

abc of formatting: A sample text formatted in *ephemera* style with comments

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 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. As Peck 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. (2010: 106)

* 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.

titles/headings (apart from the first word) are not capitalised

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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.

we don't mind how exactly the year the book appeared is identified, so can be like this or in a square bracket, but consistent throughout the text and in references

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Three principles

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).

ibid. needs to be italicised

Don't capitalise titles in the text. Put the title of a book in italics or in " for articles, like here.

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. '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].

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the authors

Martin Parker works at the School of Management, University of Leicester. Recent books include *Alternative business: Outlaws, crime and culture* (Routledge, 2012) and he is part of the collective which wrote *Fighting corporate abuse* (Pluto Press, 2014).

Email: mp431@leicester.ac.uk

George Cheney...

Valerie Fournier...

Chris Land...