, Imperial and authoritarian approach: centralist, hierarchical, working from the top to the bottom; organization as a pyramid of authority. On the other side stands the popular, federalist and libertarian approach: decentralized, freely federated, functioning from the periphery to the center; organization as a form autonomy and self-regulation (*ibid.*: 52). This last tendency leaned towards 'no-government', while the former was focused on state dominance. In the federalist tradition, organization was equated with the concept of 'anarchy'.

Kropotkin was well aware that in daily linguistic usage the term 'anarchy' was often equated with disorder. According to him, this interpretation was based on at least two false assumptions. First, that in the absence of a state, chaos and disorder would inevitably follow. Secondly, that the peace and order produced by a strong central state was always beneficial. In his view both assumptions were extremely doubtful. In many areas where the state does not intervene, a harmonious situation is achieved, while the order produced by the state is often superficial and hardly bearable (*ibid.*: 62).

Hence the goal of society is not 'unity' or 'order', but an organic and natural 'harmony' (1975: 108). Whereas order, unity and stability were realized by means of submission to law and obedience, this natural harmony was the result of the earlier mentioned free agreements concluded between the various societal groups, representing an interwoven network of federations of all sizes and degrees. Against the monolithic unity that was typical for centrally ruled state systems, Kropotkin portrayed the anarchist structure as a 'union' or an 'association' (see, for example, 1914: 186 [union] and 282 [association]). It was a union for mutual aid and support 'without imposing upon men the fetters of the

state, but giving full liberty of expression to the creative genius of each separate group of individuals in art, crafts, science, commerce (...)' (see also 1914: 186).

Specific characteristics of the anarchist organization concept

Organization as a free order of autonomous entities

The recurring theme of Kropotkin's thinking was the necessity to abolish authoritarian leadership and central authority. Already at a young age he developed a strong aversion of pyramidal and centralized forms, and noted that in truly important matters commanding and discipline were useless. So what, then, are his major objections against hierarchical authority?

In the first place he argues that hierarchical authority leads to a lack of freedom among the organization members at the base of the organization. Generally, hierarchy leads to compliance, compliance leads to slavery and slavery is nothing but losing the fundamental human right to follow one's own will and to be free from interference.

Second, by exercising hierarchical authority even good people tend to become corrupted: 'We affirm that the best of men is made essentially bad by the exercise of authority' (1970a: 135). Nobody is without mistakes, Kropotkin argues, so even the best among us will be corrupted when using their political power, and that's why 'we take men for what they are worth and that is why they hate the government of man by man' (1970b: 130). Besides, in his view, no division of power or system of checks and balances and mutual control of authority will ever be effective.

Thirdly, hierarchical authority is ineffective. According to Kropotkin, it is inadvisable to transfer political power to a small minority group. If this would be done the leadership would have to rule and decide on numerous issues where they would totally lack the much needed expertise and information. For instance, he argues that no government would ever be capable of successfully centrally organizing and regulating the economic production of a whole nation:

for in all production there arise daily thousands of difficulties which no government can solve or foresee. It is certainly impossible to foresee everything. Only the efforts of thousands of intelligences working on the problems can cooperate in the development of a new social system and find the best solution for the thousands of local needs. (1970a: 76-77)

Only those who are closely involved can be aware of all the details and situational factors, and hence should be able to take decisions, without orders or commands from the top.

Fourth, hierarchical authority produces conformity and obedience among organizational members. Fear of being punished and obedience lead to a loss of taking initiatives and to mental slavery. People will start to behave themselves as mere 'servants' and will degenerate intellectually, artistically and morally. They will stop using their full capacities and will lose their autonomy and decisiveness. It is no wonder Kropotkin was arguing for a radical change in the relations between individuals from hierarchical to relations that would be authority free. Admittedly, Kropotkin did not argue that this would lead to a complete and fully unrestricted freedom of man and women in society.

Because of the necessity for humans to cooperate, liberty would not be fully unrestricted, but would come close to the best and most extended form of freedom possible. Ultimately, the new anarchist society would eradicate the former order with its Roman structures of authority, and leave room for personal initiatives and having a say in the decentralized social, economic and political units. In such a free, anarchist society, humans will base their actions on rational thinking, in interaction with the ethical conceptions of their environment, 'and thus be able to reach full individualization' (1975: 108-109).

Fifth, Kropotkin's trust in the viability of introducing organizations without hierarchy and discipline was rooted in a positive evaluation of the capacities and potential of ordinary organization members. In this area, his *Memoirs of a revolutionist* are most informative of his particular views. In his *Memoirs* he repeatedly alludes to the sound mind and rationality of the Russian peasants which he had met in his younger years. Also during his long travels in Siberia he was impressed by the great intelligence of the peasants and local villagers, and in his work he describes their 'remarkable sharpness' (1970b: 136).

Later in his life when he had visited the watchmakers in the Swiss Jura, he notes: 'The clearness of insight, the soundness of judgment, the capacity for disentangling complex social questions (...) deeply impressed me' (*ibid.*: 130). Overall, he was very positive about the creativity, autonomy and intellect of the many the workers that he had met over the years. In the future, improvements in the field of education and working conditions would make it possible for workers to participate in decision making and become optimally acquainted with the anarchist ideas of self-regulation, self-steering systems and self-realization.

Sixth, Kropotkin suggests a free form of organization in which the individual must become the central agent. Far ahead of his time, his ideal organizational model is like a system of modules that are 'self-regulating'. There are subunits (individuals, municipalities, provinces, etc.) which possess local autonomy and which can federate on a voluntary basis with the other units. In general, he looks at organization not as a hierarchical order based on the exercise of central control, on discipline and obedience, but as the 'ordering of freedom'. He argues for a view on organization in which the emphasis is put on consistently finding 'spaces of freedom'. In a strikingly 'modern' way, he favors a loose, flexible and federative framework, in which the various entities would be autonomous and cooperate on the basis of free agreements.

The necessary prerequisite of social equality

Next to a need for radical changes in political and economic organization, Kropotkin stressed the necessity of social equality. The political and economic revolution would have to go hand in hand: after all, what could political liberty mean if people were slaves from an economic point of view?

In *The conquest of bread* Kropotkin investigates the capitalist relations of production. The system of private property produced riches for the few, brought exploitation and poverty for the many and thus led to unjust social inequality. In his opinion this situation was unacceptable from an ethical point of view: 'the means of production being the collective work of humanity, the product should be the collective property of the race. Individual appropriation is neither just nor serviceable. All belongs to all. All things are for all men, since all men have need of them, since all men have worked in the measure of their strength to produce them, and since it is not possible to evaluate every one's part in the production of the world's wealth' (1985: 33). Kropotkin argued for well-being for all by abolishing private property and the returning of land, machinery, factories, means of transportation, etc., into the hands of the community. This would end the capitalist exploitation of labor, since both the means of production and the goods produced would become common property.

In his plans for the reconstruction of society, Kropotkin chose to abandon the traditional wage system. Since in the present state of industry every branch is completely interdependent, any attempt to identify an individual origin for products has become untenable (*ibid.*: 146 and 70). His new freedom oriented society was based on the principle – 'to every man according to his needs' (*ibid.*: 170). The final result would consist of an anarchist-communist society in which economic exploitation and domination were abolished and equal relations and feelings of solidarity would take their place. Kropotkin was convinced that the

resulting social equality would foster a new sense of justice and raise the moral level of humanity, producing an unprecedented feeling of general well-being and harmony in society (1975: 73).

Conclusion

Nineteenth-century libertarian Peter Kropotkin has developed an alternative line of organizational thinking which completely breaks with traditional ideas about central rule, control and hierarchy. He contributed to elaborating a freedom-oriented 'anarchist' organization which opposes today's predominantly bureaucratic and hierarchical organizational society. Starting from the idea of the primacy of individual liberty, mutual aid and interdependence between humans, he was far ahead of his time and created a surprisingly modern organization theory and promising anarchist vision for society. As a matter of fact, his reflections have influenced many radical social and political thinkers, such as William Morris, Aldous Huxley, Murray Bookchin and also Kirkpatrick Sale ('bioregionalism'). Moreover, he can be seen as an important predecessor of bio-cybernetic organization theory as found in the work of contemporary theorists such as Stafford Beer and of the ideas on organization of well-established researchers including Henry Mintzberg and Gareth Morgan.

His general design of a free and socially just society is based on the creation of self-regulating and self-governing entities, as in his view is the case in most natural systems. He underlines the necessity and efficiency of self-regulation and the redundancy and inefficiency of central rule. Strikingly, his vision of an anarchist society strongly resembles relatively modern bio-cybernetic organizational theories and systems of 'self-regulating' modules. In society there exist basic units (individuals, associations, communes, etc.) which have to possess autonomy, and which can co-operate and federate on a voluntary basis with the other units.

Kropotkin rejects hierarchy and argues for a concept of society in which the emphasis lies on finding 'spaces for human freedom'. He wants a loose, flexible and federative framework, in which the various entities voluntarily cooperate on the basis of free agreements. The central notions of his theory are autonomy, federalism, mutual aid, minimal central control and above all political and economic decentralization. Hierarchy, discipline and the exercise of power from the top are again and again criticized. Kropotkin's approach emphasizes the full freedom of every human being and assumes that the needs of the organizational system must be subordinated to the individual rights and liberties of the participants.

In Kropotkin's anarchist organizational vision, the production of goods would take place in small scale factories and workshops, evenly dispersed in the country and situated near to the local fields and gardens. In his plans, people would combine intellectual work with manual labor and have ample opportunity to pursue new branches of art and knowledge. There would be no need for working overtime and people would have the real opportunity to develop their individual capacities.

Due to improved efficiency and modern technology, more than enough goods and services could be produced in such a system: real human needs could easily be satisfied. In Kropotkin's view there is no place for individual appropriation and private property. Equal social relations would develop, which would in turn produce a sense of justice and morality in society. Kropotkin argues that a harmonious stateless situation would result, where all the relations of its members are ruled by mutual aid and voluntary agreements.

Kropotkin's anarchist organizational ideas are intriguing and surely not without promise. His anarchist concept stresses that in future society loose and flexible forms of organization are quintessential. Ideally, organizations must consistently aim at the goal of individual and collective liberty. In general, he argues, men and women possess all the qualities suiting them for a life of full freedom, self-rule and self-regulation. In line with this, individual freedom and social equality are the only acceptable foundations of human organization, be it a state, a village or a productive economic unit. In sum, we must reject still dominant ancient concepts of central control, hierarchical rule, command and discipline. Organization and management must always be based on 'self-guidance' because the individual him or herself knows best how to deal with the demands and conditions of the specific situation. Only then can individual liberty and rights be assured and well-informed, wise and rational organizational and managerial decisions be made

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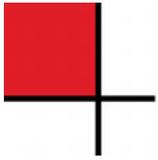
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The anarchist commons

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Analyzing the anarchist commons in Montreal, Canada using participatory action research interviews with 127 participants, we find that anti-authoritarian groups and networks addressing disparate but connected struggles are building an anarchist commons, constructing a loose grouping of spaces, networks and collectives united by a shared political culture. Key debates are explored, centering on: intentional development of the commons; mixed labour models; and anti-oppression practices of calling in vs. calling out. Participants indicate an understanding of the anarchist commons through theories and practices beyond capitalism, including feminist, queer, trans and anti-racist commitments. Finally we argue that the shared anti-authoritarian political culture provides a certain resistance to enclosure of the *anarchist commons* through the processes and practices used to construct it.

Introduction

The notion of the commons has long been understood as referring to spaces for open participation of regular people, and is thus both a concept and practice with an affinity to anarchism. De Angelis and Harvie (2014: 280) define the commons as 'social systems in which resources are shared by a community of users/producers, who also define the modes of use and production, distribution and circulation of these resources through democratic and horizontal forms of governance'. Caffentzis and Federici (2013) map out a partial history of the commons, showing how the sharing of land and projects for sustainable communities has long existed in a range of global locations and extensive formations. They consider several contemporary small-scale anti-capitalist

projects, suggesting that squats, urban gardens and other autonomous self-organized groups are examples of contemporary anti-capitalist commons. Thus the definition of the commons exceeds a simple notion of openness, as we see in Ostrom's account of the commons as a space 'where the members of a clearly demarked group have a legal right to exclude non-members of that group from using a resource' (Ostrom, 2000: 335). While *anarchist commons* tend to focus on open access principles, they also tend to provide basic membership principles articulated in a basis of unity, although these tend to fall outside any legal framework. The *anarchist commons* are spaces owned and managed in common by anarchists and anti-authoritarians, and sometimes open to outsiders (Anarchist FAQ, 2012).

Robinson (2009: 1) has found that, 'Anarchist social movements are relatively understudied, despite indicators of their resurgence in the last decade. Today, however, anarchist politics have diversified to address a variety of social issues'. An economic-determinist model of the commons must be extended to consider this diversity of struggles. In this paper we will describe our methodology, situate anarchist theories of the commons within the literature, and provide a mapping of the Montreal anarchist commons as a case study. We will argue that the range of anti-authoritarian groups and networks in Montreal addressing several disparate but connected struggles are engaged in building the *anarchist commons* in a loose grouping of spaces, networks and collectives that are united by a shared political culture (Sarrasin et al., 2012), illustrating this with examples from empirical interviews. Key discussions emerge, including the need for more intentional development of the commons, mixed-labour models that may address tendencies toward self-exploitation, calling people in rather than calling them out on oppressive behaviors, and understanding the anarchist commons through theories and practices beyond capitalism. Finally we will argue that this political culture and the processes engaged in provide a certain resistance to enclosure of the anarchist commons.

Methodology: Rooted participatory action research

This research project is part and parcel of the Montreal *anarchist commons*. It was undertaken by the *Collectif de Recherche sur l'Autonomie Collective* (Collective Autonomy Research Group, CRAC), a bilingual anti-authoritarian *profeminist* collective doing research with and rooted within anti-authoritarian groups and networks that have emerged in Quebec between 1995 and 2010 (Breton et al., 2012a; 2012b). The CRAC collective is comprised of anti-authoritarian and anarchist activists who self-identify as *profeminist*, and uses prefigurative non-hierarchical decision-making and research processes. We define the term

profeminist as anti-authoritarian and anarchist activists who self-identify and/or organize as radical feminist, pro-feminist men, radical queer, trans, anti-racist and/or anti-colonialist, where the ‘and/or’ signifies the possibility of identifying with more than one (Breton et al., 2012a).

We focused our research on anti-authoritarians concerned with resistance to patriarchy and heteronormativity, including environmentalist, anti-capitalist, anti-racist and anti-colonial organizers. We identified approximately two hundred anti-authoritarian and anarchist groups, which are listed on our website in an anarchist repertoire (CRAC, <http://www.crac-kebec.org/en>). From those, we interviewed 117 participants who self-identified as *profeminist*, in nine groups and networks (see Figure 1). Many of these have explicitly anarchist values and practices that confront the immediate lived realities of everyday life (Sarrasin et al., 2012; Kruzynski et al., 2012; Breton et al., 2012a).

Collectives	Networks
Convergence des Luttes Anti-Capitalistes (Anti-Capitalist Convergence, CLAC) (n = 22)	Féministes Radicales (Radical Feminists) (n = 15)
Les Panthères roses (The Pink Panthers; queer anarchist direct action collective) (n = 8)	Autonomous Gardens (urban autonomous farm collectives) (n = 15)
Ainsi Squattent-elles (Thus she squats; Anarchist-feminist radio program) (n = 9)	Profeminists organizing in anti-colonial and anti-racist networks (n=23)
Ste-Emilie SkillShare (queer people and trans people of colour arts collective space) (n = 9)	
QTeam (radical queer collective) (n = 10)	
Collectif Liberte terre (Free Earth; green anarchist collective) (n = 6)	

Figure 1: Our sample of groups and networks in the Montreal anarchist commons.

The research took place in three phases: (1) initial contact and interviews; (2) compiling results into a monograph or case-study for each group/network and validating them through collaborative discussions, of which seven have been completed (CRAC, 2008; 2009; 2010a; 2010b; Breton, 2013; Eslami and Maynard, 2013; LeBlanc, 2013); and (3) a transverse analysis across all of the interviews on specific themes, with a validation of findings in the research

collective and then in focus group workshops. This paper presents findings from the transverse analysis on the theme ‘political culture’ – a comparative analysis of all of the groups and networks taken together. To validate and extend the findings, we held a weekend of reflection in February 2011 in which approximately 80 activists participated. The transverse analysis was conducted by activist-scholars each with ten or more years’ experience in the anti-authoritarian milieu, and this participatory experience also informs our analysis.

Situating the anarchist commons: Theory and practice

The commons is a concept used to indicate spaces and goods that are held and used in common by a community or collectivity. De Angelis and Harvie (2014: 290) argue that the relation between capitalism and the commons has always been one of ‘co-dependence and co-evolution’, as even very early forms of the commons were subjected to the logic of enclosures, often benefiting the already wealthy. Neoliberal capitalists today are engaged in an intensified enclosure of the commons, in an ‘attempt to subordinate every form of life and knowledge to the logic of the market’ (Federici, 2010). Countering these enclosures, ‘new forms of social cooperation are constantly being produced’ that construct a commons as a third space, an ‘alternative to both State and Private Property’ (*ibid.*). While the commons eschew the capitalist profit motive, De Angelis and Harvie (2014: 290) find that the labour and resources of the commons may sometimes support capitalist activity. Moreover the commons itself may be theorized with capitalist assumptions as per Hardin (1968), who assumes that, for example, herders on a commons will feel compelled to increase their herds limitlessly, thereby exponentially depleting the resources of the commons until they are no longer useful. De Angelis and Harvie (2014: 286) provide counter examples where those using a commons are more concerned with long-term sustainability and subsistence than capitalist accumulation. While Hardin’s type of commons does not ‘put constraints on, and push back, practices based on commodity production and capital accumulation’ (De Angelis and Harvie, 2014: 291), explicitly anti-capitalist commons that promote independence in social reproduction and horizontal decision-making often do (*ibid.*).

Caffentzis and Federici (2013: 92-94) propose six criteria for an anti-capitalist commons: (1) commons are produced; (2) commons are invested in collective labour; (3) commons should be non-state, and produce the public good; (4) commons serve community, balancing responsibilities and rights; (5) “commons require regulations”; and (6) commons are founded on egalitarian principles. The proposal offers a principled starting point for considering the features of an *anarchist commons*, which has shared organizational principles and political

commitments that challenge the economic logic of late capitalism, as well as its social logics. However, there are some differences.

The *anarchist commons* draws on the anti-capitalist commons in that it is distinct from both private property and state-owned commons. It does not preclude selling or buying things, but rather exchanges at events such as the Montreal Anarchist Bookfair are governed by anarchist norms—the booksellers will be worker co-ops such as AK Press; the food providers will be horizontal activist groups such as the People’s Potato or the Midnight Kitchen; people will trade or sell zines and patches for the cost of production; art, film, radio, and other media are freely accessible to users and producers. There is a political economy of mutual aid based on self-determination and prefigurative political practices fostering horizontal social, political and economic relationships. This political economy appears to be very resistant to the logic of capitalist and other forms of enclosure.

The *anarchist commons* creates a political culture in organizational practices based on shared commitments to diverse political struggles, shared ethical principles, and alternative social norms. As Grégoire¹, a participant from the CLAC (*Convergence des Luttes Anti-Capitalistes*, or the Convergence of Anti-Capitalist Struggles) mentioned:

For me, what was super important, was the organizational mode. The principle of general assemblies and self-management and the decentralization that we tried to do which didn’t necessarily work, but the effort in all facets of doing that, to do it differently... It was one of the only activist milieus that made the effort to include Francophones and Anglophones in the same milieu, or to do rotation of certain tasks such as facilitation, a speakers list, all of that, these were the means that I found interesting which made the involvement activist, not just in the results but in the way things were done.

These social norms are part of an anti-capitalist *profeminist* ethic, favoring cooperation over competition, listening over speaking, gift or barter economies over profit, and linguistic inclusivity. Norms of political process are put into practice in workshops, discussion spaces and other types of public spaces organized by anarchists such as the Montreal Anarchist Bookfair. These include: no behaviors that exhibit sexism, racism, heterosexism, colonialism, ableism or other forms of oppression; taking turns and being respectful when others are speaking; raising one’s hand to be on a speakers list which prioritizes marginalized and first-time speakers; twinkling or making jazz hands rather than

1 All quotes from participants are anonymized. Names have been changed, although activist group and network names are given for context. Some quotes have been translated from French to English by the authors.

interrupting when one likes what someone is saying; self-facilitating by being aware of how much space one is taking up and limiting interventions if speaking too often; and doing go-around check-ins where everyone in a workshop introduces themselves, says what pronoun they go by, and speaks about how they are feeling, their organizing work, and/or what they expect from the meeting or workshop; and explicit processes for addressing dominating behaviors. These social norms are not predominantly anti-capitalist, but are based on *profeminist* anti-oppression politics, and are expressed in the basis of unity for various groups, for example, the Bookfair's statement of Principles (Montreal Anarchist Bookfair, n.d.).

The social norms of the *anarchist commons* described here are part of a widespread global political alternative based on three important principles: collective autonomy, self-determination, and self-organization.

First, *collective autonomy* is the principle in which collectives or affinity groups are organized in autonomous formations, as distinct from NGOs, political parties, social services, unions or other top-down organizations. They are autonomous specifically from capitalism and the state, and their autonomy is put into practice through processes that create collective autonomy through day-to-day actions. As Rowan, a participant from Liberterre said, 'The idea is that it is not really the government who is going to do something, so the actions, it is necessary to take them in hand personally and collectively'.

Second, *self-determination* is the principle in which collectives determine how they will function themselves. Decisions are not separate from responsibilities and rights, but rather are negotiated with and respectful of the diversity of communities the collective exists in relationship with. However, external organizations or individuals may not determine decisions of the group. As Victoria from ACAR (profeminists organizing in anti-colonial and anti-racist networks) mentions: 'if you're working from a place of the politics of self-determination, that [for] the issues that you are working on, the people most affected by those issues should be the ones leading those struggles, and [at] the forefront of them'. Conversely, the group will not determine decisions for others. Monique from Ste-Émilie Skillshare puts it this way: 'If everybody talks their own life and talks about their own story and doesn't try to pretend they're somebody else's or try to pretend that they know about somebody else's life or somebody else's struggle, then we don't need to steal from other cultures, right?'. Thus a respect for self-determination is applied both internally and externally to a collective.

Third, *self-organization* is the principle by which collectives organize themselves using horizontal processes such as consensus decision-making. As a CLAC participant, Kai, stated: ‘I think that it is something that everyone has access to construct, to influence, to share tasks, to build consensus, so that one is not dependent on institutions, the government, that it is by our own efforts, our own will, our own work, that our direction is determined by ourselves’. Groups use task rotation, skill-sharing, and other forms of knowledge co-production to organize and carry out their work in self-organized formations.

Moving beyond anti-capitalism, *profeminist* anti-authoritarians use anti-oppression politics (Breton et al., 2012b), theorizing oppression using intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1989; Sandoval, 2000; hooks, 2000; 2007 [1984]; Bilge and Denis, 2010). Oppression can be defined as illegitimate institutionalized power that allows certain groups to exercise dominance over others. These are some of the axes along which oppression takes place:

[gender], race, colour of the skin, age, ethnicity, language, ancestral origin, sexual orientation, [sexual practices], religion, socioeconomic class, skills, culture, geographical location, and status as migrant, Indigenous person, refugee, internally-displaced person, child or person living with HIV/AIDS, in a conflict-zone or occupied territory. (Morris and Bunjun, 2007: 5)

An opposition to all of these interlocking systems through collective organizing is at the heart of the *anarchist commons*.

Empirical findings: Practices and processes in the anarchist commons

The cartography of activism (CRAC, 2011: 3) in the anarchist commons using an anti-oppression intersectionality framework can be conceptualized as a set of five overlapping circles (see Figure 2):

- *Profeminist*, anti-patriarchy, anti-sexism, for bodily autonomy
- Anti-racist, anti-colonial, anti-imperial, international solidarity, (im)migrant and refugee rights, e.g., No One Is Illegal, Solidarity City, Israeli apartheid
- Environmental justice, food security, e.g., Liberterre, Autonomous gardens, People’s Potato, Midnight Kitchen
- Queer, trans, anti-heteronormative, anti-homonormative, e.g., QTeam, Ste-Émilie Skillshare, Les Panthères roses
- Anti-capitalist, anti-state, anti-police brutality, workers’ rights, anti-poverty, anti-gentrification, no borders, no prisons, e.g., CLAC, Centre Social Autogéré, Collective Opposing Police Brutality.

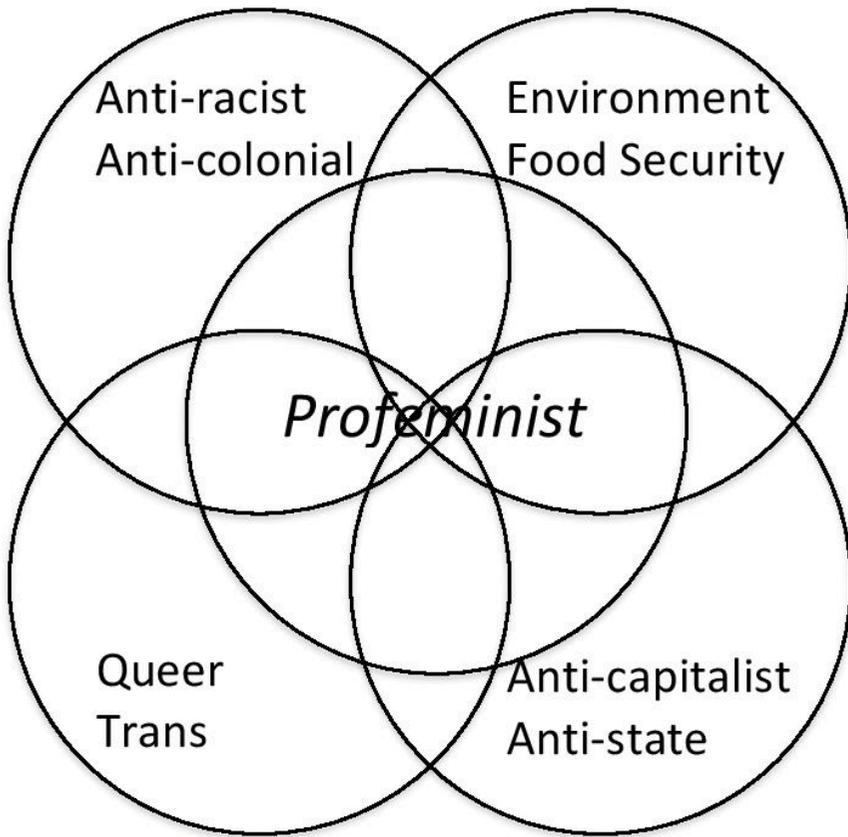


Figure 2: Cartography of the anarchist commons in Montreal.

Many struggles occur at the overlap of two or more circles. Migrant worker struggles occur at the intersection of anti-capitalism and anti-racism, and may also connect to queer and trans struggles. Gaza was mentioned by several participants: a pink (queer) bloc would participate in a Gaza solidarity protest, and an anti-Israeli-apartheid group such as Queers Against Israeli Apartheid might participate in an LGBTQ pride parade. Police brutality connects to anti-racism in struggles against police profiling, and racialized violence and shootings. Anti-capitalism intersects with colonialism in indigenous struggles against resource extraction, which intersects with environmental justice. *Profeminist* practices intersect with every struggle.

We have found that anarchists and anti-authoritarians are engaged in providing for ourselves and simultaneously radically altering the types of spaces and services that are typically expected to be provided by the state (education, health care, child care), capitalism (media, food production, clothing, retail stores,

workplaces), or personal relationships (housing, kinship, love, intimacy). Examples include popular education workshops such as those put on at the Montreal Anarchist Bookfair or the Forum Against Police Violence and Impunity, Community Supported Agriculture provided by the autonomous gardens, and intentional family relationships mentioned by Ste-Émilie Skillshare.

Furthermore, we have found that anti-authoritarian individuals, groups and networks taken as a whole represent a contemporary articulation of anarchism defined by a fluid political culture and set of processes or ‘a collective identity built around a way of being, thinking, and doing’ (Gordon, 2007: 14). Despite some of our differences, we refer to ourselves as a whole when speaking of the movement, and when we talk about social change, we talk in large part about the same things (CRAC, 2011: 4-5). Anarchism is thus understood as both a set of prefigurative processes and a political organizing culture that creates and is created by the anarchist commons.

Prefigurative processes of the anarchist commons

Ideas and practices spread within anarchist spaces, communities and outward through non-hierarchical processes of ‘cross-pollination’ (sharing principles and practices through face-to-face discussions as people move between various collectives and meeting spaces) that grow out of a commitment to principles of mutual aid and co-production of knowledge. Anarchists set up and self-manage spaces that allow for expressions and practices of collective autonomy in the here and now, as Emerson from *Les Panthères roses* expressed:

For me, what is also important, is to create spaces. I don't believe in the complete change of the world tomorrow morning, but for me it's already very important to be able to create spaces where political ideas can really be put into practices, my political ideas must be put into practice. That I am able to live according to my ideas, I think it is already an enormous job. It is really very difficult. Anyway, for me, it allows me to go out into the world outside, which is savage, and to be able to survive because I feel well.

They are collectively rather than individually oriented, challenging individualism, and re-orienting toward community, caring, compassion, mutual understanding, and respect.

Emanating from this orientation toward the commons and the public good is the collective production of autonomy from top-down institutions. Collective autonomy cannot just be written down in a manifesto or basis of unity however, it must be put into practice in everyday processes. As Stéphanie put it,

You're always going to run into people that haven't done much self-reflection and I think however radical of a group you build with all kinds of structures in place to make sure that racism within an organization is minimized, that organization is part of society so it has to be constant on-going work. You can't be like "well we've, you know, put in place our anti-harassment policy or anti-racism policy so we're good to go." It always has to be on-going work.

Other examples of process-related techniques include: check-ins and check-outs at the beginning and end of meetings, when people share personal experiences and discuss how they feel about the meeting; a vibe-minder to track the emotional tenor of the meeting and call for a break if people are getting aggressive, tense or tired; a time-watcher to ensure each topic doesn't go over time (a known pitfall of consensus decision-making!); scheduled play times to create pleasure in the organizing process; and retreats that set aside decision-making to concentrate on relationship building and visioning. As people engage in anti-authoritarian processes, they develop alternative capacities by creating relationships that replace socio-cultural norms of domination with cooperation, active listening, collective self-care, and consensus building.

In addition to the use of anti-authoritarian processes, a second understanding of anarchism as process is the concept of permanent revolution. As Carlsson and Manning (2010: 951) argue, 'human beings are forever resilient in recreating patterns of behavior based on mutual aid, collaboration, and collective need, despite the forces working against those desires and impulses'. But to categorize and constrain these behaviors and practices would risk becoming authoritarian, so many participants agreed that it was neither necessary nor desirable to solidify the definition of their projects in any prescriptive way, sometimes even avoiding the label of anarchist as too constrictive (Breton et al., 2012a; 2012b).

Most participants recognized that the ways we organize may differ, according to the decisions taken by those directly concerned, based on their social position, and their understanding of how best to put collective autonomy into practice. Thus affinity groups placed importance on open-endedness with respect for a multiplicity of ideas and practices, and for free and voluntary association. The fact that there may be tensions between people or groups with different needs and aspirations is what makes attentiveness to process so important. Cindy Milstein (2010) argues that it is precisely in the struggles of day to day organizing that anarchism takes place, and our findings confirm this (CRAC, 2011: 7-8).

Shared political culture of the anarchist commons

The shared political culture of the anarchist commons is similarly organic, experimental, open to change, adaptable to geo-political developments, and emblematic of an overall political fluidity, without being trapped in an endlessly

self-referential cultural relativism on the one hand, or a fixity of purpose, structure and demands on the other. The shared anti-authoritarian political culture can be characterized in three ways: solidarity and forefront organizing through confrontation and construction; value-practices in affinity group organizing; and anti-oppression consciousness integrated into day-to-day organizing.

For the most part, anarchist work is grounded in a dual political strategy of confrontation and construction. Confrontation strategies aim to destabilize and delegitimize the current socio-political order, whereas construction strategies build grassroots alternatives. Being in solidarity with those active on the frontline of struggles was seen to be a key anarchist ‘value-practice’ (Jeppesen, 2009). Strategies for acting in solidarity and being good allies were widely discussed. Stéphanie articulates a common position on solidarity:

it’s important to send a message of solidarity, to send a message to the people that are directly affected “you’re not alone, and other people care.” I think it’s important to send a message to the oppressors that there’s not universal consent to the oppression. For example, a message being sent to the Canadian government that – I’m just focused on Gaza because it’s happening right now – a message that not all people in Canada think that’s it okay that Canada is being complicit in the bombing of Gaza. And also, it’s an important way of *using* that privilege. Sometimes you just have more access to power structures, or more leeway to take certain risks, as someone that’s not directly affected. So migrant justice organizing springs to mind, like, people that don’t have immigration papers are taking a much greater risk in taking a direct action where you’re going to get arrested, than people that do have immigration status. So if at a certain point it is strategically useful to do a direct action with a high degree of risk of arrest then that’s a role for allies.

Solidarity organizing takes place when those most affected are at the forefront of the struggle taking leadership roles, but not necessarily at the forefront of the protest facing down police lines. This conception of solidarity suggests that people with more privilege will use their social location to work with and support those in frontline struggles, a position reiterated in our weekend of reflection. One participant, however, mentioned that when they came to Canada from Latin America many activists wanted them to be at the forefront of Latin American solidarity organizing. They felt it was difficult to live up to those expectations as they were just one person among many in the struggle. This kind of figure-heading may inadvertently serve to create awkward hierarchies of expected leadership, and we must be careful not to establish new power dynamics through our rejection of these very power inequities. Checking in with people about how they feel in specific situations, and practicing active listening may be helpful.

In addition to the forefront model, anti-authoritarians articulated a commitment to a shared set of principles, of which we identified ten: social justice, mutual aid, solidarity, freedom, equality, spontaneity, autonomy, democracy, respect for diversity, and creativity (CRAC, 2011: 5). Grounded in these principles, ‘value-practices’ (Jeppesen, 2009) emerge that define the shared political culture. For example, the principle of mutual aid might result in the value-practice of resource sharing, whereby resources such as a computer, food, work expertise, a spare bed, heirloom seeds, or books and zines might be shared mutually among activists.

Affinity group organizing is a common decentralized form of anti-authoritarian political culture. Affinities can coalesce around identities, interests, or localities, such as a neighborhood that is gentrifying (Centre Social Autogéré) or a personal identity such as queer and trans people of colour (Ste-Émilie Skillshare). Some affinities were found to be quite different. For example, the anti-gentrification work undertaken by the Centre Social Autogéré was organized among people who lived in the same geographical proximity, where activists reached out to strangers to develop affinities. On the other hand, Ste-Émilie considers their affinity to be so close that they self-identify as an intentional family. Networking structures used by affinity groups are flexible and decentralized, allowing for effective communication, coordination, and organization of campaigns in everyday life. There is a common understanding among anti-authoritarians of what an affinity group entails, and how such a collective will be organized using a shared political culture.

We found that people in various networks (e.g., radical feminists, *profeminists* organizing in anti-colonial and anti-racist networks) organized in both explicitly anarchist groups and more mainstream groups. This included radical community groups that worked along anti-authoritarian lines but were not explicitly anarchist. However, some people felt that there were limits to this kind of work, as some groups’ practices did not account for interlocking oppressions:

in mainstream organizations where there’s an assumption that everybody participating in the organizing personally has enough money to, say, hold the meeting in an expensive restaurant, or if the meeting goes beyond last metro, we can all take a cab home... Those are the instances where I would feel silenced; if the group itself has no conception of the operating of oppression within the group itself. (Stéphanie)

This example emphasizes attempts to address interlocking issues through practices such as providing free food at meetings, ensuring meetings end before the last metro, and providing dependent-care and transportation subsidies.

These principles are flexible to some extent, as anarchist practices account for practical modes of crisis intervention where survival is at stake. Stéphanie mentioned specific examples where they would make decisions based on immediate need:

I have no qualms about taking a woman to a women's shelter, even if that women's shelter doesn't accept trans women or women who don't have immigration papers. If the woman that I'm working with is going to be not killed by her spouse if I take her to that women's shelter, and is going to be killed by her spouse if I don't, I'm going to take her. Or if somebody's going to get deported if we don't get the Canadian Council of Refugees to sign on to their case.

Anti-authoritarians would prefer a women's shelter that is trans-inclusive, with a 'don't ask, don't tell' policy so that undocumented people can access its services. However, a person's immediate survival needs would over-ride these political or ideological preferences.

The prefigurative processes and shared political culture of the anarchist commons are continually under development through self-reflection and in response to political change.

Discussion

All of these forms of anarchist organizing, taken together, form a set of alternative institutions and social-political practices, and yet this *anarchist commons* faces several challenges today.

Intentionality

Federici (2010) suggests that there is a problem in the lack of cohesion of the commons, as 'the left has not posed the question of how to bring together the many proliferating commons that are being defended, developed, and fought for, so that they can form a cohesive whole and provide a foundation for a new mode of production'. Our research confirms this.

Collectives and affinity groups tend to start because there are individuals interested in a particular topic, issue, identity, or practice. The *anarchist commons*, therefore is not intentional in terms of collectively taking decisions among the entire community to start or provide particular anarchist 'institutions'. Each city, instead, will have specific institutions depending on local factors. Philadelphia has a mental health care collective called Philly's Pissed partially due to explicit struggles with mental health and gendered violence. Toronto had an Anarchist Free University for many years. Vancouver has several vegetarian collective

restaurants because of the west-coast emphasis on sustainability and permaculture. Montreal has several anarchoqueer collectives because the city is home to a large radical queer population. The challenge is for the global anarchist movement to make decisions more intentionally, so that each city can have a flourishing *anarchist commons* that might provide all of these institutions, or so that institutions can be networked together.

It was also found that collectives come and go, as the need for specific activism arises, or the geopolitical context shifts. As Adrienne from QTeam said:

I don't really feel like it's even necessary for QTeam to last forever. I really think that QTeam is there to serve the needs of the people who are organizing within it and if that need changes or if there's no longer that need than I don't think that those individuals are going to stop doing queer activism or doing activism, I think it will have served its purpose and people will do other things because that's what's coming up.

Challenges thus are less directly related to enclosure, and derive instead from questions of sustainability, adaptability and resilience, due to the experimental nature or changing needs of our organizing work. Groups such as QTeam, Ste-Émilie Skill-Share, the CLAC, and other *profeminist* anti-authoritarian collectives did not express a concern about enclosure of the commons, or the co-optation of their groups by capitalism. The organizing structures, processes and political culture seem to make enclosure unlikely, as the commitment to a consistency of ends and means, or prefiguration, prevents this to a large extent. Instead what was emphasized was that a balance needs to be struck between intentional long-term sustainable collectives and spaces, and fluid adaptability of activists and collectives to sociopolitical events and collective needs.

Self-exploitation

In 'Nowtopia' Carlsson and Manning (2010: 925) suggest that labour separated from class relations is not exploitative, as people 'reinvent work against the logic of capital', and 'fully engage their capacities to create, to shape, to invent, and to cooperate without monetary incentive'. But one of the internal critiques of anarchist organizations is that, although we might critique exploitation by capitalists, when working for ourselves we often engage in self-exploitation, working long hours for little pay. Some anti-authoritarian worker co-ops, such as the Media Co-op, are faced with difficult choices between paying low wages in order to make the collective sustainable, and maintaining the financial sustainability of writers and editors who may need to find other jobs, or work extra unpaid hours.

Unpaid activism is another anarchist working model. Many activists said they didn't have time to do all of the organizing work they wanted to. The Montreal anarchist library (DIRA) and the Montreal Anarchist Bookfair are both organized and run by unpaid volunteers. The 'labour of love' model of anarchist organizing and of 'nowtopia' are an integral part of neoliberal labour precarity. José van Dijk (2009: 50) argues, 'the sliding scales of voluntarism are inversely proportional to the sliding scales of professionalism, resulting in new mixed models of labour'. The risk is that participation in unpaid/underpaid jobs may lead to fewer opportunities for paid professional positions, as contemporary critics of internships argue (de Peuter, Cohen and Brophy, 2012). Activists may inadvertently be playing into the hands of neoliberalism, trading off creative and political autonomy for personal austerity, a practice which may not be sustainable. As Jacqueline argues,

It was self-managed, I guess, but CLAC couldn't ever survive without the support of other factors in society. It wasn't independent from society,... it's not like a self-managed factory, a self-managed territory. ... You have to rely on universities for your space or funding or people have to rely on working at Café Dépôt if it's that, or working as a professor's assistant, or not working, rely on welfare. It was self-managed as an institution, sure, but it wasn't self-reliant.

Mixed-labour models, where people work part-time at low-wage jobs and do unpaid labour in activist groups, do not guarantee collective self-sufficiency, whereas the *anarchist commons*, considered as a whole, has this potential if it can become slightly more intentional.

Unpaid activist labour can lead to burnout, which depletes the collective resources of the *commons*, as experienced individuals may not have the capacity to pass on expertise. This over-exertion often falls on the shoulders of those experiencing multiple oppressions, specifically women and/or people of colour and/or queer and trans people and/or indigenous people and/or people with disabilities. Furthermore, when anti-capitalists burn out from doing too much anti-capitalist organizing, they often return to living in capitalist modes, as there are few supports in place for those not engaged in collective organizing. Thus the tensions in amateur/professional or unpaid/paid labour are crucial to resolve for the long-term sustainability of the anarchist movement and its participants.

Calling people out/calling people in

Racialized, gendered, heteronormative, colonial or ableist group dynamics also cause tensions, which may be dealt with directly by 'calling people out' on their privilege. Resources such as 'White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack' by Peggy McIntosh (1989) or 'Where was the Color in Seattle?' by Elizabeth Martinez (2000) were helpful in facilitating these kinds of conversations.

Activists noted, however, that the process of calling someone out is emotionally draining. The person calling out might not find support in the group for taking this action. Those called out might leave one group and join another, failing to check their own behavior. The process might sideline a collective's organizing work, and some collectives might not survive the process.

Other activists noticed a group's racialized or gendered dynamics, but second-guessed themselves because the people who seemed dominant also appeared more experienced. Paradoxically, the power dynamics that felt oppressive were second-guessed because those dominating the meeting were so effective in asserting their power as a right to speak. Yet others noted how they silenced themselves because they worried about being judged for not having the correct political analysis.

Ngoc Loan Tran (2013) argues that calling out can be draining, heartbreaking, and destructive. Instead of 'calling out', they propose 'calling in':

I start "call in" conversations by identifying the behavior and defining why I am choosing to engage with them. I prioritize my values and invite them to think about theirs and where we share them. And then we talk about it. We talk about it together, like people who genuinely care about each other. We offer patience and compassion to each other and also keep it real, ending the conversation when we need to and know that it wasn't a loss to give it a try.

Calling out and calling in are both practices of anti-oppression politics that attempt to call into question dominating behaviors internalized from the dominant culture.

The desire to focus on building bridges through caring and compassion is a strong current in the *profeminist* anti-authoritarian movement. There is a desire for gentleness, pleasure, enjoyment and passion in life and in organizing, which motivates us in calling people in rather than out, engaging in collective self-care rather than self-exploitation, and creating intentional families or affinity groups with other people we care about.

Beyond the anti-capitalist commons

The anarchist commons is thus different from an anti-capitalist commons. Caffentzis and Federici (2013: p. 95) assert that: 'Anti-capitalist commons are not the end-point of anti-capitalist struggle, but its means'. Anarchists, however, have always argued for prefiguration in that the means and ends must be consistent. The principles or means of self-organization, self-determination and collective autonomy are also the ends or strategic long-term goals of anarchist organizing. What is important is the *process* of creating social change, not just in moments of

rupture, such as protests, but also through living arrangements, food production, work relations, knowledge co-production, media, and art, all of which expand and nurture the anarchist movement. These processes are themselves political, creating a new type of society through their practice. Because they are explicitly anti-capitalist in both means and ends, they offer strength in resisting co-optation or enclosure by the mainstream.

Second, the Marxist emphasis on economic relations is inadequate to the task of producing a diverse commons. For Habermas (1991 [1962]), the public sphere comprises the sum of all communicative action to create cooperatively generated mutual understandings among people to make positive political contributions to society. The anarchist commons includes practices related to challenging straight-white-male (SWM) domination of anti-capitalist and anarchist counter-public spaces that include feminist (Fraser 1992), queer (Berlant and Warner 1998), anti-racist (Sehdev 2002), and anti-colonial (Tuhiwai Smith 1999) counter-publics.

Demonstrating the interconnectedness of issues in the anarchist commons, queer activist groups such as QTeam or Les Panthères roses engage in direct actions that critique pink dollars and consumerism in the gay village, and they are also active on issues such as Israeli Apartheid, critiquing the Israeli state's false claim that the gay nightlife of Tel Aviv somehow compensates for their oppression of Palestinians. This solidarity is reciprocal. As Stéphanie mentioned,

I do see it as important for directly-affected people to self-organize. I do think solidarity is needed, but not only solidarity, like, from people who aren't affected towards people who are affected, but solidarity amongst all kinds of different people that are fighting all kinds of different oppressions, right. So queer people are oppressed, Palestinians in Gaza are getting bombed so it's good solidarity to have a pink bloc at the Gaza demo, right. So it's not just non-Gazans have privilege and Gazans, Palestinians don't so therefore – like I think when solidarity is one way, it's pretty tenuous.

To take a second example, Ste-Émilie Skillshare provides a queer and trans inclusive space for artistic production and hanging out, which is also explicitly anti-racist and anti-colonial. Instead of economic determinism, the *anarchist commons* derives from the principle of solidarity with those directly affected by an issue, challenging the hierarchy of oppression that considers economic oppression first.

A third question to consider is the liberal assumption inherent in the notion of egalitarianism. Caffentzis and Federici (2013: 94) caution against constructing the commons around a homogenous privileged group; they are concerned that participation be open to all, through 'access' and 'egalitarian decision-making',

key principles in an *anarchist commons*. They overlook potential challenges, however, in creating a commons within a diverse and structurally unequal society. Micro-aggressions, cultural differences, and structural inequities (for instance requiring a time commitment that only the privileged can fulfill, requiring people to speak the dominant language, etc.) can close the doors of a commons to specific groups despite a stated commitment to egalitarianism. This often happens in activist spaces, as was widely discussed by the Occupy movement (cf. Farrow, 2011; Doyle, 2011). While anarchist groups are also plagued by similar dynamics, many *profeminist* groups and collectives have developed practices to challenge this, as we have shown here. The *anarchist commons* thus does not presume egalitarianism, but actively fosters relationships of equality based on *profeminist* anti-oppression practices, horizontal organizing, and prefigurative politics (Breton et al., 2012), which can create and bring together a diverse range of interconnected counter-hegemonic publics.

Conclusion

A large proportion of anti-authoritarian organizing in Montreal is done by women, queer and/or trans people and/or people of colour. There may be SWM-dominated anarchist groups, however, the anarchist milieu in Montreal cannot be reduced to these groups. As Lucie observed,

You would come into any meeting in Montreal and be like ‘wow there’s lots of folks of colour here’ which is true. Most of the anti-capitalist organizing that I’ve been involved with there’ve been lots of folks of colour involved. I think that it’s a very particular – I would say that most people of colour that you meet who are at these meetings are highly educated.

This research reveals the depth and breadth of anti-authoritarian organizing along anti-racist, anti-colonial, queer and/or feminist lines, allowing us to extend our understanding of what counts as anti-authoritarian activism and to challenge the invisibilization of these forms of activism within the anarchist movement.

Processes for dealing with power imbalances in horizontal collectives range from the formal to the informal. For example, Lucie from ACAR talked about an informal process undertaken in the context of organizing against Israeli apartheid:

[T]his kind of ties into the question in terms of hierarchy of oppressions. I think sometimes gender-based analysis falls by the wayside ... Organizing around Apartheid stuff, we’re in a huge group where there are a lot of strong personalities, some women who have really strong personalities and men who have really strong personalities, and it ends up that a lot of the men in the group end up taking up a lot of space. It also ends up that the only Palestinian in the group is a man. And

there are just these ways that it plays out I think in those [big] meetings... where we have to get a lot done ...while also keeping a bigger view, of the bigger picture, and everything that's going on in Gaza right now. ... [T]here are times in that room where it feels like women's voices aren't being heard ... [S]ome people go away from the meetings sometimes and talk about it afterwards and sort of talk through it, and I've seen it actually change, and I've seen some of the dynamics change, and it's really exciting.

Feminist discussions took place outside the collective among active members, and males in the group took it on to self-facilitate, becoming aware of how much they tended to speak, and trying to speak less to make space for others to participate.

An anti-oppression framework helps us to name, discuss, address, and account for power dynamics in organizing spaces, workplaces, home spaces, and everyday life. The starting point is an understanding of ourselves and the roles we play in different relations of oppression/privilege. These roles derive from (in)visible privileges that all members of a dominant group are granted *de facto* because of their social location. Moreover, axes of privilege reinforce each other; different positions accumulate, overlay each other, and thereby magnify power and status. Through its focus on anarchism as process and shared political culture, the *anarchist commons* is not just resistant to enclosure by capitalism, but also to domination or enclosure by white supremacy, patriarchy, colonialism, ableism, and heteronormativity.

The *anarchist commons* is thus more than just the sum of its parts. It is a deep-seated political project prefiguring a constantly evolving alternative political form based on principles of collective autonomy, self-determination, and self-organization put into practice in the pleasure, work, everyday living, and activist organizing that make up all of our lives. As Nicole from Ste-Emilie Skillshare puts it:

I think that I like it best when we are all together, in this cheesy way [laughs], like when there are Open Studios, and everybody is here and there are so many nice people coming in, like, I don't know, whether just hanging out and talking about people stuff and working on projects together and stuff. Like for example, the Anxiety Zine is the best project ever, like everybody was here all the time folding paper, hanging out, and this was really, really nice. That's one of the best parts of organizing at Ste. Émilie.

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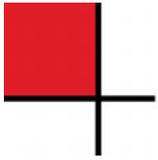
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Exit the system? Anarchist organisation in the British climate camps*

Fabian Frenzel

Protest camps have proliferated in social movement practice globally in recent years. Research has started to address protest camps and this study aims to contribute to the emerging field, focusing in particular on their form of organisation. Protest camps appear to resonate with social movement activists because they combine characteristics of networks like fluidity and flexibility with certain elements of organisation, in particular the ability to create and pursue an alternative order. They do so, I argue, by pursuing organisation in space. In this way protest camps offer practical solutions to the question of how to achieve powerful challenges to the status quo while maintaining a prefigurative politics of social change. In particular elements of organisation like hierarchy, membership and rules are significantly altered when organisation is pursued in space. I argue that the history of the protest camp as an organisational form is best conceived as a series of experiments with alternative, anarchist organisation, where different innovative elements of organisation are invented, modified and adapted to locally specific needs. Two distinct forms of spatial organisation emerge across different camps, the creation of spatial antagonism and decentralisation. Pursuing spatial antagonism and decentralisation protest camps enable 'partial organisation', somewhere between network structures and full organisation.

Introduction

Protest camps have proliferated in social movement practice over the last 40 years and they have grown to global significance in the last 4 years with uprisings taking place from Wall Street to Central London, from Tahrir to Taksim. There has been – concurrently – an increasing interest in the study of protest camps (Feigenbaum et al., 2013; Frenzel et al., 2014; Halvorsen, 2012; Leidinger, 2011;

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Ramadan, 2013). A common thread in this emerging field of research has been the question whether historically and geographically diverse protest camps share characteristics and whether the analysis of these can increase our understanding of dissent and social action? This paper aims to contribute to this debate and offers an interpretation of the protest camp as a specific organisational form. In particular I focus on the features of protest camps that allow participants to experiment with alternative and more specifically anarchist organisation. Alternative organisation is often used to describe organisations that are neither business nor state. Anarchist organisation aims explicitly at the absence of domination of human beings over other human beings in a sociality based on mutual aid and care. This includes attempts at limiting bureaucracy and hierarchy and an orientation towards a prefigurative politics of radical social change.

The history of the protest camp as an organisational form is best conceived as a series of experiments with alternative and anarchist organisation, where different innovative elements of organisation are invented, modified and adapted to locally specific needs. The study of these elements in a specific empirical example leads to an evaluation of elements that work better and worse in achieving the aims of participants. To this end I discuss empirical material from the Camp for Climate Action (CFCA) that conducted a series of protest camps in Britain between 2006 and 2009.

The paper addresses – in a more general sense – the political question of organisation. Violence, coercion and repression characterise human organisation in much of its history, as well as in the contemporary capitalist order. Marxists, feminists and anarchists, among many others, have long pointed to the need to overcome this predicament. Whether through radical rupture or slow transformation, their aim is to transcend the existing order and to create new order characterised by the absence of violence, coercion and repression. The question of organisation emerges because such new order also needs to be organised. Indeed organisation is intrinsically linked to the creation of (new) order (Ahrne and Brunsson, 2011). Furthermore the question is how to achieve new order against powerful defenders of the status quo. In particular there is debate over how to organise, in practical terms, political will and power to contest the status quo and to pursue alternatives. Classical modern answers inspired by Marxism aimed at the increase of power of the working classes through centralised, unified and hierarchical organisation, and in particular through the belabouring of state power. The inherent paradox (organising with violence, coercion and repression to overcome them) was never lost to anarchists who have long questioned this approach to politics and radical change. They emphasised instead the necessity to change politics not simply in content but also in form.

With theoretical interventions like the concept of pre-figurative politics (Breines, 1989), demands to ‘change the world without taking power’ (Holloway, 2002) and for a ‘post-capitalist politics’ (Gibson-Graham, 2006), recent decades have arguable shown something of a shift in the left towards the anarchist line. Concurrently these political ideas have been implemented in alternative organisational forms. Social movements have started to understand themselves as ‘networks’ or as ‘movement of movements’, comprised of a variety of diverse and heterogenic affinity groups and campaigns (Juris, 2008; Kingsnorth, 2003; Routledge et al., 2007). More recently, as horizontally inspired political movements have taken state power in several Latin American countries, the debate has perhaps seen a new shift. There is new emphasis on the weaknesses of networked politics and a stronger consideration of the potentialities to use state power or institutions (Hardt and Negri, 2009) to transform society. This has partly been motivated by new political concerns, including climate change, where the gravity of the problems demands, in the eyes of many, a resolute force if there is supposed to be a chance to tackle them at all. While the twists and turns in the ongoing debate over the question of organisation in the left are multiple, this contextual introduction shows that the question remains largely unanswered. There are however interesting learning effects and changes to observe, once we start paying attention to ways in which social movements experiment with organisational forms, what lessons are learned and what lessons are sometimes forgotten. I take a cue here from Cornell’s (2011) discussion of the Movement of a New Society (MNS) in which he traces the origin of procedural forms of horizontal decision making, an organisational feature of about 40 years of social movement organisation that has been made prominent by the Occupy movement.

In this paper the focus will be on protest camps and the employment of space as an organisational device. I show how spatial organisation enables protest camps to oscillate between more formal organisation and network character, seeking to combine advantages of both. In particular they seem to enable what Ahrne and Brunsson (2011) call ‘partial organisation’, forms of organisation that display some elements of organisation, but not all. The paper shows that protest camps are innovative, where they use different forms of spatial practice to achieve partial organisation. For example membership, a key element of organisation, is determined by physically being in place at the camp, and rules and sanctions only apply within the territory of the camp. Protest camps organise in space, rather than in time and/or procedure. Theoretically I contribute the insight that the concept of partial organisation is very useful for the study of protest camps, but that it needs to take into account the spatiality of organisation. Empirically I discuss the British Camp for Climate Action (CFCA). Following the first climate camp in Yorkshire in 2006, climate camps took place on a regular basis in

Britain, but were also copied in several other countries around the world. In 2009, the year of the climate conference COP15 in Copenhagen, at least 19 climate camps took place globally (Climate Camp NZ, 2009). In the UK, four camps and a broad range of further actions were organised. In 2011 CFCA decided to discontinue the mobilisation for climate camps amid internal critique over its practices and purpose. Research has pointed to some of the reasons why CFCA discontinued a national mobilisation after 2011 (Saunders and Price, 2009; Schlembach, 2011; Schlembach et al., 2012). Using the concepts of partial and spatial organisation, I discuss the history of the CFCA and its eventual demise offering new perspectives in this debate.

Outline

In the next section I discuss the question of organisation through the duality of network and organisation. I first point to the increasing rejection of formal organisation in social movements, new concepts and ideas about social movement formation and the emergence of the network paradigm. Against this backdrop I introduce the concept of partial organisation. In the second section I discuss protest camps as examples of partial organisation, whereby the focus will be on the emergence of this organisational form. Pointing to a few examples in the protest camp history I show how innovations in partial and spatial organisation were made and how they travelled (or not) to form an ever more sophisticated organisational form of the protest camp. In the last section, I review empirical material from the British climate-camps movement. The empirical part of the paper mainly draws upon the analysis of discourses as produced in and of the camp in a wide orbit, including both online and offline media and my own experience as a participant.

The question of organisation

The question of organisation is central to social movement activism. In the last 40 years or so an increasing rejection of formal social-movement organisations like trade unions and political parties and a trend to new, more loose and networked organisational forms can be observed. 'New' social movements are characterised by the search for new forms of organisation (Böhm et al., 2010; Calhoun, 1992; Crossley, 2003; Offe, 1987). Several factors have been identified as contributing to this development. The dramatic failure of state socialism, as established by communist parties in the Soviet Union and several other countries, to establish a communist order played an important role. In capitalist countries vibrant criticism of formal organisation since the 1970s also resulted from grievances with formal organisations in social-movement practice and

beyond. The reproduction of male-dominated gender relations and vertical hierarchies in trade unions and political parties on the left as well as their failure to account for the environmental degradation became a major issue of contestation for the emerging 'new left' since the 1960s. Sociological analysis tends to point to a variety of structural factors, like the demise of industrial labour and the rise of services industries which undermined classical union organisation (Lash and Urry, 1987).

A key concept to describe new social movement organisation since the 1970s is Breines' (1989) idea of 'prefigurative politics'. Prefigurative politics focuses on the *way* of doing politics, its *processes*. The means of progressive politics need to be aligned with its ends. This idea was not entirely new, as anarchist movements had long questioned and challenged both communist and socialist parties for their appraisal of structures of domination within their organisations as well as through the state. The new left in the 1970s took some inspiration from classical anarchism, but also showed greater awareness of the non-western traditions of dissent and protest. Emerging anti-nuclear and peace movements emphasised the development of new organisational forms, and new forms of decision-making, aligned with the political aspirations expressed in left-wing politics (Cornell, 2011). The emergence of horizontal decision-making and consensus as a procedure in movements across the US since the 1980s points to the ways in which new political movements increasingly attempted 'to change the world without taking power' (Holloway, 2002). The aim was to create new forms of organisation from the bottom up that could replace the existing capitalist and state structures. In terms of creating alternative organisational structures to capital, social movements concurrently also attempted a new approach to political economy, where social reproduction became a domain of political struggle (Federici, 2004). As Gibson-Graham (2006) argued in their call for a post-capitalist politics, this could be done by acknowledging the diversity of human forms of social reproduction existing despite and beyond capitalism.

Networks and organisation

Concurrently there has been an increasing use of the term 'network' to describe social movements (Castells, 1996; Routledge et al., 2007). To use the network metaphor was prompted by the huge influence of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) on human organisation. ICTs enabled cheap, inclusive and non-hierarchical communication in large, and spatially distant groups. With the help of mailing lists, open publishing sites like Indymedia, and more recently social media social movements could now more easily mobilise, organise and even appear (and vanish) spontaneously and without having to rely on formal structures, leadership or centralisation. While

the role of ICTs in social movement practice is highly important, there has also been arguably some exaggeration of their influence. A tendency of techno-determinism sometimes prevailed according to which technological advance in ITCs comes with an automatic advance in democratic human organisation (Frenzel and Sullivan, 2009; Lovink, 2011). This operated through an extension of some characteristics of ICTs to the realm of social organisation. The social network metaphor promised social relations of a more horizontal character, lacking hierarchies and clear boundaries or identities. In social movement practice, however, the genuine, abstract network form never worked as a comprehensive alternative to organisation. New social movement networks did not simply occupy a 'new plane of immanence, replacing the plan of organisation' (cf. Deleuze in Rossiter, 2006: 201). Social movement 'networks' continued to result from organisational work (Cornell, 2011). In the global justice movement, where diverse groups and individuals attempted to co-operate on a global level, it became quickly obvious that organisation remained crucial to manage diversity in resources, backgrounds and political orientation (Featherstone, 2003; Routledge et al., 2007). Individuals and groups with more resources to travel and be present at global gatherings, for example, would tend to become more powerful in structures that did not formally organise to mitigate against such imbalances. In the absence of some structures of organisation, resource imbalances can lead to power imbalances and hidden hierarchies, often described and lamented in social movement literature (Freeman, 1982; Gordon, 2010).

From a theoretical perspective it is important to note the imprecision of the network concept in the ubiquitous application to political groups. Once it is accepted that really existing social movement 'networks' continue to be (transparently or not so transparently) organised, what is the difference between network and organisation and why does it matter? Ahrne and Brunsson (2011) propose a clear conceptual differentiation between networks and organisations. Accordingly networks are social forms without organisation. Unlike a network, organisation is 'not emergent, but the result of the intervention of individuals or formal organisations which can and do make decisions not only about their own, but also about the behavior and distinctions of others' (Ahrne and Brunsson, 2011: 90). Organisation is defined as the attempt to create a specific (new) order, while networks describe existing orders. Conceptually networks don't have boundaries, while organisations do. 'In its genuine form, network is a form of interaction that is qualitatively different from organisation, and a network is often defined in terms of its informality, lack of boundaries and hierarchical relations, and is ascribed with qualities such as spontaneity and flexibility' (*ibid.*: 88). Reflecting on empirical forms that show evidence of both network and organisation characteristics, they introduce the concept of 'partial organisation'.

One could be tempted to question the usefulness of the concept, because in the real world many, perhaps most organisations qualify in some way as partially organised or partially networked. Ahrne and Brunsson's proposal however enables us to operationalise and investigate specific aspects of partial organisation. They argue that organisation consists of elements, which they define as: 'membership, hierarchy, rules, monitoring and sanction' (*ibid.*: 86). Formal or full organisations have to decide about all these elements, whereas in partial organisations only some elements are adopted. In partial organisation some elements of organisation exist while others don't.

To the question of organisation an analysis of social movements based on the concept of partial organisation seems helpful. Considering the aspirations of anarchist organisations to prefigure the desired alternative order in their own organisation, could some elements of formal organisation like hierarchy be disposed of without abandoning organisation altogether? Could network characteristics of fluidity and openness be maintained without the need to give up on the desire to aggregate political will into unified demands and to pursue new order? For social movements these are very practical questions. As early as the 1970s, it was obvious to many activists that, despite their rejection of formal organisations, they had to deal with organisation in some way if they were to effectively pursue the alternative social order they had in mind. In building what was called 'counter-institutions', groups often experimented with new forms of organisation, but rarely rejected all elements of organisation (Cornell, 2011). In these attempts trust, social capital, reciprocity and other characteristics of networks (Ahrne and Brunsson, 2011) remained in place, while elements of organisation were selectively added. But how precisely did this partial organisation take place? Looking at the emergence of protest camps as a new form of social-movement organisation, I'd like to show how partial organisation, relying on network characteristics as well as some elements of organisation was often pursued practically by employing an aspect of organisation that Ahrne and Brunsson overlook: spatial organisation.

Protest camps and spatial organisation

Pointing to the importance of spatial organisation for politics, David Graeber (2011: 230) describes two antique forms of protest, 'popular revolts in ancient Greece and the strategy of exodus typically pursued in Egypt and Mesopotamia'. He also points to a third strategy, a 'halfway point' between the other two, pursued by the Roman plebeians: 'the secession of the plebs, when commoners of the city abandoned their fields and workshops, camped outside the city and threatened mass defection'. Perhaps an early protest camp, the 'secession of the

plebs' points to the power of spatial organisation to undermine the political order of the status quo. Modern campers have for some time actively searched for a space outside the status quo. This was obvious for example, in the late 19th and early 20th century, when Scouts in Britain, the 'Wandervoegel Movement' ('wandering birds') in Germany and the US summer camps searched for a place outside the developing industrial cities, and by implication, outside civilisation. Soon, this new practice developed a political meaning for participants, who aspired to use the experience of camping for social change. In contrast to the politics associated with today's protest camps, these early campers often tended politically to the right (Frenzel, 2013; Giesecke, 1981; Mills, 2012; Smith, 2006). Withdrawing from the status quo, protest camps are themselves territorially (and often temporally) bound organisations. By physically occupying a certain physical space, protest camps mirror the spatial practice of the state.

This is evident to protest campers who have – in recent protest camp history – claimed to form independent republics, placed outside the political status quo. Examples range from the 'Pollok Free State' in Glasgow (Routledge, 1997), to the 'independent republic of Tahrir' (Keraitim and Mehrez, 2012) and to the Occupy Camp in London, where a graffito claimed that within the camp's territory the laws of the UK would be 'null and void'. Camps are sometimes constructed on squatted land, without consultation of the authorities. This results in the development of contested, guarded and highly policed boundaries of the camp. Boundary-crossing into protest camps often involves passing through proper checkpoints. Entering protest camps, protesters are often searched by the police; then, on the other side, they are welcomed by volunteers within the camp. This border crossing experience creates a tangible sense of entering new space. The boundaries are also symbolically dramatised. At the 2007 CFCA in London Heathrow, a big cardboard installation of an airplane featured at the main entrance. Above the open door of the plane that led into the camp, a slogan read: 'Exit the system'. Entering the camp, therefore, enables an outsider perspective on the 'system'. From here, 'the system' can be observed, evaluated and criticised at a distance. While such a symbolic distancing doesn't necessitate that all participants immediately identify with the protest camps and position themselves against the system, it enables a separation that is much harder to construct in non-spatially bound organisations. Protest camps enable a radical challenging of the status quo, because they carve out space within the social order to form their own political 'alternative space' (Dale and Burrell, 2008: 231). By carving out their own territory, protesters in the camp might feel to be no longer part of some pluralistic negotiation that takes place within the given society. Protest camps enable protesters to be 'uncivil' rather than civil society (Sullivan et al., 2011). Such use of territory is not the exclusive domain of protest camps. Anarchist organisers of social centres, squats, workplace organisation and other

counter-institutions often carve out their own bounded territory in order to challenge the status quo from outside its realm (Ince, 2012; Pickerill and Chatterton, 2006).

Experiments in spatial organisation

The creation of bound political space outside the status quo has direct implications for the organisation of the camp. In the history of protest camps, we can see how protest campers learned, often incidentally, about the potential of this organisational form to solve some of the dilemmas associated with the desire for less formal and more fluid organisation. In the 1968 Resurrection City was established as a protest camp on the Washington Mall by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). The camp was part of the poor peoples' campaign, initiated by Martin Luther King who was assassinated before Resurrection City started. It was an attempt to broaden the anti-racist work of the SCLC with a social justice focus. In Resurrection City poor people of all backgrounds from across the USA came together, invited and mobilised by the SCLC (Chase, 1998; Wiebenson, 1969). The SCLC leadership running the camp were not camping themselves, but were instead housed in a nearby hotel. There was no intention for the campers in Resurrection City to autonomously organise themselves. However in the five weeks of the existence of the camp, such autonomous organisation started to emerge nevertheless. A clear example, directly related to the organisation elements of rules, monitoring and sanctions, was the conflict in the camp between two security forces. One was put into place by the SCLC leadership, a second one created autonomously within the camp because the official one was rejected by the campers. Inside the camp, a strong solidarity grew among participants, and this solidarity enabled and eased autonomous organisation within the camp on a more horizontal, networked basis. The outside leadership was increasingly seen as unnecessary, if not unhelpful to the self-organisation of the camp (Chase, 1998).

A new wave of protest camps and site-occupations, emerged in Europe and the USA in the 1970s (Baer and Dellwo, 2012; Downey, 1986). Environmental activists used mass occupations of building sites of nuclear power plants and chemical factories as a direct action civil disobedience tactic. These site occupations were never meant to be protest camps in the contemporary sense, they really simply aimed at physically preventing the building works from going ahead. But in some cases like the occupation of Wyhl in Southern Germany in 1975, they became permanent protests, lasting several months. The occupiers had diverse backgrounds but lived together, with a high level of fluidity, eating, playing music and discussing energy policy. A veritable community of resistance grew, comprised of unlikely partners, including farmers, student activists,

bourgeois liberals, feminists, anarchists and members of the radical left. United in opposition to nuclear power and the state that was pursuing it with little to no consideration of popular opinion, the Wyhl occupation was organised not through formal structures and membership, but through a shared antagonism. Wyhl had no formal mechanisms for decision making but still – on a daily basis – many decisions were made. Many organisational tasks, including the social reproduction of daily life, were taken care of. While there were, without doubt, numerous conflicts and discussions about how the occupation was to be organised, Wyhl never needed to resort to formal organisation. The antagonism to the outside and the being together created a solid basis for partial organisation.

The next wave of transnational protest camps, initiated by the Greenham Common women's peace camp in 1982, exemplified one more time the power of a spatially expressed antagonism to achieve partial organisation. Pitching the camp as an alternative social space against the military, Greenham Common explicitly challenged the patriarchal status quo (Couldry, 1999; Cresswell, 1994). Occupying this space was necessary for the construction of the alternative world of Greenham Common. In the camp, an alternative order could be imagined and experimented with; it could be tested and designed (Feigenbaum, 2010; Roseneil, 1995; 2000). Greenham common prefigured another important element of spatial organisation, decentralisation. In Greenham, this was the accidental result of the need to blockade several gates at the same time. The women needed to camp at several different sites in quite some distance from another. The multiple gate camps developed their distinct identities, catering for different groups and political outlooks among the participants (Roseneil, 2000). Decentralisation with a high degree of autonomy for the different gates, allowed for difference in the camp to be managed. Picked up by the German women's peace camp in Hunsrück, decentralisation became established as the neighbourhood structure, created with the specific aim of devolving organisation to smaller scales, even within the camp, to enable diversity and localised decision making within the camp (Leidinger, 2011). The neighbourhood – or 'barrio' – structure travelled from German 'no-border' camps in the 1990s into the anti-summit-camps in the early 2000s where they became a regular organisational feature. Protest camps now featured not only a spatially organised antagonism, but also a spatially organised decentralisation.

The examples given here show how protest camps function as laboratories of anarchist organisation. Even if not intended as revolutionary in any way, protest camps potentially enact a secession from the status quo and prompt the creation of new order. This enables protest campers to realise aspirations for partial organisation, fluid but forceful, networked but cohesive, diverse but united. Protest camps allow protesters to become partially organised, however not as

Ahrne and Brunsson suggest by avoiding some elements of organisation. Rather the very character of several elements or organisation is transformed by spatial organisation. Decision-making in the camp is eased by the increased cohesion that results from the spatially expressed antagonism. Overall, members are likely to be less concerned with internal disputes, invisible hierarchies and their own autonomy when a clear-cut separation from the outside provides identity, and a reason to be together. At the same time membership is expressed through being in place. Territorial boundaries create membership without the need to resort to bureaucracy, for example by keeping a membership register. The rules in the camp, the monitoring of how they are kept and the sanctioning of members corresponds to elements of formal organisation. But in a political party, for example, these elements pertain to permanence, transcending locality. It is in such organisation that rules may be easily understood as arbitrary and alienating and their implementation and the sanctioning is more likely to necessitate violence, coercion and repression. In a protest camp the set of rules will apply only in the specific local context of the camp. Where they emerge remains traceable, applied to specific situations. As a result rules are less alienating to people. This is increased through the decentralisation in a neighbourhood system. It keeps centres of decision making close to the ground. Overall elements of organisation are kept in check because members yield significant power in spatial organisation. If they are unhappy with the camp it is fairly easy to leave.

The potential of protest camp and its multiple ‘discoveries’ of techniques for alternative and anarchist organisation have to date only been partially addressed in research. It is remarkable how new organisational ideas were sometimes carried from camp to camp, sometimes invented at different places without any connection, and other times plainly forgotten. Protest camps organisation is sometimes based on significant experience by some protest campers, in other cases the camps seem to emerge much more spontaneously. In the next section, I attempt to better understand the process in which a specific series of protest camps, the CFCA, implemented previous experiences of protest camping, to what extent it employed spatial organisation in specific contexts and how spatial organisation interplayed with other elements of organisation.

Year	Place	Participants (from climate camp webpage/media estimates)	Target
2005	Stirling Scotland ‘Horizone’ Camp	5000	G8 Protest Camp

2006	East Yorkshire-Drax Power Plant	600	Coal Power Plant
2007	London Heathrow Airport	2000	Heathrow 3rd runway
2008	Kent-Kingsnorth Power Plant	2000	Carbon Capture at Kingsnorth Power Plant
2009 (April)	London City, G20 conference	5000	European Climate Exchange/Carbon Trading
2009 (August)	London Blackheath Common	5000	no direct action focus
2010	Edinburgh	1500	Royal Bank of Scotlands for financing unconventional fossil fuel exploitation

Table 1: History of the largest UK climate camps and predecessors (Regional climate camps took place in Scotland and Wales in 2009, while climate camp also mobilised from separate mass events at a power station near Nottingham and for the climate summit in Copenhagen).

The camps for climate action

When the first Camp for Climate Action (CFCA) was organised, protesters took their direct inspiration from the ‘Horizone’ protest camp set up during the G8 in Scotland in 2005 (Schlembach, 2011). As Schlembach notes, the structural set up of the first and following CFCA camps, as well as many of their key organisational features, were carried on from the ‘Horizone’ Camp. Schlembach also points to some of the important differences between the Horizone camp and the first climate camp. The latter was actively promoted not only as base for direct action, but also as a place to enable education and movement-building. The CFCA advertised the climate camps explicitly as spaces of prefigurative politics. In particular, climate camps claimed to have four functions: enabling action; sustainable and democratic living; movement-building; and education (Schlembach, 2011). Prefigurative politics included not only questions of governance and political strategy. The climate camps were equally concerned with building sustainable living conditions, a ‘post-capitalist politics’ as discussed earlier. To this end sustainable energy sources, food supplies and waste management were pursued (Only Planet, 2007). All four aims were explicitly linked to the main goal of the climate camps: to create a comprehensive challenge to the continuation of the status quo, considered to be leading to

catastrophic climate change. Outside the actual camps CFCA was organised through regular national planning meetings and various working groups. Such meetings took place prior to the first climate camp and continued in the periods between the consecutive ones. After a national gathering in Manchester in 2010 and a retreat in Dorset in early 2011 it was decided to discontinue the mobilisation for a UK wide climate camp after five years (Climate Camp UK, 2011; Schlembach et al., 2012). What might seem obvious but needs emphasis is that the camp did not simply emerge, but was initiated and ended by a group of people. While this organising structure was always open to newcomers it attracted by far fewer people than the actual camps.

The internal organisation of the each of the camps was based on a system of neighbourhoods (roughly 10 in each of the camps) dotted around central workshop and entertainment and discussion areas. Neighbourhood boundaries were not clearly defined, and participants freely chose to be part of one. The neighbourhoods were, however, often nominally associated with UK regions (e.g. South West, Midlands, etc), and there was an implicit idea that protest camps should build on and enhance local political organisation before and after the camp. Neighbourhoods were set up around a kitchen marquee, which served as the main hub. Regular daily meetings took place here; these were aimed at organising the social reproduction of the neighbourhood, as well as enabling tactical and strategic deliberation around the aims of the protest camps and the issues arising from the relationship of the camp to its outside (often the police, but also media and local regulatory bodies). A variety of rotas (kitchen, site security, toilet-cleaning) had to be filled during the neighbourhood meetings. Camp-wide issues were discussed in a separate structure, the so-called 'spokes council'. Here, (rotating) delegates from each neighbourhood met daily, to report from the neighbourhoods. All decision-making and deliberation were based on a model of consensual, horizontal decision-making. Each camp took aim at a specific infrastructural project linked to high GHG emissions (see Table 1). Alongside the squatting of land to establish the camp, the opposition to these projects and the declared aim, in most of the camps, to shut them down, formed the basis of the antagonism in which each camp attempted to position itself outside the status quo. The interplay between spatial and other elements of organisation in the CFCA becomes particularly clear in two areas I will focus on. Firstly I address the changing relationship between the organisers (preparing the camps) and various people attending the camps and in particular newcomers and how this relates to rules as an element of organisation. Secondly I discuss the challenge of creating a spatial antagonism and how this relates to hierarchy as an element organisation.

Newcomers

In the literature on protest camps, for example in Roseneil (1995), differences between activists and newcomers have often been observed. But how do protest camps deal with newcomers in organisational terms? Conceptually speaking newcomers don't exist in networks, because there is no established organisation in the first place. In organisations, newcomers are dealt with in a defined procedure that manages their entry and puts them into certain places in the organisation. In spatial organisation, an organisation you can walk into, a crucial point for the accommodation of newcomers is the entry. Like in many other camps in the climate camps border crossing included intense police searches as well as a welcome tent. Maps guided participants to neighbourhoods and other locations on the campsite. Inside the camps newcomers were accommodated in informal settings, in chats with others who had attended more often, by watching things unfold, by learning and by being in place. In many protest camps there are also more formal ways of integrating newcomers. In the welcome tent at the climate camps, new arrivals could pick up a guidebook that described the way the protest camp worked. A guidebook sets out the rules of the camp, for example in respect of its governance structures. The existence of a guidebook points to a certain level of organisation: rules are established and codified.

The climate camp guidebooks, published for every climate camp from 2006 to 2010, changed significantly overtime. Through its five-year development, one discernible feature was their increasing sophistication and seriousness. They became more and more comprehensive, with more rules explained and codified. Their style also changed. In the CFCA in 2006 and 2007, the guidebooks were called 'Only Planet', mocking the popular Lonely Planet travel guidebook series in name and design (Only Planet, 2006; 2007). In 2008, 2009 and 2010 the guidebooks were designed more sincerely – without the ironic play of the previous editions. The ironic style of the first guidebooks may signify a certain unease among organisers about employing this more formal element of organisation. The more serious tone of the later rulebooks signifies a stronger and perhaps more unashamed emphasis on one element of organisation, namely rules, in achieving partial organisation in the camp. This change stands in close relation to the growth of climate camps over time. In the first climate camp in Yorkshire at Drax Power Station, about 600 people attended. Most of those were previously linked to anarchist networks in the UK and had protest camp experience. The next climate camp in Heathrow was attended by more than 2000 people and Kingsnorth in 2008 drew similar numbers. This was the result of several factors, including the proactive attempt by the organisers of the climate camp to make the camps more welcoming to newcomers. There were tangible changes that included advertising campaigns as well as an ever more sophisticated media policy which led to positive reporting and feedback for the camp.

A colonised space

But other factors also played a significant role in the increasing attention and visitors the camps got. In 2007 CFCA chose to dedicate the camp to the struggle against a third runway in London Heathrow. After a fairly remote location in Yorkshire, this time the camp mobilised very close to the capital city, enabling a whole range of newcomers and day visitors. Moreover the camp decided not to call for a shutdown Heathrow airport. At the first camp, the shutdown of Draw power station had been one of the aims of the camp. At Heathrow the antagonism focused on the opposition to an expansion of Heathrow. This was helpful in creating a broad coalition of support, but – despite heavy policing which could have indicated otherwise – did not produce an overtly radical challenge to the status quo. A new openness prevailed, perhaps most significantly expressed in that fact that the camp justified its calls for action against climate change on the supposedly neutral ground of science. The camp presented itself as a site of open debate in which the best ‘peer reviewed’ argument should win (Schlembach et al., 2012). However the debate soon followed less sanguine logics of the status quo. Leading figures of the UK mainstream environmental movement, including publicists like George Monbiot and a range of MPs, joined the climate camps in Heathrow. Their talks drew large numbers of camp participants – significantly more than other workshops and presentations – and their voices and opinions had high resonance in the camps. The politics they proposed in the context of the open-space deliberations in the camp can be subsumed under the concept of the ‘Green New Deal’, a set of policies of large-scale state investment in a variety of technologies, including nuclear power, to combat climate change and create employment (Monbiot, 2007). This resulted in an open confrontation between Monbiot and anarchists over the role of the state in fighting climate change (Saunders and Price, 2009). Some organisers felt alienated and expressed in the critique of too much openness:

While we recognise the importance of creating a welcoming and non-sectarian space, we feel that the camp risks losing contact with its anti-capitalist, antiauthoritarian roots and appearing as a gathering that lends its support to top-down, state-centred responses to the crisis that climate change and energy depletion pose for capitalism. (Shift Magazine and Dysophia, 2010: 6)

When interpreting these developments in terms of organisation, it is important to turn to the element of hierarchy. Hierarchy is ‘a right to oblige others to comply with central decisions’ (Ahrne and Brunsson, 2011: 86). Prominent figures of public life could colonise the antagonistic space of the camp with debates from the status quo. Their voices didn’t simply add to all the other voices present in the camp, but actually carried more weight and garnered more

attention than those of others. This might be explained by their ability to charismatically convince others, a function of leadership prevalent in networks. It might also be argued that they were privileged, imbued not so much with charisma or convincing arguments, but with a sense of entitlement and power derived from their position within the status quo. Be that as it may, the power of these individuals in a protest camp that rejected hierarchies and installed a formalised process of horizontal decision-making to avoid hierarchies, led to a paradoxical situation. In appealing to the 'roots' of the protest camp – like the critics cited above – some camp organisers now resorted to the organisational element of hierarchy. They did not directly ask for power for certain people, but maintained that power should be in some way given to guardians of the 'roots' of the camp. This appearance of hierarchy as a defense of the 'roots' of the camp, points to the demise of a shared spatial antagonism of the camp. It seems paradox that it was precisely the anarchists who should appeal to the roots of the camp, but this came as a reaction to the colonisation of the antagonistic space by the status quo.

Discussion

It might not seem overly surprising that the climate camps became more formal in their organisation as they grew. This is a familiar transformation that can often be observed in social movements. In theoretical terms the greater number of people necessitate more bureaucratic organisation as network ties and shared identity diminish. Elements of organisation become more visible until, perhaps, partial organisation is replaced by full organisation. In the context of the CFCA the story applies in so far as the dual organisation structure and the annual repetition of the camp led to some level of professionalisation and institutionalisation. Increasingly a small number of organisers carried the burden of organisation, catering for newcomers that needed to be accommodated with ever more abstract elements of organisation like the more sophisticated guidebooks indicate. Another problem however was the diminishing power of the spatial antagonism chosen by the camps to symbolise and made tangible the position of the camp as outside of the status quo. I argued that spatial organisation can offset the need to employ elements of organisation. Employing spatial organisation protest camps functioned as laboratories of anarchist organisation. The way the climate camp space was colonised by the status quo indicates that the spatial antagonism the camp created was perhaps no longer radical enough. This is linked to the actual place of the camp, its atmosphere, its tangible difference to the status quo.

CFCA increasingly provided a space for open discussions about ways of tackling climate change. The attention the climate camps got from the British public goes some way to demonstrating the inability of the established political order to provide spaces for those discussions. Indeed, the mass media and politicians gathered at the camp, because here exciting deliberations and political debate – mostly absent from parliament and media – actually took place. For many of its key organisers, however, the climate camps were meant to do more than simply help to refresh liberal democracy by creating a new political forum. The climate camp was not meant to rejuvenate the political status quo. Rather, it was supposed to prefigure the change needed to tackle climate change by building a radically different and better society. In order to do so, the camp needed to adopt an antagonistic position vis-a-vis the status quo. When the CFCA decided to discontinue the organisation of climate camps, this might well have been because few camp organisers were motivated to provide space for deliberations that no longer fundamentally questioned the political status quo. Protest camps become political significant when they claim to be better places, occupying territories outside the status quo. As I have indicated, protest camps need to stress this claim, and perform it above and beyond their relationships with the outside. From an anarchist perspective there is no use for a camp within the status quo.

With elements of antagonistic spatial organisation diminishing, the camps had to resort increasingly to elements of organisation to achieve partial organisation. Not all elements of partial organisation derived from Ahrne and Brunsson could be discussed in this paper. I focused instead on the elements of rules and hierarchy. Further research could analyse other elements of organisation, in particular sanctioning and monitoring. I found that the increasing use of some elements of organisation in the context analysed here wasn't successful, but rather created new problems. The increasing sophistication of the guidebooks indicates an increasing bureaucratisation that does not necessarily bode well with social movement activists. More contested yet was the perceived need to make explicit hierarchies in the camp. As some organisers felt the need to assert their position as 'guardians of the roots' of the camps, contradictions between the ideal of creating horizontal alternatives and the reality of persistent hierarchy became undeniably obvious.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the organisational form of the protest camp, and pointed to its role in social movement organisation. It contested that protest camps have the capacity to radically challenge the status quo through spatial

organisation, and in particular through the creation of a spatial antagonism. Protest camps create alternative worlds based on networks by mirroring the spatial practice of the state. They (per)form alternative polities. This enables the experimentation with alternative and anarchist forms of organisation. In particular it enables to overcome the limits of the network form to produce alternative order through organisation. At the same time protest camps can avoid the problems of formal organisation, namely its tendency to develop hierarchies and abstract rules which often result in violence, coercion and repression as means of internal governance. The concept of partial organisation offered a helpful device to clarify the tension between network and organisation. According to Ahrne and Brunsson partial organisation means that some elements of organisation are employed but not all. The study of protest camps shows that partial organisation can also be achieved through spatial organisation. By organising in space, rather than for permanence, protest camps significantly change the meaning of elements of organisation like membership or rules. In general spatial organisation points to an organisation that is less abstract and more grounded.

By using spatial organisation through antagonism and decentralisation, protest campers have developed ways in which anarchist organisation might work in practice. But those techniques are not simply tools that can be taken from one context and applied to another. Indeed the genealogy of protest camps is crooked and non-linear, with techniques developed, forgotten, transformed and reinvented. Context is paramount to any understanding of the salience of the organisational form of the protest camp. The study of the CFCA showed how protest camps can become highly professional tools of organisation, able to attract broad attention and induce strong political impulses. The CFCA based its particular organisation on experiences of several previous protest camps, in the UK and beyond. It furthermore developed protest camps into an organisational device and social movement strategy. This process has led to increasing attention on the climate camps, and an ever-increasing diversity among the people and politics present in the camps. To some extent it is unsurprising that an increasing professionalisation and growing numbers of participants prompted the appearance of more formal elements of organisation. Beyond this problem, I argue that CFCA had a problem in formulating a spatially expressed antagonism to successfully occupy a place from which to radically challenge the status quo. Instead the status quo could increasingly colonise the space of the camp which undermined its ability to prefigure a radical alternative as hierarchy, the perhaps most un-anarchist of the elements of organisation, reappeared. The crafting of a viable antagonism remains the crucial challenge for anarchist organisation in as well as outside protest camps.

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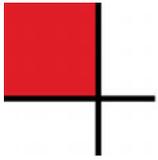
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Organizing otherwise: Translating anarchism in a voluntary sector organization

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Although foundational texts in Critical Management Studies (CMS) pointed to the empirical significance of anarchism as an inspiration for alternative ways of organizing (Burrell, 1992), relatively little work of substance has been undertaken within CMS to explore how anarchists organize or how anarchist principles of organization might fare in other contexts. This paper addresses this gap by reporting on the experiences of a UK Voluntary Sector Organization (VSO) seeking to adopt non-hierarchical working practices inspired by anarchism. The paper analyses this process of organizational change by examining how ideas and practices are translated and transformed as they travel from one context (direct action anarchism) to another (the voluntary sector). Whilst the onset of austerity and funding cuts created the conditions of possibility for this change, it was the discursive translation of ‘anarchism’ into ‘non-hierarchical organizing’ that enabled these ideas to take hold. The concept of ‘non-hierarchical’ organization constituted an open space that was defined by negation and therefore capable of containing a multiplicity of meanings. Rather than having to explicitly embrace anarchism, members were able to find common ground on what they did not want (hierarchy) and create a discursive space for democratically determining what might replace it.

Introduction

In the early 1990s, Gibson Burrell wrote that there were a ‘growing number of alternative organizational forms now appearing, whether inspired by anarchism, syndicalism, the ecological movement, the co-operative movement, libertarian communism, self-help groups or, perhaps most importantly, by feminism’ (1992: 82). These organizations offer an alternative to the dominant form of the capitalist business enterprise, which Burrell understood as repressing autonomous human development. Since 1992, however, most critical studies of management have focused attention power relations in mainstream capitalist

organizations (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Costas and Fleming, 2009; Fleming and Spicer, 2003; Knights and McCabe, 1998; Poulter and Land, 2008). Resistance has mostly been understood in terms of opposition to capitalist, managerialist forms of control rather than on alternative, non-capitalist forms of organization (Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999; Fleming, 2014; Fleming and Spicer, 2010; King and Learmonth, 2014; cf. Parker et al., 2014). Whilst such studies have been invaluable in deepening our understanding of power and domination in contemporary management, they can lead to a kind of critical melancholy (Gibson-Graham, 2006). By exposing new, more sophisticated forms of exploitation and domination within even apparently emancipatory management practices like teamwork (Barker, 1993), participation (Cooke and Kothari, 2001) or self-management (Bramming et al., 2011), CMS risks theorizing power as monolithic and resistance as futile. Instead of cultivating new organizational practices and subjectivities, this form of critique effectively forecloses potential for real change. Whilst an affirmative experimentation with organizational change requires compromise, CMS has tended towards a politics of purity that evaluates attempts to organize otherwise from a safe distance. In effect, critique has become a form of 'secular holiness' (du Gay, 1998) in which the critical subject occupies a relatively safe and risk free position abstracted from the messy realities of 'doing' organization (King, 2014). This has sidelined the development of alternative, perhaps more humane, ways of organizing. As Gibson-Graham (2006: 4) put it, 'Strong theory... affords the pleasures of recognition, of capture, of intellectually subduing that one last thing. It offers no relief or exit to a place beyond'.

In light of these melancholic, critical investments, relatively little has been done within CMS to develop Burrell's suggestion that 'alternative' organizational forms found in political social movements (Reedy and Learmonth, 2009) should be examined as possible sources of new ideas for organizing (cf. Parker, 2011; Parker et al., 2014; Parker et al., 2007; Williams, 2005). This paper contributes to the small but growing literature in CMS on anarchist organizing by examining a voluntary sector organization (VSO) that consciously adopted an anarchistic model of organizing. In line with calls for a 'critical performativity' (Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Spicer et al., 2009), the research deployed a methodology grounded in 'engaged scholarship' (Van de Ven and Johnson, 2006) and participatory action research (Kindon et al., 2007) to actively foster alternative, anarchist inspired, organization. Our concern as researchers was to support democratic organizational change through the research process. The case study is a small voluntary sector education service provider called World Education (WE)¹ who, following a period of managerialism in the early 2000s, decided to review their

1 Throughout the paper we have used pseudonyms for the case organization.

organizational principles and practices to become less hierarchical and more democratic. Drawing inspiration from anarchist social movements, they experimented with non-hierarchical organizing and consensus decision-making, to align their practices with their political and ethical value system; a process that our research sought to support.

Following a short literature review of anarchist organization studies, the paper outlines the methodology used in the empirical study: a combination of non-expert consultancy, participatory action research, and semi-structured interviewing. Together these methods enabled a combination of sympathetic engagement, intervention and critical distance. Part three describes the case organization in more detail, giving an account of its historical development from a radical activist organization in the British Midlands in the 1980s to a professional education service provider, with 5 full time employees and a turnover in the region of £400k by the late 2000s. The change of UK government in 2010, coupled with internal conflict, a change of leadership and an increasingly austere funding regime, brought WE full circle and to considering a return to its more radical, anarchistic roots.

Part four of the paper analyses these changes, working through the issues arising from introducing anarchist, 'non-hierarchical' principles and practices into the organization. Drawing upon concepts from the sociology of translation (Czarniawska and Sevón, 1996) we suggest that translating organizational practices and principles from one sector (anarchist social movements) to another (the voluntary sector) is not a simple matter of transfer, but also of transformation, constituting a new assemblage of meanings and practices whilst drawing inspiration from the original. The main focus in the discussion is on the linguistic and conceptual translation from 'anarchism' to 'non-hierarchical'. This discursive shift had two main effects. First, it de-emphasized a contentious political position that some members felt would not allow a professional enough organizational performance to secure funding. Second, it replaced the fullness of a positive, albeit contested, approach to politics with a more open space, defined by negation, within which democratic debate over organizational practices could take place. 'Non-hierarchical' in the case did not so much signify a presence as an absence. Given widespread disillusionment with hierarchy within the organization, this empty signifier² or 'non-signifier' facilitated agreement between members about what they did not want the organization to be. This enabled them to engage in the kind of directly democratic, autonomous ideal of

2 We are not using the concept of the empty signifier here in the sense that Laclau (1996) does, but in a more general sense to refer to a signifier that designates absence, rather than presence.

self-determination that lies at the heart of anarchism (Graeber, 2013), without explicitly labelling themselves as an ‘anarchist’ organization.

Anarchism, critique and management studies

Although there are currents of anarcho-syndicalism running through some workers’ cooperatives, anarchist theory and practice has largely been neglected within Critical Management Studies. Of course, anarchism itself is a highly contested concept. In popular culture, anarchism is more often associated with violent political protest and bomb throwing than it is taken seriously as a political position (eg. Chesterton, 2010; Conrad, 2011; Pynchon, 2006). Theoretically it covers a range of positions from the libertarianism of Robert Nozick (1974), through Stirner’s (1995) egoistic individualism, Kropotkin’s (2006) mutualism and collectivism, Bakunin’s (1973) revolutionary activism and Proudhon’s (1979) federalism. More recently, anarchism has been associated with many of the ‘even newer social movements’ (Crossley, 2003; Day, 2005), for example the alter-globalization movement (Feigenbaum et al., 2014; Maeckelbergh, 2009), self-identifying anarchist groups (Sutherland, 2014), environmentalist organizations (Day, 2005; Sutherland et al., 2014) and Occupy (Graeber, 2013; Halvorsen, 2014).

At its most simple, anarchy can be defined as ‘the absence of a master, of a sovereign’ (Proudhon, 1970: 203). As Peter Marshall (2008: x) notes, this reflects the etymological roots of the word ‘anarchy’ which ‘comes from the ancient Greek *αναρχία* meaning the condition of being “without a leader” but usually translated and interpreted as “without a ruler”’. This sense of being without a leader is reflected in the recent work of Neil Sutherland on mechanisms and practices of leadership in anarchist organizations as a collective process of meaning-making operating in the absence of formally appointed leaders (Sutherland, 2014). This suggests that anarchists’ primary concern is with the creation of hierarchy and the separation of leaders as designated individuals or groups who occupy positions of power and exercise authority over others.

This is not to say that leadership and authority do not exist at all in anarchist organizations. Colin Ward identifies three sources of authority deriving from a formal position in a chain of command, from specialist knowledge and expertise, or from ‘special wisdom’ (Ward, 1982: 43). In an organization based on anarchist principles, leadership shifts according to expertise relevant to the task in hand rather than being allocated by a formal position in an organizational structure. ‘This fluid, changing leadership derives from authority, but this authority derives from each person’s self-chosen function in performing the task in hand’ (Ward,

1982: 43). This model of organization offers a more democratic form of organization, based on free association and mutual aid, and mitigates some of the dysfunctions of formal authority and hierarchy. For anyone working in a university it will hardly be a surprise that those who study marketing or work organization are the last people that would ever be consulted by vice-chancellors and senior management on matters of university branding or reorganizing the university's administrative structure. As many studies of informal organization have shown, not only does 'the knowledge and wisdom of the people at the bottom of the pyramid [find] no place in the decision-making leadership hierarchy of the institution. Frequently it is devoted to making the institution work in spite of the formal leadership structure, or alternatively to sabotaging the ostensible function of the institution, because it is none of their choosing' (Ward, 1982: 43; cf. Bensman and Gerver, 1963; Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939; Roy, 1959).

Regardless of performative efficacy, however, anarchists are first and foremost concerned with direct action and autonomy (Ward, 1982: 27). Autonomy is understood in terms of the free association of individuals in collective action that is determined through directly democratic processes. Direct action means taking responsibility for problems, rather than petitioning those in authority, such as political representatives, to deal with them. In both cases, the focus is on constituting organizational processes that support autonomy and direct action, rather than disempowering individuals and groups by placing responsibility and authority in the hands of a small, organizational elite.

Despite the difficult historical relationship between anarchism and Marxism, best illustrated by the tensions between Bakunin and Marx in determining the political structures of the First International in the 1870s (see Miller, 1984: chapter 6, for a discussion), they share a common opposition to capitalism as a social system that disempowers workers, and thus see work as a central terrain for political contestation. As Colin Ward (1982: 27) puts it: 'The autonomy of the worker at work is the most important field in which [the] expropriation of decision-making can apply'. The central concern for anarchism, therefore, is not the increased effectiveness that might be realized by decentralization of decision-making and authority,³ but political empowerment. Rather than a rejection of order and organization per se, anarchy suggests an approach to organization that refuses hierarchical relations of domination, whether by 'leaders', 'bosses', 'rulers' or 'managers', and seeks the coordination of action in a radically

3 See Hamel, 2011 for a recent managerialist version of this argument. Hamel, it should be noted, formulates this problem as one of efficiency and effectiveness rather than exploring the wider meaning and purpose of the organization.

democratic and participative frame. It therefore ties in well with the established literature on workplace democracy and workers' cooperatives (Atzeni and Vieta, 2014; Cheney, 1999; Kokkinidis, 2014; Ranis, 2006; Srinivas, 1993; Vanek, 1975; Webb and Cheney, 2014).

Rejecting the liberal democratic understanding of government, which situates the state as the defender of democratic liberty, and therefore seeing anarchism's anti-state position as anti-liberal-democratic, David Graeber (2013: 154) writes that:

Anarchism does not mean the negation of democracy... Rather, anarchism is a matter of taking... democratic principles to their logical conclusions.

Reflecting this demand for direct, rather than representative, democracy, anarchism can be defined in terms of core 'principles of horizontal, radical, participative democracy and the destruction of hierarchy' (Sutherland et al., 2014: 765). Whilst forms of vertical hierarchy may be unavoidable (Freeman, 1972; Lagalisse, 2010; Nunes, 2014), the ideal of a flat, non-hierarchical, radically democratic and autonomous form of organization is one that most anarchists would subscribe to.

Crucially, this ideal is both an organizational 'end' and a 'means'. Anarchist organizations embed autonomy and democracy in their organizational practices by developing forms of participatory democracy and reflexivity that aim to 'model and enact a different vision of how the world might be organized, thereby inspiring hope that another world is possible' (Smith 2008: 203). In these organizations the principles of organizing are self-consciously reflected on, challenged and alternatives experimented with (Maeckelbergh, 2014) so that political ends become organizational means.

Of course, there are as many versions of anarchism as there are anarchists and the sheer diversity of *anarchisms* means that even an introductory text on anarchist theory runs to some 800 pages (Marshall, 2008). There are, however, some significant currents in contemporary anarchism that we would like to draw attention to as they provide important influences on the case organization discussed in the following sections, as well as underpinning movements like Occupy, that have brought a critique of capitalism, and constitutive practices of counter-capitalist organization, into popular discourse in recent years. One of the central principles in the anarchist tendencies discussed above is horizontalism: an approach that intends to create non-hierarchical and anti-authoritarian ways of organizing and acting (cf. Nunes, 2014). To do this they use organizing mechanisms such as consensus-based decision-making, spokescouncils and tools for reflection to overcome forms of exclusion and 'limit power inequalities that

inevitably arise' (Maeckelbergh, 2011: 164). Whilst these practices tend to focus on explicit decision-making processes within meetings and pay less attention to the wider processes of exclusion that shape who can be present in these fora (Blee, 2012), they do present possibilities for a prefigurative participative democracy (Graeber, 2013). This approach to participatory democracy is more than simply a set of systems or techniques. It is an ethos in which processes of organization become reflexively self-present (Maeckelbergh, 2011). In contrast to a potentially infinite deferral of the 'good organization' into a utopian future, these organizations enact their political values in their everyday organizational practices here and now, 'learning how to organise the world differently' through experimentation and direct action (Maeckelbergh, 2011: 96).

Despite the insights that studies of the alter-globalization movement or Occupy offer those interested in alternatives to conventional management, there are few accounts that have directly applied them to managing and organizing in other contexts. Studies of workplace democracy rarely draw upon anarchist political philosophy to understand workers' control, and have done relatively little to connect to contemporary anarchist political struggles and social movements (for exceptions see Kokkinidis, 2014 and Atzeni and Vieta, 2014). In contrast, studies of organization that do draw explicitly upon anarchist theory tend to focus exclusively on directly political forms of organization, failing to reconnect these ideas and practices to more everyday contexts of work organization. If these ideas of organizing are going to reach beyond protest movements then we need to understand how their principles and practices might be transposed into other organizational contexts and what happens when institutional entrepreneurs attempt to make anarchist principles and practices travel beyond the relatively narrow confines of protest movements.

The following sections of this paper take up this challenge by examining how anarchist principles travelled into a Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organization. A number of Voluntary Sector Organizations (VSOs) have explicitly sought to organize themselves along non-hierarchical and emancipatory lines (Kleinman, 1996) and there are discursive tendencies in the sector toward versions of mutual aid and direct action as a means of realizing social change by empowering the socially marginalized. In this sense, the sector provides a best case context in which to experiment with anarchist forms of organization. This is not to suggest that the sector is a hotbed of radicalism. Many VSOs mirror the organizing principles and practices of for-profit organizations, particularly as they face institutional pressure from funders to be more accountable, professional or even business-like (Sanders and McClellan, 2014; Tomlinson and Schwabenland, 2010). Whilst it should not be assumed most VSOs operate in a markedly different manner to conventional organizations, we are suggesting that

VSOs offer a particular potential for organizing otherwise due to their explicitly social mission. Our case organization's structure was quite distinctive in this regard, as it had its historical origins in an explicitly anarchistic social centre with a politically radical agenda for social change.

Case organization and methods

In April 2012 the Chair of World Education approached Daniel to discuss organizational change. At this meeting he explained that WE had experienced dramatic changes in recent years. The organization had gone from an egalitarian to a hierarchical, authoritarian management style that eroded both their original ethos and staff autonomy. Some members had recently left, most notably the director, and the remaining employees were looking for an alternative to managerial hierarchy. Others on the management committee were more comfortable in traditional command and control structures. We were asked to facilitate a meeting to air different perspectives, explore possibilities for organizing without hierarchy and to support the organization through any subsequent changes.

Before explaining the details of the case it is worth saying something about research methods. The project was conducted in the spirit of engaged research within the 'performative turn' in CMS (Spicer et al., 2009), which seeks to bring about practical transformations in organizational practice (King and Learmonth, 2014). The idea was to break with more traditional notions of academic distance, objectivity, authority and expertise, and to collaborate with the organizational members in experimenting with new models of organization. Our intention was to work in ways that would be useful to the organization and not only to our academic careers. To do this we adopted three distinct roles: Participatory Action Researcher, Critical Consultant and Critical Researcher.

Using Participatory Action Research (PAR) (Kindon et al., 2007) we worked with WE to develop a reflexive understanding of their organizational practices and align them with the more anarchistic, participative, democratic values that they subscribe to. This approach has a long history, particularly with workers' cooperative groups in Mondragón (Whyte, 1991) and is well suited to working with anarchist organizations due to its democratic and participatory intent (Krimmerman, 2001). Throughout the project we have worked with organizational members to develop the project's guiding research questions. Daniel worked with WE for over 18 months as part of a 'working group on non-hierarchical ways of organizing'. In this capacity he took notes on meetings and observations that often doubled as both fieldnotes and official minutes. He worked with WE to

understand their problems and provided material for members to read and use, exploring concepts and practices like consensus-based decision-making (Seeds for Change, 2013) and prefiguration (Maeckelbergh, 2011). The participative approach also extended to making visible aspects of the research process and design, from ethical approval procedures to interview questions.

Secondly, at times we took a role more akin to that of (critical) consultants. Together we facilitated a workshop to enable members to air views on how they organized themselves, including attitudes to hierarchy and the strengths and weaknesses of the organization. We also facilitated connections with other organizations undergoing similar changes. Throughout the research Chris took a more advisory role, acting more as a sounding board for suggestions that organizational members made and offered practical suggestions as well as theoretical perspectives on some of the dynamics at work within World Education. Working in tandem, we were able to create the simultaneous closeness and distance that characterizes engaged scholarship.

Thirdly we also undertook more conventional case-study research using interviews to explore our academic interests. We conducted eight interviews, of around one hour each, with members of the organization and management committee. These interviews were transcribed and analyzed in terms of members' explicit orientations to hierarchy and organization as well as personal biography, experience of other organizations and the narratives they told about WE. In keeping with the ambitions and ethos of the research project, the focus of these interviews came from the collaborative research design process. We sought to combine our academic research interests with the concerns of WE's members, to generate a reflexive understanding that was both academically relevant and facilitated a deeper organizational understanding. As they explained, the research program should provide a useful insight into how different members understood the term 'non-hierarchical' and 'how far along this road [of non-hierarchical organizing] we want to travel'.

Who are World Education?

Drawing on WE's annual reports, website, publications and interviews this section gives an historical account of the organization. According to their website WE are a UK based, regional charity 'supporting educators and youth-workers to develop the skills and abilities necessary to make sense of this complex world and

accelerated social change'⁴. A Voluntary Organization run almost exclusively on project funding, they currently have six part-time staff members and a management committee of ten people. At its peak their turnover was almost £400,000 a year. Since the austerity measures implemented by the UK government in 2010, the organization's income has fallen dramatically, like many public and voluntary sector organizations. Voluntary organizations have received a disproportionately large percentage of austerity cuts, with estimated cuts of £1.7bn between 2010 and 2017, before inflation (NCVO, 2013).

WE have two main lines of work: education and youth work. Education projects are mostly conducted in partnership with secondary schools and aims to 'educate people about different cultures' (interview with project worker). Operating as a Development Education Centre (DEC) they provide training, educational resources and a school linking project which supports educational trips to other countries. The youth work arm delivers global citizenship through participatory workshops, using street cultural forms such as hip-hop and graffiti. This approach is built around a Freirean pedagogical approach that uses dialogue to 'enhance self-understanding through a reflexive interrogation of values and ideas' and 'foster an open and outward-looking mindset via engagement with multiple contexts and global perspectives' (Organization Website). In common with many community organizations (Ledwith, 1997; Newman et al., 2004) this is based on 'democratic learning ... [where] everybody's a teacher and everybody's a student in a Freirean sense' (former chair). The idea is to challenge the top-down, hierarchical systems of education that young people are familiar with through formal schooling, and to facilitate a collective form of autonomous learning in a non-hierarchical relationship. As their annual report states, they use '[i]nformal approaches to educating young people; encouraging critical understandings of the interconnectivities of the global local and personal; facilitating positive participation in social change for justice and equality'.

These two strands of work combine in the overarching goal of creating a more just, equal and fair society based on individuals and communities that understand their mutual interdependence and interconnectedness with others throughout the world: a perspective that one education worker illustrated with a video clip of the 'Global Wombat'⁵. Within this overarching framework there are

4 All quotes from websites are paraphrased to protect the anonymity of the organization. Whilst anonymity was not a particular issue for the members of the organization, it was stipulated as a requirement for ethical approval of the research by our institutions so rather than renegotiate this, we have opted to retain this principle. For a discussion of the limits of anonymity in organizational research, see Taylor and Land (2014).

5 <http://www.globalcommunity.org/flash/wombat.shtml>.

variations in approach. The education work in schools is more formalized and structured, while the youth work uses more participative, democratic approaches, enabling a degree of emergent self-organization on a project-by-project basis.

Beginnings: A social centre

For its first five years, what became World Education was a social centre (cf. Hodkinson and Chatterton, 2006) providing a meeting space for local activists, a social change library, newsletter, permaculture garden, a veg box scheme and a variety of educational courses. Rooted in DIY, anarchist activism they were also 'home for a wide range of alternative, radical social groups— environmentalist, hunt-sabs, anarchists and community activists. The centre provided a community for anyone feeling excluded from the rapidly globalizing, homogeneous culture dominant in wider society' (WE Annual Report 2012). The centre operated a loosely structured, consensus based approach similar to other activist organizations, with an explicitly non-hierarchical, horizontal decision-making structure where everyone, regardless of position, was paid the same and had an equal voice in running the organization (cf. Firth, 2011; Kleinman, 1996). These horizontal, anti-authoritarian structures and processes were explicitly framed in terms of anarchist principles of autonomy and free association.

Phase two: The emergence of World Education

In order to fulfil its aims, the social centre successfully applied for funding and was able to employ part-time staff. During this second phase the focus was on environmental sustainability and work began with schools. With funding conditions and the institutional requirements of working in the formal education sector, WE became more professionalized and relocated to a serviced business centre. World Education was established as a separate charity and eventually replaced the social centre, which was wound down and the property sold to help fund the organization. This transition brought with it increased formalization and hierarchy as they became a legal charity with delineated jobs and roles. During the transition to this second phase some of the initial founders left, unhappy with the direction the organization was taking.

Phase three: Formalization and growth

The third phase saw environmentalism moving into the background as the organization consolidated around International Development education. They received more funding from government agencies, mostly working with local authorities who contracted with them to deliver particular work packages. In this phase, WE's historical roots as an anarchist social center generated tensions with the new institutional context they were operating in. Concerned that they were

perceived as a ‘tin-pot’, ‘unprofessional’ charity, they wanted to ‘shake off’ their ‘hippy image’ (youth worker) so that they would be taken seriously as a ‘professional’ organization that the ‘council would be happy to partner with’ (education worker). One of the longest serving members explained to us that Council officials were confused by the absence of a clear authority structure, asking who was in-charge, who was responsible for decision-making and, ultimately, who could be held accountable. In order to secure funding in this context they tried to organize in a more ‘business like way’ so as to ‘look like a safe pair of hands for the funders’ (current Chair).

In this third phase, WE embarked on a strategy of formalization and growth with a focus on ‘reputation building’ and professionalization. The current members all spoke of this period as being more structured, formalized and outwardly professional. They rebranded with a set colour scheme, moved their offices to a more prestigious area of the city, built networks and alliances, and were recognized on a regional and national stage. In conventional terms WE were at their most successful, with five full-time employees and a turnover of between £300-400k.

This formalization brought an increase in hierarchy and bureaucracy, culminating in the formal appointment of a director. As one of the members explained:

Mary went on some sort of training course where it was like, “we should really have a Director.” So Mary was appointed as Director.

Working with the then chair of the Management Committee, who was a close friend and long-term ally, Mary appointed herself as Director. The first that the employees knew was when a new organizational chart was emailed around, showing the changes in pay and communication structure. One of the youth work team was promoted from co-ordinator to manager and the administrator was offered a new title of ‘centre manager’. This move was presented in terms of professionalization and efficiency but the current members gave a very negative account of these changes and positioned them as turning point in WE’s history. It was the point at which formal hierarchy and authority entirely replaced the more grassroots, autonomous, anarchist ethos that had historically guided the organization.

Phase four: And back again?

The fourth phase can be seen as one of crisis. Like many VCOs, in the wake of the austerity measures introduced by the UK’s Con/Dem coalition government after 2010, WE’s core funding was cut. WE have been active in campaigning

against the cuts (indeed one of our interview days was preceded with an anti-austerity banner making event) but this also led them to rethink how they operated. The structure and size of the organization, sustainable in times of funding abundance, became difficult to maintain. Jobs were lost and working hours were reduced. With the loss of core funding, WE's finances became precarious. The director's salary was not financially sustainable so Mary left to become a freelance consultant, taking with her one of the more viable funded projects. The Youth Team Manager and members of the Management Committee, including the Chair that had approved her appointment as Director, left around the same time, creating an organizational vacuum.

Without a formally appointed manager the organization reverted to more ad hoc methods of coordination. With a relatively small group of workers, mostly working in close physical proximity, this was not a huge challenge but represented more of a drift than an intentional change strategy. It was with the appointment of a new Chair, who had a background in social movements and a Masters in Activism Studies, that the group began a more intensive period of reflexive evaluation of their organizing practices. As this new Chair put it:

World Education is an organization which is aspiring to create a more just, equal, democratic, fairer world and it seems ironic, paradoxical, hypocritical, contradictory, that the way that it organizes itself replicates a lot of the problems within a world that is trying to move away from.

Drawing upon the language of prefiguration (Graeber, 2013; Maeckelbergh, 2011), several members explained that their organizational practices should match the values they aspired to realize through their work. Especially in their youth work, WE took an approach grounded in Paulo Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the oppressed* and a relationship of mutual learning, rather than teacher/student. Their concern in this work was to empower young people to take control of their lives, encouraging an active attitude of mutual aid and autonomy, rather than passive dependency. Members did not see this approach mirrored in the hierarchical structures that WE had adopted. For some, the Chair included, hierarchical organizing was both a result and cause of wider problems with the environment and society, and so could not be part of the solution to those problems.

To work through these issues, we conducted visioning workshops with WE, involving volunteers as well as workers, discussing some of the problems arising from hierarchy and how a less hierarchical way of working might fit better with the ethos and origins of the organization. As their annual report from this time put it 'should we go back to our roots in social activism, or seek out a niche that will allow us to remain in the educational mainstream?' In this sense 'crisis' was

reframed as an opportunity to re-evaluate the way WE was organized and to consider contemporary anarchist organizational practices of horizontality, consensus, participatory democracy and prefiguration as part of a critical, self-reflexive process of organizing (Steyaert and Van Looy, 2010). This process, and its results, are explained in the following sections, first looking at how the need for a change and the desirability of a more anarchistic way of organizing were understood, then examining some of the tensions arising from the framing of this change process in terms of 'non-hierarchical' organizing. Our analysis focuses on the ways in which 'anarchist' ideas were reframed in terms of 'non-hierarchical organization', simultaneously making the changes more acceptable and displacing some of their substantive content. Our argument is that the negative framing of change as toward non-hierarchical practices created an open discursive space in which directly democratic, anarchistic forms of self-organization could be performed. On the other hand, this openness has meant that, two years into the process, the organization still lacks a clear and shared understanding of what 'non-hierarchical' organization means and how WE should be managed.

Shades of anarchist discourse

According to the current Chair the central aim of WE is 'creating a better world' and in doing so they 'should model the type of world we want to create, not just perpetuate the organization'. This is reiterated by the previous Chair who argued that the way WE organize themselves should be in 'the spirit of the organization's values, trying to make it as democratic as possible as participatory as possible, having an appreciation of the power of collective learning and gaining critical insights from other people ... pooling our collective insights so we can be as strong as possible'. At the heart of these statements is the belief that the means by which WE organizes itself should match the ends to which it aspires, fostering justice, equality and autonomy in both the wider society and in their own organizational practices. This conflation of means and ends lies at the centre of the anarchist belief in prefiguration (Maeckelbergh, 2009: 88). As the anthropologist David Graeber has noted when discussing the influence of anarchism on anti-capitalist activism from the 'battle of Seattle' protests against the G8 to Occupy Wall Street, 'Pretty much everyone in the activist community had come around to the idea of prefiguration: the idea that the organizational form that an activist group takes should embody the kind of society we wish to create' (Graeber, 2013: 23).

For some members, this perspective drew self-consciously on anarchist principles and was translated into demands for direct democracy, both in 'life'

and in ‘work’,⁶ as illustrated by a picture in the 2011 Annual Report of the Chair holding a hand painted sign saying: ‘I want the right to self-management & to participate in making decisions that affect my life’. The ‘a’ in self-management had been replaced with the anarchist sign of the circled A, clearly referencing the political tradition within which he wanted to locate this demand. When asked about this in an interview, he cited a catalogue of contemporary anarchist influenced movements that had inspired him, including ‘things like Climate Camp, Earth First! gatherings and certain mobilizations leading up to the G8 summit in 2005 and indirect second hand experience like reading a huge amount about, not just theoretical, about people experiencing engaging in these processes... Bolivia anti-water privatization, Occupy... David Graeber’.

For an organization that had, in recent years at least, been focused on state funded education, the idea of drawing inspiration from Occupy and the Zapatista movement was contentious and not all of the members shared this political position. Whilst anarchist thought was explicitly discussed, and referenced symbolically, for example in the circled A appearing in official publications, some members worried that this would not be a good image for an organization that was still seeking funding for work with schools and local education authorities. To address this, proponents presented anarchist values as commensurate with the organization’s pedagogic practices in youth work and with the organization’s underlying ethos. Evoking consistency between means and ends, anarchistic methods of organization were legitimated by foregrounding WE’s working practices. By connecting anarchistic self-management with the ideals of equality, respect and collaborative learning underpinning youth work, prefiguration was translated into ‘walking the talk’ or ‘practicing what you preach’, and associated with a well-established and institutionally recognized set of youth work practices. The risk with this approach was that it exacerbated extant fault-lines in the organization. Those with a background in youth work were already more engaged with the idea of change and tended to see this as a much needed, positive reorientation. Those working in the more formal education sector, whose day-to-day work involved close coordination with schools and education authorities, tended to be more suspicious of ‘non-hierarchical’ working practices and inclined toward deploying the frame of ‘professionalization’ to legitimate more conventional forms of organization.

6 See Kathi Weeks’ (2011) book *The Problem with Work* for a discussion of the political issues surrounding this distinction. We use the distinction here simply to flag up that the extension of democratic self-determination and autonomy to all spheres of life, including work, has been a theme throughout much of anarchist thought (Marshall, 2008), and was quite explicitly brought into the discussions at WE in this sense.

History also played a role in legitimizing change. Proponents presented anarchism not as something new but as a return to the organization's roots, for example by referencing the early days as a social centre and involvement in the environmental justice movements. By drawing upon the past, these institutional entrepreneurs constructed a narrative in which such ideas appeared natural for the organization. This move simultaneously challenged more positive accounts of professionalization and funding success in terms of an imposed 'hierarchy' that had caused WE to lose sight of its foundational values. This narrative was not universally accepted, however, and some members, particularly those working in the formal education sector, retained concerns about how WE would be perceived by external bodies, reasserting the need for a 'professional' demeanor against historical perceptions of the organization as 'unprofessional', 'tin-pot' and 'hippy'.

Against the counter-narrative that anarchist organization is unprofessional, a third strategy of legitimation was to work with business school academics. The narrative of a need for professional organization was strong, particularly amongst those workers and management committee members who came from education, unions or local government and were thus used to the forms of accountability and governance found in public bureaucracies and private firms. These modes of organizing had a strong degree of institutional legitimacy so appeared natural and normal when compared with models drawn from anarchism. Reflecting a kind of institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), the perceptions of funding bodies and clients were evoked as requiring at least the semblance of a conventional organizational structure. Bringing business school academics in to run visioning workshops, conduct SWOT analyses and provide an overview of academically validated, 'alternative' organizational practices lent a degree of institutionalized legitimacy to what would otherwise have been, to some members, too radical to offer a sound basis for an organization that was still dependent upon external funding and collaboration with public sector organizations.

Translating anarchy

One way to view these re-framings is through the lens of 'translation'. As sociological studies have used the term, 'translation' refers to a process by which particular practices, artefacts or ideas are transferred from one context to another. This transfer never leaves the objects unchanged, however, as they have to be translated to fit into the new context. By entering into a new set of relations, concepts, meanings, practices and even material objects are reconfigured, becoming something else in the process (see Czarniawska, 2010; Czarniawska

and Sevón, 1996; Gherardi and Nicolini, 2000). In this sense it goes beyond the strictly linguistic meaning of translation. As Czarniawska puts it, citing Latour:

It is important to emphasize, once again, that the meaning of “translation” in this context far surpasses the linguistic interpretation: it means “displacement, drift, invention, mediation, creation of a new link that did not exist before and modifies in part the two agents” (Latour, 1993, p. 6), that is, those who translated and that which is translated. (Czarniawska and Joerges, 1996: 24)

This idea that a ‘new link’ is created is important from this theoretical perspective as the sociology of translation adopts a broadly anti-essentialist perspective (Land, 2007). The local relationships between humans, non-humans, meaning, artefacts, narratives and a range of other actants actively constitute a particular object, practice or organizational innovation. The connections made to translate a practice to a new context, assemble a new practice.

As we discussed in the previous section, anarchist theory, the practices and pedagogic principles of youth-work, a particular history of WE and even business school researchers were all mobilized as part of an attempt to construct a new assemblage of values, ideals and organizational practices. These were not uncontested, and narratives of professionalization and legitimacy were mobilized to resist the stabilization of this new assemblage. Those wanting a more anarchist organization in WE also had to translate anarchy into something that made sense in the very different context of the voluntary sector, education and youth work. Voluntary Sector Organizations are under increased pressure to be more business-like and adopt more conventional forms of management practice (Sanders & McClellan, 2014; Tomlinson and Schwabenland, 2010). Given that the label ‘anarchist’ is a highly mutable and contested term, as well as subject to significant moral approbation amongst certain social groups, one of the steps in this process was to linguistically translate ‘anarchist organizing’ into something else. This was a necessary step in constituting the idea as a quasi-object that could gain a degree of objectivity within the new context. As Czarniawska writes:

The simplest way of objectifying ideas is turning them into linguistic artifacts by repetitive use in an unchanged form, as in the case of labels, metaphors, platitudes... This is an attempt at a reproduction, a mechanical translation, intended to minimize displacement effects. Local labeling, for instance, is especially important in cases where ideas must be fitted into already existing action patterns, as it reflects the broader, societal categorizing... [For example,] decentralization can be almost any change in organizational structure, but by labelling actions in such ways, desired associations are created to master-ideas... such as modernity and community help [or] democracy and autonomy... Words are turned into labels by frequent repetition in an unquestioning mode in similar contexts, so that a possible “decentralization, why?” will give way to “decentralization, of course!” (Czarniawska and Joerges, 1996: 32)

For this to happen effectively at WE, the ideas of ‘anarchist organization’ or even ‘alternative organization’, which were seen by some members as redolent of an undesirable, or now unrealistic, hippy past, had to be linguistically translated into something around which new organizational practices could be assembled. The crucial moment in this process was the translation of the ideas we have discussed in the previous sections into the simple label of ‘non-hierarchical organizing’. This label fitted well with the anarchistic ambitions of the institutional entrepreneurs driving the change, as it maps directly onto the broadest and most literal definition of anarchism as without (*an*) a leader/ruler/authority (*archos*). This anti-hierarchical position also had traction with those members who, whilst not anarchists, had been unhappy with the organizational form WE had adopted under Mary’s directorship.

Assembling opposition to hierarchy

Whilst some members of WE baulked at the epithet anarchist, they could all agree on the desirability of non-hierarchical working practices. All of the current members spoke about the period under Mary’s directorship in negative terms. Complaints were primarily directed at the erosion of democratic decision-making that the organization had traditionally enjoyed, and the separation of a hierarchical elite from those they made decisions for. As one member put it, the Director’s departure was ‘why this all this sort of non-hierarchical business started to creep in really ... [the hierarchical approach resulted in] a lot of staff [being] quite disgruntled about how things were going with the management committee, a lot of the management committee resigned’ (Worker).

It was not only that Mary’s departure created an organizational hiatus. The hierarchical managerialism she had inaugurated was widely recognized as problematic, so provided a foil for the current changes. Internally there had been a separation between the management committee and staff meaning that decisions at a strategic level were not taking into account the views of WE employees, leading to a perceived disconnect in the organizations mission.

Members also spoke about the encroachment of micro-management and surveillance. Forms of communication, such as emails, had been monitored. Unnecessary, bureaucratic reporting and paper trails had been created, for example making members complete a request slip to use the administrator’s services, submit reports two weeks in advance of meetings and account for their daily activities to the Director. As one employee told us: ‘for the past three months I had to write down every meeting that I’d attended, every project I had worked on’. This account then provided the basis for target setting for the next

three months. These practices were seen as a largely procedural waste of time. For example, whilst there was an insistence on accounting and reporting, the resultant paper was just ‘put in a folder’ rendering it a ‘pointless exercise’. Overall, the members felt ‘hurt’ by these changes and by the way they were implemented without consultation.

If we attend to the flow of the interviews, some members also contrasted non-hierarchical working with their previous experiences of work and management. For example, one of the youth workers had previously been employed by an ethical cosmetics retailer and recounted this experience as a counterpoint to how ‘non-hierarchical’ organization might work, effectively distancing her expectations of work, and her aspirations for WE, from both the previous regime and from work in the commercial sector:

It was hard work... for not a great deal of money, erm, and despite the happy clappy ‘we’re fun, light-hearted’ front that it gives, its actually massively hard-sell. You have a lot of targets. They have a counter on the door which counts every single person that walks through. So when we would go in, we would duck and people would always think we were insane that we would walk through the door by going low and coming up again, but it was because we didn’t want to be counted into ‘coming in’. And at the end of the day they would calculate how many products had been sold compared to how many people had come in and the ratio of how many products per person basically, and each person was meant to buy on average three products. You were meant to acknowledge someone within 30 seconds of coming through the door; approach them within two minutes; and speak to them about three different products; and tell them different essential oils and ingredients within each of those products. And you would get mystery shoppers that would come in and do it, but we had a Nazi of a manager as well (Youth Worker).

It was clear, then, what the remaining members of WE did not want: hierarchical management of the sort experienced under the directorship or in other jobs. This opposition to hierarchy, allowed the group to coalesce around a recognition of the need for change as a way to avoid going back to hierarchy but by defining the new organizational principles in terms of negation – *not* hierarchy – a relatively empty, or at least under-determined, space was opening up that needed to be filled. If not hierarchy, then what?

Ambiguity and ‘non’ signification

When we asked what ‘non-hierarchical’ meant to them, members articulated a range of perspectives. For some, like the current Chair of the Management Committee, non-hierarchical organizing meant autonomy, decentralization and collaborative working:

People taking an active role in being involved in the decisions that affect them, and taking responsibility for decision that are made as part of the organization; being proactive in getting support and supporting each other, in more of a network model than a line-management model... erm... so the consequences of that are you don't have people making decisions about others further down the organization without their say.

This description fits well with the main characteristics of anarchism laid out by Colin Ward, which proposes the horizontal network as a foundational structure for anarchist organizing, contrasting this with the bureaucratic pyramid (Ward, 1982: 26). There is also a strong emphasis here on direct action – being proactive and not having others make decisions for you – another cornerstone of anarchism.

A relatively new member of the management committee echoed this perspective, characterizing non-hierarchical organization in terms of horizontality, autonomy, direct action and personal responsibility:

a flat level of management, a lot of autonomy, a lot of expectation on individual staff, to be autonomous to be proactive, to support each other, no obvious boss but people that are skilled in, using people strengths not people's weaknesses.

One of the education workers reframed this in terms of collective responsibility but combined with an emphasis on open communication and respect:

I think it means more open and honest communication which is what we all want [...] but also the idea of shared responsibility. [...] So finding we together, but we can all contribute and respect each other's points of view, and come to a way of moving forward as an organization and also as individuals I suppose.

Whilst the first two perspectives resonate very clearly with anarchistic ideals of direct democracy and autonomy, by bringing respect and 'honest communication' to the fore, this last quote emphasizes more liberal concerns with diversity, inclusivity and respect/tolerance.

Moving even further away from anarchism, the financial co-ordinator, one of the longest serving members of the organization, framed non-hierarchical organizing in terms of a hand-off, 'laissez-faire' management style. Whilst this was still concerned with individual autonomy and trusting people to do a good job, there was no underlying analysis of power, thus reflecting a unitarist conception of the organization. Rather than a distinctive set of political values, embedded in an organizational structure, this perspective assumed that simply getting rid of hierarchy was adequate, neglecting the wide range of debates within social movements and anarchist thinking about less visible, or informal,

sources of power and authority and hidden modes of domination (see Freeman, 1972; Sutherland et al., 2014).

Negation as anarchist change process?

As these examples suggest, WE members interpreted ‘non-hierarchical’ organizing in a variety of often quite vague ways including respect, participation, openness, honesty, pro-activism, collaboration, creativity, co-working, community, networks, laissez-faire management, autonomy and freedom. By translating anarchist organizational principles into ‘non-hierarchical organizing’, a widespread commitment to change away from hierarchy could be mobilised. Rather engaging in a positive discussion about what an anarchist organization should look like, however, the direction of change was understood in terms of absence (not hierarchy). The emphasis was on what the organization was moving away from, rather than what it was working towards. Whilst ‘anarchism’ is itself a highly contested term and therefore always holds the possibility of multiple interpretations, it had the potential to be a positive signifier around which to mobilise organizational change. By contrast, ‘non-hierarchical organizing’, whilst retaining anarchism’s core rejection of hierarchical leadership, remained empty: an uncontentious non-signifier, lacking positive content. The result of this was that members could fill it with whatever they saw as desirable, from fairly anarchistic ideals of pre-figuration, direct democracy and free association, to more liberal ideas of diversity, respect and transparency.

Whilst this might be understood as a dilution of anarchism as a distinctive, if always contested, organizational ideal, the reality is more ambivalent. ‘Non-hierarchical’ constituted a empty discursive space in which members could democratically debate the positive content with which they would fill this space, discussing principles and practices of organization without concerns for fidelity to a particular political or organizational theory. In this, we argue, the negative move of rejecting hierarchy presented an opportunity for a radically democratic *process* of organizational change rather than emphasizing a specific *content* for this change. Through our research we sought to bring the organization’s members together to work through this in an open dialogue about organizational principles and practices. This process of developing non-hierarchical organizing thus embodied the ideals of direct democracy and self-determination that characterize contemporary anarchist social movements. Arguing that ‘democracy’ and ‘anarchy’ have historically been used interchangeably, David Graeber suggests that:

In its essence [democracy] is just the belief that humans are fundamentally equal and ought to be allowed to manage their collective affairs in an egalitarian fashion, using whatever means appear most conducive...

[It] is not necessarily defined by majority voting; it is, rather, the process of collective deliberation on the principle of full and equal participation. (Graeber, 2013: 183-186)

The absence at the heart of ‘non-hierarchical’ constituted a space within which the members of WE could engage in precisely this kind of ‘process of collective deliberation’ about what equality and participation might mean, and how they wanted to embody these principles in their organizational structures and management practices. In facilitating the change process in an open, democratic way, anarchist principles informed the change process itself, even if the final model of organizing was not a direct transplanting of the anarchist/social movement organizational practices that informed the initial impetus to change.

Practical challenges

As one of the employees told us, the process was about finding ‘a new way about how WE can work’. Whilst the concern of this paper has been with how change was mobilized around contested anarchist principles, we have not had space to explore in detail the concrete practices of organizing that were developed within this change process. This is not to say that there was no concern with practicalities. On the contrary, without a set of clearly articulated organizational principles, practical techniques for non-hierarchical organizing became an important focus, but disembedded from the political traditions and movements that had given rise to them. In being translated into a new context, they were reconstituted and transformed by connection to local and divergent understandings of politics, democracy and organization.

To give an example, we ran some sessions on consensus decision-making with WE using Seeds of Change’s handbook (Seeds for Change, 2013). The idea had been to bring one of the most characteristic organizational practices of the contemporary anarchist social movements (Maeckelbergh, 2009; Graeber, 2013) into WE’s repertoire of organizational practices, and use it to facilitate democratic decision-making about the direction of desired change as well as providing a relatively durable tool for non-hierarchical organizing. The technique was interpreted in light of members’ extant conceptions of democratic process. Some, with experience of social movement activism, brought anarchistic understandings of consensus and direct democracy to these sessions. Others, working with consensus for the first time, translated the practice in light of more mainstream conceptions of democracy as majority rule. For example, one respondent described the new practice in management meetings of ‘voting with Jazz hands’. When we discussed this further it became apparent that she understood the hand signals associated with consensus decision-making in

terms of majority voting. The underlying principles of consensus and its associated political principles had not travelled. Instead, the practice appeared as an unnecessarily complicated, and even unprofessional, way to 'vote' for a majority rule. Although this was certainly an improvement on the managerial diktat of the Director, the lack of a substantive political ideology at the heart of 'non-hierarchical' organizing left it open to interpretations in line with dominant hegemonic conceptions of democracy and participation as one-person-one-vote and majority rule.

If approached from a normative perspective, oriented toward implementing anarchism as a mode of organization, we might figure this example as a form of 'misinterpretation'. From a more sociological perspective, however, we would understand this as a form of translation and transformation in which attention needs to be paid to a wide range of apparently 'contextual' factors that are actually constitutive of the new practices being developed.

Conclusions

This paper has presented a complex and at times contradictory tale of the travelling of anarchist ideas of organization into the context of Voluntary Sector Organization. In translating 'anarchism' into 'non-hierarchical' our case organization achieved two things. First, they were able to mobilize a degree of consensus over the need for, and broad direction of, change. Second, they opened a discursive space in which a democratic dialogue could take place over the content of change and what 'non-hierarchical' organizing should mean. On the other hand, the formal negativity of the 'non-hierarchical' framing meant that this space could be occupied by quite divergent interpretations, ranging from anarchism to a liberal and laissez-faire style of organizing, without a genuine consensus over underlying values and a shared political approach to organization. This openness in turn inflected the interpretation of concrete organizational practices, for example when the tools of more radically democratic forms of consensus decision-making were understood through the framework of majority rule.

In summary, the translation of anarchist forms of organization to non-native contexts like the Voluntary Sector has real potential but if this becomes focused on attempting to transplant organizational innovations and practices like consensus decision-making it is likely that the process of translation will constitute an assemblage that bears only slight resemblance to anarchist organizing. On the other hand, the translation of 'anarchism' into 'non-hierarchical', whilst risking recuperation and a loss of substance, creates

possibilities for an open, collective discussion of what self-determination, equality and participation might mean in a range of organizational contexts. This would be a significant step forward both for practitioners and organizational theorists pursuing a 'critical performativity', when compared with the melancholic analysis of hierarchical, capitalist organization that dominates Critical Management Studies.

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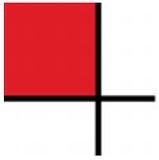
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Anarchist economic practices in a 'capitalist' society: Some implications for organisation and the future of work

Richard J. White and Colin C. Williams

Adopting an 'anarchist squint' (Scott, 2014: xii) this paper aims to expose, subvert, and undermine the dominant *prima facie* assumption that we live under a 'neoliberal capitalist' order. It achieves this primarily by drawing attention to the pervasive nature of alternative economic modes of human organisation within western society. Celebrating an ontology of economic difference, the paper argues that many of the existing 'alternative' modes of human organisation enacted through everyday material, social and emotional coping strategies are demonstrably and recognisably *anarchistic*. Far from being a residual and marginal realm, these anarchist forms of organisation – underpinned by mutual aid, reciprocity, co-operation, collaboration and inclusion – are found to be deeply woven into the fabric of everyday 'capitalist' life. Exploring the key implications for the organisation of everyday work, particularly at the household and community level, an economic future is envisaged in which anarchist modes of organisation flourish. The paper concludes by discussing why anarchist forms of organising and organisation should be harnessed, and how this might occur.

Political, economic and social institutions are crumbling; the social structure, having become uninhabitable, is hindering, even preventing the development of the seeds which are being propagated within its damaged walls and being brought forth around them.

The need for a new life becomes apparent. (Kropotkin, 2002b)

An anarchist society, which organises itself without authority, is always in existence, like a seed beneath the snow, buried under the weight of the state and its bureaucracy, capitalism and its waste, privilege and its injustices, nationalism and its suicidal loyalties, relations differences and their superstitious separatism. (Ward, 1982: 14)

Introduction

Throughout the 1990s and for much of the 2000s, an unshakable *belief* in neo-liberal capitalism as a giant totalising system, all-powerful and all-pervasive was widespread across mainstream academic, policy-making and media discourse.¹ The implications of such uncritical alignment to this capitalo-centric economic discourse can be seen by paying critical attention to the way in which capitalism has powerfully colonised, conditioned, bound and blinded the economic imagination to the diverse and more radical possibilities that political economy can offer contemporary society. As Shutt (2009:1) observes, ‘the belief that laissez-faire capitalism has so clearly demonstrated its superiority over all imaginable economic systems that any deviation from it is ultimately untenable and unsuitable’. Thus, whether framing, discussing, envisaging, organising or imagining ‘the economic’, capitalo-centrism privileges capitalism as the ‘quintessential economic form’ (Gibson-Graham, 1996: 7). At the same time, positioning capitalism as the ascendant or aspirational North Star, necessitates presenting non-capitalist or ‘alternative’ economic forms of organisation as ‘an homogenous insufficiency rather than as positive and differentiated others’ (*ibid.*). Moreover, this rampant capitalist propaganda, reinforced by the mantra that *there is no alternative*, ensures that any questions concerning (alternative) economic reality/ies are considered as secondary, incidental, indulgent, and ultimately redundant. In the eyes of its supporters, a neoliberal capitalist world order has always been ‘the greatest’ show in town. Significantly, at a time of global neoliberal economic, environmental and political crisis, capitalism is aggressively re-presented as society’s least worst option. Duncombe (1997:6) captures the powerful implications of such a threat:

The powers that be do not sustain their legitimacy by convincing people that the current system is The Answer. That fiction would be too difficult to sustain in the face of so much evidence to the contrary. What they must do, and what they have done very effectively, is convince the mass of people that there is no alternative.

Somewhat predictably therefore, the recent legitimisation crisis of neoliberal capitalism across western economies, triggered by the global financial crisis of 2008-2009, *appears* to have been sufficiently limited and temporary (Dale, 2012). The global financial crisis certainly did not lead to an imminent collapse or implosion that was widely predicted at the time. In a post-crisis United Kingdom for example, a ‘business-as-usual’ approach was quickly re-instated. As Cumbers (2012: 2) noted, once ‘the initial shock of the financial crisis wore off... it became clear that the grip of free market philosophy on the political mainstream was as

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strong as ever'. Indeed it becomes necessary to face a deeper truth: that the reoccurring crises of capitalism have consistently proved inherently productive, particularly for neoliberal forms of governance. This apparent paradox can be more properly conceptualised by moving away from representations of neoliberal capitalism as a monolithic entity, and instead recognising neoliberalism's hybridised and mutated organisational nature. As Peck (2010: 106) argues:

For all the ideological purity of free-market rhetoric, for all the machinic logic of neoclassical economics, this means that the practice of neoliberal statecraft is inescapably, and profoundly, marked by compromise, calculation, and contradiction. There is no blueprint. There is not even a map. Crises themselves need not be fatal for this mutable, mongrel model of governance, for to some degree or another neoliberalism has always been a creature of crisis.

So, does this mean that we are forever condemned to 'living in a global system of neoliberal state capitalism that is simultaneously bankrupt and not bankrupt but to which there is no alternative'? (Beck, 2012: 4) No, it does not. Any economic discourse that artificially privileges the centrality of capitalism in western society, and argues that there are no viable alternatives to capitalism, is woefully inadequate on two fronts. Not only does it reveal a worrying lack of awareness and understanding of the rich, pluralistic, heterodox ways in which the economies of the western world are already organised, but it betrays a poverty of imagination about what forms of economic organisation could be harnessed in the future.

Drawing particular attention to the alternative economic literature that has gained traction from the 1990s, the paper challenges a capitalo-centrist discourse by demonstrating that already existing non-capitalist modes of organising are still pervasive in the western world. Contributing to this literature, the paper asserts that many of these 'non-capitalist' forms of work and organisation are examples of anarchy in action. Having first discussed anarchism and anarchist praxis in the context of this paper, a Whole Life Economic framework is introduced in order to better recognise the multiple and fluid ways in which different economic taxonomies overlap in society. This, together with qualitative findings that have emerged from Household Work Practice Surveys in the UK, are used to underpin the argument that not only are anarchist modes of organisation central in western society, they are also extremely desirable. The final section of the paper, while problematising the immunity of 'the alternative' to capitalist valorisation, indicates how anarchist forms of organisation could be – and are being – harnessed and made more visible at this present time.

Recognising alternative economic and social modes of organising and organisation in western 'neoliberal-capitalist' society

First world countries generally, and western societies in particular are perceived to occupy the heartlands of advanced capitalism. Yet capitalo-centric narratives of the triumphant ascendancy of neoliberal capitalism have long been fiercely contested and resisted by a wide range of critical and radical research (e.g. Burns et al, 2004; Gibson-Graham, 1996, 2006a; 2006b; 2008; Fuller et al, 2010; Leyshon et al, 2003; Williams, 2003; 2004; 2005; 2011; White and Williams, 2010; 2012a; 2012b). Much of this research has evidenced the significant limits of capitalism by drawing attention to the pervasive geographies (extent, character, social embeddedness) of non-commodified or 'alternative' forms of monetary exchange. Evidence gained through Time Use Surveys have been particularly influential when assessing and measuring the relative importance of non-market work (see Gershuny and Jones, 1987; Murgatroyd and Neuburger, 1997; Dumontier and Pan Ke Shon, 1999; Williams 2010). Summarising the findings of this research in the UK, France and the USA between 1965-1995, Burns et al (2004: 52) found that, 'over half of all the time that people spend working is unpaid'. Moreover, work beyond employment has 'over the past 30 years... taken up a greater share of the total time that we spend working' (*ibid.*). One of the key implications emerging from these findings was that 'the tendency to give prominence to formal employment while placing all else in one catch-all "non-formal" category has to be seriously questioned'. (Burns et. al, 2004: 53)

Presented with a pluralistic reading of contemporary economic life, questions of how to better conceptualise, capture, frame, present, value and *organise* non-capitalist economies have been repeatedly asked. Here, the work of Gibson-Graham (1996; 2006a; 2006b; 2008) through their attempts to 'map' this diverse economy, and thereby prepare critical spaces for 'the alternative' has been of great influence. In highlighting potential exit points from capitalism, they encouraged individuals to *think* differently about (their) economic pasts, present and futures thus allow the possibility of *enacting* alternative economics, to enable ourselves and others to strengthen and build non-capitalist enterprises and spaces'. (Gibson-Graham, 2006a: ix) This economic ontology of difference and diversity has been represented through their "A Diverse Economy" (Figure 1) for example. Here a tripartite reading of *transactions* (market, alternative market, non-market); *labour* (wage, alternative paid, unpaid) and *enterprise* (capitalist; alternative capitalist; noncapitalist).

Transactions	Labour	Enterprise
<i>Market</i>	<i>Wage</i>	<i>Capitalist</i>
<i>Alternative market</i>	<i>Alternative wage</i>	<i>Alternative capitalist</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sale of public goods • Ethical 'fair-trade' markets • Local trading systems • Alternative currencies • Underground market • Co-op exchange • Barter • Informal market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-employed • Cooperative • Indentured • Reciprocal labour • In kind • Work for welfare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State enterprise • Green capitalist • Socially responsible firm • Non-profit
<i>Non-market</i>	<i>Unpaid</i>	<i>Non-capitalist</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household flows • Gift giving • Indigenous exchange • State allocations • State appropriations • Gleaning • Hunting, fishing, gathering • Theft, poaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housework • Family care • Neighbourhood work • Volunteer • Self-provisioning labour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communal • Independent

Figure 1: Gibson-Graham *A Diverse Economy*. Source: adapted from Gibson-Graham (2008: 616, Figure 1). Note: The figure should be read down the columns, not across the rows.

Addressing these 'Diverse Economies' columns, with the multiplicity of non-market, unpaid and non-capitalist forms of organising at all levels of society brings firmly to mind the words of the anarchist geographer Colin Ward (1982: 14): 'anarchism... is a description of a mode of human organisation, rooted in the experience of everyday life, which operates side by side with, and in spite of the dominant authoritarian trends of our society'. But what did he mean by the use of anarchism in this context? It is to this – exploring what anarchism as a theory of organisation means – which the paper now turns its attention toward.

Anarchism: A theory of organisation

Writing without any hint of hyperbole, the philosopher Simon Critchley argued that: 'Of all the political visions of another social order or another way of conceiving and practising social relations, anarchism has proved the most condemned, and yet the most resilient. Outlawed, repudiated, ridiculed by liberals, by neoliberals, but most of all, of course by Marxists... the anarchist idea simply will not die' (2013: 2). Unquestionably, anarchism has long been (ab)used as a synonym for violence, nihilism, chaos and dis-order. Elsewhere, more sympathetic interpretations have dismissed anarchist visions as romantic, unrealistic and utopian. Unfortunately, such is the strength of the propaganda, and its stranglehold on the popular imagination with regard to this political philosophy and its adherents, that any arguments in favour of advocating anarchism must first seek to transgress these polluted soils of prejudice and ignorance.

As a sweeping generalisation, anarchism stands *against* violence, oppression, exploitation and all unjustified forms of 'archy', and thus stands *for* freedom, autonomy, mutuality, peace, solidarity and organisation. Indeed, as Springer (forthcoming) argues:

anarchism refuses chaos by creating new forms of organisation that break with hierarchy and embrace egalitarianism. In fact, the symbol for anarchism (A), is meant to suggest that anarchy is the mother of order, an idea advanced by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the first person to ever to identify as an anarchist.

It is important to note that, while also 'supporting a variety of utopian visions' (Kinna, 2012: 7), anarchist praxis is very much focused on the present. In this respect Graeber (2004: 7), for example, notes that anarchism has traditionally had little concern for High Theory, owing to the fact, that

it is primarily concerned with forms of practice; it insists, before anything else, that one's means must be consonant with one's ends; one cannot create freedom through authoritarian means; in fact, as much as possible, one must oneself, in one's relations with one's friends and allies, embody the society one wishes to create. (Graeber, 2004: 7)

Thus when exploring *anarchist* modes of organising and organisation it is those organic, multiple cultures of self-organisation which are given particular importance and status. Indeed when setting out to explore anarchist forms of organisation perhaps necessitates what Scott (2012: xii) refers to as seeing like an anarchist, or adopting an anarchist squint:

if you put on anarchist glasses and look at the history of popular movements, revolutions, ordinary politics, and the state from that angle, certain insights will

appear that are obscured from almost any other angle. It will also become apparent that anarchist principles are active in the aspirations and political action of people who have never heard of anarchism or anarchist philosophy.

Adopting an anarchist squint, will also in turn point toward *anarchist solutions* which – focusing on the household and the community in particular – will be considered toward the end of this paper. Ultimately, a guiding spirit of anarchism in this context of organisation is one which is 'premised upon co-operative and egalitarian forms of social, political, and economic organization, where ever-evolving and autonomous spatialities may flourish' (Springer, 2012: 1606).

In many ways, anarchists are committed to finding (new) creative solutions for contemporary problems. In an age of 'no alternatives' (to capitalism) drawing attention toward the presence of ordinary anarchist (non-hierarchical, voluntary) forms of organising within society, which are known and familiar to most people, is incredibly powerful when agitating for change. As Ward (1982: 5) notes:

Many years of attempting to be an anarchist propagandist have convinced me that we win over our fellow citizens to anarchist ideas, precisely through drawing upon the common experience of the informal, transient, self-organising networks of relationships that in fact make the human community possible, rather than through the rejection of existing society as a whole in favour of some future society where some different kind of humanity will live in perfect harmony.

Thus, rather than a fearful leap into the unknown, in advocating a mode of human organisation that is central within society, anarchism at once presents tangible, recognisable and desirable exits with which to further 'escape' a capitalist society.

In search of anarchist modes of organisation and practice

Kropotkin, writing in *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* found that:

Although the destruction of mutual-aid institutions has been going on in practice and theory for full three or four hundred years, hundreds of millions of men [sic] continue to live under such institutions; they piously maintain them and endeavour to reconstitute them where they have ceased to exist. (1901 [1998]: 184)

Anarchists have long identified a diversity range of anarchist praxis within human society, past and present. Particular spaces of attention have focused on the provision of (alternative) forms of housing, education, work and employment, leisure, and community gardening (e.g. Ward, 1976). Viewed collectively, these findings have been of inestimable value in bringing to light the pervasive nature of forms of self-help and mutual-aid that are evident in everyday life economies

of the western world. They exist despite being hidden, neglected, overlooked, and marginalised in a world that tells itself it is 'capitalist'. Such a wonderful range of anarchist modes of organising – which are underpinned by mutuality, autonomy, solidarity, self-management and self-organisation – forms an impressive rebuttal to orthodox economic accounts as what motivates economic organisation in society. Mainstream economics (with its monstrous chimera of Rational Economic Man) being after all, 'the science of self-interest, of how to best accommodate individual behavior by means of markets and the commodification of human relations' (Lutz, 1999: ix).

In search of the presence of anarchist modes of organisation and practice, the paper will shortly turn attention to the empirical data presented by the UK Household Work Practice Survey. Before then, a more nuanced organisational economic framework than the Gibson-Graham representation highlighted in (Figure 1) is considered. The example drawn on in Figure 2 is adapted from Williams and Nadin's (2010: 57) "Whole Life Economies" perspective, which itself is a framework that expanded upon a Total Social Organisation of Labour schema put forward by Williams (2009; 2011). When interpreting this Whole Life Economic framework, it is important to recognise that anarchist praxis can *potentially* be present within any economic taxonomy, not least those where it may be least expected (e.g. informal support and guidance given to another colleague in a formal capitalist firm). Equally, anarchist praxis can potentially be absent within any economic taxonomy and within any given space, including those where it is most often anticipated. For example, when focusing on the household and community, it is imperative that false differences, essentialist traps or misguided assumptions are avoided. These are complex spaces with the potential to empower and subjugate. Feminists have long problematised the idea that anything that occurs in 'the household' or 'the community' is necessarily anti-capitalist, progressive, or emancipatory. Indeed, the women's liberation movement sought to free women from the constraints of patriarchal household relations (e.g. Berhmann, 1973); and the 'wages for housework' campaign was a radical (though unmet) demand of women in the second wave feminist movement (see Federici, 1975; Lutz, 2007). Indeed, a great deal of attention continues to be made on the uneven gendered division of domestic labour and care work in contemporary society (e.g. Aassve et al, 2014; Kilkey et al, 2013; Weir, 2005; Windebank, 2012).

Similarly, questions which problematise the meaning of 'community' are also vital. For example, how does community aggregate people: who is included, and who excluded (Vishmidt, 2006)? How are authentic representations of the community created and contested (Ince, 2011)? What about communities which may be simultaneously highly communal, but also highly exclusionary and

unequal. Such a framework of communal organisation could be consistent with certain religious communities like the Mormons, the Mafia, urban street gangs and far right political groups such as the British National Party (see Ince, 2011; Schimmenti et al. 2014; Tita et al., 2005). Ultimately, it is important to be sensitive to the reality that multiple forms of alienation can be found *anywhere*. As Shukaitis and Graeber (2007: 31-32) argue:

Alienation in this sense is not just something that exists from a lack of control in one's workplace, or a process that divorces one from being able to control one's labor. Rather, as all of society and our social relations are creatively and mutually co-produced processes, alienation is lacking the ability to affect change within the social forms we live under and through. It is the subjective experience of living within structures of imagination warped and fractured by structural violence.

Acknowledging those tensions is important, and necessary, but it does not detract from the overall argument of the paper that the proliferation of experiments in more communal, self-organised, and thus overtly or potentially anarchist forms of activity should be recognised and celebrated. It is to the former – that of recognition – that the paper now considers.

Rejecting the rarely contested dichotomies that are conventionally used to divide types of economic organisation (either formal or informal, either paid or unpaid) and recognising the complex range of identities and relationships that underpin western economic modes of organisation, a Whole Life Economies approach holds several advantages over previous approaches to capturing economic diversity (Figure 2). Compared to Gibson-Graham's typology (Figure 1) for example, the work practices within the Whole Life Economic framework are more properly depicted along spectrums of relative, not absolute, difference. The horizontal axis differentiates between more formal and more informal types of work. The vertical axis between more monetised and less monetised forms of exchange. This framework also deliberately introduces incorporates hatched lines to depict each economic practice,

in order to show display how they are a borderless continuum, rather than separate practices, which overlap and merge into one another. The outcome is a vivid portrait of the seamless fluidity of economic practices and how they are not discrete but seamlessly entwined together. (Williams and Nadin, 2010: 57)

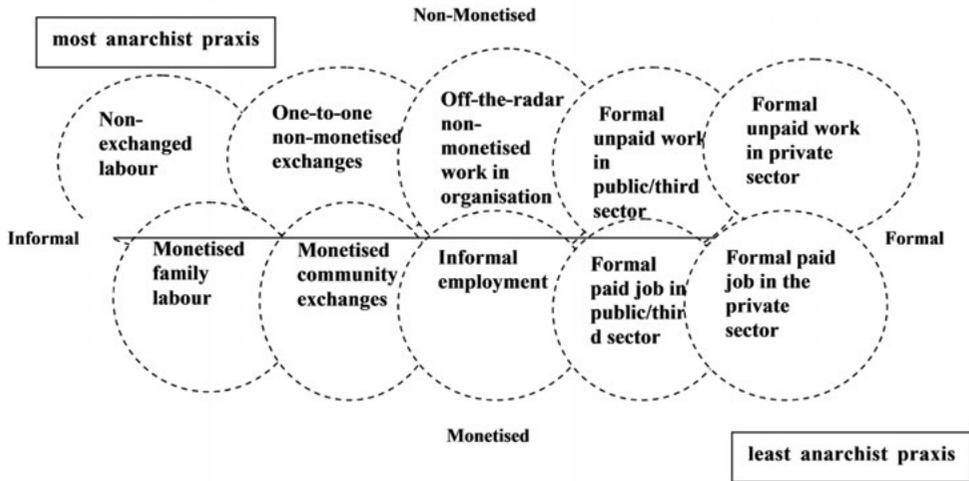


Figure 2: *Whole Life Economies: anarchist praxis and the diverse economies in with western world.* Source: Adapted from Williams and Nadin (2010: 57, Figure 1 A: taxonomy of the diverse economic practices in everyday economies).

The main adaptation made to previous Whole Life Economies frameworks, is the deliberate positioning of non-exchanged labour at the top-left hand side, and work considered within the ‘formal paid job in the private sector’ at the bottom-right. While still recognising the contextual and temporal natures of economic practices – systems of ‘archy’ and ‘anarchy’ could theoretically found within any taxonomy – a general interpretation of anarchist modes of organisation in this taxonomy would also capture these as a continuum. All things being equal, anarchist economic praxis will be most present toward the top-left hand side, and be more absent the further right the work practices appear along the spectrum. In this context two important caveats need to be made. First, though anarchist praxis can potentially be found even in the most unexpected of (formal work) practices and environments, anarchism remains deeply anticapitalist. In this way the paper actively rejects the perverse spectre of ‘anarcho-capitalism’, and refutes claims that individualist anarchism is capitalistic (Rothbard, 1973). Indeed McKay (2012: 574) makes an important point that:

In this context, the creation of “anarcho”-capitalism may be regarded as yet another tactic by capitalists to reinforce the public’s perception that there are no viable alternatives to capitalism, i.e. by claiming that “even anarchism implies capitalism”.

Secondly, it should also be remembered that anarchism has never just been limited to its critique of capitalism. Rather, anarchists have sought to emphasise forms of economic oppression that form part of a wider intersectional reading of domination and hierarchy (see Shannon et al, 2012; Socha, 2012). In this context,

how economic forms of practice intersect with other aspects of social domination (and vice versa) are also important sites to deconstruct, challenge and overcome

Drawing attention to the first two types of work practices in the Whole Life Economies framework (Figure 2), 'non-exchanged labour' and 'monetised family labour' are both forms of self-provisioning. They refer work conducted by household members for themselves or other members of the household. The vast majority of self-provisioning has been traditionally interpreted as non-exchanged labour. However there are important shades of grey between non-exchanged labour and more monetised forms of family labour (where the work is reimbursed in some way, perhaps through money, a gift-in-lieu of money, of in-kind reciprocal labour). For example there is often an explicit or tacit agreement within the household about how domestic jobs will be shared ('I'll do these jobs, you'll do those'). Examples can also be recollected where children have been encouraged to complete tasks (wash the car, tidy their room) to earn extra pocket money. Here, understanding the use, purpose, and value of money necessitates going well beyond accounts that focus on impersonal instrumental market calculations. With respect to the varieties of labour practices: money is not indicative of 'capitalist' relations between 'the buyer' and 'the seller'. In this context, it is worthwhile reflecting on Simmel's emphasis of 'the sociological character of money' (2004: 174) or Zelizer's research on the social differentiation of money. Here Zelizer (1997: 2) rejects the commonly held belief that money corrupts cultural meanings with materialist concerns by demonstrating:

how at each step in money's advance, people have reshaped their commercial transactions, introduced new distinctions, invented their own special forms of currency, earmarked money in ways that baffle market theorists, incorporated money into personalized webs of friendship, family relations, interactions with authorities, and forays through shops and businesses.

One to one non-monetised exchange – either one-way giving or two-way reciprocity (mutual aid) – concerns work 'exchanged on an unpaid basis within the extended family and social or neighbourhoods networks' (Williams and Windebank, 2003: 138). Monetised exchange with the community has long been appraised through a narrow economists' lens, drawing solely on profit-maximisation rationales, and thus considered as paid informal work. However, as Burns et al. (2004: 32) argue: 'although some paid informal exchange is very much akin to market-like exchange, a good deal is based on non-market motivations and social relations'. Therefore, understood more properly, monetised community exchanges are different from informal employment (though again they fade into/out of this work sphere), and have been also been referred to as paid favours, or "autonomous" paid informal work, where people engage in paid work mostly for friends, relatives and neighbours' (*ibid.*).

Informal employment refers mainly to ‘paid labour unregistered by or hidden from, the state for tax, social security and labour law purposes’ (Williams 2014: 109). Here, as Williams and Nadin (2010: 58) point out:

Two varieties exist: work wholly undeclared for tax, social, security and/or labor law purposes, which might be conducted either of a self-employed or waged basis, and under-declared formal employment where formal employees receive an undeclared “cash in an envelope” wage in addition to their declared wage. This latter category is fascinating because it directly challenges the standard notion that a job is either formal or informal, but cannot be both. Under-declared formal employment shows that a job can be both at the same time.

This overlaps with monetised community exchanges, as mentioned, in addition to ‘off-the-radar non monetised work in organisation’, as well as paid and unpaid jobs in the private, public and third sectors. Non-monetised work in these sectors could include unpaid internships, or unpaid work experiences.

At the furthest right-hand side of the taxonomy, there are two remaining labour practices, including ‘formal paid labour in the public and third sectors’. This further blurring of ‘public’ and ‘private’ realms reflects the 21st-century reality that many private sector organisations are not just ‘for-profit’ but are actively pursuing a sustainability agenda that promotes a triple bottom line: pursuing economic and environmental and social indicators (see Savitz, 2014). Similarly, public and third sector organisations are increasingly seen to incorporate a ‘for profit’ philosophy (as a means to reinvest into social and environmental aims) thus encroaching on economic space that was traditionally seen to be the domain of explicitly ‘for profit’ firms. Finally, located in the bottom right hand corner there are ‘formal paid jobs in the private sector’. This is defined as remunerated (paid) work in the private sector which is formally registered by the state. Conventionally this type of work practice has been depicted as ‘capitalist’, ‘waged’ and ‘market based’ (e.g. Gibson-Graham, 2008; see Figure 1).

As highlighted earlier, the Time Bank Survey’s focusing on the ‘capitalist economies’ of the western world have indicated that not only half of all the time that people spend working is undertaken on an unpaid basis, but that more time is being spent engaging in work outside of the ‘formal’ sector. In this context, focusing briefly on the empirical research undertaken in the UK through Household Work Practice Surveys helps generate more detailed evidence for the persistence of “anarchist” praxis in the everyday organisation of work. One key methodological advantage of this approach – unlike the Time Study – is that it encourages a richer, more complex *qualitative* understanding of economic participation at the household and community level to take place. In terms of examining household work practices, a wide range of household-based tasks were considered focused on property maintenance (e.g. painting, decorating,

plumbing, electrical work), property improvement (e.g. DIY, house insulation, building an extension), routine housework (e.g. washing dishes, ironing, cooking, shopping), gardening activities (e.g. sweeping paths, planting seeds, mowing the lawn), caring activities (child-minding, animal care, looking after property, giving lifts) vehicle maintenance (e.g. repairing and maintenance) and miscellaneous (e.g. borrowing tools or equipment).

Typically, against each of the tasks the interviewee was asked whether the task had been undertaken during the previous five years/year/month/week/day (depending on the activity). If conducted, first, they were asked in an open-ended manner who conducted the task (a household member, a relative living outside the household, a friend, neighbour, firm, landlord, etc.) and the last time that it had been undertaken. Second, to understand their motives to get the work done, they were asked why they chose that particular individual(s) to carry out the work, whether they were the household's first or preferred choice, and if money was not an issue would they have preferred to engage a (formal) professional individual, firm or company to carry out the task? Third, they were asked whether the person had been unpaid, paid or given a gift; and if paid whether it was 'cash-in-hand' or not and how a price had been agreed. Finally, they were asked why they had decided to get the work done using that source of labour so as to enable their motives to be understood. Table 1 draws on the findings of the household Work Practices Surveys carried in the UK towns of Fulbourn, Cambridgeshire; Chalford, Gloucestershire; Grimethorpe, South Yorkshire; Wigston, Cumbria; St. Blazey and Cornwall; and in the suburbs of Fulwood, Manor and Pitsmoor in Sheffield; and Basset/Chilworth, St. Mary's and Hightown, Southampton. A breakdown of the tasks completed by locality-type can be seen in Table 1.

% tasks last conducted using:	Deprived	Affluent	Deprived	Affluent	All areas
	urban	urban	rural	rural	
Non-Monetised labour					
Non-exchanged labour	76	72	67	63	70
One-to-one non monetised exchanges	4	2	8	7	6
Off the radar/non-monetised work in organisations	<1	0	<1	0	0

Formal unpaid work in public & third sector	<1	0	<1	0	<1
Formal unpaid work in private sector	<1	0	<1	<1	<1
Monetised labour					
Monetised family labour	1	<1	1	1	1
Monetised community exchange	3	1	4	1	3
Informal employment	2	8	<1	4	2
Formal paid job in public and third sector	2	2	2	2	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100
\div^2	102.89	29.87	89.76	28.88	-

Table 1: Household Work Practice Survey: type of work practices used to conduct 44 domestic tasks: by locality-type. Note: $|z| > 12.838$ in all cases, leading us to reject H_0 within a 99.5 per cent confidence interval that there are no spatial variations in the sources of labour used to complete the 44 household services. Source: Adapted from White and Williams (2012) Table 5: Type of labour practices used to conduct 44 domestic tasks: by locality-type.

That the household (non-exchange labour) was engaged to complete the majority of tasks considered, cannot be accounted for by appeal to ‘economic rationales’ (i.e. to save money). Indeed when asked ‘why’ that was the preferred source of labour, other non-economic rationales including ‘pleasure’, ‘choice’ and ‘ease’ were particularly prominent in both affluent and deprived neighbourhoods (see Williams, 2010). Though the research undertaken through the Household Work Practice survey has highlighted a distinct preference from respondents to undertake unpaid work for other family members, rather than wider social relations, this does not detract from the general and ordinary acts of support and solidarity that define and nurture meaningful relations between people. For example:

There are things people do in the contexts of certain kinds of friendship that are done without calculation. They are done because they are called for, or because they are unexpected, or because they would be useful to the friend. We all know of actions like these, and of the contexts in which they occur. They are compliments paid to a friend because they are momentarily vulnerable, the rides given because the friends' car is in the repair shop of the friend is drunk or because you are going that way anyway and it would be just as easy. They are the hospital visits, the childcare, the expertise shared, or the spontaneous gifts.

These activities cut against the figures of neoliberalism. (May, 2013: 67)

Cutting further against the figures of neoliberalism, by seeking ways to further enable the development and growth of anarchistic forms of work and organisation in 'capitalist' society, is the focus of the last section. In many respects this is about re-valuing and recognising those activities and relations that give meaning and purpose to the society around us. For, as Springer (2013: 14) argues, 'a new society in the shell of the old already exists; we only need to embrace it'.

Toward an anarchist society: Enabling the development and growth of anarchistic forms of work and organisation in a 'capitalist' society

You may think in describing anarchism as a theory of organisation I am propounding a deliberate paradox: "anarchy" you may consider to be, by definition, the *opposite* of organisation. In fact, however, "anarchy" means the absence of government, the *absence* of authority. Can there be social organisation without authority, without government? The anarchists claim that there can be, and they also claim that it is desirable that there should be. (Ward, 2011 [1966]: 47)

At this point, it is worthwhile to pause and summarise the key arguments so far. The dominant capitulo-centric framing and imagining of the economic landscapes of the western world overlooks and underplays the central roles that 'non-capitalist' forms of economic organisation perform in everyday life. The central role that these 'non-capitalist' work practices play has been seen through research undertaken via Time Bank Surveys, and Households Work Practice Surveys. At the household and community level in particular the prominence of non-economic rationales (love, pleasure, enjoyment) that motivate individuals to engage in the domestic activities explored, can be seen interpreted – through an *anarchist squint* – as examples of anarchy in action.

Trying to imagine what this world will look like, by better recognising, valuing and enabling anarchist forms of organisation to flourish will be the focus of the

remaining part of the paper. Before that a more immediate question presents itself: ‘why should we harness anarchist activities?’

Why we should actively harness anarchist activities

Anarchism, in all its forms, asserts and champions human freedom, common responsibility, voluntary cooperation, reciprocal altruism, and mutual aid. Reflecting the *social* nature of humans, these values forming a necessary moral base upon which individuals, communities and ultimately society itself can survive, prosper and evolve (see Burns et al., 2004; Chatterton, 2010; McKay, 2008). Importantly, as this paper has sought to demonstrate, rather than capitalism being all encompassing within modern life in western society, the prevalence of non-capitalist exchanges means that actually existing anarchism already exists for many. In other words,

once you begin to look at human society from an anarchist point of view you discover that the alternatives are already there, in the interstices of the dominant power structure. If you want to build a free society, the parts are all at hand. (Ward, 1982: 16)

Todd May (2010: 5) observed that ‘History is contingent; it leads necessarily neither to anarchism nor to anything else’. This claim simultaneously acts as a threat, a challenge, and an opportunity. Taken as a threat, calls to mind Hakin Bey’s question ‘HOW IS IT THAT “the world turned upside-down” always manages to Right itself? Why does reaction always follow revolution, like seasons in Hell?’ (2003: 97) Thus, the need to actively harness anarchist praxis in the here and now, becomes critical, particularly as the ‘post-crisis’ governance of state and market continues to wreak havoc on society. Certainly across the western world, the on-going ability of individuals working in local communities to secure their own sources of well-being: food, shelter, and clothing without recourse to ‘the market’ is constantly under attack. In the UK, and Europe more generally the vacuous appeal to Big Society and the roll-back of the state and market while implementing the ‘dangerous idea’ of austerity (see Blyth, 2013) have formed a toxic presence which continues to rip out the very (economic and social) support structures that currently hold together some of the most deprived and vulnerable communities in society. In this way – recognising the disproportionate impacts on communities and their ability to cope – focuses attention on recognising the important difference that come to light by problematising space. As de Acosta, argues:

Mutual aid, direct action, etc., may be happening all the time, but not in every place. Attention to differences in location – where, not when, anarchy manifests in all intensity – underlines the importance of space, geo-historical space, the

archipelago of territories that make us as we make them. For every practice implies and involves a territory... (considering territory as land and body... both as components as self). (2010: 31-32)

The active nature of resistance to these measurements and economic 'adjustments' – exemplified by, but not limited to Occupy!, the Spanish *indignados* and the Greek *aganaktismenoi* – and the brutal acts of state-sponsored violence and recrimination that were enacted against those (citizens) brave enough have spoken out, stands as another testament to the powerful mutual integration of political and economic elites through 'neoliberal governance'. Yet, these very acts of rebellion, and a call for new creative ways of *being*, evidenced by the the commitment new spaces of political and economic experimentation are so important in informing future possibilities.

Suggestions of how to help enable the development and growth of anarchistic forms of work and organisation will be put forward, before moving to the paper toward its conclusion.

Enabling the development and growth of anarchistic forms of work and organisation at the household and community level

New ideas germinate everywhere, seeking to force their way into the light, to find an application in life; everywhere they are opposed by the inertia of those whose interest it is to maintain the old order; they suffocate in the stifling atmosphere of prejudice and traditions. (Kropotkin, 2002b: 35)

When considering how to develop existing and harness new informal, self-organising networks of relationships that take place within the household and within the community it is important to be aware of a range of uneven barriers to participation that previous research has drawn attention to (Burns et al, 2004; White, 2010). Focused on UK households for example these barriers include: a lack of money to be able to buy the necessary tools or equipment to complete the work at hand; a limited social networks with which to help/ ask help for completing work; a lack of relevant skills and experiences (in the household/ in the community) to successfully undertake non-routine tasks; lack of confidence to help others/ ask for help. When thinking about one-to-one non-monetised exchanges outside of the family, other social taboos including 'being a burden to others', 'false expectations/inappropriate gestures', 'being taken advantage of' and 'being unable to say no' have also been identified. While being sensitive to how these, and other barriers, may present themselves in complex and unpredictable ways it is fundamental to try to help empower communities to

come up with the solutions (or adapt good practice from elsewhere) wherever possible.

On a global level, there much cause for genuine optimism and belief when appreciating on the wonderfully vibrant and creative, the forms of organisation that are emerging from within communities across the world. When attention is paid to see and understand these “alternatives”, the dominant propaganda that we live under a “neoliberal capitalist” order becomes ever more hollow and shallow. As Gibson-Graham et al (2013: xxii) observed:

Something else that gives us hope is the extraordinary proliferation of economic experiments that are being conducted all around us. From local community gardens all over the world to Argentina’s factory takeovers, to the vibrant social economy in Europe, to African indigenous medicine markets, and to community currencies in Asia, economic experimentation abounds. There is no shortage of examples of alternative economic organizations and practices that are creating social and environmentally sustainable community economics.

Important attempts to begin to map out how the local and community framework of work and organisation and how these come together at wider scales (e.g. at the city level) have also been attempted, and should be encouraged. One of the most influential of these includes the Solidarity Economy in New York City (also see Figure 3):

The solidarity economy includes a wide array of economic practices and initiatives but they all share common values that stand in stark contrast to the values of the dominant economy.

Instead of enforcing a culture of cut-throat competition, they build cultures and communities of cooperation. Rather than isolating us from one another, they foster relationships of mutual support and solidarity. In place of centralized structures of control, they move us towards shared responsibility and democratic decision-making. Instead of imposing a single global monoculture, they strengthen the diversity of local cultures and environments. Instead of prioritizing profit over all else, they encourage a commitment to shared humanity best expressed in social, economic, and environmental justice. (SolidarityNYC, n.d.)

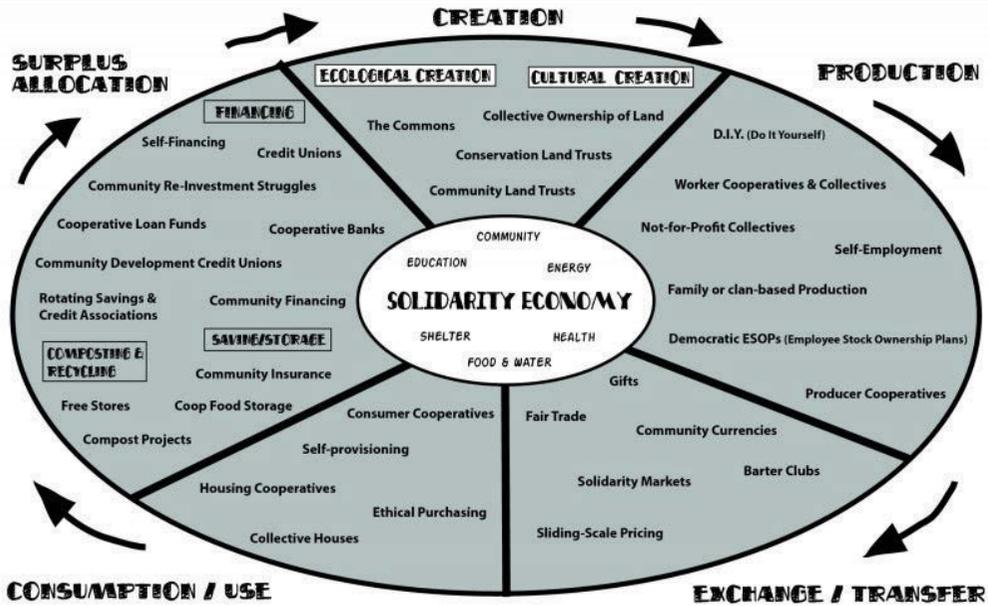


Figure 3: with caption *The Solidarity Economy NYC*. Source: Ethan Miller (n.d.).

Within the UK, a number of innovative alternative forms of community-based 'post-capitalist' economic spaces have emerged: including Local Exchange Trading Schemes (Williams, 1996; Pacione, 1997; North, 1999; Granger et al., 2010), time currencies and Time Banks (Seyfang, 2004) have risen to the challenge of re-localising social and economic identity; alleviating problems of social exclusion; restoring democratic participation (Hughes, 2005; Leyshon et al., 2003).

As a cautionary note, where these alternative modes of work and organisation (experiments of community currencies, barter clubs, D.I.Y. and so on) are present it is so important that appropriate forms and strategies of resistance are in place to ensure that the radical anarchist lines of flight moving society further away from 'capitalist' modes of organising are not compromised or blunted. This is a great challenge, as Bottici (2013: 29) points out:

If it is true that an anarchist turn has already begun, it is still far from going in the right direction. A freedom of equals has more chances today than ever, but it is still far from being realised. Capitalism's omnivorous capacity to overcome every challenge by incorporating its inner logic is the main threat.

Thus, these forms of alternative organisation represent both affirmative 'anarchist' spaces of hope *and* at the same time potential new grounds for capitalism appropriation. Hughes (2005: 502) for example, draws attention to research focused on alternative monetary forms which suggest that 'the

conventional [market mechanism of exchange] is both symbolically and materially always already in the alternative'. A diversity of social and economic experimentation are becomes incredibly relevant as a 'rational' and appropriate response when read against the 'varieties of capitalism' school of thought in heterodox political economy (e.g. Peck and Theodore, 2007). As Springer (2010: 1029) argues: it is 'imperative to contest the neoliberalism-as-monolithic argument for failing to recognise space and time as open and always becoming'. Thus responding to a time of economic crisis, flux and uncertainty, an anarchist radical commitment to organic possibilities, radical democracy and decentralisation is critical. In this sense anarchism works toward rousing, 'the spirit of initiative in individuals and in groups... [to]... create in their mutual relations a movement and a life based on the principles of free understanding – those that will understand that variety, conflict even, is life and that uniformity is death – they will work, not for future centuries, but in good earnest for the next revolution, for our own times' (Kropotkin, 2002a: 143).

Any support and encouragement that empowers (local) communities to decide on the most appropriate courses of action to challenge and confront the intersectional natures of (economic) oppression should be attempted. As Ward argues

the theory that, given a common need, a collection of people will, by trial and error, by improvisation and experiment, evolve order out of the situation - this order being more durable and more closely related to their needs than any kind of externally imposed order. (1982: 28)

Anarchist praxis actively rejects the desire to produce ready-made, ready-to-hand solutions through blueprints, maps and other essentialist commentary that prescribe how anarchistic forms of work and organisation must be developed and grown.

...any anarchist social theory would have to reject self-consciously any trace of vanguardism. The role of intellectuals is most definitively not to form an elite that can arrive at the correct strategic analyses and then lead the masses to follow. (Graeber, 2004: 11)

The opportunities that present themselves by recognising the complex array of economic realities in the everyday though is liberating. Society never has been, and never will be straitjacketed into a neoliberal capitalist future. In this 'open' ended reading of economics, the emphasis and respect that anarchism gives to experimentation, of diversity and difference becomes a key strength. These spaces are seen as having intrinsic value, worth and merit, irrespective of what, if anything, may follow from them. This approach also speaks to the successful

strategies of resistance, and forces for change in history: the quiet, faceless, anonymous everyday activism. As Scott notes:

the great emancipatory gains for human freedom have not been the result of orderly, institutional procedures but of disorderly, unpredictable, spontaneous action cracking open the social order from below. (2012: 141)

At the end of the 19th century Élisée Reclus (1894 [2013: 120]) wrote: 'But if anarchy is as old as humanity, those who represent it nevertheless bring something new to the world'. In so many ways, the pervasive nature of alternative economic modes of organising in the 21st century are testament to this living anarchist spirit; a spirit which is always in a process of unfurling and becoming; open to experimentation; embracing complexity; and finding unique inspiration in seemingly every-day, mundane and ordinary spaces and relations. Indeed, if this paper can encourage greater reflection on our own attitudes, actions and values in the first instance, and how we can better express solidarity, and support with those around us – in our homes, our communities, our places of work and all those rich anarchist spaces in-between – then it will have more than served its purpose.

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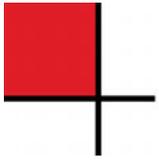
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Terrorist/anarchist/artist: Why bother?

Pierre Guillet de Monthoux

Labels are often flashy conduits for hasty assumptions and partial truths. At the time when I was writing *Action and Existence: Anarchism for Business Administration* in the late 1970s, the term anarchism served as a handy synonym for mess, chaos, and disorder. In this context the word cropped up in public debates about the Baader-Meinhof terrorism in Germany in the aftermath of Paris 68, for example. In putting my book together, I set out to explain what I had learned through my own reading and discussion about this often short-changed term. In the research and writing process I discovered that the word anarchism carried more concrete meaning than what I had first thought.

I did my investigation in West Berlin – then just a little island balancing on the Berlin wall between capitalism and communism – but the book was first published in Swedish 1978. The volume caught on and immediately thrust me into a strange world of ‘professional anarchists’: Daniel Guerin, the French friend of Buenaventura Durrutti, CNT¹ hero of the Spanish Civil War, initiator of the gay anarchist movement, and author of books like *Ni Dieu Ni Maitre* on Marxist anarchism; and Augustin Souchy, the Austrian connected to German anarchists Gustaf Landauer and Erich Mühsam as well as to Emma Goldman. I invited Augustin to lecture to my students at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. As he had just returned from Cuba, the lecture turned into a heavy attack on Fidel Castro’s authoritarian perversion of the Revolution. My new world also included Nisse Lätt, the legendary Swedish veteran of the Spanish Civil War; Tönnis Tönnisson, the math teacher whose brilliant Swedish book *Makt som hobby* (*Power as a hobby*) unfortunately is not available in English; Gert Nilson, a Swedish publisher who, in addition to writing on topics related to anarchy,

1 Confederación Nacional del Trabajo

launched his publishing house Korpen by publishing PhD dissertations refused by the university; and Roland Vila, son of refugees from the CNT in Spain. Vila navigated in Swedish anarchist circles and has colorfully documented his life in two booklets published by Bakhåll – Swedish for ‘ambush’ – Förlag in Lund, Sweden. Vila also introduced me to some small Swedish cliques nostalgically fueling on the CNT and FAI legends from the distant and mythical time of the Spanish Civil War in 1936-9. The FAI was made up of two cooperating Spanish anarcho-syndicalist unions: Confederation National del Trabajo and Federation Anarchista Iberica. These small coteries in Sweden circled around the syndicalist newspaper *Arbetaren* (*The worker*) and at the same time received exotic inspiration from recent actions taken in Quartier Latin in Paris or on Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley. I began hearing how anarchist syndicalism had been violently repressed by social democracy – the reigning political ideology in Sweden for almost 40 years – and how the Fascists and Soviet Communists, or more accurately, the Bolsheviks, had liquidated anarchists since the 1920s. The Spanish Civil War was the historical showcase of how the Spanish Fascists, supported by the German and Italian right wings and indirectly assisted by the Communist-Stalinists, had crushed the social revolution of the CNT and FAI anarchists in Catalonia. While anarchism provided mobilizing enthusiasm in the short run, in the long run both the right and the left wanted them out of the picture. To my new friends, anarchists were proletarian martyrs, the freedom fighters of twentieth-century industrial capitalism.

Face it: US anarchism exists!

After the English translation of *Action and existence* was released in 1991, I became more mindful of those seriously claiming to be anarchists. I met US-based activists Murray Bookchin – in Venice of all places – and I video-interviewed Leopold Kohr, author of the classic *The breakdown of nations*. Kohr had been befriended by George Orwell during the Spanish Civil War and got his book published thanks to UK anarchist Herbert Reed. I naively paid visits to US libertarians like Murray Rothbard, who had been the chief US propagandist for Ludwig von Mises and paved the way for some of the Chicago-Hayek impact on concrete neo-liberal politics, and Israel Kirzner to discover how they were supplanting the ‘worker anarchist’ with the ‘entrepreneur-anarchist’. Their references were of course selectively American and ranged from Ayn Rand back to Henry David Thoreau; in their accounting, however, they systematically forgot American union activists like Sacco and Vanzetti. They were sanctifying Austrian economics and in the process kidnapping Habsburg liberals like Ludwig von Mises, who claimed theoretically that any kind of regulation that upset the natural balance of the free market would eventually snowball into a complete

police-state environment like Nazi Germany; and Friedrich Hayek, who turned Mises' 'slippery slope' into a 'road to serfdom' and after WW II founded the Mont Pelerin Society, the intellectual cradle of neo-liberalism, and held them in their libertarian camp. Mises had launched the 'slippery slope' model for bureaucratic dictatorship for which Friedrich Hayek became the Nobel Prize-winning custodian. James Buchanan sophisticated it into a 'public choice theory' that eventually made him Nobel-laureate as well.² These were attempts to argue theoretically what anarchism intuitively believed; namely, that any minor compulsory local regulation will snowball into a totalized global police state. Anarchism postulated that all organizational processes lead to dictatorship in totalitarian states, whether the dictator is a Hitler, a Stalin, or a Mussolini. To the US libertarians neither labor unions nor representative democracy could escape this universal law of anarchism obscured by vague morality and religious belief in organizational bliss. US anarchism actually slipped into libertarianism as the 'economic-man' argument became a declaration of neo-liberal faith in ultimate salvation by the entrepreneurial market-maker. We know the rest of the story, and anarchists mostly dislike it!

Independent anarchism?

While anarchism did supply a cool vibe to both the left and right political movements, it also gave these powers cold feet. Anarchism provides a concrete criticism of capitalism but at the same time fuels fierce attacks on bureaucracy. Western industrial capitalism was a historical target but so was socialist bureaucracy! During the Cold War, Soviet Communists had paid alleged anarchists to mess things up in the West, and the West reciprocated by diffusing audio-visual rock-and-roll anarchists and artistic freedom fighters behind Iron Curtains and Chinese walls. Before the crumbling of the Berlin Wall this was a high-risk game since anarchists instinctively started blurring the two Cold War systems. The fall of the Berlin Wall, cementing the delineation between socialism and capitalism, blurred things even further, fusing anarchist capitalist-bashing with critique of organization.

Herein lies the essential anarchist lesson for critical management: neither state nor market will solve the problems of capitalism, and the struggle never ends. Those who believe in a final solution in a steady state might

2 Editors' note: the 'Nobel Prize for Economics' is not among the Nobel Prizes established by Alfred Nobel but was founded and endowed by the Swedish National Bank and is not without controversy, being seen by some as biased towards mainstream and neo-liberal economics.

find anarchism cool as an initial revolt, but eventually the anarchists will be silenced or tamed into useful idiots of the systems they dislike. This was the gloomy fate of the anarchist core of the Attack movement soon recuperated by the traditional left. Another case in point: the twin anarchists Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari today rebranded by the Catho-Mao-Marxist twins Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek.

Go for direct action!

So what about management? I grew up in a Nordic welfare state with capitalist machinery lubricated for growth by banks working smoothly with the central social democratic labor union. Terms like ‘planning’ and ‘systems’ were the core curriculum of business schools, where the issue of wages was unheard of primarily because salaries were fixed centrally by national unions. Finance was not even considered a discipline then. In such a world the only point to studying management or even attending business school was to be integrated into a large limited liability stock corporation. That was the expectation for all graduates not more than 50 years ago. In other words, business schools educated managers to be good capitalist bureaucrats.

Managers were sleepwalkers in big welfare gearboxes. Management was their faith solidly rooted in functionalism and preached by the increasing number of organizational scholars who tinkered with logically sophisticated sciences of decision-making. So thick was the decision-making mist that one could not see her own hand in front of her face. Readings on anarchism reveal ‘decision theorizing’ as a modern mystification. Was management then simply a drug designed to make managers forget about action even in the form of concrete work and labor? Was anarchism an antidote to logical infections of business school scholasticism?

This type of thinking appealed to many. In Sweden, Nils Brunson (1989) became indignant at the hypocritical gap between decision and action largely inspired by James G. March’s article on ‘the technology of foolishness’. Ingmar Arbnor and Björn Bjerke’s book on management methods (2008) rang an anarchist bell by focusing on what they called the actor-perspective, an anarchist trait of seeing organizing as using language from sweet-talk to pure bullshit to obscure what is or ought really to be done. Organizing could be the problem; I observed how big corporations began to crackle as ‘pyramids’ were scrapped, and operations were outsourced on scattered markets. Business could successfully be carried out by small firms, in cooperatives, and in communes that now reemerged on the radars of politicians and economists after having been long overlooked by the

corporate conventionalism reigning in mainstream business schools. In my book *The moral philosophy of management* (1993), I revisit this flora of ideas for economic action where much is directly linked to anarchism. Anarchism has always focused on action, and business-and-work is an important economic category of 'direct action' for robbing back surplus value from big organizations and state monopolies. Anarchist Jerry Rubin's motto 'Do it' soon became the entrepreneurial slogan 'Just do it'. Armed with an anarchistic mindset, many 1968 student activists left politics to enter business.

Until the 1970s, anarchism was looked upon as providing youthful energizing revolutionary enthusiasm to social democracy. Then in the 1980s liberals launched a libertarian counterrevolution, and the political ambiguity of anarchism became obvious. Not only could the left flatter itself with having theoreticians, but a vast archive of anarchist essays on liberty and economy in tune with neo-liberal ideas also existed. Just as Marx stood on shoulders of Hegel, well-known political economists were indebted to less well-known anarchist philosophers. Behind Leon Walras and Charles Gide was Charles Fourier, for example; behind John Maynard Keynes stood Silvio Gesell. John Stuart Mill eloquently praised the activism of the French cooperative movement of self-management. No one with any knowledge of the Marx-Proudhon controversies can ignore the fact that economic action – doing business without the bosses – might be considered a 'direct action', an escape from the bottomless morass where bureaucratic middlemen constantly diffuse spontaneous 'revolts' by orchestrating 'revolutions' as everlasting power struggles. The controversy between Karl Marx and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon is central to the study of anarchism and its complex relationship with both liberals and Marxists.

Existence as art

The anarchist position of focusing on 'action' instead of 'decision' implies downplaying argumentation and rationalization in favor of 'spontaneity', where humans act out and realize their nature. Noam Chomsky's classic debate with Michel Foucault (see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=myy3vL-QKI4>) is worth watching again. This anarchist philosophy claims that human nature is ethically good, and our natural instinct for mutual aid and solidarity should not be distorted by moral or legal organization. Minimize rules, norms, and maxims, and let people self-manage their cooperation. Norm does not go hand in hand with action! This optimistic scientific-ethics was, according to classical nineteenth-century anarchism, provable through careful observation of good human nature. Historically I do not doubt that anarchistic courage played an

important role in making bold developments in social science and ethics possible.

But for today's critical management I see another philosophical facet of anarchism to be much more relevant, namely aesthetic anarchism. In the world of contemporary art we are able to see anarchist practices at work. Making art has become an unavoidable ideal type of direct action, and the art world provides a constantly growing multifaceted number of labs for experiments. Critical management is okay, but - to paraphrase Italian artist Michelangelo Pistoletto - critique is no longer enough. Art, free of the trappings of linguistic cliché and made real in venues, museums, biennales, and festivals is undoubtedly the most public manifestation of spontaneity today. At the same time, art is of course packaged by creative industries, and artists are constantly threatened to be reduced to a new creative class lumpen-proletariat. Art and artists must reinvent ways to avoid and also exploit the powers of both organizations and markets. In art worlds today we can discern concrete connections between anarchism and management. For example, at Art of Management conferences, such work has a forum. Philosophical reflections on art offer an articulate development of anarchism's having a clear bearing on management; that indeed is why aesthetics offers a fruitful gateway to critical management. Much better than dusty moralism or obsolete materialist scientism! It is through aesthetics that we might approach an anarchist critical management, and art is to my mind the only vaccine against obsolete ideologies that make management into schooling for party-cadres to the right or left. That is why management scholars hungry for freedom reflect on Marcel Duchamp or Ai Wei Wei, and that is why I see the anarchist business as an art firm (2004). It is no coincidence that the Spanish Civil War had its most sustainable impact on art and literature from Orwell to Bunuel. To those interested in anarchism - performances, happenings, and installations offer activist showcases for gaining conceptual insight by concrete direct action. While early anarchists were primitive terrorists, contemporary activists call on a sophisticated arsenal of art to impact society. Today writers such as Jacques Ranciere teach how art and aesthetics spontaneously spark off social energy not yet tamed, disciplined, coded, or regulated in received paradigms or set theories. Read Ranciere for yourself, and you will recognize an updated version of anarchism in his politics of aesthetics; you will experience a real anarchist in the role of his ignorant schoolmaster. So go ahead and just do it!

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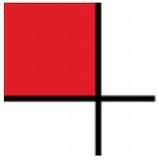
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'I'm as much an anarchist in theory as I am in practice': Fernando Pessoa's Anarchist banker in a management education context

Brigitte Biehl-Missal and Raymond Saner

Abstract

The performance of Fernando Pessoa's novel *The Anarchist Banker* serves as an example for critical management education and allows for further insights into how anarchist theories may be reflected upon and practiced in a business school context. We explore elements of an 'anarchist aesthetics' that are created through dramaturgy, narration, and collective production and reception. *The Anarchist Banker* fits well with arts-based education in business schools and efforts to learn lessons for leadership through the use of drama. The literary source encourages to rethink salient issues in today's global and finance-dominated capitalism and offers opportunities to search for alternative forms of organizing society and the economy by questioning charismatic leadership and managerial rhetoric in favor of collective reasoning. Elements of an anarchist aesthetic include the deconstruction of the hero and authoritarian discourse, dialogue and polyphony, collectivity and obstructionism that are at play artistically and socially, integrating anarchist theory and practice in content and form. The topic links to new forms of resistance, with critical artists opposing the business world and academics attempting to play out the 'banker' versus the 'anarchist'.

Introduction

'You mean to say, then, that you are an anarchist in exactly the same way as all those people in workers' organizations are anarchists? You mean that there's no difference between you and the men who throw bombs and form trade unions?'

'Of course there's a difference, of course there is, but it isn't the difference that you're imagining. Do you perhaps doubt that my social theories are different to theirs?'

‘Ah, now I see! In theory; you’re an anarchist, but in practice...’

‘I’m as much an anarchist in practice as I am in theory. Indeed, in practice, I’m much more of an anarchist than those other people you mention. My whole life proves it.’ (Pessoa, 1997 [1922]: 88)

The Anarchist Banker presents in its title both a mystery and a contradiction in terms, that resonate with the *ephemera* special issue on anarchism and management. Whether this provokes a bewildered reaction or a puzzled rejection of one term in relation to the other, Fernando Pessoa’s novel serves as a starting point to comment on how the study of management and the practice of management education can explore, integrate and negotiate an anarchist aesthetic and radical political thought in ways that differ from traditional business school approaches.

In this paper we discuss a theatrical staging of *The Anarchist Banker* by Fernando Pessoa (1997 [1922]), entitled *The Anarchist Banker for Four Actors*, at a gathering of artists, philosophers and management scholars in Zadar, Croatia in 2010, organized by The Université Nomade¹. The adapted play also can be enacted in business schools or as a stand-alone theatrical performance. Considered by Fernando Pessoa as a ‘conto de raciocínio’ (tale of reasoning), the text is abound with references to philosophy that are opposed, interwoven and negotiated in a way that is supported and enhanced by the aesthetic situation of the theatre performance. We argue that the performance serves as a compelling example for critical management education and allows for further insights into how anarchist theories may be reflected upon and practiced in a business school context. We also argue that such a theatrical performance constitutes a critical intervention that encourages people to rethink salient issues in today’s global and finance-dominated capitalism in the search for alternatives.

We link this potential to an ‘anarchist aesthetics’ in the sense of sensually perceptible forms of (‘cultural’) products and performances whose production process and content embodies and expresses libertarian principles. Loosely related to the quote in the title which refers to being an ‘anarchist in theory as

1 Adaptation written, directed and played by Raymond Saner together with three Croatian actors Jure Aras, Milan Miocic Stocic, and Miro Pucar. The Université Nomade came about through the co-operation of several individuals active in the European Cultural Parliament and organizations such as the Abo Akademi University in Finland and the Cittadellarte-Fundazione Pistoletto. http://www.nuope.eu/people_text.html.

At this point, it may be worth mentioning a coincidence that one of the reviewers has pointed out: Zadar, or Zara in the past, at one point in time was the place where Luca Pacioli taught; Pacioli is credited with inventing double-entry bookkeeping and thus laying the foundations for finance capitalism.

well as in practice', this means that the actual theatre performance with its form and content, including its production and staging or *mise-en-scène*, share some characteristics that resonate with anarchist theory and practice. This includes ideas of working towards fuller freedom and autonomy, an egalitarian community, and liberating practices that deconstruct authority and suppression and encourage collective, polyphone visions.

The interplay between art and anarchy has been discussed from different perspectives, including from a literature perspective (Jeppesen, 2011; Leighton, 2011; Rosa, 2012), focusing on artists' imaginative and creative capacities to transforming social realities (Amster, 1989; Antliff, 2011). In our discussion of the novel and the performance of *The Anarchist Banker*, we explore elements of an anarchist aesthetic that relate to the following elements: the deconstruction of the hero and authoritarian discourse, dialogue and polyphony, collectivity, and obstructionism. These elements seem particularly relevant in a context of mainstream and positivist management studies (Spicer et al., 2009), while other elements of an anarchist aesthetic, such as anarchic gambling and rejection of rules, have been discussed with reference to other economic situations and political epochs (Gourianova, 2011).

An understanding of anarchist aesthetics that includes a critical stance towards many sensually perceptible relations is deemed useful in the management area where control and power are exerted increasingly indirectly and via subtle aesthetic influence and manipulation (Warren and Rehn, 2006). An aesthetic, visual and emotional mode of communication has been found to be part of new forms of resistance towards the capitalist economy that are driven by critical artists, from theatre makers to painters, to social activists who use theatrical means for their social interventions (Biehl-Missal, 2012; 2013; Chong, 2013). This form of artistic resistance goes beyond extant critical discourse about organizations, because its form provides an aesthetic experience, and conveys both intellectual and embodied forms of knowing in fuller, richer and stimulating ways. Similar to critical artists who question the current business world, critical academics may want to use artistic methods to encourage reflection also.

The quest for an anarchist aesthetic in the sense of performative practice addresses questions such as whether anarchism can be found and used in business schools, in teaching, or in artistic student projects that work with *The Anarchist Banker*. A historical literary text such as Pessoa's deals with issues of leadership and the topic of how ideals have been taken over by managerialism, greed and selfishness. This complements today's reflection and practices echoed by the manifold protests around the globe such as the 'Occupy Wall Street'

movement, questioning corporate capitalism and searching for alternative forms of organizing society and the economy. The openness of the artistic realm and an anarchist aesthetic's interruption of the dominant image machinery (Jeppesen, 2011) allows many revolutionary dimensions of our existence to be addressed, reminding participants that they, too, are creators.

The paper is structured as follows. In the next section, we situate *The Anarchist Banker* as a literary source of high contemporary relevance in an arts-based education context in business schools. In order to sketch some elements of an anarchist aesthetic, in the following sections we address a range of issues. Starting from a subversive presentation of the protagonist and hero, with reference to the text of the novel and the staging of the performance, we elaborate on dialogue and polyphony made possible through dramaturgical choices. We discuss the role of collectivity in the process and the attitude of obstructionism as another general aesthetic principle. Finally we consider even more unstructured, postdramatic, theatre forms and their potential in an anarchist endeavor. In the conclusion, we reflect on our case and future business school projects and implications.

Arts-based education and Pessoa's novel

We witness an increase in creative methods and use of the arts for management education in business schools. This trend can be seen as an answer to calls for new social, creative and communication skills following increasing social inequalities (Saner, 2010), scandals in banking, the media and the public sector, which have exposed limitations of current management practice and education (Adler, 2006). Some business schools include theatre performances, reading of literature and other practical projects to account for human dialogue and sustainable perspectives in management. For example, though in a more positivist way, Badaracco (2006) aims to 'illuminate the heart of leadership through literature'. It is commonly suggested that artistic contemplation and agency can increase personal reflection as an inspiration for new approaches to the business world (Adler, 2010). This complements a growing number of courses on ethics and sustainability, with management scholars pleading for more equitable growth and more sustained development that include triple bottom lines of social, ecological and economic development.

The Anarchist Banker situates itself very well in this context, showing obvious relevance for management education today. The financial crisis of 2008 and the consequent Occupy Wall Street movement in many parts of the world centered around issues such as perceived greed, unjustified bonus systems of major

corporations and unequal distribution of wealth in industrial and developing countries. *The Anarchist Banker* was written in a time of economic, financial and political upheavals where logic, stability, trust and principled rule based economic activity drifted into opportunistic, manipulative and high rent seeking behavior. The character of the banker thus can be perceived as an appropriate object of study.

We suggest that there is a need to go beyond moralizing and debates about ethical principles of good management behavior and to get closer to the rationalizing and self-justification of managers engaging in excessive profit maximization. Little is known about how a manager engaging in greedy behavior thinks, feels, and interacts with others. Mainstream management literature leaves little space to feeling and failure (Mangham, 2001) which, in their sensual and aesthetic, non-rational nature, may be played out perfectly in the space of theatre. Pessoa's play provides an excellent opportunity to make an experimental in-depth visit into the psychological realm of a senior manager.

From a management studies perspective, the character of the 'anarchist' banker is worth analyzing and performing in a theatre production, also with students. Such an endeavor would situate itself in a stream of theoretical and practical interest in heroes in the drama. *The Anarchist Banker* can be seen as a source for lessons for management studies. Drama as an acknowledged source of learning in a management context can provide critical and inconvenient lessons about social and economic interaction (Biehl-Missal, 2010: 289). Leaders are the archetype of drama and for thousands of years stages have made clowns of kings, capitalists and communists rather than praising them. Theatre has been used as an inspiration in management education for a long time. A premise for this approach is the nature of much management literature that presents frameworks and models but falls short of many increasingly-relevant issues in business revolving around human interaction, responsibility and ethics. Critical issues brought to the foreground by a theatrical performance can draw an audience's attention directly to crucial issues such as manipulation of followers, the abuse of power, the dark side of leadership and personal guilt, tormented feelings and other topics that do not feature prominently in biographies of successful leaders of today. We argue that the aesthetic form of a play's content as well as of the performance itself opens up an even stronger potential, also by embodying some anarchist principles.

Performing *The Anarchist Banker*

Plot of the novel

Fernando Pessoa, aka Fernando António Nogueira (1888–1935), was a Portuguese poet, writer, literary critic, translator, publisher and philosopher, one of the most significant literary figures of the 20th century and one of the greatest poets in the Portuguese language. *The Anarchist Banker* is one of the few short stories published before Pessoa died. It appeared in 1922 during a period of great instability in Portugal with growing fiscal deficits, hyper-inflation and forty-five changes of government between 1910 and 1926. Following the exile of King Manuel II of Portugal in 1910, reactionary monarchist powers, republican and anarcho-syndicalist groups clashed violently (Wheeler, 1978: 3). In 1921, another radical revolt in Lisbon ended up in the ‘Bloody Night’, where some of the most influential figures of the Republic were murdered. Further armed clashes between republican, clerical-conservative and monarchist parties lead to a military coup d’état in 1926 starting a long period of fascist-authoritarian regimes which only ended with the carnation revolution of 1974 that brought about democracy and the end of colonialism. Portugal’s First Republic (1910–26) became, in the words of historian Douglas L. Wheeler (1978), ‘midwife to Europe’s longest surviving authoritarian system’.

Pessoa rejected these ideological acts of violence and the ‘spiritual corruption’(Wheeler, 1978: 4) of the nation. Emphasizing individual freedom that does not subject itself to any person or ideology, Pessoa opposed self-righteousness of majorities that do not value differences but violate individuals’ positions and rights (Werner, 1992).

The Anarchist Banker situates itself in this historical and personal context. Pessoa’s short story features two characters, a senior and wealthy banker, a cigar smoking monopolist, and a junior banker in the early stages of his career. Following a dinner in the home of the banker, the guest inquires: ‘I know what I’ve been meaning to ask you. Someone told me a few days ago that you used to be an anarchist’ (Pessoa, 1997 [1922]: 88). The senior banker replies that he still is: ‘There’s no “used to” about it, I was and I am. I haven’t changed in that respect, I still am an anarchist’ (*ibid.*: 88), engaging in a long monologue that lines up different arguments, which however only on the surface portray capitalism as the logical development to a free society (Werner, 1992). Pessoa lets the senior banker present himself to the admiring yet unperceptive junior banker as someone who in his youth tried different radical social movements. He presents his life as a process of moving from being an enthusiastic but simplistic follower of social movements, developing step-by-step from a young revolutionary anarchist to being the only true and consistent anarchist: a self-centered and self-justified wealthy banker whose only motive is to stay rich and be independent of needs and social constraints. The junior banker tries to question the senior banker but is not able to catch up with his shrewd sophistry

and at the end lets the senior banker conclude on a triumphant note of self-congratulation. The story is an exercise in sophisticated sophistry twisting facts around glib arguments similar to what we would call today a spin-doctor. The story unfolds in the form of a Socratic pseudo-dialogue and, in Pessoa's 'diabolical capacity for reasoning', exposes the reader 'to an astonishing and versatile exposition of logic. Sophism, subversion, and subterfuge are called to the service of truth, which is but another player in the malleable rhetoric of life' (Jackson, 2010: 108). This story ranks thought higher than action and finds irrationality in logic, challenging the reader to discover flaws in the shocking twist of the wealthy banker's reasoning, by playing out what we consider in the following sections to be an anarchist aesthetic.

The deconstruction of the hero and of authoritarian discourse

With regard to aesthetic principles, we start our discussion with the protagonist and his subsequent deconstruction. As he puffs his cigar, the wealthy banker explains to his naïve after-dinner companion the argument that he is, in fact, the only real anarchist. He shows himself as a coherent character: 'What I mean is that between my theories and how I lead my life there is no divergence at all, but absolute conformity' (Pessoa, 1997 [1922]: 89). In a lengthy process, he transforms himself from an obvious *contradictio in adiecto* (the 'anarchist banker') into a heteronym that embodies many contradictions of Western culture. First of all, the character of *The Anarchist Banker* is different from typical figures in anarchist literature that often embody resilient counter-cultural roles of the nomad, tramp, vagabond or hobo, being constantly on the road to live the anarchist challenge to borders and other forms of oppression (Jeppesen, 2011: 200). The motif of a journey is prevalent in a more utopian way in anarchist literature, so that a typical character 'both reflects and produces a model for the project of becoming an anarchist, a literary expression of the always-incomplete permanent anarchist revolution' (*ibid.*: 189). The anarchist banker, who remains nameless, is the absence of all this, operating from an adverse yet still aesthetically-powerful position of stagnancy and standstill, assessing and evaluating the intellectual twists and turns that accompanied his decisions in life.

Protagonists in drama have been used for some time now to learn lessons for management. For example, the famous plays of Shakespeare offered a range of ideas for scholars and popular management writers of how to improve leadership (Mockler, 2002; Stevenson, 1996). Yet still, some of these analyses are criticized as being positivist and instrumental (Mangham, 2001; Biehl-Missal, 2010). Whitney, Packer and Noble (2000) for example learn from *Macbeth* that one of the worst leadership strategies is to strive for power simply for the purpose of winning more power. This insight does not question much of the system in

which today's managers operate and thus constitutes a superficial critique, instrumentalizing much of the political impact a play can convey. At least it would be hard for positivist management literature to ignore the subversive nature of *The Anarchist Banker*, which lends itself to a critical approach. With regard to *Henry V*, management scholars (Burnham et al., 1999) develop implications about how to excel as a leader, using symbols and stories to persuade people. Mangham (2001: 301) has criticized such approaches for lacking depth of interpretation, finding that the drama's character lacks morality and integrity, being a master dissembler able to play many roles, and thus questions entire systems of hierarchy, rule and suppressive order.

This applies to Pessoa's anarchist banker who does not present an ideal of career success but exposes us to an anti-hero, to a character who acts suavely and self-assuredly yet covers up contradictions and a problematic personality. Pretending that he is an 'anarchist in theory as well as in practice', the senior banker displays an errant character and provides for the play many heroic calls for freedom from injustice, which are, however, superficial and full of twisted logic, half-truths and straightforward lies, thus creating a subversive impact.

It has been discussed that theatre in general does not provide us with examples of ideal or charismatic leaders but, quite the opposite, teaches us about contentious and problematic heroes (Mangham, 2001): by exposing heroes' weaknesses, the constraints of role-playing and the fact that appearances are deceiving, theatre can encourage audiences to question and possibly reject powerful men and the social, organizational or legal systems that surround them (Biehl-Missal, 2010). This element also works towards an 'anarchist aesthetic'.

At this point, it is worth mentioning that Pessoa is a pen name of the author Noguera, who invented a total of 81 different heteronyms which appeared in most of his novels creating a web of multiple interactions between his different personas. The choice of 'Pessoa' which means 'person' may be seen as an expression of his personal life-long reflection of the complexity of human consciousness and elusiveness of identity.

The anarchist banker can be seen as an example of interrupted social identity formation involving issues of self-betrayal and the subsequent moral impasse. From a literature studies perspective, it has been analyzed how Pessoa's novel revisits major treatises on European economic, moral, and political philosophy to eventually unmask the illogic of the philosophical foundations of our political systems (Jackson, 2010). In the philosophical density of his rhetoric, Pessoa's character reviews and distorts major works in the European tradition by deconstructing many of the essential logical processes that originate in antique

philosophy. Pessoa playfully undermines many of the founding texts of political Enlightenment (Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Malthus, Rousseau, Smith, and Spinoza), as well as making a devastating critique of revolutionary psychology and of 1917 Bolshevism. For example, the banker's triumphant conclusion that he has freed himself, starts from a distortion of anarchist theory:

What does the anarchist want? Freedom – freedom for himself and for others, for humanity as a whole. He wants to be free from the influence and pressure of social fictions; he wants to be as free as he was when he was born, which is how it should be; and he wants that freedom for himself and for everyone. (Pessoa, 1997 [1922]: 96)

At a later stage, this recurring argument is countered by one of the few objections of the junior banker:

The conditions of your course of action were, as you yourself proved, not only to create freedom but also not to create tyranny. You did create tyranny. As a sequestrator, as a banker, as an unscrupulous financier – forgive me, but you yourself used such terms – you created tyranny. You've created as much of a tyranny as any other representative of the social fictions which you claim to fight. (*ibid.*: 112)

In his reply, the senior banker emphasized that he 'did not create any tyranny' and did 'not add to it', but has followed the only possible anarchist option, which is: 'I freed myself' (*ibid.*: 113). While Jean-Jacques Rousseau presumes that men is naturally good, and John Locke has suggested the image of mind that comes into being as a blank slate, Pessoa's character, more in accordance with Thomas Hobbes' Leviathanian concept of man as the selfish animal, argues in favor of inequalities, rejecting the idea of a transcendental or universal mankind (Jackson, 2010: 110). The banker attacks Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* which suggests that self-interest leads to public good, provided that markets function undisturbed, by emphasizing a remaining egoistic drive (Jackson, 2010: 111). This is linked to the senior banker's later statement that the 'best way to gain freedom for the whole of humanity (is by) destroying all social fictions'. In this attempt, other philosophical ideas are refuted, for example Marxist views and the failure of revolutions that are interpreted as the final failure of political utopias:

So what emerges from a revolutionary dictatorship – and will emerge more fully the longer that dictatorship lasts – is a dictatorial warrior society, that is, military despotism. It couldn't be anything else. (Pessoa, 1997 [1922]: 94)

Revolutionary systems for the senior banker simply are dictatorships, an idea that resonates Pessoa's rejection of consensus that is forced upon other individuals (Werner, 1992). These rhetorical pirouettes and philosophical trips however lead to the assessment of interchangeability of political ends, where utopias do not

have a place and history is failure. This argument brings the banker to abandon organized anarchist structures in favor of individualistic actions: 'We should all work for the same end, but separately' (Pessoa, 1997 [1922]: 105). However, as theorists on anarchism have pointed out, while the blunt rejection of any organization may well be a form of individualistic anarchism, many others have formed effective groups and federations that are non-hierarchical, non-bureaucratic and decentralist and work towards the shared goal (Stowasser, 2006: 135). The protagonist however connects to a line of thinking that is also related to Spinoza's treatise on the superiority of the super individual (Jackson, 2010: 111). The image of the ideal hero is perpetuated by the senior banker who, at several instances, refers to 'the logic of a clear-thinking man (that) has to examine all possible', carrying 'the idea of justice (...) here inside' himself:

As I was saying, I was, by nature, clear thinking and I became an anarchist. Now what is an anarchist? He is a person in revolt against the injustice of people being born socially unequal – that's basically what it is. From that springs his rebellion against the social conventions that make that inequality possible. (Pessoa, [1922]1997: 91)

In full faith of his 'clear' intellect, the banker does not question his judgment and rarely reveals humble moments towards social movements and utopias. Jackson's (2010: 114) analysis ends in the assertion that 'the short story, then, presents the case of the authoritarian, individualistic, rationalizing tendencies of logic, thereby constituting a parody of deductive logic of socio-political concepts summarized and satirized in the banker's maximum conclusion "I freed one man"'.

With regard to a critique of heroism and leadership, as in many other dramas, the character of the anarchist banker provides a view into the dark side of human thinking and existence, which makes him an object of interest in a management context. A dark side is not present in the world of management where managers in their speeches for example typically use rhetorical devices to create a controlled, reassuring and 'balanced' impression (Biehl-Missal, 2011a: 639). On a broader level, management textbooks and popular entrepreneur biographies promote an idea of leadership as rational and self-confident and this discourse colonizes our everyday life, forcing us to re-enact an unemotional ideology of efficiency (Hancock and Tyler, 2004). All this is driven ad absurdum in this anarchist banker's speech.

Similar to many classical dramas, the novel questions systems, structures and social power by encouraging the audience's reflective interpretation through satiric and distorted logic in the protagonist's rhetoric. There are abundant examples of paradoxes in the banker's rhetorical and socio-political exposition.

For example he consents to the existing bourgeois system, which he as a believer in natural society should reject like other social fictions. He reasons about the way to overcome another 'social fiction':

The most important, at least in our day and age, is money. How could I subjugate myself to money, or to be more precise, to the power and tyranny of money? (Pessoa, 1997 [1922]: 109)

The answer is to acquire it in such quantity that he is beyond its influence. In the end this inversion of meaning leads to the very existence of someone considering himself to be an 'anarchist banker'. Immersing into capitalist accumulation, an anathema to an anarchist, the banker has separated his acts from his morals. This eventually replaced his ideals by a coherent capitalist ideology which then became identity. With the banker hiding behind logical argument and self-deception, Pessoa questions the façade of logic and related strings of arguments that may cover many other social and political relations. The anarchist banker's mode of reasoning encourages audiences to think on their own, abstractly and almost artistically, to create their own view on the topic, and potentially their own vision of something else.

With regard to anarchist literature, Jeppesen (2011: 201) argues that it has as its task a 'radical break with conventional perceptions, revealing their constructedness and simultaneously experimenting with form and content with the goal of creating something new, extending the limits of the possible'. *The Anarchist Banker* indeed goes some way to deconstruct, obstruct and recombine philosophical thought. The performance can deconstruct a discourse of persuasive creation of meaning by showing that an authoritarian discourse, here driven by the 'anarchist' banker, imposes answers and thereby constructs opinion and order in ruthless and shrewd ways. This is another aesthetic principle that we see as part of an 'anarchist aesthetic'.

The anarchist banker, with his theatrical self-confidence and the exercise of effective rhetorical control in the conversation, presents an image of himself that is quite revealing and, in its exaggerated nature, may affect *our perception* of many bankers and business leaders that we encounter today among the leaders of the global economy. Many of the theatrical techniques of leaders in particular have been reflected in detail in studies of impression management to explain how they exert power and hierarchy, increasing subordinate compliance and faith in them, building follower belief and commitment in pursuit of a vision (Leary and Kowalski, 1986). Less prominent though are studies that emphasize not only their manipulative potential but opportunities for negotiation and change in a co-created encounter with the audience (Biehl-Missal, 2011), or draw on theories of acting to provide explanations for how people behave in organizations, also

outlining the pressure to perform roles at high emotional and psychological cost (Höpfl, 2002). With regard to Pessoa's *The Anarchist Banker* this is driven ad absurdum, because he obstinately adheres to his point of view and consistently follows this paradoxical vision in a crescendo leading to a point where the entire endeavor appears in its dark and tormented form, revealing the logical disorientation in thinking. This leaves spectators to draw their own, unpleasant and potentially anarchist conclusions about how personalities, for example in the finance industry, are able to hide behind a sleek façade of impression management and rhetorical argument.

Dialogue and polyphony

The elements of anarchist aesthetics mentioned so far (the deconstruction of a seemingly logical but in reality authoritarian order, and a hero exposed in his ideological contradictions) are played out in the situation of a theatrical performance, which adds more elements of anarchist aesthetics in form and content.

For the purposes of the performance, the short story *The Anarchist Banker* was amended in Zadar by Raymond Saner by adding two more roles to the original dialogical pair of senior and junior banker, calling the adapted version *The Anarchist Banker for Four Actors*. These two additional characters function as alter egos in the script which provide more space for the audience to deepen their understanding of the senior banker's sophisticated arguments and self-serving re-interpretation of history.

As a dramaturgical choice the polyphony aims to emphasize the distorted nature of the argument. Several key statements spoken by the senior banker are used in the performance. These statements represent central *Versatzstücke* (originally: 'movable pieces of scenery' in theatre practice. The notion often is transferred to describe central 'concepts-beliefs' and motifs that originate from the text and that can be used in different instances and in other contexts as well). During the Zadar performance, the movable pieces of text were written on flip chart paper, then hung up on a grid symbolizing the looseness and instrumental use in the logic of the senior banker's narrative. Examples are:

I'm as much an anarchist in practice as I am in theory.

There is no divergence between how I live my life and my theories.

An anarchist is a person in revolt against injustice of people born socially unequal.

True evil are social conventions and fictions super imposed on natural realities.

Any system based on desire to abolish a fiction is also a fiction.

The more money I acquire, the more I'm free of its influence.

Social fictions are not people that one can shoot.

The objective is to bring to the actual scenic and narrative foreground the statements of the senior banker to help the audience see and hear the core of his circular arguments. The two alter egos can step down from their high chairs onstage, go over to the flip charts, point at any of the key statements with a pointer or stick and interject a short lecturette about the statement, providing arguments to either support or reject the statement in some kind of impromptu lecture. During such interventions of the alter egos, the senior-junior actors remain in a freeze and let the two alter egos debate the senior bankers' statements. Once an alter ego stops the reflection and sits back on the high chair, the senior and junior banker come out of their freeze and continue their dialogue within the script.

Polyphony emphasizes that the characters and their situation are complex and ethically sophisticated, which is undoubtedly the case in *The Anarchist Banker for Four Actors*, to allow for a range of choices and alternatives that require profound ethical assessments. In an analysis of anarchist aesthetics in literature, Jeppesen (2011: 203) argues that 'polyphony emphasizes what is an important value to anarchists – free will – and thereby demonstrates the heightened potential of every decision we make to influence the direction of the future world'. In the situation of the performance actors can actually embody this anarchist principle.

An alternative option is for the pair of senior and junior bankers to replay the previous few statements to get back to the text and allow the audience to focus again on the textual foreground. Actors can use the printed script and read or improvise from script or memorize text. Both options are viable. Reading from the script could give more perception of depth, that is, give the audience space to see the play as a form of *mise-en-scène* of a written text which sometimes helps the audience to keep intellectual distance rather than be drawn into the acting dynamics and personalities played up by the actors. This technique of alienation and distance has some history in socialist theatre practice and is known as the Brecht's (1970) *Verfremdungseffekt* (alienation effect). It is used to show not individual but some overarching collective view of social relationships and to prevent identification, allowing actors to step out of their role so as to encourage spectators to reflect and to practice self-reflection. Walter Benjamin (1977) put this in relation to a specific kind of heroes, so-called 'untragic' heroes, who are full of personal incoherencies and contradictions in character, as is the self-

deluding senior banker. This dramaturgical choice further works towards an anarchist aesthetic.

Theatre impacts spectators not only on the intellectual level but also strongly influences their perception on the aesthetic, the sensually-perceptible dimension. A theatre performance unfolds its impact not only intellectually via spectator reception of the underlying dramatic text, but in the actual aesthetic situation of the performance, which is co-created by the audience through co-presence in the materiality, light, sound and atmosphere of theatrical space (Lehmann, 2006; Biehl-Missal, 2011). The performance in a subtle fashion can touch and irritate audiences when it conveys self-doubt and insecurity via fragile voices, trembling hands and unsteady gaze. It has been suggested that it is 'precisely the reality of theatre, playing with meanings, aesthetic experiences and emotional states, which predestines it for aesthetic training – preferably via non-instrumental appreciation, visiting or participating in performances in the context of theatre-based training, or extensive readings of plays' (Biehl-Missal, 2010: 289). This is another reason why a staging of Pessoa's text seems a more holistic and critical approach to management education which remains largely positivist and mainstream rather than polyphone, for example as an actually experienced and embodied exercise in free will.

Collectivity

Developing this idea of the actual embodiment of thought leads us to another element that is commonly referred to as characteristic for an anarchist aesthetic: collectivity. Collectivity is emphasized in anarchist literature with a collective or an affinity group being an important space for the production and distribution of anarchist literature, including practices such the rotation of tasks, consensus decision-making, resource-sharing and skill-sharing (Jeppesen, 2011: 192). This process of organizing creative work recreates anarchist horizontal grass-roots practices that stand for the essential political aspiration to create the world we want to live in. The production of theatre (the planning process of the *mise-en-scène* and the actual performance) in particular lends itself to this approach, with uncountable enthusiastic (e.g. Pollesch, *KulturanthropologInnen*, Kanak, *TFM-StudentInnen*, 2001) and persistent practices and by now many failed attempts to organize theatre collectively, for example the 1970s *Schaubühne* in West Berlin (Iden, 1979). Efforts to bring about anarchic social organization were also strong in American event-based art practices of the 1960s that created temporary non-hierarchical collectivities (Shea, 2011).

These collective and anarchist approaches challenge the common celebration of the individual virtuoso artist that is reproduced in the widespread practice of

hierarchical modes of production with one dominant director in the theatre. We find these practices in contemporary forms of artistic resistance in diverse Occupy movements and in other theatrical groups of resistance (such as The Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army) that do not have a leader but have shared forms of organization. We encounter similar notions of 'shared leadership' in contemporary management practice (Pearce and Conger, 2003), which however aim to source knowledge trans-individually to increase corporate efficiency. Resistant theatrical collective processes reject the principle of economic performativity, and instead work towards cultural efficacy that may challenge and change cultural norms in ways that are not foreseen. This fits with the guiding principle of anti-performativity in critical management studies (Spicer, Alvesson and Karreman, 2009). Also in this sense, the use of arts-based methods in a business school may constitute a subversive approach.

The staged production of *The Anarchist Banker* had one director but made collective dramaturgical decisions during the process involving all four participants. There are however more opportunities of an anarchist aesthetic and collectivity in the course of the performance.

In a tradition of socialist and critical theatre, collective creation has been heralded as a means of empowerment and political action in real life. For example, the forum theatre (Boal, 1979) actively encouraged participants to freeze the action in a staging that typically dealt with daily practices of suppression, to jump in and improvise a performance that then could be recreated as an emancipated action in real-life. Emphasizing the embodied nature of agency and decision making, theatre pedagogics and political theatre, including Bertolt Brecht's (1970) *Lehrstücke* or learning plays, use playful situations to practice, amend and change text spoken in social encounters, and to train the necessary emotional and aesthetic strength within actors. Other approaches such as Erwin Piscator's (1986) *Agitprop Theatre* in the 1920s also relied on the aesthetic impact of a situation that made rational arguments but used emotional components as well to better reach spectators. This idea is mirrored in contemporary approaches to arts in management education that emphasize that impact resides in the aesthetic experience of the situation, for example in the embodied experience of drawing and reflection, performing and sensing, singing and feeling (Barry & Meisiek, 2010). In this sense, *The Anarchist Banker* could be staged as a forum theatre with students, as a participatory event that reconnects embodied experience to social experience (Shea, 2011) and simultaneously exposes the authoritarian structure that dominates our society.

The dramaturgical choices in *The Anarchist Banker for Four Actors* offer much opportunity to involve the audience, for example as understudies that substitute

the alter egos, or as interjections commenting on the movable pieces of text. The performance itself emphasizes improvisation and offers opportunities for a collective narrative situation that is generated by the contribution of different voices, articulating a multiplicity of minds and ideas that is accessible and undetermined. This aesthetic form performs and reinvokes anarchist ideas of collective generation and utopian openness. Thereby it challenges the position of a singular spiritus rector of ideas, as denoted by the phrase the 'death of the author' by Roland Barthes (2001 [1968]). Barthes argued against the limited approach of drawing on individual information such as biography and views of the author to understand the meaning of a text, rather assigning intertextual authority to all recipients opening up its multiple layers and meanings. While the historical context of its creation adds to the potential of *The Anarchist Banker for Four Actors* in contemporary management education, on an in-built dimension, the narration itself expresses this anti-author(itarian) principle as ideas of philosophers are drawn on, combined, and, in an almost postmodern sense, combined anew.

This postmodern recombination by the senior banker exposes his distorted logic that heavily argues against collective work processes that the banker had experienced in his earlier anarchist days:

We would all work towards the great social revolution, we would work for a free society (...) we worked together for the anarchist ideal. (Then) I discovered something else. Something happened within the group (...): a tyranny was created. (...) Some gave orders to others and made the latter do whatever they wanted them to do; some imposed themselves on others and obliged them to be whatever they wanted them to be; some used cunning tricks and devices to lead others into areas into which they did not want to be led. (Pessoa, 1997 [1922]: 100)

This leads the senior banker to conclude: 'Working separately, we cannot create a new tyranny because no one has influence on anyone else'.

The aesthetics of this narrative structure hence also expresses the moral of the story. The on-going singular person's dominating monologue, only timidly interrupted by the junior banker, eventually leads to the philosophical breakdown showing the result of a missing collective reflection. 'If only he had not worked through this thoughts completely separately!', a spectator might exclaim.

More than a novel, the whole situation of a theatrical performance has the power to expose, via its aesthetic atmosphere, the true nature of what he is saying. The mere presentation of the authoritarian, unobstructed flow of philosophical destruction that dominates the stage, all the time, governs the sound, and taints the atmosphere. This addresses another preeminent aspect of collectivity that consists in the shared aesthetic situation, namely the performance, which is co-

created by spectators and audience members and is reciprocal through some sort of aesthetic feedback loop (Biehl-Missal, 2011: 622). The dramaturgical choice of collective polyphony supports this experience in order to actively obstruct and oppose the individual's errant performance. This may suggest 'enacting' a more utopian, collective interpretation and writing of philosophical history and future.

Obstructionism

The Anarchist Banker for Four Actors, via its authoritarian narrative atmosphere and the dramaturgical choices that emphasize discourse and challenge, touches upon another principle of anarchist aesthetics that is referred to as 'confrontational politics' (Jeppsen, 2011: 202): a confrontational politics is almost inevitable in anarchist creative ventures, as they attempt to become 'direct action interventionist representations that interrupt flows not just of capitalism and governmentality, but also of sexism, racism and heterosexism – the normative images and textual representations of our time'. This idea of 'antiauthoritarian insubordination' as a function of anarchist aesthetics has been found in studies of literature (Cohn, 2007) and is actively enacted in approaches to forum theatre and in all kinds of theatrical activism and contemporary artistic resistance (Biehl-Missal, 2013).

As we discussed earlier with regard to the protagonist in the theatre, dramaturgy often reveals the preposterousness of heroes and their world. The text of the novel deconstructs the senior banker's self-deluding and self-aggrandizing attempt to cover up his blatant greed and misanthropic philosophy of life. For example, by constructing the 'civilized' versus the 'uncivilized' and the 'strong' versus the 'weak':

How could I make myself superior to money? The simplest way was to remove myself from its sphere of influence, that is, from civilisation; to go into the country and live off roots and drink spring water; to walk around naked and live as the animals live. But this, apart from the obvious difficulties involved, would not be combating a social fiction; it would not be combating anything, it would be running away. It's true that anyone who avoids joining in a fight also avoids being defeated by it. Morally, though, he is defeated, precisely because he did not fight. There had to be another way, a way that would involve fighting not fleeing. How could I subjugate money by fighting it? How could I shrug off its influence and tyranny over me without avoiding contact with it? There was only one way forward, I would have to acquire money. (Pessoa, 1997 [1922]: 110)

The character of the anarchist banker is dramaturgically and performatively obstructed, not for sarcastic reasons but to open up opportunities to imagine how the world could be, particularly with regard to today's figures of bankers, the financial crises and the elites' socially and economically harmful behavior that excludes the remaining 99 percent of the population. While only a small portion

of these 99 percent actively opposes wealth, the dream of financial success is strong for many, who, again may find that they share some of the features mirrored in the hero's text and his posterousness.

Discussion

Taking into account elements of anarchist aesthetics such as character deconstruction, dialogue, polyphony, collectivity and obstructionism in co-present performance brings to mind even more experientially radical forms of theatre such as so-called 'postdramatic theatre'. This is a form of theatre that goes beyond the classical drama. It emphasizes the overall experience constituted by the interplay of sound, voices, silence, movement and the materiality of performers, rather than (like in classical drama) by the representation of linear, dramatic plots (Lehmann, 2006). Dominant principles of postdramatic theatre are the fragmentation of narration, the deconstruction of authorship, the non-hierarchical, chaotic, yet congruent situations that have the potential of stimulating utopian envisioning. This aesthetics reflects poststructuralist approaches to anarchy and power (Antliff, 2007) and many other contemporary anarchist processes of production that do without copyright and clear structures in the media and social life with nonlinear circulation and a rearrangement of ideas, collectivity and polyphony.

In management studies these ideas are reflected as a model for contemporary organizations (Boje, 1995). In this vein, postdramatic theatre has also been used as an inspiration for management and innovative forms of consulting, as its fragmented form encourages a shift away from linear problem-solving to empowering people to deal with never-ending complexity (Saner, 1999; 2000). Developing this suggestion of aesthetic awareness and creative agency, it since has been argued that a postdramatic form of artistic intervention is, in the present era of organizational aestheticization, particularly suitable for unfolding a critical and transformational potential (Biehl-Missal, 2012). This may be achieved by not exposing organizational issues onstage via the use of a dramatic, linear format. Rather than presenting answers and solutions and the view of a single author, which can be seen as an affirmation and imposition of ideas, postdramatic aesthetics can perform the anti-order, the exception, and thereby open up divergent perspectives. This would resonate with Amster's (1989) view on a contemporary anarchist aesthetics that argues for the abandonment of the textual space and for more realist approaches that may enact revolution beyond the textual space.

In a way, some of the aesthetic principles may be achieved by staging *The Anarchist Banker for Four Actors*, because many of its elements are explicitly obstructivist, polyphone and collective. Its narrative approach still seems useful because there is a need to go beyond moralizing and debate about ethical principles of good management behavior and to obstruct ubiquitous narratives of rationalizing and self-justification by managers who engage in excessive profit maximization. As many forms of socialist theatre that aimed at social impact (Piscator, 1986) relied heavily on narration, the production and deconstruction of narratives remains necessary for a critical management studies discourse that also involves students.

Quite how this message may reach the world of finance is a moot point. The impact of theatre may include change on the individual and group level that is brought about by dramatic re-enactment of emancipatory ideas and their performance in everyday-life (e.g. Brecht, 1970; Boal, 1979). Arts-based, theatrical forms in an organization may also have an impact on the group level through uncontrollable narratives and polyphony and divergent interpretations by participants (Barry and Meisiek, 2010). Artistic critique may also affect society indirectly, as we have seen throughout history. *The Anarchist Banker for Four Actors* has not been tested with multiple audiences and it remains to be seen what feedback emerges when it is staged with different participants, for example students from different levels and maybe also executives, for example in the context of arts-based management development.

Conclusion

Faithful to the preceding motto of being 'as much an anarchist in theory as in practice' we have argued that a theatrical re-enactment of Pessoa's novel can generate important insights into philosophical thought as well as practical implications for everyday agency. We have discussed how Pessoa's historical novel touches on issues that are very much relevant for leadership in today's global economy. The play situates itself in an extant stream of research that is concerned with learning lessons from drama and literary heroes, and with active creative agency. The elements of anarchist aesthetics such as deconstruction of the hero, dialogue and polyphony, collectivity, and obstructionism come to the fore in the performance of the text and through dramaturgical choices. These elements are also relevant for earlier stages of the production process in terms of shared work and collective discussion. Future management students engaged in such a project may benefit from enacting collective processes that differ from those in conventional management textbooks (which emphasize leadership directed towards maximizing organizational efficiency) and instead learn to

appreciate shared leadership oriented towards cultural efficacy. The process that we have described asks for dialogue and collective mindfulness, for debate and understanding, in a playful form that is characterized by, to use Kant's philosophic words, purpose without purpose. In other forms of anarchist aesthetics, forms of play such card playing and gambling, are advocated in place of labor, since they are neither a duty nor an obligation, but an ultimate and ephemeral fulfilment without 'special purpose' (Gourianova, 2011: 77).

We thus suggest that a performance based on Pessoa's novel *The Anarchist Banker* not only generates reflection on leadership, success and the capitalist system but also enhances the aesthetic awareness of issues such as self-presentation strategies, impression management and leadership that is created interpersonally. In the end, the impact and effectiveness of hierarchical leadership in organizations depends on the followers and on their willingness to give credit and follow, or perhaps, with a bow to the anarchist endeavor, not to do so.

Policymakers and business leaders of many countries are calling for more investment in the creative industries so as to face better the challenges of continuous technological change and globalization. Creativity is indeed crucial for the future of countries and enterprises. However, the best and surest road to creativity is cultural expression and the application of aesthetics to industry, management and society. This understanding can help to legitimize the use of arts and anarchist aesthetics in a business school, though it is exposed to the danger of further instrumentalization of the case that has been described as a negotiation of anarchist aesthetics. We are confident that the challenging nature of the aesthetic form makes it hard to misinterpret texts such as *The Anarchist Banker* without making a fool of oneself.

As a possible exercise in a business school, this extends beyond standard classroom learning by connecting with practices of artistic resistance and anarchist aesthetics that are seen as 'illegalities': This may involve some alternative or independent press production and reclaiming spaces with community art and creative redecoration, with imagery and culture jamming of billboards or guerrilla poetry (Jeppesen, 2011: 197). Combining artistic expression with direct action, these protests are directly democratic, interventionist and participatory rather than the mainstream or repenting attitudes and approaches used in universities in the 1960s and by the recent protest movements. Instead, we suggest that, in hierarchical and efficiency-driven business schools, there should be implemented some exercises in philosophical thinking so as to discuss with students (fee-paying or otherwise) the qualities of freedom, liberated will, play versus labor, unpredictability versus determinism, purposeless fulfilment

versus efficiency, the 'actor' versus the 'accountant' and the anarchist versus the banker, in theory as well as in practice.

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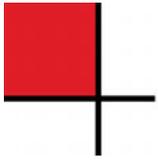
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Improvisation as anarchist organization

David M. Bell

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to consider the practice of collective musical improvisation as a form of anarchist organization, exemplifying both its possibilities and its dangers. As such, I argue that it has significant pedagogical value for anarchists. I will also consider how capital has attempted to utilize improvisation, a phenomenon that highlights the fallacy of approaching anarchism simply as a theory of organization. In making these arguments, a number of areas of issues of importance for the intersection of anarchism and critical management studies (CMS) will be highlighted. The practice of 'musicking' will be raised as a hitherto underdeveloped area of significance for both areas; the relationship between critical management studies and anarchist thought will be explored through a grounding in practice; and the vital importance of thinking through the relationship of anarchist organizational forms to contemporary forms of capitalism and the concept of communism will be raised.

Introduction

A frequent lament among those on the left is that there is no political music anymore. Quite apart from the inaccurate nostalgia and narrow, mainstream bias of such a claim, the substance of this complaint is called into question by its focus on the lyrical content of music. According to this logic, a 'political' piece of music is one that explicitly engages with politics in its lyrics and which impacts on the political consciousness of the listening subject (given contemporary listening habits this is usually, though not always, an individual). While anarchists are largely unconcerned by the absence of 'anarchist music' from the

mainstream (though I would be all for an anarchist popular music)¹, the underlying assumptions about what makes music ‘anarchist’ often remain, such that an ‘anarchist’ piece of music is one that sympathetically engages with anarchism in its lyrics². Whilst I do not want to belittle the importance of such musical forms – nor the encounters they may generate – this focus on music’s lyrical content results in an incomplete understanding of how music might operate politically.

Indeed, in recent years a vast number of works have been published that supplement (and sometimes critique) these textually focussed arguments by drawing attention to the political ‘function’ of music rather than the ‘meaning’ of a specific work, though function and meaning should not be seen as mutually exclusive: what a piece of music ‘means’ to someone is largely a result of how it ‘functions’ for them (see, for example, Thompson and Biddle, 2013; Korczynski et al., 2013; Shaprio, 2007; Thaemlitz, 2010; anonymous, n.d.; Goodman, 2009; Void Network, 2007 – the last of which is explicitly anarchist). Others have broadened the understanding of what ‘political music’ might be through engaging with practices of DIY organization in the recording, distribution and performance of (usually punk or post-punk) music (for anarchist approaches see

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- 1 For a fascinating discussion of anarchism and popular music see Aaron Lake Smith’s (2012) history of Chumbawamba.
 - 2 The thread ‘Anarchist music?’ on the libcom forums neatly illustrates this point. Across 163 posts almost all of the suggestions put forward are for punk or folk musicians whose lyrics are explicitly or implicitly pro-anarchist. A small number of posters expand the focus, however: ‘wellclose square’ suggests that the culture of Greek Rembetika music resonates strongly with anarchism; and ‘Igor’ offers an argument similar to that developed here, writing ‘I think there’s a distinction to be made between music that has an anarchist propagandist purpose and music that is made according to anarchist principles – in the latter category... I’d include American composers John Cage and Christian Wolff (composer/improviser, libertarian socialist – check out ‘Exercises’, ‘Wobbly Music’, ‘Changing The System’) and Dutch composer Louis Andriessen (libertarian socialist – ‘De Volharding’, ‘Workers Union’), free improvisation groups like MEV (musica electronica viva – a group of improvisers/composers originally based in Italy though mainly American) and AMM (see drummer Eddie Prevost’s books ‘No Sound is Innocent’ and ‘Minute Particulars’). Later in the thread, he adds ‘in the classical world there’s a very clear hierarchy with the composer at the top (being the creative one) and the players as (uncreative) wage slaves whose job is to reproduce the composer’s ideas as accurately as possible via the medium of the written score. Composers like Cage, Andriessen, Wolff etc. try to create situations where the players have ownership of the composed music as much as them, and groups like MEV and AMM make their own music (much as pop/rock/jazz/folk etc musicians do, only through free improvisation or ‘instant composition’ as some people call it) rather than reproducing other peoples’ music’.

Gordon, 2005; Dale, 2012; and Ward, n.d.. For an important feminist contribution, see Griffin, 2012).

What such works do is shift music away from its common status as a ‘thing’ (a noun) and towards processual understandings where ‘music’ functions as a verb. In this, they resonate with the work of the musicologist Christopher Small, who argues that the ‘meaning’ of music lies in its doing, which he calls ‘musicking’. He develops this concept in his 1998 book *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*, where it is defined as ‘tak[ing] part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance... or by dancing’ (1998: 9). He even goes so far as to suggest that the cleaner of a concert hall is ‘musicking’ (9), though he asserts that performance is the ‘*primary process* of musicking, from which all other processes follow’ (*ibid.* 113, emphasis in original). It is from this that I take my cue, with improvised performance the focus of this article (though performance here should not be understood as necessarily ‘for an audience’).

Anarchist musicking

At this stage, the reader may be wondering what the performance of improvised music has to do with CMS, and what anarchism might have to do with any of this. The rest of this paper, it is hoped, will answer this, but one particular concept is key: organization (as a verb, rather than a noun). This is central for Small, who argues that ‘whatever meaning a musical work has lies in the relationships that are brought into existence when the piece is performed’ (1998: 138). For him, then, musicking *is a form of organization*. Thus, alongside textual and functional approaches to reading music politically; a third, organizational approach can be suggested. ‘Organization’ here takes two (related) forms: the organization of sounds, and the organization of those participating in the performance (1998: 139). Whilst I engage with the former when particularly pertinent, it is the latter of these forms of organization that this article grapples with, and that is of particular relevance for the field of CMS.

One of CMS’ major contributions has been to highlight that organization is an inherently political phenomenon (Parker, 2002). Small acknowledges as much for musical organization, writing that:

By bringing into existence relationships that are thought of as desirable, a musical performance not only reflects those relationships but also shapes them. It teaches and inculcates the concept of those ideal relationships, or values, and allows those taking part to try them on, to see how they fit, to experience them without having to commit themselves to them, at least for more than the duration of the performance. (1998: 183)

If the term ‘ideal’ might alarm anarchists (an issue I return to later), this claim nonetheless presents the intriguing possibility that musical performance could be organized along anarchist lines. Drawing on Colin Ward’s claim that anarchism should be seen as a theory of organization (1966, 1982: 7-8), this would allow for an organizational approach to identifying ‘anarchist music’. It is my contention that improvisation offers one such form, such that *when people take part in collective musical improvisation they are practising an anarchist form of organization*. Small himself makes a similar point, arguing that:

improvisation celebrates a set of informal, even loving relationships which can be experienced by everyone present, and brings into existence, at least for the duration of the performance, a society whose closest political analogy is with anarchism[, with] each individual [contributing] to the wellbeing of the community. (1987: 307)

As any improviser will tell you, however, this does not always work quite so smoothly in practice. And nor, of course, does anarchism. Improvisation is thus useful for highlighting both the potentials and dangers of anarchist organization; and as such – I will suggest – could be of significant pedagogical value to anarchists. Current ‘uses’ of improvisation by capitalism also suggest, however, that adopting a purely organizational understanding of anarchism is an error – something I discuss in the final section of this article.

Before going further it is necessary to define what I mean by improvisation. This is a notoriously difficult task, but the fairly standard definition offered by the improvising percussionist and writer Eddie Prévost suffices as a useful starting point for the purposes of this article. For him, improvisation is defined by the fact that performers ‘are searching for sounds and their context within the moments of performance’ and ‘the relations between musicians are directly dialogical: i.e., their music is not mediated through any external mechanism e.g. a score’ (2009: 43), although I will argue that certain ‘external mechanisms’ may actually be conducive to improvisation, and certainly to an anarchist improvisation.³ What is clear is that improvisation offers a certain degree of

3 Improvisation here, then, refers to a *practice* rather than a style, and so must be differentiated from concepts such as ‘free jazz’ and ‘free improv’, which are generally (although not always self-consciously) used primarily to refer to the sonic properties of the music created rather than the practices that produced it, although writers using these terms generally acknowledge that there is a relationship between the way music is produced and how it sounds. It should also be noted that Prévost is describing a western tradition of improvisation here, with roots in African-American jazz and avant-garde European music. Forms of improvisation from other traditions often function very differently, and are beyond the scope of this article, though this is not to say that they would not have something to offer anarchist organization – indeed, I suspect they may well.

‘freedom’ for performers – and it is for this reason that the term ‘free improvisation’ is often used to label the most ‘absolute’ forms of improvisation that concern me here. I do not use the term ‘free improvisation’, however, for reasons that are made clear below. I also exclude solo improvisation from this article, for obvious reasons (though see Gilbert, 2004; Borgo, 2005; and Corbett, 1994 for fascinating analyses of solo improvisation that challenge the supposed unity of the subject. If read alongside Gilbert’s (2013) work on ‘preindividuation’, these works can be seen to offer important insight for organization).

This brief definition of improvisation has obvious resonances with common understandings of anarchism, according to which the relations between people should not be mediated through the external mechanism of the state. Here, however, I want to complicate this a little by suggesting that the state is not simply an external mechanism, but is rather a particular mode of thought that can immanently (or ‘internally’) mediate relationships. It, too, is a process and not a thing (Landauer, 1994: 1; Newman, 2007; 2010; Deleuze and Guattari, 2004). Contemporary anarchism is therefore not simply directed against the geopolitical institution of the state, but against statist forms of organization on all levels, including the ‘micropolitical’ relations of power internal to anarchist groups. To this end, I want to offer adopts four ‘core concepts’ of anarchism: freedom and non-domination, mutuality, a commitment to difference and prefiguration and open-endedness.⁴ Each of these – and the problems anarchists may face in seeking them – can be explicated further through a consideration of musical improvisation.

Freedom and non-domination

Anarchism is frequently (mis)understood as the belief in absolute freedom, which is (to be) brought about through the eradication of hierarchies that impose power over the individual (a negative freedom, in other words). Such a state is often claimed for ‘free improvisation’, with musicians perceived as playing in a state of absolute freedom given the absence of a score, pre-agreed structures and/or hierarchical organization. I want to contend that such an understanding of freedom is mistaken for two reasons.

4 These ‘core concepts’ of anarchist ideology are heavily inspired by Uri Gordon’s *Anarchy Alive!*, though he lists these as non-domination, prefiguration and diversity and open-endedness (2008: 28-46). They are primarily descriptive (which is to say I believe all these concepts are prominent in contemporary anarchist organization), but they are by no means universally accepted and – whilst it is not my place to ‘gatekeep’ the concept of anarchism – they also carry a normative weight inasmuch as I believe they are desirable features of organization.

The first of these is semantic (though it has material effects), and can be simply illustrated with reference to improvisation. To the extent musicians are free to play as they choose, they are free to express their power. Thus, it would be ludicrous to be hostile to power *per se*, and anarchists should therefore be understood as hostile to power-over, in which one body is compelled by another to behave or act in a certain way: a relationship that is best referred to as one of ‘domination’ (Gordon, 2008: 47-52). Such a relationship reduces the amount of power-to the dominated body is able to express (though as I will argue below, this is also true of the dominating body), separating both that individual and the collective from what it might otherwise be able to do. It is this second form of power (power-to) that improvisers express when they perform, and which anarchists seek to foster. Freedom and power, then, are not opposites – as they are so often perceived – but rather are mutually inclusive (Proudhon, 2009), and it is for this reason that I avoid the term ‘free improvisation’, which encourages ignorance of the importance of power in the music’s formation.

My second complaint regarding the view of freedom presented above concerns the manner in which domination functions. As Foucault has highlighted, it is not simply the result of ‘the king in his central position, but [of] subjects in their reciprocal relations; not [of] sovereignty in its one edifice, but [of] the multiple subjugations that take place and function within the social body’ (2004: 27). Thus, insidious, informal acts of domination occur – even in nonhierarchically organized groups – ‘through performative disciplinary acts in which the protagonists may not even be conscious of their roles’ (Gordon, 2008: 52). This, I suggest, is particularly likely when the organization in question is part of a broader society that is still organized through hierarchy and domination. In other words, there can be no realm of unfettered freedom free from ‘micropolitical’ operations of power-over: freedom is always contingent upon circumstance (May, 2011).

This point is illustrated neatly by Scott Thomson, who flags up the danger of ‘performative disciplinary acts’ (which he labels ‘authoritarian gestures’) occurring within improvisation. For him,

A... thorough (and realistic) analysis... must acknowledge how ‘authoritarian’ gestures threaten the musical and social well-being of a performance.... The fluidity of authority within a group can be easily circumscribed by gestures that fix social power in a domineering or negligent way; the good faith that a group works to establish as a foundation for responsible and responsive play is under constant threat of being demolished in this way. Authoritarianism, from my own experience as a performer and listener, is commonly exemplified by a player’s inability or unwillingness to listen to the other members of an ensemble, often coinciding with his or her unresponsive, soloistic musical contributions. This type of musical activity constitutes a very basic authoritarianism in which the player

effectively suggests that ‘I have nothing to learn from you, but you have something to learn from me.’ (2007: 5-6)

If this analysis suggests an at least partially conscious decision by particular musicians to dominate (a scenario no doubt familiar to anyone with experience of anarchist organization), it is important to remember Gordon’s claim that those who dominate may not be aware they are doing so. Thus, an ‘inability or unwillingness to listen’ (and the accompanying exercise of power-over) may result from insecurity, inexperience, bad mood, or the persistence of forms of domination that exist in society more broadly.

This latter point is particularly important, for it highlights the relevance of Gibson Burrell’s (1988) argument that organizations should not be considered as autonomous from the broader forms of societal organization in which they are embedded. Whilst he applied this to institutions more commonly considered under the remit of CMS, it is equally pertinent here: improvisation does not occur within an anarchistically organized society, and cannot escape the dominations that characterise our present order. This can be neatly illustrated with the example of a female-gendered person who takes up improvising for the first time. Assigned the female gender from birth, she is unable to instantly shake off the ways in which society has encouraged her to ‘perform’ her gender (Butler, 1990), and her socialised reluctance to speak publicly (Holmes, 1992) translates into musicking, during which she feels unable to express her ‘power-to’ by playing. She is not subject to any hierarchy here – nor, let it be assumed, to any dominatory acts by her fellow improvisers – yet she still feels unfree. This may be less of a problem if her fellow improvisers are also female, but at least so far as existing improvising communities go, this is unlikely to be the case (cf. Oliveros, 2004: 55).

There are numerous tactics that improvisers might adopt to overcome such power relations. The ‘Unmusical Project’ run by Charlie Bramley in Newcastle-upon-Tyne utilises ‘safe space’ principles and explicitly encourages those who may ordinarily feel intimidated by taking up improvisation to join in (Bramley, 2013). It also encourages children of all ages, allowing those who have childcare issues to join in – an oft-ignored issue in anarchist organization (amberraekelly, 2001), and one that disproportionately affects women. Sessions are well-attended and include a number of people who identify as female. In London, Maggie Nicols utilizes her charismatic authority (Weber, 2009) so that women feel confident about expressing themselves musically at ‘The Gathering’ – a weekly improvising session she runs (<http://www.maggienicols.com/id13.html>)⁵. Within

5 Many anarchists would be uncomfortable about the concept of ‘charismatic authority’. Yet to deny it would be to disavow its ubiquity, and it can play an

specific performances, meanwhile, acts as simple as allowing female improvisers to play first may help – a tactic similar to that adopted by many Occupy camps, where women, people-of-colour and other under-represented and dominated subjects were given exclusive access to the floor at the start of assemblies.

Mutuality

The term ‘anarchy’ was originally used pejoratively to describe the chaotic state of affairs that would emerge without a hierarchical order: a form of (dis)organization characterised by a ‘perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death... because [man] cannot assure the Power and means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more’ (Hobbes, 1996: 70). This understanding persists both colloquially and academically (in the discipline of International Relations, for example – though see Prichard [2013] for a work that challenges this from an anarchist perspective), and is often applied to the practice of improvisation. Although he doesn’t use the term ‘anarchy’, the novelist Ralph Ellison describes jazz improvisation in decidedly Hobbesian terms, writing that:

The health of jazz and the unceasing attraction which it holds for the musicians themselves lies in the ceaseless warfare for mastery and recognition – not among the general public, though commercial success is not spurned, but among their artistic peers. And even the greatest can never rest on past accomplishments, for, as with the fast guns of the Old West, there is always someone waiting in a jam session to blow him literally, not only down, but into shame and discouragement. (2008: 555-556)

Such understandings view power-over as the only possible form of power, such that when a musician exercises their power they necessarily dominate others (reducing their freedom). This is one of the foundational principles of liberalism (and realism in International Relations), necessarily pitting individuals (or states, in the case of IR realism) against each other; and the (heroic) individual against the (tyrannical) collective (cf. Gilbert, 2013). My point here is not that Ellison’s empirical analysis is necessarily wrong – improvisation *can* be a war of all against all, but it does not have to be.

Indeed, anarchism rejects the necessity of this Hobbesian approach – instead stressing the importance of ‘mutuality’, in which individuals are co-dependent upon and constituted by each other. The anarchist (and Marxist) philosopher Chiara Bottici draws on Cornelius Castoriadis to show how the boundaries between the ‘individual’ and ‘society’ can never be clearly established, for ‘society

important part in making people feel welcome and confident in anarchist forms of organization (and to attract them in the first place).

does not exist without the individuals that constantly create and re-create it, but, at the same time, individuals exist only as a product of society itself' (2013: 15). In order to drive home the force of this argument, I borrow Lewis Hyde's use of the term 'dividual' – a subject thought of as being 'constituted by the complexity of the world' around and within them (in Hyde and Wallace, 2010).⁶ This mutuality means that power-to is not a zero-sum game, but is held in common and functions reciprocally: the increase in the ability of one dividual to express their power-to results in an increase of others to do likewise. Or, as Bakunin puts it, '[t]he freedom of others, far from limiting or negating my liberty, is on the contrary its necessary condition and confirmation' (1953: 267). Drawing on a concept of Starhawk's (1989), I name this collective freedom 'power-with'.

According to this understanding of freedom and power, acts of domination reduce the power-to not only of the dominated partner; but also of the dominator (Malatesta, 1891; Bottici, 2013). Where power was previously held in common, such acts enclose it and encourage it to be viewed as a scarce resource. Anarchist organization, therefore, does not proceed from the *ressentiment* of the slave who despises power (Nietzsche, 1994: 52) – nor from the master's addiction to 'power-over' – but from the figure of 'a new human who was to be neither master nor slave' (Sunshine, 2005: 36).⁷ It may be that conflict emerges from particular expressions of power-to, but this should not be seen (or approached) with the aim of dominating. Rather, it is productive of 'sustained dissensus' (Cohn, 2006: 256): a productive force that allows the organization to develop (Springer, 2011; Maeckelbergh, 2012).

If this is all a little abstract, improvisation offers an excellent indication of how such organization might function in practice. Imagine, for example, three musicians improvising together. At a particular point, Musician A expresses their power-to by introducing a drone. Musician B picks up on slight rhythmic variations in the amplification and improvises around these. Musician A may then play across this rhythm in their playing, whilst Musician C adds an emphasis to particular notes played by the assemblage of Musician A and Musician B, which in turn influences the way in which Musicians A and B

6 Here I differ from the use of the term by Gilbert (2004), who uses it to refer to the collectivity that cannot be 'reduced to the individuality of its members or to some Leviathan meta-subject which encompasses them all in perfect unity' (124-125).

7 For Nietzsche, this figure is named the 'Übermensch', but I prefer not to use the term given its tainted history. With regards to the organization itself, Deleuze's term 'crowned anarchy' could be used (1994: 55), whilst George Woodcock's claim that anarchism universalizes aristocracy (1975: 30) can be read in a similar light.

continue to play.⁸ Thus, as one popular description of improvisation has it, ‘nobody solos, everybody solos’: the improvising group is neither a homogenous collective nor an aggregate of ‘free’ individuals. The relationship governing this non-soloing may be consensual or marked by conflict – it certainly shouldn’t be misunderstood as inherently cozy (Watson, 2004) – but what is clear is that Musician A’s expression of their power-to did not limit the power-to of the other performers, but rather enhance them, creating ‘power-with’. Each expressive act is a placing of power-to into the common realm.

Musicians, of course, would never be able to trace the flows of power so clearly as the description above; and nor is it always possible for listeners to determine who is leading. What listeners do hear, however, is what George E. Lewis (2002) has called ‘multidominance’: the simultaneous, polyphonic expression of power and freedom that he argues is characteristic of much art (both visual and sonic) of the African diaspora. This can be a simultaneously wondrous, dizzying and inspiring feeling for the listener (I still remember the shock I felt when I first encountered the music of Ornette Coleman), and points to how the power-with of anarchist musicking might cross from musicians to their audience; how organization might ‘give something back’ to the world from which it draws so much.⁹

Whilst improvisers often stress the importance of ‘unlearning’ conventional musical techniques, developing the mutuality that marks successful improvisation requires a great deal of skill; and improvising educators have developed exercises designed to maximise this (Clark, 2012; Higgins and Campbell, 2010). Certain forms of score can also be useful in maximising this

8 Whilst space prohibits me from exploring such factors here, it would undoubtedly be possible to develop what Jane Bennett (2010) calls ‘a political economy of things’ here, by considering the influence of instruments, amplifiers and the environment on (or indeed as part of) the improvising assemblage. Tokyo’s ‘onkyō’ movement, for example, stresses such factors – its member Toshimaru Nakamura states that ‘[w]hen I play with other musicians, I don’t play with them, I play with the space including this musician – not directly human to human. If you’re a musician, okay, let’s play together. But I don’t play with you – I play with all of the elements around you, around us. So I don’t really confront you as one individual – you are part of many other elements in the space around you’ (in Novak, 2010: 46).

9 There is, perhaps, a problem here though, inasmuch as a lot of improvisation simply isn’t that much fun to listen to; suggesting some truth to the old adage that it is more fun to play than it is to listen to. I would contend that this is a particular problem for improvisation in the European tradition, though this may of course just be a matter of personal preference. The problem is neatly summarised by Simon Reynolds, who describes the tedium he felt when attending a free improv gig, and even compares this to the problems anarchists face in making their organization aesthetically appealing to those outside its sphere (2008). I intend to explore this problem (through the concept of utopia) in greater depth in future work.

mutuality (contrary to understandings of improvisation that place it in a binary opposition with composition). If a musical score is usually a document that determines how music should sound, with the form of organization required to realise it a secondary (but important) effect, the composer Helen Papaioannou reverses this with her graphic score 'Cogs' (Figure 1), in which:

the emphasis is very much on the type of interaction that the visual information may engender, rather than encouraging an ethos which values a 'perfect', reproducible representation of a score. The aim is to heighten the different intensities involved in [the] relationships [between improvisers], the beating back-and-forth, and the shifting dynamics between individual/collective focuses in achieving/dissolving the synchronisation of parts. In a sense, this type of hyperactive, frenzied exchange is aimed towards collapsing the distinction between individual/collective (email conversation with author, 2011).

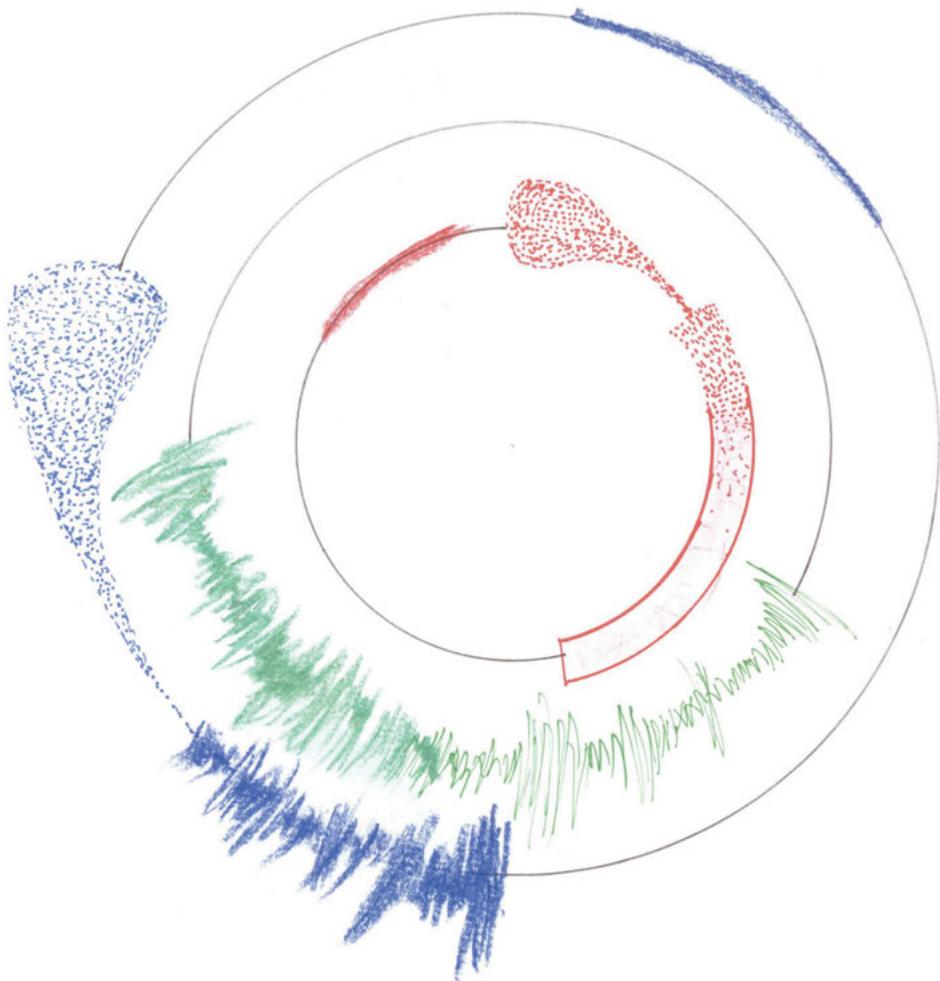


Figure 1: 'Cogs' by Helen Papaioannou. (Source: helenpapaioannou.com)

Papaioannou's score is clearly an 'external mechanism' brought to the group, and illustrates that an influence from outside the group's immediate temporal and spatial confines can be useful in helping it self-organize; which is to say that this score is neither generated by the group, nor does it occur during the group's performance, but that it may help the group generate the kind of mutuality I have discussed above.

Difference

In order for mutuality to be productive in creating new formations, it is important that an organization is constituted by 'difference'. Each member of an anarchist organization will (ideally, at least) have different histories, experiences, knowledges etc. (many of which may well have served as a locus of oppression); and these can be combined to generate productive solutions to problems that may emerge (cf. May's reading of Deleuze, 1994: 134) – a process that has been compared to the self-organization of matter in complexity theory (Arrigo and Williams, 2004). Here, difference should not be understood in terms of liberal notions of 'diversity' – in which a cosmopolitan order can be made up from relatively stable identities; and through which certain 'differences' come to be respected by the dominant order (Newman, 2010: 118), because these differences then strengthen this dominant (and dominating) order (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 521); and because 'difference' cannot be equated with the individual, which is always-already made up of 'preindividual' differences (Gilbert, 2013; Deleuze, 1998: 77; Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 288-289). Rather, the 'order' is (permanently re)constituted by difference.

In improvisation, then, the musicking of performance is organized by the multiple 'differences' of individual performers – their histories, their playing styles, their mood on the day, their choice of instrument, etc. Resonating with Arrigo and Williams' work on complexity, David Borgo (2005) draws on non-linear dynamics to show how improvisation pushes these differences to self-organize new forms. This process can be illustrated with reference to the improvising band K-Space, who utilise techniques and styles from traditional Tuvan and Celtic musical forms alongside those drawn from jazz and the electroacoustic tradition, creating new forms that transcend these influences. It is not, therefore, a question of K-Space's Tuvan throat singer Gendos Chamzyryn adapting his style to a pre-existing form, but rather of a new form being created from his – and his bandmates' – differences (a form which then transforms each of them).

The danger here, of course, is that difference fails to self-organize. Whilst the frequency of 'chaos' as a pejorative descriptor for improvised music often illustrates an ignorance of the practices of musicking that produce it (such claims

also rest on a binary between chaos and order/organization, which is troubled by complexity theory, and may – as Lewis [2002] notes – be the result of racialized norms), it would be wrong to disavow the dangers of disorganization altogether. Indeed, improvisation often fails to ‘self-organize’ into anything coherent: ‘nobody solos, everybody solos’ functioning as a recipe for explorations of the (supposedly) pre-given self rather than the production of new forms through mutual co-dependence; and performances frequently dissolve into tired noodling in which power-to seems entirely absent, or a Hobbesian struggle for power-over (thus returning us to the first danger). Again, an external influence can be useful in such instances: specific instructions for improvisers; or some form of score or game play may help catalyse self-organization (although of course this ‘external influence’ does not have to be imposed on the group from outside, but rather one that the group chooses to engage with). But there can be no guarantee here, and just as with failed attempts to start anarchist groups it may be that there is insufficient common ground: people cannot agree on what works and what does not; or they simply do not get along. Dissensus can be productive, but if it is not underpinned by some common ground it is simply destructive; and can even be damaging for some participants (Motta, 2012). In such cases, it is best to know when to admit defeat and accept that not all projects will be successful.

Prefiguration and open-endedness

The final of anarchism’s ‘core concepts’ I want to consider here is ‘prefiguration and open-endedness’. The former term highlights that anarchism eschews a separation between the means and ends of organization; instead seeking to immanently create ‘a new world in the shell of the old’, as the old IWW saying has it (cf. Gordon, 2008: 34-40). It would be easy to see improvisation as an example of this, with musicians creating temporary anarchist communities in the here-and-now. Yet divorced from open-endedness – which insists that the ‘ends’ must not be pre-determined – the object of anarchism’s prefiguration can still be a once-and-for-all state of emancipation in which freedom is believed to have eternally triumphed over domination. Thus, to paraphrase Deleuze and Guattari’s definition of immanence, it can be said that anarchism’s prefiguration ‘is prefigurative only to itself, and leaves nothing to which it could be prefigurative (1994: 45)’.

To a considerable degree, this open-endedness results from anarchism’s previous three core concepts. In other words, if it is accepted that domination’s insidious nature means that freedom can never be achieved once-and-for-all; and communities are structured around the mutual self-organization of difference-in-itself, open-endedness will follow as a matter of course. Yet it is useful to position it as one of anarchism’s core concepts in and of itself, as acknowledging the

importance of open-endedness can in turn facilitate commitment to anarchism's other core concepts. Anarchist improvisers would thus need to slightly modify Christopher Small's claim about the political function of musical performance: it is not a question of trying on (and prefiguring) 'ideal' social relations, but rather of experiencing the radical unknowability of anarchist organization. As the free jazz saxophonist Ornette Coleman notes in the liner notes to his album 'Change of the Century': '[w]e [the musicians] do not begin with a preconceived notion as to what kind of effect we will achieve' (2004: 254). Similarly, the critic John Litweiler describes Coleman's music as

mak[ing] clear that uncertainty is the content of life, and even things that we take for certainties such as cell motives) are ever altering [in] shape and character. By turns he fears or embraces this ambiguity; but he constantly faces it, and by his example, he condemns those who seek resolution or finality as timid. (1984: 39)

A commitment to open-endedness may also help to ward off a particularly subtle threat to anarchist organization, which I name the 'tyranny of habit', after a phrase of Oscar Wilde's (2008: 21). This is a particularly subtle form of domination, which arises collectively and immanently. An excellent account of the threat this poses to anarchist organization can be found in Ursula Le Guin's novel *The Dispossessed*, which (among much else) depicts life on Anarres – a seemingly utopian anarchist planet which is ossifying into dystopia as 'laws of conventional behaviour' come to function as an organizing principle (2006: 286). What is particularly chilling about these, however, is the way they pass unnoticed: 'we've...built walls all around ourselves, and we can't see them, because they're part of our thinking' says Shevek, the novel's chief protagonist (*ibid.*).

This is a common danger in improvisation, and may occur within a single performance, across a number of performances by a group, or even across a particular (geographic/temporal) 'scene', where there is a cross pollination of habits between musicians. The guitarist Michael Rodgers expresses his dissatisfaction with such a state of affairs at improvisation workshops run by Eddie Prévost, claiming that:

The workshop in its early years was diverse, lively and full of risk and debate. [Later], it started feeling more like church, where one must avoid offence and observe ritual. A hegemony was replacing a much more vibrant state of being. (in Clark, 2012: 38)

This leads some to claim that this danger is inbuilt to improvisation. The composer Pierre Boulez, for example, notes that the improviser 'can only turn to information that he [sic] has been given on some earlier occasion, in fact to what he has already played' (1985: 461). Whilst I would argue individual musicians can

(hopefully) turn to other musicians to find new ways to play, it is clear that habit may 'infect' the whole group, leaving them stuck in a repetition of the same. There are, again, a number of tactics that might be utilized to avoid this – including bringing in new musicians, swapping instruments or using some form of score or gameplay to break habits. Papiaioannou's scores might again be instructive here; or it might be possible to use something along the lines of Brian Eno's 'Oblique Strategies': a list of vague instructions such as 'Try faking it' or 'What would your best friend do?' that improvisers sometimes use to instigate new modes of behaviour and to prevent habit from ossifying into domination.

An ambiguous utopia?

So far I have presented a picture of improvisation as creating anarchist forms of organization. As an anarchist, I believe that these forms of organization (re)produce space in a 'good' manner, and so the term 'utopia' might be appropriate to describe them (see Bell, 2013 for a longer discussion of the relationship between improvisation and utopia, and for a Spinoza-inspired account of what the term 'good' might mean in this context). But 'utopia' is, of course, a pun: meaning 'no place' as well as 'good place', and I have also shown that no improvising group can ever claim to have reached the ultimate form of anarchist organization, for there are a number of dangers constantly threatening to rear their head. Like Le Guin's Anarres, improvisation is, therefore, an 'ambiguous utopia': always on the verge of ossifying into a dystopia.

This fragility is neatly expressed by Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner, who note that many improvisers see their practice as 'a utopian space... as strong and fragile as a spider's web, and, as such, constantly under construction and repair' (2006: 251-252). Above, I have noted some tactics that improvisers might use to constantly construct and repair their organization, lest it succumb to the dangers posed by exclusion, domination and habit. These must be decided upon in moments outside the group's primary purpose (making music), meaning that the 'utopia' of improvisation is one that must be realized across time and between – as much as during – performances (Toop, 2005: 239; Borgo, 2005: 194). This, too, applies to anarchists – who need to reflect on what has worked in their organization, what hasn't, and what tactics might be utilized to address these failures. In so doing, attention needs to be given to the particularities of circumstance: anarchists (and improvisers) need to, well, 'improvise' (in a non-musical sense) in order to deal with contingencies and problems that will undoubtedly emerge. There can be no one-size-fits-all approach to this because of the variations in how power functions from group to group.

Degenerate anarchism and the importance of communism

This would be a lovely place to leave improvisation: strung delicately between success and failure; showing us how anarchist organization might work but also how it might break down. The story cannot end here, however: for there is one final danger that needs considering here. Unlike those identified so far, this is not a danger to the internal functioning of the (anarchist/improvising) organization, but rather stems from the way the form can be put to work for the decidedly un-anarchist end of profit¹⁰: a further example of Burrell's claim that organizations must not be seen as discrete from society. As a relentlessly inventive form that privileges the creation of the new and enables collective solutions to difficult problems, improvisation has – understandably – had a great deal of appeal for capital in its drive to find new markets to exploit and new ways to cut operating costs (cf. Hegarty, 2012; Mattin, 2009; Saladin, 2009; Brassier et al. 2010); part of a broader trend that sees managers (and even military commanders) utilising non-hierarchical (though not non-dominatory) and/or self-organized forms of organization (Barker, 2005; Monk, 2007). Artie Lewin, for example, reports that:

The 1996 annual report of the LEGO Corporation featured the top management team decked out as a jazz ensemble with the CEO, Kjeld Møller Pedersen, playing the saxophone. The CEO of LEGO used the occasion to highlight his belief and expectation that improvisation is an art form that needs to become the hallmark of all levels of management, beginning at the top. (1998: 38)

Elsewhere, (largely uncritical) theorists of management and organization have published a number of articles extolling the potentials of improvisation in a business context (for a very small sample, see Oakes, 2009; Cunha et al.: 2011; Kubacki, 2008; Weick, 1998). Meanwhile, the website 1000ventures.com – which describes itself as offering “Broader knowledge, better ideas!” for entrepreneurs, corporate leaders, innovators and consultants/trainers’ – hosts an online ‘mini-course’ by Vadim Kotelnikov for ‘creative achievers’ entitled ‘The Jazz of Innovation’ (some of Kotelnikov’s other courses include ‘Strategic Management’, ‘SMART Innovation’, ‘Winning Customers’, ‘Your People Skills’, ‘12 Leadership Roles’ and ‘Inspiring Corporate Culture’).

Whilst none of these works seeking to recuperate improvisation for the gain of capital contains a particularly in-depth analysis of improvisation (and many take less ‘extreme’ practices of improvisation than those under consideration here,

¹⁰ Further work on this relationship will hopefully surface with the publication of a special issue of *Critical Studies in Improvisation* entitled ‘Ethics and the Improvising Business’ (see <http://www.criticalimprov.com/announcement/view/42> for the call for papers).

with the focus largely on forms of improvisation with a considerable degree of internal hierarchy), their very purpose is inconsistent with the internal organization of improvisation: capitalism relies upon and perpetuates power-over, artificial scarcity results in competition between individuals, and difference-in-itself is reduced to the commodity form. Improvising groups, then, may function internally as an anarchist utopia – but their methods can be taken from them to generate dystopian forms of organization more broadly.

It is difficult to suggest strategies to defend against this. Complaints that capitalism is using ‘your’ forms of organization for purposes utterly alien to your intent are little more than pissing in the wind, but one potential answer comes from an unlikely source (for an anarchist): the work of Jodi Dean. Whilst her Leninism makes her hostile to anarchist forms of organization, her insistence on the rhetorical power of ‘communism’ to name the incompatibility between what we want and what currently exists (2012) can, perhaps, be utilized here. Though anarchism often functions as a useful media bogeyman in capitalism’s ideological battle, a hollowed-out version of its forms of organization (such as improvisation) can clearly be productive for capital by providing forms of organization ‘suitable’ for the post-fordist climate, with its stress on creativity and flexibility. Yet as Dean notes, the term communism retains the rhetorical power to shock and to clearly demarcate a boundary that capital is (for now, at least) reluctant to cross. Furthermore, improvisation’s anarchist utopianism is predicated on the power that musicians hold and develop in common, and ‘communism’ provides a label for this. Private property creates scarcity and makes anarchism’s mutuality impossible.

Here, it is perhaps pertinent to apply Marx and Engels’ critique of the failure of ‘utopian socialism’ to appreciate the importance of class struggle (2004: 48; Engels, 2008) to an excessively organizational understanding of anarchism. Whilst Marx and Engels argued that the utopian communities of Owen, Saint-Simon et al. failed to truly challenge capital by not engaging with the material relations of the broader society in which these communities were embedded, I suggest that simply creating prefiguratively utopian, anarchist forms of organization not only fall victim to the same flaw, but can actually *reinforce* capital. If one of the great strengths of Colin Ward’s anarchism-as-organization approach is to show that anarchism exists in the here-and-now like a ‘seed beneath the snow’, its weakness *vis a vis* contemporary forms of capitalism is that such ‘anarchism’ is just as likely to be found in the post-fordist workplace as it is in a community health-centre or housing project. Anarchism *is* a theory of organization, but if that is *all* it is then it is a theory of organization that can be turned against the working class: a ‘degenerate anarchism’. Anarchism needs

communism, then, just as – in order to avoid the failings of state power – communism needs anarchism (cf. Bottici, 2013).

Conclusion: The shape of organization to come?

In Lorna Davidson's (2010) account of musicking in Robert Owen's utopian New Lanark community, she notes how musical performance, song and dance were used to instil the discipline Owen believed was necessary for his community to function successfully. We don't yet live in an anarchist (ambiguous) utopia, but to the extent that music can help us learn how we might organize our lives differently I would suggest that improvisation can play a similar pedagogical role for those interested in advancing the anarchist cause. This is not only because it shows how it can work as a mutually empowering form of organization, but also (and perhaps especially) because it is frequently challenged by many of the dangers that threaten anarchism. Working out how to overcome these could be of considerable pedagogical importance for anarchist organization; and it may even be that some of the techniques used by improvisers could be adopted in more explicitly political forms of anarchist organization. Oblique strategies for anarchists, anyone?

Yet the manner in which improvisation has been (ab)used by capitalism highlights the fallacy of an exclusively organizational politics. We cannot simply prefigure the world we would like to see: we must also challenge the world that (sadly) exists. Jodi Dean is fond of wearing a t-shirt saying 'Goldman Sachs doesn't care if you raise chickens', and this could equally state their ambivalence (or perhaps even enthusiasm) for improvisation. Utopia, however, is as good a place as any from which to launch a challenge on the present state of things (Weeks, 2011: 204-205), and improvisation is a utopia as ambiguously wonderful as the most dazzling science fiction. Communism makes possible the universalization of its conditions, and must be the vehicle of our attack.

Who says there's no political music anymore?

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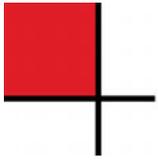
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Alternative organizations in a global context: Tensions, challenges and potentialities

George Kokkinidis

review of

Atzeni, M. (2012) *Alternative work organizations*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. (HB, pp. 224, £71.00, ISBN 9780230241404)

While cooperation exists since times immemorial, in its modern form it constitutes a 'product' of specific socio-economic and political conditions. Within this context, cooperatives and other alternative experiments have offered an opportunity to challenge existing capital-labour relations and inter-work relationships and rethink the way we relate everyday practices to political organization in general. This in turn implies an effort to reconceptualise the links between the economic and social field of action. Despite their political, social and economic significance, such projects have received insufficient attention from critical management and organization studies scholars. In the light of this, this edited book offers the readers a colourful account of contemporary and historical examples in the labour movement (from the factory occupations and workers' cooperative in the UK during the 1970s to the current worker-recuperated enterprises in Argentina) while inviting us to appreciate the dynamics and factors influencing the nature and potentialities of workers' control and other self-managed projects. The book is divided in 8 chapters each drawing on a specific case from different historical periods and geographical contexts. Although context-dependent, the cases presented in this book offer a useful template of workable alternatives within capitalism. In so doing, this edition challenges the widespread assumption that workers cannot run

production themselves, as well as the almost naturalised character of capitalist work relations by offering a well-balanced analysis of the potentialities, tensions and challenges faced by alternative organizations within a market system.

The book begins with an introductory chapter by Maurizio Atzeni in an attempt to put into a more general theoretical framework some important and topical issues related to the transformative character of workers' control and self-managed experiments. More specifically, it reflects on the impact of such projects in shaping how people perceived work and how they relate with each other in their workplace but also in their communities, which is illustrative of the potential of these projects in constituting a vehicle of social transformation. Another important issue covered is the interplay between market forces and other structural factors in influencing the character and organizational practices of these projects as well as the ambivalence of state and other local institutions in supporting or repressing the potentialities of these projects. Therefore, any attempt to envision an alternative form of organization and organizing should begin with a critical reflection on the existing forms of work organization. In assessing and evaluating these alternatives, however, we need to pay attention to the structural conditions and mundane tensions they face while operating within a market system which (re)shapes their character and future possibilities. These issues, as Atzeni argues, should be carefully considered in any serious attempt to analyse and evaluate the current state and future potential of alternative experiments. After addressing the theoretical relevance of these projects, the chapter concludes with a solid summary of each chapter contained in this book.

Chapter 2, by Alan Tuckman, focuses on the UK context in the period marked by the end of the post-war settlement between capital and labour that resulted in the loosening of the employment relations and the decline of trade-unionism. The chapter offers a historical overview of workers' attempts to control production in the UK during the 1970s through factory occupations and workers' cooperatives. These occupations, although from a different geographical and chronological context, share much similarities with the Argentinean experiences discussed in Chapter 6. In both cases, the authors remind us that these occupations did not start out as a working-class revolt or a predetermined political ambition but rather as a defensive reaction to the fear of unemployment. Factory occupations, Tuckman (32) repeatedly says, 'tended to be acts of relative desperation of job loss, with no real plan for the future beyond some hope that another owner might be found'. Yet, these defensive and spontaneous actions, although short-lived, put alternative forms of organizing work at the heart of the political debate and strategy. Tuckman nicely reconstructs the history of the factory occupations in Britain during the 1970s and discusses the conditions that led to the wave of occupations in that period. By examining specific cases such as the 'Benn

Cooperatives' he offers some useful insights regarding workers' mobilisation and resistance to the prerogatives of capital, inviting us to look more closely at the strategies adopted by capital and labour. Those strategies adopted by the labour movement were rooted in social imperatives and were trying to 'move towards the establishment of an alternative to capitalism rooted in social needs' (44) while those of capital were driven by the imperative to extend commodification.

One such strategy is discussed in Chapter 3 by Russell Smith, Len Arthur, Molly Scott Cato and Tom Keenoy. Staying in the UK context but in a different chronological period (1990s and 2000s), the chapter is based on a longitudinal qualitative study of the 13 years experience of workers' control at the Tower Colliery in South Wales (for those interested in this experiment, it is also worth looking at Cato, 2004). The authors attempt to reconstruct the history of the deep-coal mine, focusing on the period between the buy-out in 1995 to its closure 13 years later. Drawing on site observations, individual and group interviews, and secondary data (including the cooperative archives and local newspaper reportage) the authors build a discussion around the nature, significance and limits of this experiment offering a well balanced reflection around the tensions and practical challenges that organizations face when multiple objectives clash. At the same time, it raises some important questions about issues related to work organization, employees' participation and decision-making. For Smith et al., Tower Colliery is a 'deviant mainstreaming' organization which shares similarities with conventional capitalist enterprises as these are manifested in the leading role of technocrats and the priority 'to the financial and technical strategic arguments' (59). Yet it challenges top-down organization and offers an alternative way of organizing work by giving emphasis on bottom-up ownership and control while it serves as an inspirational example for others to follow. Therefore, rather than dismissing the political and social significance of the project, they invite us to appreciate the practical challenges that alternative organizations face while operating within a "market-system".

The practical challenges faced by alternative organizations operating within a market-system are further discussed in the chapters to follow. Chapter 4, by Joseba Azkarraga Etxagibel, George Cheney and Ainara Udaondo takes us south to the periphery of capitalism and the Basque region of Spain where we find the most well documented examples of a cooperative experiment, the Mondragon Cooperatives. The discussion begins with a brief historical overview of the Mondragon Cooperative Experience (MCE) and its current status as the largest worker-owned organization in the world. The authors soon acknowledge and summarise the various criticisms and debates around Mondragon's work organization, members' participation and decision making processes. The discussion around these issues offers a balanced view of the MCE as an

experiment that tries to combine economic viability while maintaining strong political and social values and objectives. Focusing primarily on the outcome and implications of the 10th Cooperative Congress, the authors outline the "process of self-reflection and debate entitled 'Reflection on the Meaning and Future Directions of the Cooperative Experience' (82), an institutionalised process that nevertheless aimed to create a space for reflection on the evident bureaucratic tendencies in the Mondragon group and the privileging of economic over other more social and collective objectives. The themes covered in this broad-based process extended from problems related to members' as well as non-members' participation in the decision making process and control of the cooperative, to the issue of cooperative education and social transformation.

While the authors argue that the implications of the decisions made at the Congress are yet to be seen and future research will be indeed required, I feel that the discussion has much value for researchers and practitioners of alternative forms of organization as they open up a discussion on various important issues of everyday practices and challenges for organizations that operate within a market system. Acknowledgement of the tensions between democratic impulses and bureaucratic tendencies that are constantly present in every alternative experiment, and perhaps more intense in large-scale organizations such as Mondragon, invites us to further explore and reflect on various issues such as horizontality, participation and control or the relationship between size and workplace democracy. It therefore opens up further discussion: In what ways can cooperatives that operate in a complex global market resist the degenerative effects of market competition and maintain, perhaps even strengthen, their social values? How are we to make sense of employees' autonomy and control when multiple objectives (e.g. economic efficiency and more inclusive forms of participation) clash? And what are the potentials as well as the practical challenges for more inclusive forms of participation and control in a large-scale context? Some of these questions are addressed in the following chapters.

In chapter 5, by Camila Piñeiro Harnecker, the focus shifts from Europe to Latin America and more specifically to the newly formed producers' cooperatives in Venezuela in order to investigate the workers' experience with self-management, reflecting on the issues of workplace democracy and workers' solidarity. Unlike similar projects elsewhere (see the Argentinean workers' recovered enterprises discussed in chapter 6), the Venezuelan cooperatives are favoured by the state as a vehicle for social transformation which has resulted in the exponential rise of cooperatives under Chavez's administration. Based on a fieldwork conducted in the summer of 2006 on 12 cooperatives and 3 civil associations, this chapter investigates the potential relationship between levels of workplace democracy and

the development of workers' solidarity and to reflect on 'the main dynamics that could explain such a relationship' (107). In so doing, the author discusses the internal as well as external conditions contributing to the development of democratic workplaces and social consciousness, reflecting on the dynamics that are crucial for cultivating workers' solidarity not only within the cooperatives but also with the community at large. The chapter offers a thorough description of the democratic process in these cooperatives while encouraging the reader to look beyond formal forms of participation. In fact, and rightly so, the author places much emphasis on more substantive forms of participation, reflecting on workers' experience of the deliberative character of the democratic practices within their cooperatives.

The analysis of these cases, although context specific, opens up the discussion around the limits and contradictions of representation as an element of democracy and the importance of more inclusive forms of representation in blocking hierarchical tendencies in democratic organizations. Placing emphasis on equality and consent, coupled with structure and practices aiming to minimize exclusion, contributes to the members' realisation of their self-creating and self-instituting capacities. At the same time, the active participation and involvement of the members in the processes of deliberation and the dynamic interactions developed within these processes, cultivate among them a culture of openness and receptiveness to others' ideas. As Harnecker writes, 'a democratic practice that privileges deliberation, rather than time-saving voting procedures, is more effective in shaping individuals' preferences, so the likely initial contradiction between their individual and collective interests is diminished' (112). Moreover, the author reflects on the relationship between workplace democracy and equality and analyses how specific organizational arrangements contributed to the development of a sense of equality among the members.

As one of the most promising features of workplace democracy is its openness to change, the organizational arrangements and democratic practices in these cooperatives are not free from shortcomings and potential improvement. One such shortcoming identified by the author turns around the issue of collective monitoring and its impact on members' participation in the decision-making processes which can also be a source of conflict among the members. The discussion of this issue, although brief, reveals the importance of understanding equality beyond equal rights, placing emphasis on the mechanisms and conditions stipulating exercise of these rights. In the last ten pages of the chapter, the attention shifts from the internal factors that affect the functioning of workplace democracy to those external conditions contributing to the development of workers' solidarity and democratic attitude in spaces beyond the actual workplaces. Harnecker reflects on how the members' exposure to a

solidaristic ideology affects their everyday life and relationship with local communities as well as the extent that cooperatives' avoidance of market logic affects their social solidarity. Drawing on her findings, Harnecker argues that social consciousness is not guaranteed by simply exposing workers to solidaristic ethics. She further illustrates that exposure to market logic poses a constant threat to the democratic character of these and other experiments, and further diminishes social solidarity. Her conclusions highlight the importance of substantive forms of participation that need to be more broadly exercised beyond the work spaces to other spheres of social life.

Moving from Venezuela to Argentina, Chapter 6, by Marcelo Vieta, is based on a qualitative case study research on worker-recuperated enterprises (ERTs) that developed in the country as a result of the economic liberalization in the 1990s which eventually led thousands of small and medium-sized companies to bankruptcy (for those interested in the Argentinean experiments, it is also worth looking at the works of Atzeni and Ghigliani, 2007; Vieta, 2008 and 2010 and Vieta and Ruggeri, 2009). This crisis led to protests and the creation of grassroots democratic organizations such as the ERTs discussed in this chapter. It is important to note that unlike the Venezuelan cooperatives discussed in the previous chapter, the Argentinean ERTs not only lacked support from the state but they also faced hostility and, very often, violent repression. Also, as Vieta repeatedly argues the occupations and running of factories and other enterprises by workers did not start out as a working-class revolt or a predetermined political ambition but rather as a defensive reaction to the fear of unemployment. Yet this initially defensive reaction to unemployment fostered a sense of collective purpose and democratic ethos through a process of experimentation with alternative forms of organizing work. Although the ERT phenomenon in Argentina remains relatively small there is a symbolic dimension in these experiments, as they challenge widespread assumptions that workers' cannot run production. The chapter outlines the constraints and challenges these self-managed projects constantly face as they operate within a market system and provide an account of how they address these challenges in creative ways through a repertoire of organizational innovations and the development of soft infrastructures of interpersonal communications that nurture deliberation. In this process of innovation and experimentation with new forms of organizing work, the members of the Argentinean ERTs appear to reinvent themselves but also their relationships with their fellow workers and their local communities, which offer a useful lesson of the transformative impact of these self-managed projects.

Chapter 7, by Anita Hammer, is based on a comparative study on two cooperatives in India. The first is a workers' cooperative in the state of Kerala and

the second producers' marketing cooperative in the state of Gujarat. The study follows a comparative institutional analysis, in order to show 'that it is the dialectics of institutional development and class mobilisation that influence and determine the differing nature and trajectory of cooperatives in the two states' (158). The chapter begins with an overview of the two cooperatives and shows their main differences in the management and internal organization as well as their differences in terms of practices and values. The attention then shifts to assessing the transformative potential of collective mobilisation and how institutional context is shaping the nature of movements which in turn influence the internal and external practices of the two cooperatives. Drawing on the interlinkages between class organization, political mobilisation and institutional development the study argues that institutions and collective mobilisation can in some cases (as in the cooperative at Gujarat) reinforce existing power relations while in other cases (as in the cooperative at Kerala) offer a radical potential. Reflecting on the dynamic between institutions and collective mobilisation and how institutions not only reproduce dominant social relations but also constitute a space of political contestation, the chapter offers some useful lessons to researchers on cooperatives and other alternative projects, inviting us to look more closely the ways that such dynamics shape the values and practices of alternative organizations.

The last chapter, by Martino Ghielmi, is not only a deviation from the tenor of the rest of the book, but as Atzeni (21) correctly puts it, 'traditional studies on workers' control and self-management' historically focusing on the formal sector. This chapter is instead focusing on the development of alternative forms of associations in the informal economy in Kenya and more specifically in the capital city of Nairobi. Drawing on multiple research techniques (participant observation, interviews, surveys) the chapter attempts to critically evaluate the extent that self-help groups (SHGs) can be seen to constitute an alternative form of work organization and their transformative potentialities. In terms of structure, the chapter provides a conceptual framework for informal economy in order to set the grounds for analysing the Kenyan context. A brief political history of self-help in Kenya helps the reader to appreciate the complex political, economic and cultural context that self-help groups operate in. Focusing on specific cases, the chapter proceeds to examine the members' motivation to participate in such associations as well as the aims and practices of these groups. The author argues that participation in these groups is primarily a defensive strategy to exploitation and poverty in an attempt to cover their basic needs. Particularly important is the discussion around the role of economic, political and cultural factors in limiting the potentialities of SHGs as well as the interconnectedness of the informal economy with the formal sector.

To conclude, the book addresses some important and timely topics such as that of workers' control and self-management that have not yet received adequate attention in Organization Studies. The detailed ethnographic accounts of contemporary and historical examples of the labour movement provide a useful insight into the political, social and economic significance of these experiments and challenge many assumptions about work organization, workplace democracy, and employees' autonomy. Without romanticising in any way the social and political significance of such projects the book also challenges the almost banal arguments that alternative organizations are destined to operate at the margins and are thus insignificant, or that they will be inevitably forced to reproduce at least some aspects of capitalist work relations. It invites us to look more closely at the differences in the ways of organizing, even within the market system. The chapters contained in this edited book provide informative and well balanced arguments on the possibilities and challenges that alternative organizations face while operating within a market system. The empirical evidence of past and ongoing experiences of workers' self-management offers contextualised information about each of these projects and invites us to look more closely at the dynamic interlinkage of institutional forces and social movements in shaping the nature and practices of these social experiments. Therefore, I believe this book is a great resource for anybody interested in alternative forms of organization and particularly in cooperatives. It is not only informative but also theoretically intriguing both for experts in the field of alternative economies, cooperative and organization studies as well as readers with a general interest in the area.

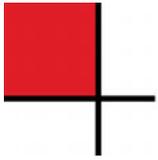
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‘Why did it work this time?’ David Graeber on Occupy Wall Street

Mathijs van de Sande

review of

Graeber, D. (2013) *The democracy project: A history, a crisis, a movement*. London: Allen Lane/Penguin. (PB, pp. 326, £14.99, ISBN 9781846146633)

It has been two years since Occupy emerged on the global scene, inspired by an on-going wave of protest movements and upheavals. Like its predecessors, the movement was met with great skepticism – not least by many self-acclaimed leftist academics and journalists. How could a political movement, one objection went, be of any significance and endurance if it failed or refused to produce a clear, univocal agenda? How could it affect society or politics beyond the border of its own tent camp? Why did Occupy not even seem to be bothered with giving continuity to its own practices, for instance through initiating more durable and representative institutions?

David Graeber’s *The Democracy Project: a History, a Crisis, a Movement* takes the opposite position vis-à-vis the Occupy movement and its significance. And of course, from one of Occupy Wall Street’s (OWS) most prominent initiators and spokespersons – in the academic sphere as well as the public media – one would expect no less. But on the other hand, a first glance at the book’s cover text and table of contents suggests that Graeber may end up committing a comparable (if opposite) fallacy as the above-mentioned critics. For one of the identified objectives of this book clearly is to explain why it ‘did work’ or ‘went right’ this time. This somewhat blunt statement serves as Graeber’s point of departure, but

is not thoroughly problematized throughout the book. Graeber's analysis does, however, manifest a completely different understanding of what it means for a political movement to 'work'. His first-person account of the Occupy-movement provides us with a different reading of what it means to be involved with political action. It may help us to formulate a reply to the often-voiced consequentialist critique of Occupy and similar movements. And, moreover, it serves as a sound example of what does remain after the tent camp has been evicted: a good and important story to tell.

Why did it 'work'?

But first, let me briefly outline the overall structure and argument of Graeber's book. In its introduction, Graeber stresses that it is not simply his aim to write an all-encompassing or 'objective' history of the Occupy movement. Instead, his point of departure is an anecdotal account of one of the many failed attempts to re-establish an occupied space, long after the eviction of Zuccotti Park. Graeber reconstructs an impromptu speech he delivered at a 'post-Occupy' protest action. While improvising a brief lecture on the history of democracy in America, Graeber argues, he suddenly realized that he 'hadn't been thinking of Occupy Wall Street as rooted in any grand tradition in U.S. history' (xiv). But, he argues, this movement could indeed be placed within such a tradition. The history of the U.S. is characterized by a struggle between democratic, popular movements on the one hand, and institutionalized politics 'from above' on the other hand, which aims to limit and control such democratic expression as much as possible. Even though the founding fathers successfully prevented the U.S. from becoming truly democratic, many Americans have always remained skeptical of the idea of government. It is from this perspective that Graeber aims to conceptualize the Occupy movement – as an expression of the very possibility to act democratically against the existing order.

So how did it all 'kick off', to refer to another aphorism popular in this context? In his first chapter Graeber provides a first-person account of the preamble to – and, eventually, the very moment of – the occupation of Zuccotti Park. This account strikingly highlights the strategic discussions and considerations that eventually led to the particular ways in which Occupy was staged and organized, as well as the many contingencies and coincidences with which the movement was confronted down the road. Occupy, Graeber effectively illustrates, was neither a centrally and tightly organized movement, whose task was simply to implement a pre-set strategy, nor the overly spontaneist and unorganized street party that it became in the representation of its critics. From the 'Arab Spring' and the UK Uncut campaign to Adbusters' call-out to 'Occupy Wall Street' and

the attempts of orthodox Marxist organizations to control the outcome of General Assemblies, many different ‘external’ factors largely influenced the eventual form that Occupy took. Graeber also reconstructs how such contingencies gave rise to several of OWS’s most distinctive features – such as the famous ‘99%’ slogan and the choice for Zuccotti Park as the movement’s stage.

It is discussed at length how this movement was characterized by a strategic preference for a ‘prefigurative politics’: ‘the idea that the organizational form that an activist group takes should embody the kind of society we wish to create’ (23). Occupy was not simply the means to an end external to it. Instead, its experimental and experiential nature is singled out as its most significant aspect. Rather than to ‘come up with a vision for a new political order’, Occupy’s initiators sought to ‘help create a way for everyone to do so’ (38). Notwithstanding the many external pressures to revise its strategic outlook, the movement succeeded in sticking to its prefigurative rationale. And it is for this reason, first and foremost, that it actually did ‘work’ this time.

The second chapter, which is titled ‘Why Did It Work?’, deserves to be discussed at length. Graeber goes on to scrutinize the economic, political and cultural circumstances that – in a remarkably short time – led to Occupy’s success and visibility. Graeber thus produces seven explanations for this success. First, the movement received wide international media coverage (and was only later taken up as a major news story by domestic media), partly due to its striking similarities with several protest movements or upheavals abroad. A second explanation for the movement’s success is its generational focus. Occupy most specifically represented a highly educated generation that has always ‘played the game by the rules’, but which after the economic crises was left gravely indebted and without much of a future perspective. Third, the significance of this wave of protest carried out by educated and indebted youth is due to the enormous economic role of the financial industry, and the many ways it instrumentalized relations of debt to serve its own commercial interests. Prior to the 2008 crisis, already one fifth of the average American household’s budget was spent servicing interest payments for loans and mortgages, fees and penalties, service charges and insurance overheads – for members of younger generations this even increased up to two fifths. Needless to say, it got significantly worse after the economic system had neared the verge of collapse.

A fourth reason that Graeber identifies is that the movement’s lack of clear demands to, or engagement with, the existing political system to many people had a strong appeal. As much as the revolting generation has vainly ‘played everything by the rules’ economically, the political disappointment in institutional representation in general (and in Obama’s government in

particular) led them to experiment with other ways to address their problems and change society. Following upon this, a fifth explanation for Occupy's success was its explicit radicalism. As opposed to Arab or South-European protesters, Graeber argues, Americans could not blame their economic and political crises on any 'outside force'. For Americans, there was no other option but to argue for political change within the United States itself, and it was abundantly clear that such change would need to be more than a mere re-arrangement of the status quo. On the other hand, of course, this does not mean that austerity and the exploitation of many indebted Americans is self-inflicted. '[I]f we did not do this to ourselves', Graeber stresses, a new protest movement first had 'to rethink the question of "who" we are' (109).

It is for this reason that the '99%' slogan was so successful, as it politically repositioned many Americans and made them realize that their system only served the interests of a '1%'. Occupy's central message thus had to revolve around challenging the political power and role of money in the U.S. To focus on this political role of money inevitably entails taking a revolutionary position. 'By gathering in the full sight of Wall Street, and creating a community without money, based on principles not just of democracy but of mutual caring, solidarity, and support, occupiers were proposing a revolutionary challenge not just to the power of money, but to the power of money to determine what life itself was supposed to be about' (127). Graeber identifies this as a sixth reason for Occupy's visibility. This central chapter is concluded with a defense against the aforementioned accusation that Occupy did not 'work' after all. Indeed, many things did go wrong, but it would be a mistake to assess the movement purely on basis of its (lack of) concrete results. After all, Graeber stresses, social change takes time. 'In one year, Occupy managed to both identify the problem – a system of class power that has effectively fused together finance and government – and to propose a solution: the creation of a genuinely democratic culture' (149). To that extent Occupy did indeed work.

Prefigurative democracies

In a following chapter Graeber returns to his earlier depiction of U.S. history in terms of a continuing struggle over democracy. Notwithstanding our common reading of their work, what the Founding Fathers loathed most of all, Graeber argues, was precisely the Athenian idea of direct democracy. Once 'the mob begins to think and to reason', (163) it may as well end up putting forth radical demands that serve its own interests – such as the abolition of debt or the redistribution of wealth and property. A centrally organized republic obviously served best to keep such 'horrors of democracy' (158) at bay. Obviously, a lot

more could be said about the political history of the U.S., and Graeber’s account may at times be somewhat sweeping. But of course, the point is rather to show how throughout American history, democracy mostly took place outside of the dominant structures and institutions of power and representation. Graeber deliberately places the prefigurative experiment of Occupy within this democratic counter-tradition.

What follows is a more practical chapter on the forms and structures of organization that have characterized Occupy Wall Street. Graeber first gives an elaborate introduction into the rationale and practice of consensus oriented decision-making procedures. In a ‘Q&A’ section he further discusses some of the often-voiced objections or uncertainties regarding such direct-democratic processes (e.g. ‘What to do if people abuse the system?’). Clearly, such decision-making procedures served not only as a means to establish a predetermined end. Through the consensus process occupiers also tried to provide a certain image or model of what an alternative social order might look like.

Occupy’s prefigurative politics manifests a refusal to present demands to the existing political order – which, after all, would entail an implicit recognition of its legitimacy. Through implementing direct democratic organization directly as inherent part of political practice itself, one instead acts ‘as if one is already free’ (232). That being said, Graeber does acknowledge that ‘[i]t’s a difficult business creating a new, alternative civilization, especially in the midst of the coldest and most unfriendly streets of major American cities, full of the sick, homeless and psychologically destroyed’ (241). By endorsing a prefigurative strategy one is obviously not instantly exempted from the many forms of repression and exploitation that the capitalist order imposes on us. The ability to act ‘as if one is already free’ thus is limited from without (e.g. by police brutality) as well as from within. But nevertheless, Graeber stresses, the movement did succeed in temporarily liberating space in order to immediately ‘transform it into a space of love and caring’ (258).

For the strategy of prefigurative occupation to be successful in the longer term, however, it will eventually have to gain more continuity. Graeber pleads for the creation of a network of liberated spaces: ‘the ultimate aim would be to create local assemblies in every town and neighborhood, as well as networks of occupied dwellings, occupied workspaces, and occupied farms that can become the foundations of an alternative political and economic system’ (261). Obviously, Occupy has not yet managed to establish such a network, but several strategic options can be derived from earlier examples elsewhere (from the Iraqi Sadrist to the Zapatistas, from Bolivian populism to the Argentinian protest movements of 2001). Such examples could help us to give more durability to prefigurative

practices such as Occupy's, so that it will go on to 'work' as it did in the fall of 2011.

In the meantime, Graeber concludes in a short closing chapter, Occupy has at least been successful in one not unimportant respect: it has 'broken the spell' of a hegemonic neo-liberal discourse. The Occupy tent camp has shown that the potential for communism and democracy always is there, that 'we are already anarchists' (295). The challenge now is to expand these experiences and turn them into more omnipresent principles of organization. This, moreover, will remain an experimental process. For another valuable lesson that we have learned from Occupy is that revolutionary practice should not be mistaken for the implementation of a pre-set blueprint. It has 'worked' first and foremost because the question what exactly was supposed to 'work' always remained at stake within its revolutionary practice itself.

From prefiguration to 'figuration'?

The remaining question then is, of course, how are we to ensure the continuity of this prefigurative practice? How are we to proceed after the tent camp has been evicted? Although these questions are addressed in Graeber's book, they do remain largely unanswered. The book itself, however, serves as a good example for the work that is to be done after the political moment of movements like Occupy has come to an end. For one of the more durable things that remain after the prefigurative moment is precisely what this book offers: first-person accounts of what it means to be part of such political moments.

For there is one important difference between the way in which Graeber describes these events in his book, on the one hand, and these events themselves, on the other. Political action does not follow a clear, narrative structure with a beginning, an end and certain outcomes. It does not obviously 'work' the way it appears to 'work' when approached retrospectively, from a storyteller's perspective. A political moment like that of Occupy is a complex mash of different relations, origins, causes, motivations, outcomes, successes and failures. It is afterwards, once such a political moment has come to an end, that we can start to ascribe a certain 'structure' to it. By relating different events or acts with each other, by amplifying and emphasizing certain aspects and by articulating a language that grants a meaning to these different elements, the storyteller creates a unity, lays out a pattern which was implicitly present, but not always perceptible in the 'naked' facts themselves.

This, in other words, is the difference between actions and stories. The former are experimental and spontaneous. They may be prepared, but cannot be successfully based on a pre-set blueprint, as Graeber rightly stresses. The latter, on the other hand, obviously are composed and articulated. Stories that follow upon action, thus add something essential to it: a ‘design’ that initially was lacking. As the Italian feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero argues, ‘[t]he significance of the story lies precisely in the figural unity of the design, and in this simple ‘resulting’, which does not follow from any projected plan’ (Cavarero, 2000: 1). Cavarero therefore stresses that ‘[t]he figure, the unity of the design... – if it comes – only comes afterwards’ (144). Here, an important step is made from prefigurative action to figuration; from the open and experimental action to the point where a meaning can be ascribed to it. At the moment itself, it may have been impossible to determine if and/or why the Occupy movement indeed was ‘working’. Those judgments are left for the retrospective gaze of the storyteller.

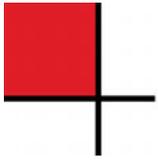
In *The Democracy Project* Graeber once again proves himself a great storyteller. This time, he approaches his subject not merely from a participant’s perspective (as, for instance, in his ethnography of direct action [2009]), but instead from the position of one of its most prominent initiators. The insights he thus provides are both interesting and engaging. But more important is that there is a strategic use to such stories as well. For movements like Occupy do not ‘work’ evidently, themselves, they must be ‘put to work’ afterwards, in the stories that remain when the tent camp has been evicted.

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Towards collective liberation

Jenni Ramone

review of

Crass, C. (2013) *Towards Collective Liberation: Anti-racist Organizing, Feminist Praxis, and Movement Building Strategy*. PM Press: Oakland, California. (PB, pp.295, US\$20.00, ISBN 9781604866544)

Introduction

Towards Collective Liberation is a collection of separate essays working towards the overall aim of collective liberation from capitalist inequality. The book is engaging and well-researched, combining anecdotal evidence from Crass' personal journey as an activist with historical discussion on various social movements which Crass suggests form strands of the anarchist family. Essays speak directly to activists to encourage them to value their contributions and to offer guidance on how to work collectively, keeping basic principles in mind regarding class, race, and gender equality. As a documentary text on contemporary North American socialist activism, the text is a detailed guide to specific projects, concerns, and challenges. The main strength of this text is its confident assertion of the possibility of a socialist future, in the face of mass media representations of the impossibility of socialist politics.

In addition to chapters focusing on historical discussion in the first section of the book, there are chapters on feminism, with a focus on anti-racism and on ways that men can act within the feminist revolution. This aspect is covered in two chapters. The first chapter asking men to engage with feminism explores the author's own horror when he was accused of being sexist because of the way he

and other men in an activist study group excluded or ignored women, and his reluctance to admit to and deal with this accusation while the second offers men a list of twenty tools to further feminism. Some of these tools include studying feminist thinkers and writers (the list includes Audre Lorde and Gloria Anzaldua), studying historical social movements led by women, learning from the men who supported those female-led movements, and learning about sexual violence and crime. In addition to these instructions to study, there are reminders to appreciate women in everyday life and to take on 'women's work' and to recruit other men to such tasks which, for Crass, include 'cooking, cleaning, providing transportation, replenishing food and supplies, caring for children' (146). There are tools that aim to overcome the idea that men and women communicate differently, with men as competitive speakers who aim to solve problems and women as cooperative speakers who see their role as to listen and empathise: Crass encourages men to ask for help and to ask questions, and insists that men remember 'you will be needed in the movement when you realize that you are not needed in the movement' (*ibid.*). This is a novel approach that asks men to adapt their behaviour and challenge their mindset and to recruit other men, in order to further feminism. Further chapters focus on liberation movements and organisations and include discussion of white anti-racist movements including the Heads Up Collective and the Catalyst Project, Anti-racist Queer organisation, and the Occupy movement.

Crass has worked in an activist role that he terms 'organizing' for twenty-three years. The nature of this role is peaceful, community-based, and focuses on building relationships and collectives who share a vision of equality. Crass works to nurture groups and individuals, with the intention of identifying those who can provide inspiration and support for others involved in the collective, citing as his own inspiration Lucy Parsons, a Mexican and African-American journalist who began editing *Freedom: A revolutionary anarchist-communist monthly* in 1891 and writers and orators Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman. Goldman is perhaps best known for her expulsion from the US and the well-known quotation which is often attributed to her, 'If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution', a comment that sounds flippant but actually accords with her focus on highlighting the significance of politics in people's everyday lives and her insistence on women's rights and issues of sexuality and motherhood, as Crass describes. His role models are all American, and his activism focuses on American history, political contexts, and contemporary problems. In this way his work is a departure from Marxist global narratives, and this is reflected in his written style, in the way in which he engages with Marxist principles, and in the methods that he suggests will enable collective organisation against capitalist inequality.

Crass' aims

With this book, Crass states that his aim is to 'help our movements further develop the visions, strategies, cultures, organizations, practices, and relationships we need to build and win a democratic and socialist society' (15). There are a number of interesting things to say about this comment, which is the first clear statement of aims in the text. Firstly, Crass carefully avoids setting up his own position as any kind of leader, by noting that his book should 'help' to achieve collective goals, goals that are shared by 'our movements', that is, multiple movements rather than one coherent system. The lengthy author's acknowledgements and the long introduction to the book, written by feminist autobiographer and activist Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, also show that Crass aims to avoid presenting himself in a leadership role or holding himself up as an exemplar for others to follow. His tendency to offer a supportive voice to others rather than to lead may appear to contrast with his acknowledgement of his own heroes (Parsons, Goldman, Berkman), and this is one of many apparent contradictions in the book. Rather than suggesting confused aims, though, Crass' approach seems purposeful; he is, perhaps, expressing humility, but at the same time he states repeatedly that his aim is to reach as many people as possible and to encourage everyone who shares the vision to end inequality that their contribution is valid – or, more than valid, vital: 'everyone reading this book is needed' (14), Crass writes, no matter if they are not sure whether they are 'radical enough, involved enough, experienced enough, well-read enough' (13). He continues: 'we need liberation movements of millions of people, from all backgrounds, from all walks of life, with a wide range of experience, playing many different roles' (14).

Again, here, while enlisting the support of many different people, Crass is referring to liberation movements in the plural. This is one way in which Crass' approach differs from traditional Marxist, communist or anarchist writing, and it could be viewed as either a failing, or a strength. On the one hand, the route to equality is meandering because of its attention to various voices which include those who champion environmentalism and religious freedom as well as those issues which are closest to Marxist and anarchist principles including race, gender, and, of course, class. At times, Crass locates anarchism in the very slightest of acts, such as community gardens and cooperative childcare (23). Crass justifies this by stating that 'most anarchists do not wear their politics on their sleeves but practice them in their broader political work, families, communities, and organizations' (23). It appears that Crass' strategy to gain support for anti-capitalist organization is to see anarchism at work everywhere. It is likely that by engaging with numerous collectives with slightly differing agendas Crass will reach more individuals and demonstrate the shared vision for

equality amongst diverse groups, while promoting anarchism as a peaceful and natural position, and one that has potential, in contrast with the dominant representation of anarchism as chaotic and violent.

Using the word 'win' rather than 'create' or 'achieve' in his statement of aims is an uncharacteristically competitive or combative, perhaps even a materialistic, term, in an otherwise thoroughly cooperative and non-violent message. And to make a final observation on Crass' statement of aims, I would refer to the position of the word 'socialist' in his sentence, which comes after 'democratic' and as an addition to it rather than as part of the phrase 'democratic socialism'. There is a tendency in the text to introduce terms like 'Socialism', 'Marxism', 'global elite', 'working-class' and 'ruling class' quietly. These terms are used, and Crass leaves no ambiguity about his political commitments, yet his approach is to work gradually towards these recognised terms and to drop them into the text rather than using highly politicised language from the outset. In general, the tone of Crass' work marks it as different from many other collections of essays on political themes. He uses a personal tone and writes regularly of personal incidents, experiences, and emotions.

'We can do this'

Crass engages the reader in his personal journey towards activism by explaining how he has had to confront feelings of 'inadequacy, isolation, and powerlessness' as well as 'denial, fear, guilt, and shame' (14). He describes a vision for 'all of us' and speaks to the reader as an individual, explaining that 'whether you have been involved in social justice work for decades or only a few weeks, the stories and lessons in the chapters to follow can help you on your path' (14). This adoption of a personal and informal tone is an effort to garner support from those people who may feel disenfranchised even by the groups working to support them, people whose ordinary vocabulary does not include words like 'patriarchy', 'imperialism' and 'praxis'. Praxis, though, is used in the subtitle of Crass' book and may be used to avoid using a term like 'political action', in order to break with all discourse of resistance and mobilization. This draws attention to a contradiction in his work which marks his departure from Marxist discourse.

Individualism vs. collectivity

In breaking with Marxist discourse by employing a personal tone and an open, all-encompassing vision for the work of anarchism, Crass seems to struggle with the contradictory issue of individualism versus collectivity. Enlisting support from the reader against capitalism, Crass refers to the emotional effect of

capitalism which makes individuals feel ‘inadequate, isolated, and powerless’ (13), and notes that he, as an individual, found strength in the stories told by other activists. Crass notes how he was enabled, through hearing others’ stories, to place his personal experience into historical and systematic analysis of ways that power operates today. Coming from a US perspective, it may be that Crass is so firmly entrenched in the message of individualism that he is unable to avoid it. Alternatively, aware of his audience’s reliance on notions of individual merit, choice and ownership in the US, Crass may find it necessary to acknowledge and build in to his vision some concession to individualism. The sense of contradiction between the need to acknowledge the individual and the effort to work collectively operates throughout the book and restricts a strong message of political organisation in favour of a more emotive call to act ‘from a place of love that helps us honor and respect our own humanity and the humanity of others’ (284). As a result, the definition of ‘government’ within a socialist collective provided by Crass is somewhat vague, based on ‘generating and practicing legitimate authority’, taking collective action against inequality in any appropriate way. This involves doing more than opposing an oppressive system, which might uphold that oppressive system, and instead is an intention to create new systems based on liberation. While Crass implies that the reader should act to govern by legitimate means, he also suggests that this kind of leadership is already in place in the work done in ‘families, classrooms, workplaces, community institutions’. So while his strategy is to encourage people to see their commitments as part of wider political movement for change, he does not offer a strong strategy for achieving the goal of ‘a vibrant and healthy democratic and socialist society’ (284) and instead insists on its possibility. This is, in fact, potentially a very powerful message in the face of media representation, especially in the US, of socialism as an impossible utopia or even a dystopia. The impossibility of socialism is belied by the telling statistics that in Cuba, where a system of state socialism has been in operation for sixty-five years, the average age is 79 (equal to the US; the UK figure according to the World Health Organization’s most recent 2011 list is 80, and the highest figure is Japan at 83); healthcare is among the best in the world; and maternity care is the best in the Americas, with Canada coming second. It is noteworthy that Cuba is not mentioned in Crass’ book despite its continued strength as a socialist society in the face of hostile trade embargos.

Despite this need to grapple with the contradictory messages of individualism and collectivity, Crass does demonstrate a deep-rooted commitment to Marxist principles in a number of ways. He reminds readers of the importance of history by offering detailed summaries of the history of the anarchist movement and of grassroots left-wing movements in the US in the 1990s, and by engaging with the Civil Rights Movement as a historical lesson in organizing. He also expresses very clearly that the first problem that the Marxist activist faces in contemporary

capitalist society is that, as Moyra Haslett has put it in *Marxist Literary and Cultural Theories* (2000), many people are unable, not only to act against capitalism, but even to think against capitalism, and ‘Capitalism’s dominance is thus more ideological than ever’ (Haslett, 2000: 57).

One interesting feature of Crass’ work is his engagement with imperialism in general terms, and with postcolonial thought more specifically. Crass makes the interesting observation that capitalism is a ‘constant process of colonization and exploitation of working people’ (15-16). In this context Crass uses postcolonial allusion to draw on the ideas of a number of significant postcolonial thinkers: He alludes to Ngugi wa Thiong’o (Ngugi, 1981) when he claims that white people must ‘decolonize their minds’ (18), and echoes the ideas of Amilcar Cabral and Frantz Fanon (Cabral, 1993; Fanon, 1993) who insist on the significance of culture to enable freedom from oppression by conveying the importance of cultural and intellectual activity as well as historical study as expressed by South African Black Consciousness leader Steven Biko (15). The title of his book comes from bell hooks’s essay ‘Love as the practice of freedom’ (1994), and bell hooks, a theorist whose work is significant to postmodern, feminist, and postcolonial studies, is an important thinker for Crass.

Building liberatory power

The clearest message that emerges from Crass’ work is his commitment to using a range of strategies and approaches, as he states clearly in his opening statement. A second and related aim is to convey the idea that anarchism is not a discreet or limited political margin, but that in fact it can be witnessed in movements as diverse as the Civil Rights movement and ongoing anti-racism groups, the women’s movement and campaigners for women’s liberation and motherhood rights, queer liberation, pacifism (citing the Left radio station KPFA/Pacifica in this category), and environmental activism. In part, Crass aims to rescue anarchism not just from its hostile media portrayal, but also from the way in which it is sometimes held too preciously by those who work within the movement: Crass notes that the ‘culture of “more radical than thou” isn’t welcoming, supportive, sustainable, healthy, or successful in achieving our goals’ (22). Interestingly, American musician and socialist activist David Rovics has addressed this same tendency to create a hierarchy of activism in the song ‘I’m a better anarchist than you’ (Rovics, 2007). Crass conveys the contribution made by anarchism and anarchist principles to all aspects of life, bringing the term ‘anarchy’ out of obscurity and ambiguity. If sometimes the specific degree to which anarchists or anarchism was behind social change is exaggerated, then this

is justified by the effort to remove the stigma from the term anarchism, and to convey a truer definition of its meaning, function, and aims.

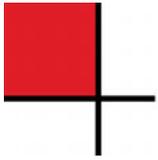
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A bequest from the barricades

David Harvie

review of

Scholl, C. (2012), *Two sides of a barricade: (Dis)order and summit protest in Europe*, Albany: SUNY Press (PB, pp. 272+xiii, £19.97, ISBN 9781438445120)

I was gripped by this book. I enjoyed it partly because it tells my own story – and who can resist their own story? Or rather (because only I can tell my own story), it tells the author's story of a series of events and of a movement that I was part of. Namely: that wave of North American and European counter-summit protests that emerged with the mobilisation against the WTO in Seattle in November 1999 (or possibly with the 'Carnival Against Capital' in London a few months earlier), and then waxed and waned over the course of the following eight years or so.

But – my own history apart – *Two sides of a barricade* is of far wider importance, at least to anti-capitalists. It suggests: first, that this cycle of counter-summit mobilisations mattered, and second, that its trajectory – its *movement* – can teach us lessons more generally relevant to anti-capitalist movements.

Christian Scholl's analysis is powerful because it is underpinned by a number of important principles – principles all too frequently neglected by supposedly anti-systemic scholarship. By 'anti-systemic scholarship', the author means scholarship, whether academic or not, that critiques the capitalist mode of production and that, further, suggests, whether implicitly or explicitly, that this system – capitalism – should be overthrown or transcended or replaced by some other social system.

First, he reads summit protests *politically*, in the sense used by Harry Cleaver in *Reading Capital politically* (Cleaver, 2000). That is, he reads summit protests not from the perspective of ‘social stability’ or ‘law and order’ or even ‘democracy’, but from the perspective of anti-systemic movements; and his analysis is designed to inform such movements. As Scholl writes, his ‘standpoint... resists being socialized methodologically as a “social movement scholar”’ (18–19). Second, Scholl takes seriously Mario Tronti’s maxim, first formulated in ‘Lenin in England’ and developed throughout *Operai e capitale*, (Tronti, 1966) that working-class struggle drives capitalist development: that the struggle of the working class and capital develops as a spiralling ‘double helix’. Thus in the context of summit mobilisations: counter-summit protestors innovate tactically, and this forces the state to respond; the state’s response provokes, in turn, another round of anti-systemic tactical innovation. Third – and following from the second principle – Scholl understands social movements as *moving*. Fourth – and again relatedly – Scholl’s approach is anti-identitarian. Thus the categories – state, ‘social movement’ (understood as noun), protestor, etc., as well as history itself – are understood as open.

Finally, antagonism is central: politics is understood as a fundamentally antagonistic process. This antagonism at the heart of politics is alluded to in the ‘barricade’ of the book’s title. This principle is important not only for the analysis that runs throughout the book, but also for understanding why summit protests themselves are (or were) important, why they mattered. Drawing on other studies of social movements, Scholl contends that ‘the success of social protest depends not so much on organisational resources, but on its ability to disrupt established routines’ (44). Distinguishing ‘contained contention’ and ‘transgressive contention’, he argues that,

Transgressive contention is central... because, first it provides visibility and consciousness about antagonistic power relations, and, second, because it challenges and threatens the stability of existing power relations. This is not to say that no communication [of political messages] takes place, only that it starts with the production of conflict. (46)

With these principles informing his investigation, Scholl focuses on six particular counter-summit mobilisations: those against the joint IMF and World Bank meeting in Prague (in 2000), against the EU summit in Gothenburg (also in 2000), and the anti-G8 counter-summits in Genoa (in 2001), in Evian (2003), in Gleneagles (2005) and in Heiligendamm (2007). The analysis is organised around ‘four contested sites of struggles: *bodies, space, communication, and law*. We can see protest events as an interactive process of *bodies* moving through *space* and *communicating* about *legality*’ (5–6; emphasis in original).

In the chapter entitled ‘Bodies that matter’, then, Scholl explores the extraordinary variety of ways in which protestors have used their ‘disobedient bodies’ (as opposed to ‘docile’ ones) to (attempt to) ‘surprise and disrupt their opponents’ (72–73) – and the way that protestors have innovated their bodily tactics in the face of the state’s response. In particular, he focuses on four of the most prominent bodily tactics: those of the *Tute Bianche* (white overalls), the ‘Pink & Silver’, the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army and black blocs. Opposed to these white, pink or black bodies are the ‘blue’ bodies of the police. He examines the various ways in which these tactics were employed in conscious attempts to subvert or escape state logics of conflict and confrontation, and instead to shift the antagonism onto an (unpredictable) terrain more favourable to the protestors and their ‘cause’.

It is important to stress, as Scholl does, that these were *tactics*, not *identities*. So, for example, quoting from a *Tute Bianche* text: ‘The white overall is not an identity, it is a tool. One shouldn’t even say “I’m a white overall”, the correct phrase is “I wear a white overall”.’ This anti-identitarian impulse is crucial. Just as identity is essential for capital in general (‘identification is domination’, as John Holloway [2002: vii] writes at the beginning of *Change the world without taking power*), so, in particular:

Police regulation of protestors’ bodies relies very much on protocols. As do many hierarchical organisations, police try to establish standardised procedures for dealing with identifiable problems. During disruptive summit protests, it is the absence of protocols regulating the treatment of protestors’ bodies in such instances that is critical. For protocols rely on the identification of these specific uses of bodies in order to channel interaction with them into predictability. So identification emerges as a crucial part of the social and regulatory control of unpredictable bodies. (72)

Scholl interprets these attempts to identify and categorise protestors and their various behaviours using Foucault’s analysis of state processes of creation of ‘docile bodies’ and ‘normalisation’ – such ‘docile’ or ‘normalised’ bodies are easier to police and, more generally, to govern. But the refusal of identity he praises goes deeper, I think: the antagonistic class relationship at the heart of capital relies on the subordination of heterogeneous, concrete *doing* to commensurable abstract labour (the subordination of use-value to exchange-value). In other words, identity and identification – the process of identifying one activity or one human being with another – is fundamental for capital. Thus the importance of an anti-identitarian impulse to anti-capitalist politics.

Scholl’s discussion of his other three ‘contested sites’ is similarly incisive and provocative. Thus, in the chapter entitled ‘Leave them no space!’, he explores, amongst other issues, the state-protestor dynamics surrounding the ‘fence’ (or,

in police terminology, the ‘technical barrier’) and the ‘red zone’: while in one sense ‘securing’ a ‘safe space’ for the summit meeting, at the same time the fence itself created another ‘security concern’ for the police, a new terrain for protestors to exploit. Here Scholl also explores the various tactics police have used across different summits to spatially incapacitate protestors, depriving them of ‘their most powerful spatial repertoire: to move, and therefore, to be unpredictable as to where their movements can inhibit the flows necessary for a summit protest’ (128–29).

In ‘Psy(c)ops, spin doctors, and the communication of dissent’, Scholl warns that ‘one of the effects of ... (psy)cops in our minds ... is the erasure of memory [of our struggles]. ... What remains is merely a history of public disorder, but not of dissent. When nobody anymore wants to say “I have been there”, then the official account is left as the only surviving story’ (142). More generally, he examines ‘the problem of communicating dissent in liberal representative democracies’ (142).

Finally, ‘A revolt is a revolt is a revolt’ explores questions around violence, the law and the ‘state of exception’. Here Scholl points out that certain elements may seek to ‘introduce moment[s] of sovereign power into antisystemic dissent’, thus ‘transform[ing] constituent power into constituted power’ (180). He also suggests that, while state violence may be murderous (as in Genoa, with the unpunished police murder of Carlo Giuliani), ‘bringing about a state of exception shows the potential of summit protests for creating a historical rupture’ (201).

If I have a criticism of this book, it is that Scholl pays insufficient attention to the question of organisation. I would have found useful more discussion of the strengths and limitations of the organisational forms adopted by various groups. Although he notes that ‘the problem associated with decentralized structures avoiding representational forms of politics is that large meetings become rather symbolic (or affective) and practically redundant’ (151) and that in some situations ‘the commitment to transparency and horizontal decision-making contracts... the practical necessity of clandestine forms of communication for planning transgressive actions’ (152). However, I would be interested to read a more sustained discussion of these problems.

My second ‘criticism’ is in fact not a criticism at all. It concerns the lessons for current movements of the cycle of counter-summit protests analysed so well in this book. Scholl hardly mentions the anti-austerity and other struggles that have emerged in the wake of the global economic and financial crisis that erupted in 2007. How and what, in the words of Phillip Pignarre and Isabelle Stengers in *Capitalist sorcery*, do we ‘inherit from Seattle’? (Pignarre and Stengers, 2011: 3) Or, as explored by The Free Association (2011) in *Moments of excess*, if a new

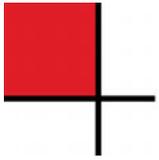
‘generation’ is to generate itself – if anti-systemic movements are to *regenerate* – then which organisational forms, which tactics should we retain from earlier struggles and which should we leave behind? How to exceed the possibilities of the past? Scholl does not address these questions in this book. But why should he? These are questions for us all. Counter-summit mobilisers – part of the wider anti-globalisation ‘movement of movements’ – have bequeathed present and future anti-systemic movements an extraordinary array of tactics and ideas. What Scholl has done is provide us with an excellent tool with which to assess our inheritance.

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There is always an alternative: Outlaws for contemporary resistance

Ozan Nadir Alakavuklar

review of

Parker, M. (2012) *Alternative business: Outlaws, crime and culture*. London: Routledge. (PB, pp. 183, US\$50.95, ISBN 9780415586481)

Introduction: Alternatives as critique

TINA (There Is No Alternative) was one of the symbolic abbreviations of the 1980s. Whilst Margaret Thatcher used this phrase to praise her party's programme throughout 1970s and 1980s, in the following years TINA turned into an ideological symbol that her allies in the United States and around the globe mobilized against any sort of alternative idea or model. But, of course, there have always been alternatives to the corporation, to market managerialism and to monopoly capital. While we might point to families, churches, NGOs, cooperatives, charities, trust-owned organizations and state owned enterprises as some of the structures that underpin our diverse economies, there have been other alternatives perceived as less legitimate as well. However, that does not lessen the explanatory power of such alternatives regarding the nature of society, market and management. This book is about these organisations.

Martin Parker's point in studying supposedly 'outlaw' forms of organization is to challenge the ideological and moral basis of what we take to be common knowledge about organizations and management that is rehearsed and taught in places like business schools. 'Can you imagine studying in a biology department

which only teaches animals with four legs and omits the rest? Or getting a degree in history based on studying a part of 17th-century Staffordshire? This is what business schools are doing' (Parker, 2008). In other words, as market managerialism dominates management research and education (Parker, 2002), the place of alternative forms in management knowledge becomes marginalised. Hence, there is a need to confront such dominant views by demonstrating there are alternatives that may help us broaden our understanding and question taken-for-granted assumptions regarding markets, businesses, organisations and management.

This book brings together much of Parker's previously published work on so called 'outlaw' organizations. An entertaining and easy-to-read book, with an extensive bibliography, it touches upon core questions regarding the relationship between culture and economy. As such the book is primarily cultural analysis rather than a comparative study of formal and informal organizations; indeed, it questions such a division. Beginning with Robin Hood and moving onto chapters on pirates, the mafia, cowboys, robbers and gangs, the book offers a cultural analysis of the practices of outlaw organizing drawn from a number of stories, films and other texts about these 'villains'. In these chapters it is demonstrated in particular how the wild, untamed and violent characteristics of outlaws are tamed and turned into a source of fun through commodities and toys. Whilst we read this narrative of transformation of the reality to popular culture commodities and eventually to profit for big companies, we also notice how alternative organising may be studied as well. The book is organized in nine chapters and in the following I offer a short summary of each and then a discussion of the importance of the book for the field of critical management studies (CMS) and anarchism.

Outlaws: Where 'culture and economy', 'fact and fiction' and 'legitimate and illegitimate' intertwine

In the first chapter, Parker primarily introduces how the outlaw concept is open to debate and what an outlaw might represent. Drawing on arguments from Hobsbawm, he suggests how hard it is to differentiate between reality and myth associated with the historical outlaws such as Robin Hood. He then provides justification for writing about outlaws and invites us to expand our views of what is involved in 'economy', 'business' and 'organisations'. He argues that the best way to understand what outlaws have to say about economy and culture is to bring together disciplines and concepts that the mainstream social science would have us keep separate. Parker then defends the subjective methodological basis of the book (a point to which I return below).

In the second chapter Parker specifically focuses on the myth of Robin Hood. He takes him as a historical archetype and fictional character found in different cultures as a trickster who stands against the established power and injustice but mostly with limited subversive potential. He notes that in the UK the character began as an outlaw around the fourteenth century and turned into a noble bandit around the sixteenth century, a patriot against Normans, a romantic image against industrialization and a children's book hero around the nineteenth century, and a cultural commodity that is consumed all around the world today. Despite these diverse forms, Robin Hood's defining trait – a noble bandit fighting for the justice and right against the violent, arrogant and wealthy hegemonic power, on the side of the poor - provides a script upon which to demonstrate the counter culture characteristics in the fight against cruelty, inequality, injustice and oppression regardless of the facts and/or fiction. Many of these qualities are common to the other outlaws Parker dissects in later chapters.

The third chapter begins with the analysis of piracy in the golden age that originated in the Atlantic in 1700s. Depending upon the historical realities and sources of piracy, the author argues how international trade became an important intersectional point for emerging states, merchants and pirates. Parker traces the first representations of piracy to Daniel Defoe's work and its effect on subsequent writings showing particularly how cultural figures are commodified. (How about a political economy reading of *Pirates of the Caribbean*?). Alongside this, Parker discusses the sources and outcomes of the alternative anarchistic, proto-democratic organizational structures of piracy. He argues that this was in complete contrast with the existing arrangements of the navy and trade ships at that time. He suggests that this leads us to consider piracy as a form of utopia based on democratic and communal ideals while at the same time reminding us how such wild characters and their images are appropriated by the market forces. 'The character seems to embody a challenge in terms of the organisation of labour and the distribution of reward, and to occupy a historical moment when the legitimacy of states, merchants and international trade was not yet fully established. This gap, this power vacuum, even today provides iconography for imagining freedoms beyond those that market managerialism allows, and perhaps even forms of re-distribution that erase hierarchies of status and reward' (46). In the end however, Parker claims that pirates come to have the characteristics that we want to see in them as sadists, libertarians or outsiders.

The next chapter takes us from the sea to the landlubbing piracy of robbers, smugglers and highwaymen between 1600 and 1850. By drawing on historical books, pamphlets, novels, songs, plays and operas, Parker demonstrates how real outlaws became romanticised as products of popular culture and literature. He

notes that these characters represent an escape from crowded industrialized life and are examples of romantic nostalgia for the good old days before urbanized capitalism replaced feudal relations. Hence, robbers are characterized as rebellious people opposed to the centralized and bounded civilization and as supporters of rural justice promising new experiences outside the law. In the same way, smugglers are presented as those that struggle against the centralized structures and are lauded as the providers of cheap goods for local people. In the same vein, the well dressed, gentle and charming highwayman is pictured as a romantic character who stands up against the powerful or rich who may deserve to be robbed in the search for justice.

In chapter five, Parker moves to the other side of the Atlantic, to North America. Here he explores the historical characters of Native Americans, mountain men and, in particular, cowboys, how they were represented and how they stood against the established order. He focuses on the idea of 'the frontier' and how living beyond this built the mythical foundations of US society. He notes how mass communication created an economy based on the dissemination of stories about these figures who sought their fate and destiny in the Wild West. In this chapter, cowboys are portrayed as the outlaws of the West who sometimes work and sometimes steal, but mostly as individuals escaping to the nature and authenticity of the West from the civilized and industrialized East. Besides, as Robin Hood like folk heroes, with their moral codes they struggle with the powerful, rich and the corrupt, such as railroad tycoons or local politicians. Parker further focuses on the fine line between the good and the bad, and discusses the relationship between the law and legitimacy in the Wild West. In contrast to how West became materialized and commodified as a tourist attraction today, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the radical reading of Wild West in terms of what it really represents as localization, sustainability and smallness in resistance to rising capitalism.

In the next chapter the author takes the reader to the 20th century and locations such as New York and Sicily in order to analyse the mafia organization as an outlaw. We are offered a vision of how thin the line can be as we start comparing the mafia with modern business and the *Dons* (mafia leaders, fathers) with managers. Beginning with the similarities in terms of the product diversity, geographical spread, economy, durability, organizational culture and the rational manager, it is demonstrated how the mafia is not altogether dissimilar from legitimate businesses. 'My point here', Parker writes, 'is that much Mafia business is just ordinary business, and that the dividing line between Mafia business and some other "uncorrupted" business is actually rather difficult to see' (96). He notes how modern business conceptions of cohesion, inter-firm links, trust and co-operation may become key success factors for mafia. He then

explains how ‘the line that divides the Mafia from real business might be less about some sort of description of what a business organisation looks like, or what the Mafia looks like, and more about its methods of doing business’ (99). As a part of this analysis, we also see the competition of the mafia with the state over the use of violence and the priority of family (business). In the end, again, our author claims, we see what we want in these characters in popular culture such as in *The Sopranos* and *Scarface*. We find fantasies of often plush and exciting masculine worlds that help us escape our daily routines of organized and mundane work.

As we get closer to present day, Parker takes us to the times of noble robbers who are gentle, charming and having a class position in society, such as Arsene Lupin or Raffles. There are also others who once innocent but forced to live as outlaws to seek revenge or to fight for fair treatment. In the end we see outlaws with manners acting against the powerful, corrupt and abusive structures and unjust order. As an extension, particularly following the years of great depression, we also see the heroes of gangs such as Bonnie and Clyde or John Dillinger who become heroes to the people because they steal from the banks and the rich but not from the poor. Whilst reading the chapter, we notice, as they become famous, how popular culture (e.g. movies) embraces them and how, in turn, these outlaws use popular culture for their own benefit. The author also focuses on those gangs that are the predecessors of today’s organized crime. He discusses various versions of gangs from all over the world including Russia, Japan, Mexico and New Zealand, and their common characteristics in terms of doing businesses on the other side of the law. Even though Parker does not question the reason for their existence, he tends to demonstrate that their mythology has a sort of moral and political aspiration in terms of resistance to the powerful and the search for justice.

The following chapter deals with how popular culture is consumed in today’s workplaces in ways that help employees escape the suppressing nature of work. He discusses the popular culture artefacts such as coffee mugs, stickers, airport books, TV series, comics, ads and blockbuster movies in addition to anti-work or anti-boss websites. As a part of this, he problematizes studying organizations, their cultures and counter-cultures. As an alternative he suggests a cultural studies perspective in order to understand how dissent and resistance to capitalist economy, work and organization is culturally articulated and cuts through the dualisms of culture and economy, dissent and co-optation. Parker claims that the culture and counter-cultures of organizations are dialectically related and that there can be no superiority of one over the other. Hence, he warns us against totalizing, fetishizing or romanticizing representations of power or resistance. Accordingly, as resistance varies in terms of different contexts,

Parker concludes the chapter by highlighting how contested the nature of resistance and power relationships at work are and the ways in which outlaws are connected to such modern representations of resistance.

In the final chapter Parker considers possible criticisms of studying outlaws. He admits that outlaws are often violent, have masculine and macho characteristics and glorify theft and burglary. He claims that it is hard to draw borders between the constructs of legitimate/illegitimate, fact/fiction, economy/culture and co-optation/critique. As a part of this, Parker asks why we still maintain a place for the erstwhile criminals in popular culture. One reason, capitalism sells such artefacts to generate profit. But, he also reminds us of Durkheim's arguments on the role of deviance in helping society learn what it is to be normal and within the law. He also argues how outlaws actually symbolize fantasies and safety valves where the oppressed society searches for freedom and non-routine.

Having discussed the motives behind focusing on outlaws, he offers us typology of the analysed characters on the axes of countryside vs. urbanized and individualism vs. collectivism. But, for him, rather than this structural analysis, the counter-culture and its dynamics with respect to resistance promise much more to us. Indeed, according to him, it is worth finding the critical intentions in popular counter-culture. Finally, the author, again admitting how his methodological approach is very much subjective, defends outlaws as helping us write our hidden transcripts of resistance in times of global capitalism where we want to create our own utopias as opposed to taken-for-granted assumptions regarding work, organization, market and economy. These hidden transcripts do not involve confrontational questioning of the powerful or transformative actions about the macro mechanisms that we mostly complain about, but they help us resist, survive and struggle against the oppression, domination and routine of workplaces. However, it is not just about writing our transcripts, but also '...documenting this sort of popular cultural dissent with which is right in front of us is also to encourage speculation concerning the limits of, and alternatives to, market managerialism' (157) which takes us to another level of discussion.

Resistance via outlaws in contemporary business schools

With a mostly western and European orientation, it seems that Parker writes about his 'childhood heroes' (146), yet, it would be totally unfair to say the book is just about that. Alternative business may be read through different lenses thanks to his playful approach of transcending disciplinary divisions and extensive use of various resources including books, poems, pamphlets, texts, songs and movies. In a very simplistic way, we can read the book as a history of crime in

order to see the material basis and origins of outlaws that have been surrounding us for more than 700 years. We are referred to many historical texts and told of how the realities of crime turn into myths in time.

In another way, by blurring the boundaries of disciplines (history, economy, culture) and ambivalent positions of outlaws (legitimate-illegitimate, fact-fiction, co-optation-critique), Parker mostly characterizes the outlaws positively as the redistributers of wealth and justice. Referring to the general script of Robin Hood explained above, he mostly puts outlaws on the side of the poor, the weak, the local and the innocent, and, against the powerful, the corrupt, the rich, the hegemonic, the evil corporation and even the state. Hence, we can read the book as a cultural analysis of how we come to see the representations of outlaws as various products and outcomes of popular culture. While we see how outlaws become cultural symbols against power and authority that inspire the fantasies of the people, at the same time we are told how they are turned into sources of fun and lucrative commodities for corporations. This is actually directly related to the suggestion of Parker on how to approach 'popular political economy', which is one of the most important contributions of the book.

In terms of inspiring fantasies, we also see how the representations of all these outlaws help us escape from the reality of global capitalism, in the shape of the routine and exploitative work and organizational arrangements of today. In the discrepancies and paradoxes of the modern capitalist world, outlaws are our escape routes. Sometimes we want to be really free and not bounded by the routinized and dull structures of industrial/corporate world. And, sometimes, we want to be protected and secured with a family-like binding that would confront and challenge the injustices we have in these modern times. Or, alternatively, we want to punch our boss in the face or be honest about our feelings without any hesitation since s/he is never satisfied with our hard work and achievements. We want romantic and heroic figures such as Robin Hood, Tony Soprano, Jack Sparrow and Dilbert who would do all these things. As a result of such a demand capitalism gives us all these characters as consumable commodities, however, by stripping of their ethics and politics of resistance. Yet, Parker argues, there is still a potential to study these counter-culture, even anarchistic, characters to question taken-for-granted assumptions regarding authority, hierarchy and domination. This is where we come to our third approach.

In a third movement, within a CMS perspective, we can assume that, by focusing on outlaw organizations, the book demonstrates how to approach alternatives as a powerful tool for critique. Actually this is the point where we see traces of politics and efforts on opening up a new space for interrogation of orthodoxy in management knowledge. With a playful language, while talking on outlaws in

the front, actually, we notice the importance of thinking on possibilities of alternative forms of knowledge in business schools.

As outlaws are portrayed as anarchistic, rebellious counter-culture characters who have problem with authority and power, the legitimate and the established are problematized by Parker. 'We often refer to a thing called "the market", or "work", as if these were uncomplicated things, and the figure of the economic outlaw allows us to see how conceptions of markets and labour have been imagined, legitimated and policed' (157). Hence, the outlaws in the book become a sort of challenge for taken-for-granted and normalized structures including the state, the corporation and even management knowledge itself. At that point one may also ask why we should care about violent outlaws as alternatives, or, how they can help us to transform organizational settings in real life. One may, furthermore, think of the book as an intellectual exercise of an established management scholar and question the contribution of such knowledge. This is why he tries to justify his position in the first and the last chapters, as, of course, a subjective way of approaching outlaws as alternative business. As long as we see what we want to see in outlaws, Parker would like us to see the prospective hidden transcripts of resistance in the contemporary world of organizations and this is what the book is about. But, with an organizational perspective this is an obviously critical approach that helps question the orthodox assumptions and methods of studying and teaching formal organizations, particularly businesses. Hence, Parker demonstrates there is no one way to understand organizations. By telling of how alternatives can help broaden our perspectives, he questions and problematizes the common sense of 'business or the market as usual'. 'Alternative thinking', or 'thinking about and with alternatives', as critique contributes to realm of anarchistic efforts in the field of CMS by questioning the taken-for-granted authority of TINA in business schools. Therefore, the book and its characters do not just call our attention to the political economy of the popular, but also serve to the ideals of CMS with an anarchistic and alternative intention to challenge established management knowledge as of today.

Conclusion

Overall, whether you like it or not, the book promises that outlaws, as actors of alternative business, have the potential to mock the realities we experience today in the name of work, organization, hierarchy and management knowledge, even though this potential does not directly turn into confrontational or transformative action and stay remain as our hidden transcript or fantasy. And perhaps this is not the concern of such a book. Parker does not make a call for being an anarchistic outlaw, neither do I; but yes, against TINA there are alternative forms

of management knowledge and we seriously need to think about them, not just to dream and fantasize with the help of cultural representations but also to reflect on possible transformations and live a worthwhile life not squeezed among the cogs of (post)modern capitalist relations.

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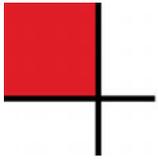
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The right to the city as an anti-capitalist struggle

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review of

Harvey, D. (2012) *Rebel cities: From the right to the city to the urban revolution*. London and New York, NY: Verso. (PB, pp. 208, £9.99, ISBN 9781781680742)

Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution is a book that draws on the very interesting idea, initially proposed by Henri Lefebvre in 1968, about the need for a renewed and transformed urban life. Lefebvre dubbed this need for transformation of the urban landscape and life 'right to the city': a right that those producing and sustaining the city lack and must fight to claim. The author of the book, David Harvey, is a great proponent of Lefebvre's idea and has given his own view on what the 'right to the city' means in his influential, homonymous article for the *New Left Review* in 2008. A slightly modified version of Harvey's article 'The right to the city' can be found in Chapter 1 of the book. In fact, the whole book is a collection of modified articles that have been published in the past and this is a good explanation on why it reads somewhat awkwardly at times; there is a sense of discontinuity. However, Harvey's argument regarding the 'right to the city' and its importance for the anti-capitalist struggle is very interesting and logically structured.

Harvey's main attempt in this book is to provide a meaning, an anti-capitalist and revolutionary meaning, to the 'right to the city', which he argues is currently an 'empty signifier': a right whose meaning has yet to be defined. In this sense, he sees the 'right to the city' not as a right that already exists, not as merely a right to citizenship as it has been mostly understood, but as a collective struggle by all

those that have a part in producing the city and creating the life in it, to claim the right to decide what kind of urbanism they want. Harvey argues that the collective labour that produces the city and its infrastructure, mostly builders and constructors, and those that create life in the city, various social and cultural groups whose activities and way of living enriches and produces city-life, are lacking the 'right to the city' because of the prevailing of capitalist urbanization.

Thus, as Harvey rightly observes, the process of urbanization has become capitalistic, as a matter of fact it has become an instrument in the hands of capitalists and a central feature for the reproduction of capitalism. The author employs a Marxist approach on the phenomenon of contemporary cities and understands them as the result of 'geographical and social concentration' of surplus product, which, as he says, make them a class phenomenon, since surpluses must have been extracted from somewhere, i.e. the working class. Hence, the type of urbanization that produced and still produces cities around the world requires surplus product that is perpetually produced by capitalism. But the relation between this type of urbanization and capitalism is bidirectional. Harvey writes (5): 'This means that capitalism is perpetually producing the surplus product that urbanization requires. The reverse relation also holds. Capitalism needs urbanization to absorb the surplus products it perpetually produces'. The renovations of Paris in the mid-nineteenth century and of post-WWII New York based on the planning of Georges Haussmann and Robert Moses respectively, are two major examples in which the use of urbanization by capitalism, to absorb the surplus product, is clear. The result in both cases was the emergence of a new lifestyle that also, especially in the case of New York, gave rise to consumerism.

But, capitalist urbanization has another, even darker nature according to Harvey: the urban restructuring takes place through a process of 'displacement and dispossession'. This means usually that poorer and less powerful populations are losing their place and space in the city. Margaret Thatcher's privatization project of social housing, for instance, produced a housing price-structure throughout the metropolitan area of the city of London that made it impossible for low-income and even middle-class people to have access to housing anywhere near the city centre. The commodification of the city and the 'urban development along class lines' (63) is a global phenomenon that has sustained capital accumulation the past years through the absorption of surplus liquidity and over-accumulated capital in urbanization, according to Harvey.

Capitalist urbanization, then, Harvey argues is a class phenomenon where the capitalist class uses predatory practices of exploitation and dispossession over vulnerable populations diminishing, in this way, their capacity to sustain the

necessary conditions for social reproduction. In fact, the author says that the better the common qualities a social group creates, the more likely it is to be raided and appropriated by private profit-maximizing interests. So those who had created interesting and vibrant neighbourhoods lose them, through the use of predatory practices, to upper class consumers and capitalists. The privatization of housing and commodification of the city (rent) which is based on the power of monopoly of private owners over assets has become the main predatory practice of capitalists against the low-income classes.

Harvey argues that contemporary cities have been turned into commodities by the prevailing of neoliberalist 'ethic of intense possessive individualism' (14), while the commons have also been destroyed and turned into gated communities; privatized public spaces that are under constant surveillance. The commons are important urban relationships between social groups and usually public spaces or traditions that sustain and reproduce life in the city: 'At the heart of the practice of communing lies the principle that the relation between the social group and the aspect of the environment being treated as a common shall be both collective and non-commodified' (73). However, neoliberal politics of privatization have commodified the commons and diminished financing for public spaces, which are crucial for the creation of commons. In other words, the city-life of lower-income populations is constantly under attack by neoliberals. But it is also the state that is under assault by neoliberalism, according to Harvey; an assault that attempts to diminish the state's control over the surplus produced. At this point, Harvey, following the Marxist view, considers as a solution against the neoliberal assault the reformation of the state by bringing it back under democratic control.

Harvey, through his analysis in the first section of the book, attempts, successfully in my opinion, to present to us how the existing type of urbanization is associated with capitalism and is itself a class phenomenon. As a part of his analysis, he brings to our attention the fact that numerous crises since 1973 are property or urban-development led and that there is a tight connection between property markets and the macro-economy. This is a connection that has to be carefully re-examined as it has been overlooked by Marxist theorists in their analysis of crises, including the recent one of 2007-09, according to Harvey. This way, Harvey argues, the role of property market can be included into the general theory of the laws of motion of capital and we will be able to better understand the dynamics of contemporary crises, which are as urban as they ever were.

The first section closes with a chapter dedicated to the 'art of rent'; the main predatory practice used by capitalists against lower-income classes. The author says that monopoly of rent or 'monopoly rent' is always an object of capitalist

desire as monopoly over ownership of the means of production, including finance and land is fundamental to capitalism. It seems like a contradiction in terms to talk of monopolization as the object of capitalism's desire especially for neoliberalism, which is all about free, unregulated competition. However, Harvey reminds us that, according to Marx, competition leads eventually to oligopolies and monopolies and the fiercer it is, as in the case of neoliberalism, the faster it will lead to them. The power of monopoly of private property is therefore the alpha and omega of capitalism; its starting and ending point.

As I have already stated, in the first section of the book the author achieves his main goal and proves that the existing form of urbanization is foundational for the reproduction of capitalism. By doing so, Harvey sets the stage for his second main argument, which is examined in the second section of the book, that the city is a major site of political, social and class struggles and that different forms of urbanization should become central to anti-capitalist struggles. The 'right to the city', then, a widely neglected and degraded right as the author argues, should be understood as a struggle for radical change and transformation that will eliminate the capitalist tactics of urbanization and re-create the city in a socialist image.

The author introduces his second main argument by reminding us the long history of urban struggles, from the revolutionary movements in Paris in 1789 to the Paris commune in 1871 and the Seattle general strike of 1919 to the movements in various US cities in 1968. He also emphasizes on the fact that actual city-site characteristics, such as architecture and infrastructure are important and have been used as weapons in political struggles. Harvey argues, then, that because of the site's importance in urban struggles, political power has, in various cases, reorganized urban infrastructures and life in order to keep resisting populations under control, with Haussmann's boulevards in Paris being the great example.

No matter how historically important urban struggles have been, urban social movements have not been seen as anti-capitalist, as they do not have their roots in the exploitation and alienation of living labour in production, Harvey argues. Because of this, Harvey writes, 'Within the Marxist tradition, for example, urban struggles tend to be either ignored or dismissed as devoid of revolutionary potential and significance' (120). Instead, Marxist tradition conceives anti-capitalist struggle to be about the abolition of the class relation between capital and labour in production that permits the production and appropriation of surplus value by capital. It is, then, due to the Marxist tenacity to consider the factory as the place where class struggles are mainly taking place that made 'the industrial working class the vanguard of the proletariat'; its main revolutionary

agent. This understanding must, in Harvey's view, change and the focus should move from the factory to the city as the prime site of class struggle, because it is builders and construction workers that assist the production or produce the surplus value.

Harvey's proposal of changing the focus from the factory to the city and living spaces is, in my opinion, the most interesting idea presented in the book. What Harvey is proposing would change the view held, falsely, by many that a class-based movement such as the Paris Commune is not considered as anti-capitalist because it was not produced by factory workers. In addition, most conventional labour struggles waged by factory-based workers turn out to have had much broader base, conventional workplaces are disappearing and the wealthy classes are more vulnerable in the urban environment, in terms of the value of the assets they control. In the end, as Harvey argues, the ultimate aim of anti-capitalist struggle is the abolition of that class relation and all that goes with it, no matter where it occurs. So, the anti-capitalist struggle, except from organizing and re-organizing within the labour process, should also be about finding a political and social alternative to the capitalist law of value that regulates the world market, according to Harvey.

Abolishing the power of the capitalist law of value across the world market is a demanding and difficult target, as it requires the abolition of the dominant class relation that underpins and mandates the perpetual expansion of surplus value production and realization. A foundational re-conceptualization of the nature of class and a redefinition of the terrain of class struggles is, then, necessary according to the author. For an urban revolution, to be successful in our world of neoliberal globalization, Harvey argues that there should be a strong and vibrant support from popular forces, the concept of work should entail the labour for the production and reproduction of an increasingly urbanized daily life, and an equal status should be given to struggles of the workers against the recuperation and realization of surplus value in their living spaces. Harvey, following Lefebvre's theory of urban revolutionary movements, believes that there is no need to wait for 'the grand revolution' but that a successful urban revolution can be the result of a spontaneous coming together of different unrelated groups, which in a moment of eruption suddenly realize that their collective action can produce something radically different.

Harvey closes chapter five, which is the last chapter of the book, by approaching the very difficult question of 'how to organize a city' in an anti-capitalist way; to carry the anti-capitalist struggle and to produce and sustain an alternative to capitalist urbanization. In his search for an answer, he examines a number of approaches, Murray Bookchin's 'confederalism' among them, and he concludes

that there may be a need for some kind of hierarchical organization that will establish and police the rules that will apply from the lower to the higher scale; from the municipal assemblies to the confederal councils. In general, he argues for an anti-capitalist organization, through urban networks, that will be hierarchical (but not monocentric), democratic and egalitarian; and above all deeply engaged in the struggle against the capitalist laws of value that dictate the social relations under which we work and live. In Harvey's words:

The organization of informal labourers along traditional union lines, the pulling together of the Federation of neighbourhood associations, the politicization of urban rural relations, the creation of nested hierarchies and of leadership structures alongside egalitarian assemblies, the mobilization of the forces of culture and of collective memories – all provide models for thinking about what might consciously be done to reclaim cities for anti-capitalist struggle. (150)

All in all, the book contains some very interesting ideas and the author's main point – the need for the right to the city to become an anti-capitalist struggle – is clear and valid. However, I believe that the spontaneous coming together of unrelated groups under the banner of anti-capitalism entails a lot of wishful thinking and it also contradicts the methodical work needed to change the focus from the factory to the city, which the author proposes. Capitalism and the various authoritarian, hierarchical and exploitative regimes have been established over time, through methodical work, and I cannot see them disappear suddenly, through spontaneous action. I understand, however, the author's anxiousness for revolutionary action that will take place here and now instead of action that is postponed until the time will be supposedly right for the grand revolution to take place.

Harvey's call for revolutionary action and his justifiable need to believe that the urban movements of today can bring forth radical change is also apparent in the last two, very short, chapters of the book, in which he briefly comments on the Occupy Wall Street movement in New York and the uprising in London 2011. In the last chapter of the book, Harvey moves a step further and argues that: 'The struggle that has broken out – that of the People versus the Party of Wall Street – is crucial to our collective future. The struggle is global as well as local in nature' (164). At this point Harvey refers to the various struggles around the world, from Chile to Syria and from China to Greece as a global struggle of the People against the capitalist ideology represented by the Party of Wall Street. I agree with and support the view that revolutionary actions occur and should occur every day whether it is through individual or group action, but seeing the beginning of radical change in every symbolic action or organized protest such as the movement of *Indignados* in Spain, the Occupy Movement in London or the striking workers in Greece is, at least, overly optimistic. In addition, I think that the last two, very brief, chapters of the

book could have either been combined together alongside a deeper analysis of urban movements and their operation since the crisis that started in 2007 to form a complete chapter or not be there at all.

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