Anarchism reloaded

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Abstract

The contemporary re-emergence of anarchism on a global scale deserves serious attention from students of ideology. As the defining orientation of prominent activist networks, anarchism today is the principal point of reference for radical social change movements in the North, and represents a mature and complex genre of political expression. This article offers a synchronic and diachronic analysis of contemporary anarchist ideology, based on participant research on large-scale ideological expression in anarchist movement networks. I identify and discuss three major conceptual clusters which mark contemporary anarchism's stable ideological core: (a) the construction of the concept of 'domination' and the active opposition to all its forms and systems, (b) the ethos of direct action as a primary mode of political engagement, both destructive and constructive, and (c) the open-ended, experimental approach to revolutionary visions and strategies, which endorses epistemological pluralism and is strongly grounded in present tense action. From a diachronic point of view, it is argued that these three elements are the product of network- and ideological convergence among ecological, feminist, anti-war and anti-neoliberal movements, associated with the multi-issue politics of alternative globalization and local grassroots politics. The re-emergence of anarchism thus highlights the continuity between movement networks, political culture and ideological articulation, and draws attention to important processes in the life-cycles of ideological formations.

Introduction

The past ten years have seen the full-blown revival of anarchism, as a global social movement and coherent set of political discourses, on a scale and to levels of unity and diversity unseen since the 1930s. From anti-capitalist social centres and eco-feminist communities to raucous street parties and blockades of international summits, anarchist forms of resistance and organizing have been at the heart of the 'alternative globalization' movement and have blurred, broken down and reconstructed notions of political action and articulation. Despite this, but perhaps unsurprisingly in view of its traditional marginalization in academia, contemporary anarchism has not received any sustained scholarly attention. This article offers an analysis of present-day anarchist ideology from a movement-driven approach, which stresses a continuity between the culture and life-cycles of social movements and the development of large-scale, grassroots ideological expression.

Based on five years of empirical and theoretical research on the political discourse of activist networks, the primary aim of this article is to offer a framework for making sense of the ideological expression that observably prevails in the radical, direct-action end of the alternative globalization and anti-war movement—the site of contemporary anarchism. At the centre of this article is a synchronic analysis of contemporary anarchist ideology, which interprets the ideational framework expressed by widespread trends in the praxis and political language of anarchist activists. These, I argue, display three major conceptual clusters which specify the meanings and relationships between central keywords in anarchist political language, and constitute the ideology's emergent stable core. The first is the construction of the concept of 'domination,' which clarifies how anarchists construct what they object to in society. The second is the cluster ideas associated with direct action and the ethos of 'prefigurative politics,' expressing anarchists' think-

ing about their methodology for social change. The third is a strongly open-ended conception of politics that is detached from any notion of a post-revolutionary resting point, expressing the experimental nature of anarchist strategies and their focus on the present tense.

Threaded through the synchronic analysis are elements of a diachronic account, which traces the sources of the present-day ideological configurations I discuss to transformative processes in social movement activity in recent decades. What emerges very clearly from this account is that contemporary anarchism is only ephemerally related to the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century thread of libertarian-socialist movements and ideas, which was effectively repressed out of existence in the first half of the last century by Fascism, Bolshevism and the American Red Scare. Instead, the mainspring of today's anarchism can be found in the network — and ideological convergence that has been taking place among movements whose beginnings were never consciously anarchist — in particular the cross-issue formulations of radical ecology, waves of militant feminism, black and queer liberation movements, and the anti-neoliberal internationalism launched by movements in the global South, most celebrated of which are the Mexican Zapatistas. Here, I draw attention to processes of cross-fertilization that have had a major influence on the development of political discourse in these ideology-producing groups. While a full genealogy is well beyond the limits of the present article, mention is made of several interrelated trends which have contributed to the emergence of a recognizable anarchist process—the emergence of a multi-issue politics that addresses overlapping oppressions, the proliferation of direct-action and its strategical implications, and the rootedness of the movement in western subcultural spaces.

More broadly, this article seeks to demonstrate what a movement-driven approach can do for the study of ideologies. Approaching the ideologies at work in social movements necessarily involves the examination of mass, or at least large-scale, social thinking. Such an endeavour involves asking how the participants make sense of their own praxis and of the larger political world they inhabit, and investigating processes of ideological production and evolution in dense social networks. The grounding assumption is that an authentic picture of a movement's ideological articulation can only emerge from attention to the verbal medium in which the bulk of it takes place. Thus, while books, pamphlets and websites should not be ignored, the primary material for interpretation is the continuous and polyphonic conversational activity that takes place among the participants, whether in the form of relatively abstract discussions of values and priorities or, more frequently, as ideological statements that surface during the planning and evaluation of campaigns, protests and direct actions—discourses in which are refractured the opinions, beliefs, narratives, controversies and myths that make up the activists' ideological world. To gain access to this discourse, a movement-driven approach to the study of ideologies employs a strategy inspired by ethnography, which stresses first-hand participant observation of the vernacular culture of activists.

My own strategy has involved five years of embedded research with anarchist activists and collectives involved in diverse local campaigns and projects, discussion groups, as well as mass international mobilizations and protest actions. In the UK these included the local anarchist network in Oxford, anti-authoritarian coalitions organising for May Day actions and anti-war demonstrations, the British *Earth First!* network (which unlike its U.S. counterpart is unambiguously anarchist) and the *Dissent!* network resisting the 2005 G8 summit. Participant observation was also conducted at international mobilizations including anti-G8 protests in Genoa (2001), Evian (2003) and Gleneagles (2005), and anti-EU protests at Nice (2000), Brussels (2001) and Barcelona (2002),

as well as several international activist gatherings, including the international No Border protest-camp at Strasbourg (2002), European meetings of the Peoples' Global Action network in Leiden (2002) and Dijon (2003), and the anti-authoritarian sideshows accompanying the European Social Forums in Firenze (2002) and London (2004). To further trace transnational connections, I have been monitoring English and Spanish-language email lists and web discussion groups, and maintaining contact with anarchist activity in North America through email correspondence and meetings with organizers visiting Europe.

The participant's approach is pivotal for issues of reliability and genuine representation. Without an embedded presence in anarchist networks, the theorist may be led to vastly misguided judgements about the relative importance of various anarchist ideas and tendencies—resulting in an academic account that has little to do with reality. As a counterexample, take the obvious starting point for the non-participant researcher: the Internet. A great deal of anarchist articulation takes place on the web, with literally hundreds of web-sites dedicated to news, announcements and polemics from an anarchist perspective available for consideration. However, without any pre-set markers, how can the researcher know whether a certain anarchist group, ideological configuration or set of arguments encountered on the web is in any way representative or influential? Since anyone with minimal web-publishing skills can set up a website and post there whatever they want, it is very easy to present a great deal of material in an attractive set-up that would give the impression of prominence and importance while in fact being misleadingly 'louder' on the web than in reality. Contrast the impression of clout given by the website of the Industrial Workers of the World (www.iww.org) and its total U.S. membership of 1298 comrades as of June 2005—a fact that is not disclosed anywhere on the website, but only in its annual report to the US Department of Labor.[1] Thus, while web-based research would present anarcho-syndicalism as a prominent contemporary tendency worthy of serious consideration, the embedded position of the participant allows him or her to realize that it is in fact a very minor one. This establishes the importance of the much richer orientation available to the observing participant, who encounters the movement and its culture as a habitus, rather than as an 'other' mediated by and limited to the texts it produces.

The direct encounter with verbal ideological expression is augmented by an analysis of anarchist texts, from books and essays to flyers, brochures, and web-based news and opinion postings. Here too a participant's background is crucial in order to determine how representative and/or influential a given text is, and the selection of material for analysis must be based on a good prior acquaintance with the population that writes and reads them. Only embeddedness in activist networks can afford a sufficiently literate approach to activists' written expression, supporting informed judgements on the relative importance and contextual reading of texts.

Political culture and ideological content

One reason for academia's blind spot for contemporary anarchism is that it is a fairly recent phenomenon. A recognizable global anarchist movement has only matured in the recent decade, and analysis should be expected to lag behind the development of its own object of investigation. Another, perhaps more important, reason is that the presence of a large part of the anarchist movement today is submerged rather than overt. While there do exist self-defined formal an-

[1] Data retrieved through search form on http://erds.dol-esa.gov/query/getOrgQry.do

archist organizations (such as the British and French Anarchist Federations), the bulk of the movement operates through informal and *ad-hoc* political formations, often without an explicit anarchist label, and obscured by the broader alternative globalization, environmental and anti-war movements in which it is embedded. There is also a reluctance to use the label 'anarchist' on part of many groups whose political culture and discourse obviously merit the designation. This stems not from any political disagreement with what the word represents to activists, but because of the will to avoid its negative baggage in public consciousness. Thus, movement participants often speak of themselves as 'autonomous,' 'anti-authoritarian' or 'horizontal' (as in horizontal rather than top-down organization)—words used for the sole purpose of not saying 'anarchist' because of its popular connotations of chaos and violence. This invites a failure to recognize the existence of an anarchist movement as such, ignoring the dense patterns of communication and cooperation between these formations, as well as their ideological cohesiveness and shared collective identity.

However, the words anarchism, anti-authoritarianism and horizontalism should not be seen as standing at odds with each other, but as synonyms for one and the same thing: a clearly defined *political culture* which is the entity most properly referred to as anarchism. Thus, it is indeed possible coherently to speak of an anarchist movement in the present day, as long as the networks- and culture turn in social movement theory is taken into account—as in Mario Diani's definition of a social movement as a 'network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity.'[2] The anarchist political culture that unifies this movement and infuses it with content is best understood as a shared orientation towards ways of 'doing politics' that is manifest across its networks in common forms of organization (anti-authoritarian, non-hierarchical, consensus-based); in a common repertoire of political expression (direct action, constructing alternatives, community outreach, confrontation); in a common discourse and ideology (keywords and their interrelations, arguments and narratives—the focus of the present article); and in more broadly 'cultural' shared features of dress, music and diet.

The site in which these cultural codes are reproduced, exchanged and undergo mutation and critical reflection is the locus of anarchism as a movement, a context in which many very active political subjects can say the word 'we' and understand roughly the same thing—a collective identity constructed around an affirmed common path of thinking and doing. The architecture of today's anarchist movement can thus be described as a decentralized network of communication, coordination and mutual support among autonomous nodes of social struggle, overwhelmingly lacking formal membership or fixed boundaries. This segmentary, polycentric and reticular format of social movement organization has been likened a rhizome—the stemless, bulbous root-mass of plants like potato or bamboo—a structure based on principles of connection, heterogeneity, multiplicity and non-linearity.[3]

While the network or rhizome is an apt metaphor for the movement's architecture on a macro level, it should be clarified that the bulk of ongoing anarchist praxis and discourse takes place on the micro level of face-to-face collectives and affinity groups, and the meso level of the local milieu or (mini-)network of anarchists in a particular locale, such as a town or city. The local milieu

[2] M. Diani, 'The Concept of Social Movement,' *Sociological Review,*40 (1), 1992, p. 13.

[3] The metaphor is borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of knowledge. cf. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis, MI: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 7–13.

is a context in which most but not all participants are closely familiar to one another, and may include participants who are also organized as collectives among themselves. The local milieu is the pool from which affinity groups are drawn for particular actions, and under the auspices of which many non-confrontational activities are organized without explicit affinity groups (stalls, leafleting, small demonstrations, and donation-generating events such as film screenings and parties). The local milieu is also the scene in which anarchists most often coordinate and collaborate with other actors, such as citizen associations, youth groups, the more radical elements of the charity and NGO spectrum, and local chapters of Green and even Communist parties.

Anarchist political culture can be seen to animate a fabric of tribal solidarities in the movement, which proceeds from the face-to-face context of the local affinity-groups and activist milieus—the small 'bands' and 'extended families' where primary solidarity is generated on the most intimate level of personal trust and friendship. Larger-scale solidarities are enabled through the further intersection of these local milieus, that is, through the combined reproduction of networks of trust and affinity among activists from diverse anarchist and non-anarchist political backgrounds. The special dynamic attached to tribal solidarity is that beyond the level of personal ties there is an instinctive tendency to extend it also to perceived members of one's extended family or tribe. Here the feeling of identification, and the mutuality and reciprocity it motivates, is premised on shared cultures of resistance and visions for social change. In exchanges between activists from different countries who meet for the first time, familiarity is often probed through the presence of various cultural indicators of one's background and political orientation. Tribal solidarity thus exists as a potentiality that can be self-actualized in a self-selected manner, destabilising the boundaries of membership and non-membership.

This article focuses on the discursive aspect of anarchist political culture—the political language that demarcates anarchism as an ideology. The task here is to clarify the mental mappings that observably prevail among anarchists, investigating the substance of the keywords that feature in their oral and written expression, and the way in which different keywords are positioned in relation to one another. In their activist capacity, anarchists employ keywords like 'domination' or 'direct action' as cultural signifiers, which in turn function as hyperlinks to broader semantic fields. This facilitates the expression of ideas in the public sphere, and the establishment of markers for common ground among activists themselves. Hence, inasmuch as anarchism is being spoken of as an ideology, it should be remembered that in doing so one is performing an act of extrapolation from cultural codes, one which suggests certain ways to phrase and conceptualize the much more intuitive and experiential constituents of anarchist discourse. Thus, the discussion of the movement's ideational apparatus should take place within the context of the political praxis which it expresses and influences, while investigating the 'surplus of meaning' that activists generate in their discourse—implications of ideological utterances of which the participants may not be fully aware.[4]

For heuristic purposes, I would suggest an understanding of anarchist ideological morphology that approaches it from the outside in. Outside are a set of ideological markers that define the basic rules of the anarchist language game, a set of first-order decontestations whose examination is at the centre of this article. These create perimeters that envelope a 'cytoplasm' of much freer and experimental articulation, where there is a diverse polyphony of ideas and approaches, marked by

[4] Cf. P. Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the surplus of meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976).

resurfacing tensions around second-order decontestations of political concepts (power, violence, modernity …), tensions which structure the development of discursive trends within anarchism. As activists' oral debates and writings contribute to a circulation of ideas in the movement, such concepts are re-framed and re-coded in a response to world events, political alliances and trends in direct-action culture.

While the picture of anarchist ideology presented here is ultimately grounded in the appreciation of verbal expression, a useful first glimpse of it can be found in a special class of written documents which constitute representative artefacts of activist discourse—documents entitled 'principles of unity,' 'mission statements' and 'hallmarks'—which almost all activist groups create or endorse. Such a document is not intended as a constitution or a political programme, but rather as a rhetorical space in which is indicated the 'flavour' of politics that such groups represent—effectively a statement of collective identity. Such statements fulfil three important political functions. Looking inwards, they establish a frame of reference for participants that can be invoked symbolically as a set of basic guidelines for resolving disputes. Looking outwards, they attempt to express the movement's political identity to a general audience. And looking 'sideways,' they define the lines along which solidarity is extended or denied to other movement actors. As content-rich statements, such documents provide a very useful starting-point for an ideological analysis of anarchism.

The most widely utilized document of this kind are the 'hallmarks' of the Peoples' Global Action network (PGA)—a worldwide coordination of anti-capitalist groups and movements launched at an international *encuentro* organized by the Zapatistas in 1996. The hallmarks have served extensively and worldwide as a basis for actions and coalitions, and have been endorsed by a large number of groups as a basic expression of their politics—though this fact is not well known outside the movement, and the importance of the hallmarks as a grounding expression of anarchist politics may well escape the external observer. The current wording of the hallmarks is as follows:

1. A very clear rejection of capitalism, imperialism and feudalism; all trade agreements, institutions and governments that promote destructive globalization.

2. We reject all forms and systems of domination and discrimination including, but not limited to, patriarchy, racism and religious fundamentalism of all creeds. We embrace the full dignity of all human beings.

3. A confrontational attitude, since we do not think that lobbying can have a major impact in such biased and undemocratic organizations, in which transnational capital is the only real policy-maker.

4. A call to direct action and civil disobedience, support for social movements' struggles, advocating forms of resistance which maximize respect for life and oppressed peoples' rights, as well as the construction of local alternatives to global capitalism.

5. An organizational philosophy based on decentralization and autonomy.[5]

[5] Peoples' Global Action Network, *Hallmarks*. Internet: http://www.nadir.org/nadir/ initiativ/agp/free/pga/hallm.htm

Now in spite of the clear resonances of its hallmarks, PGA has never been defined explicitly as an anarchist network. Missing from the hallmarks is the explicit rejection of the state, although they could be interpreted with the addition that *all* governments 'promote destructive globalization' by definition and should thus be rejected. This intentional vagueness is mainly because, on the global level applicable to the PGA network as a whole, an explicit reference to anarchism would not do justice to the diversity of its participant groups, which include numerous peasant movements from Asia and Latin America who have never identified with anarchism nor with any other set of ideas rooted in a by-and-large European historical experience. In a European or North American setting, however, hallmarks like those of PGA establish the perimeters of a decidedly anarchist political space by way of elimination, so to speak. They exclude such a long list of features of society and ways of approaching social change, that what is left, at least in terms of public discourse in advanced capitalist countries, is inevitably some kind of anarchism. This happens entirely without reference to anarchism as a label, but the results remain the same. The third hallmark, for example, explicitly distances the PGA political space from the ones in which NGOs and advocacy groups operate, working to change the WTO and other global trade systems from within the logic of their own operation through lobbying. The fifth hallmark can easily be understood as an exclusion of the centralized and hierarchical organising methods of the authoritarian left, while reserving the space for a diversity of non-hierarchical organising traditions, from the tribal-based associations of Maori and Maya peoples through Indian *sarvodaya*-inspired campaigns to the affinity-group-based structures of Western anarchists.

The PGA hallmarks and other, similar documents express the three major conceptual clusters that are present across anarchist oral discourse. The first is the rejection of 'all forms of domination'—a term encapsulating the manifold social institutions and dynamics (most aspects of modern society, in fact) which anarchists seek to challenge, erode and ultimately overthrow. It is this generalization of the target of revolutionary struggle from 'state and capital' to 'domination' that most distinctly draws contemporary anarchism apart from its earlier generations. Second, we find references to direct action, a multifaceted term which reflects the do-it-yourself approach animating anarchists' action repertoires and combines both dual power strategies (building grassroots alternatives that are to 'hollow out' capitalism), and the stress on realising libertarian and egalitarian social relations within the fold of the movement itself. The third gesture is present in what these statements overwhelmingly lack—detailed prognostic blueprints for a desired future society. This does not mean that anarchism is merely destructive, but that its constructive aspects are expected to be articulated in the present-tense experimentation of prefigurative politics—not as an *a priori* position. This lends anarchism a strongly open-ended dimension, whereby it eschews any notion of a 'post-revolutionary resting point.' Instead, anarchists have come to transpose their notion of social revolution to the present-tense. Non-hierarchical, anarchic modes of interaction are no longer seen as features on which to model a future society, but rather as an ever-present potential of social interaction here and now—a 'revolution in everyday life.'[6] These three aspects form the stable core of anarchist ideology in the present day, each of which I now move to discuss in detail.

[6] This phrase was first coined by the Situationists—a radical group of artists and writers that came to prominence during the May 1968 student uprisings in France—and used as a title for one the key works it generated: R. Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (London: Rebel Press, 2001).

Struggle against domination

Since the late 1960s, social movements have been creating linkages in theory and practice between various campaigning issues, pointing beyond specific grievances towards a more basic critique of stratified and hierarchical social structures. The rise in recent decades of multi-issue movements campaigning on diverse agendas—economic justice, peace, feminism, ecology—was accompanied by linkages among these agendas which mitigated what would otherwise have been a fragmentation of political energies, and provided platforms for solidarity and cooperation on the ground. Movement activists progressively came to see the interdependence of their agendas, manifest along various axes such as ecological critiques of capitalism, feminist anti-militarism, and the interrelation of racial and economic segregation. Special mention is due here to ecological movements, whose agenda—by its very nature encompassing the entire spectrum of interaction between society and the natural environment—supplied it with a cross-cutting perspective that inevitably touched on multiple social, economic and ideological spheres. In passing it is interesting to note that, while the holistic approach of the radical ecology movement initially led it to gravitate towards the 'consciousness shift' formulations associated with deep ecology, the latter's lack of a robust social critique left many activists unsatisfied. Throughout the 1990s, eco-radicals' growing confrontation with governments and corporations in the course of their struggles infused the movement with a very strong anti-capitalist and anti-state dimension, through which their green was darkened, so to speak, into a recognizably anarchist black.

Accompanying the convergence of campaigning issues was the growing emphasis, in the radical community, on the intersections of numerous forms of oppression, taking struggle beyond what were previously specific agendas. Black women, marginalized in overwhelmingly white feminist circles and often facing blatant sexism in the black liberation movements, began mobilising in autonomous black feminist movements heralded by the founding in 1973 of the National Black Feminist Organization and of Black Women Organized for Action.[7] These movements were soon to highlight the concept of 'simultaneous oppression'—a personal and political awareness of how race, class and gender compound each other as arenas of exclusion, in a complex and mutually-reinforcing relationship. The 1980s saw an increasing diversification of the gay rights movement in both Europe and North America, with lesbian and bisexual organizations tying feminist and gay liberation agendas, and claiming their place in a hitherto predominantly male field.[8] With the advent of the HIV/AIDS crisis later that decade, these agendas took a further radical turn when activist groups like the American ACT UP introduced a strong emphasis on direct action and focused on the pharmaceutical corporations keeping HIV medication at unreachable prices.[9] These dynamics were carried forward under the umbrella of Queer Nation, founded in summer 1990, which emphasized diversity and the inclusion of all sexual minorities. By the mid-1990s, queer women and men of colour had founded their own organizations and were structuring their struggles explicitly around the intersections of racism, heterosexism, patriarchy and class.

[7] Cf. B. Roth, *Separate Roads to Feminism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); P.H. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (London: Routledge, 2000).

[8] Cf. E.A. Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950–1994* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); F. Martel, *The Pink and the Black: Homosexuals in France since 1968* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

[9] Cf. B. Shepard and R. Hayduk (Eds), *From ACT UP to the WTO: Urban Protest and Community Building in the Era of Globalization* (London: Verso, 2002).

Contemporary anarchism is rooted in these convergences of radical feminist, ecological, anti-racist and queer struggles, which finally fused in the late 1990s through the global wave of protest against the policies and institutions of neoliberal globalization. This has led anarchism, in its re-emergence, to be attached to a more generalized discourse of resistance. A century ago the struggles against patriarchy and racism, for example, were relatively minor concerns for most anarchists—yet they are now widely accepted as an integral part of the anarchist agenda. As a result of this integration, anarchist discourses of resistance have come to gravitate around a new concept, that of *domination*.

The word domination occupies a central place in anarchist political language, as evident from countless utterances I have witnessed in the course of my research. It is, for anarchists, the paradigm governing micro- and macro-political relations, maintained through the 'reproduction of everyday life.'[10] Domination is not a value, like freedom or equality or solidarity—it is a *dis*value: what anarchists want to negate. The word in its anarchist decontestation serves as a generic concept for the various systematic features of society whereby groups and persons are controlled, coerced, exploited, humiliated, discriminated against, etc.—all of which dynamics anarchists seek to uncover, challenge and erode. The function of the concept of domination, as anarchists construct it, is to express the encounter with a family resemblance among the entire ensemble of such social dynamics, or, more precisely, among the articulations of these dynamics by those who struggle against them.[11] This linkage is evident in manifold utterances, such as the following communiqué from activists in Kvisa Shchora (Black Laundry)—an Israeli LGBT direct action group against the occupation and for social justice:

> The oppression of different minorities in the state of Israel feeds on the same racism, the same chauvinism, and the same militarism that uphold the oppression and occupation of the Palestinian people. There cannot be true freedom in an oppressive, occupying society. In a military society there is no place for the different and weak; lesbians, Gay men, drag queens, transsexuals, foreign workers, women, Mizrahi Israelis [of Middle Eastern or North African descent], Arabs, Palestinians, the poor, the disabled and others.[12]

The term domination thus draws attention to the multiplicity of partial overlaps between different experiences that are struggled against, constructing a general category that maintains a correspondence between experiences that remain grounded in their own particular realities. The term domination thus remains inclusive of the myriad articulations of forms of oppression, exclusion and control by those subject to them, at countless individual and collective sites of resistance. This does not, of course, imply that the same mechanisms feature in all of these relations, nor that they operate in identical ways. Nevertheless, it is the discursive move of *naming* domination which enables anarchists to transcend specific antagonisms towards the generalized resistance that they promote. If there is one distinct starting point for anarchist approach, it is this act of naming.

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[10] F. Perlman, 'The reproduction of everyday life' (Detroit: Black and Red, 1969). Internet: http://www.spunk.org/library/ writers/perlman/sp001702/repro.html

[11] The concept of a family resemblance is drawn from L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), §§65–67.

[12] Black Laundry (2001) 'Nails and feathers' http://www.blacklaundry.org/pdfs/Wigstock_sept01.pdf

The systematic nature of domination is often expressed in reference to a number of overarching 'forms,' 'systems' or 'regimes' of domination—impersonal sets of rules regulating relationships between people, rules which are not autonomously constituted by those individuals placed within the relationship (including the dominating side)—of which patriarchy, white supremacy and wage labour are prominent examples.[13] Regimes of domination are the overarching context that anarchists see as conditioning people's socialization and background assumptions about social norms, explaining why people *fall into* certain patterns of behaviour and have expectations that contribute to the perpetuation of dominatory relations. Because of their compulsory nature, regimes of domination are also something that one cannot just 'opt out of' under normal circumstances. Women or non-white people encounter discrimination, access barriers and derogatory behaviour towards them throughout society, and cannot simply remove themselves from their fold or wish them away. The attempt to live outside them is already an act of resistance. As prominent anarchist writer Bob Black has expressed this, domination is nobody's fault, and everybody's:

> The 'real enemy' is the totality of physical and mental constraints by which capital, or class society, or statism, or the society of the spectacle expropriates everyday life, the time of our lives. The real enemy is not an object apart from life. It is the organization of life by powers detached from it and turned against it. The apparatus, not its personnel, is the real enemy. But it is by and through the apparatchiks and everyone else participating in the system that domination and deception are made manifest. The totality is the organization of all against each and each against all. It includes all the policemen, all the social workers, all the office workers, all the nuns, all the op-ed columnists, all the drug kingpins from Medellin to Upjohn, all the syndicalists and all the situationists.[14]

The relationship, implicit in contemporary anarchist thinking, between the resistance to domination as social dynamic and the resistance to social institutions (broadly understood) can now be articulated more clearly. While what is resisted is, at the bottom of things, domination as a basic social dynamic, the resistance is seen to proceed through confrontation with the institutions through which this domination is administered. On such a reading institutions such as the state, the capitalist system of ownership and labour—and also institutions such as the family, the school and many forms of organized religion—are where the authoritarian, indoctrinary and disciplinary mechanisms which perpetuate domination-regimes are concretely *located*. Resistance to police repression or to the caging of refugees and illegal immigrants is more broadly directed towards the state as the source of policing or immigration policies. Act of resistance are, in the barest sense, 'anarchist' when they are perceived by the actor as particular actualizations of a more systemic opposition to such institutions.

The preceding account of domination, as constructed by anarchists, enriches our understanding of their action repertoires and broader 'strategic' orientations to social struggle. A 'family' concept like domination reflects anarchists' commitments to decentralization in the process of resistance. It is widely believed among anarchists that struggles against domination are at their

[13] The terms 'patriarchy' and 'white supremacy' are preferred here to 'sexism' and 'racism,' because the reference is to structural patterns in social relations rather than to individual persons' attitudes of prejudice and bigotry.

[14] B. Black, 'The sphinctre of anarchism,' in *Beneath the Underground* (Portland, OR: Feral House, 1994), p. 33.

most informed, powerful and honest when undertaken by those who are placed within those dynamics (though clearly it is possible for men to struggle against patriarchy, for white folk to resist racism, etc.). Thus, the impulse to abolish domination is valorised in the diversity of its enactments, explaining the anarchist refrain according to which 'the only real liberation is self-liberation' and grounding its rejection of paternalism and vanguards. The tension between the specificity of dominations and the need to articulate them in common is reflected in the (often positive) tension between unity and diversity in the anarchist outlook on struggle—the anarchist movement itself being a network of autonomous resistances. The latter retain a privileged position in expressing their oppression and defining their struggles against it, but are also in constant communication, mutual aid and solidarity with each other.

Direct action/prefigurative politics

This leads us to consider the second conceptual cluster that characterizes contemporary anarchism—the one surrounding anarchist strategy or social-change methodology. Here what is overwhelmingly encountered is an ethos of 'direct action'—action without intermediaries, whereby an individual or a group uses their own power and resources to change reality in a desired direction. Anarchists decontest direct action as a matter of taking social change into one's own hands, by intervening directly in a situation rather than appealing to an external agent (typically a government) for its rectification. Most commonly, direct action is viewed under its preventative or destructive guise. If people object, for instance, to the clear-cutting of a forest, then taking direct action means that rather than (only) petitioning or engaging in a legal process, they would intervene literally to prevent the clear cutting—by chaining themselves to the trees, or pouring sugar into the gas-tanks of the bulldozers, or other acts of disruption and sabotage—their goal being to directly hinder or halt the project.

However, direct action can also be invoked in a constructive way. Thus, under the premise of direct action, anarchists who propose social relations free of hierarchy and domination undertake their construction by themselves. This represents the broadening of direct action into a 'prefigurative politics' committed to define and realize anarchist social relations within the existing society, not least so within the collective structures and activities of the revolutionary movement—the idea that 'a transformative social movement must necessarily anticipate the ways and means of the hoped-for new society,'[15] as anarchism's 'commitment to overturning capitalism by only employing a strategy that is an embryonic representation of an anarchist social future.'[16] Direct action is thus framed as a dual strategy of confrontation to delegitimize the system and grassroots alternative-building from below, translating into a commitment to 'being the change,' on any level from personal relationships that address sexism and racism to sustainable living and communes. The movement's goals are thus 'recursively built into [its] daily operation and organizational style. This is evident in affinity groups, decentralized organization, decision-making by consensus, respect for differing opinions and an overall emphasis on the process as well as the outcomes of activism.'[17]

[15] B. Tokar, 'The enemy of nature' (review), *Tikkun,*18 (1).

[16] J. Carter and D. Morland, 'Anti-Capitalism: Are we all anarchists now?,' in Carter and Morland (Eds), *Anti-capitalist Britain* (Gretton: New Clarion Press, 2004), p. 79.

[17] S. Buechler, *Social Movements in Advanced Capitalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 207.

The pursuit of prefigurative politics is an inseparable aspect of anarchist strategy since the collectives, communes and networks in which they are involved today are themselves the groundwork for the realities that will replace the present society. Collectively-run grassroots projects are, on this account, the seeds of a future society 'within the shell of the old.' For social change to be successful, the modes of organization that will replace capitalism, the state, gendered divisions of labour and so on need to be prepared alongside (though not instead of) the attack on present institutions. Thus, 'the very process of building an anarchist movement from below is viewed as the process of consociation, self-activity and self-management that must ultimately yield that revolutionary self that can act upon, change and manage an authentic society.'[18]

An omnipresent hallmark of anarchist political expression, direct action was inherent in historical anarchism's insurrectionary traditions, in sabotage and contestation 'at the point of production' (a refrain coined by IWW militants), and in the formation of communes, free schools and militias. It returned to prominence throughout the 1970s and 1980s. One of the primary sites for this was the nonviolent blockades against nuclear power and weapons, which drew together pacifists, early environmentalists and feminists, though not the traditional Left.[19] The Abalone Alliance, which in the early 1980s forced the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant in California to shut down, saw a prominent involvement of women who explicitly called themselves anarcha-feminists. Through their involvement,

> the anarcha-feminists were able to do a great deal to define the political culture that the Abalone would bequeath to subsequent incarnations of the direct action movement. That political culture helped to create more space for internal differences in the Abalone, and in later organizations, than there had been in the Clamshell [Alliance]. It strengthened the role of the counterculture within the direct action movement, and it opened the movement to the spirituality that later became one of its most salient aspects … anarcha-feminism reinforced the commitment to a utopian democratic vision and a political practice based on the values it contained.[20]

Direct action under its 'constructive' aspect could be seen throughout this period in the numerous self-organized urban and rural communities that were set up in Europe and North America in this period. More violent direct action was also present, primarily against the Franco regime and in the bombings of the Angry Brigade in Britain. From the 1980s onwards, direct action also became the primary method of political expression for radical ecological movements, as in the wilderness defence of *Earth First!* or broader social and environmental struggles such as the British anti-roads movement.[21]

At the same time, many activists were increasingly departing from the top-down models of organization that characterized the old European Left as well as in American groups such as the

[18] M. Bookchin (1980) 'Anarchism past and present,' *Comment,*1 (6).

[19] Cf. Midnight Notes, *Strange Victories: The Anti-nuclear movement in the US and Europe* (London: Elephant Editions, 1985); and I. Welsh, 'Anti-nuclear movements: failed projects or heralds of a direct action milieu?' *Working Paper Series*11 (Cardiff University: School of Social Sciences, 2001).

[20] B. Epstein, *Political Protest and Cultural Revolution: Non-violent direct action in the 1970s and 1980s* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 95–96.

[21] Cf. D. Wall, *Earth First! and the Anti-Roads Movement* (London: Routledge, 1999); B. Seel, M. Patterson and B. Doherty, *Direct Action in British Environmentalism* (London: Routledge, 2000).

National Organisation of Women, the large anti-Vietnam War coalitions or Students for a Democratic Society (and, later, its would-be 'revolutionary cadre' the Weathermen). From the 1970s on, movements increasingly began to organize themselves in a decentralized manner without (formal) structures or leaders, inspired by critiques of political centralization that emanated in particular from the New Left in the late 1960s and feminist circles in the 1970s.[22] Anti-nuclear blockades and sabotage actions, for example, were often organized through the cooperation of decentralized affinity groups, arguing that the movement should model the social structures it looks forward to in its own organization. At the same time, the involvement in these actions of Quakers and feminists (anarcha- and otherwise) introduced consensus decision making methods and 'spokescouncil' structures for coordination among affinity group delegates—until then quite alien to anarchists, but today enjoying a prominent, if contested, position in anarchist organising. Later, 'autonomist' movements in Italy and Germany would extend the decentralized logic of collective action in antagonism to the state, further cementing this aspect of an anarchist political culture.

Thus, direct action and prefigurative politics have been reconstituted as a central element in the worldview of present-day anarchists. The effort to create and develop horizontal functioning in any collective action setting, and to maintain a constant awareness of interpersonal dynamics and the way in which they might reflect social patterns of exclusion, are accorded just as much importance as planning and carrying out campaigns, projects and direct actions. In contemporary anarchist discourse, considerations of efficiency or unity are never alleged to justify a weakening of this emphasis. The development of non-hierarchical structures in which domination is constantly challenged is, for most anarchists, an end in itself.

A clear indication of the importance that anarchists attach to prefigurative politics is its decisive role in defining their solidarity and willingness to collaborate with non-anarchist movements. Anarchists are quite often found allied, on an *ad-hoc* or pretty regular basis, with self-organized movements of migrant workers, peasant associations, anti-militarist initiatives, campaigns against police brutality etc., which do not have an explicitly anarchist orientation. Such groups may have no radical critique of capitalism, entirely focus their work on a single issue, or limit their political agendas to reforms in particular institutions rather than seeking the type of social transformation that anarchists endorse. But when asking activists why they are more comfortable working with some non-anarchist groups rather than others, the response I often received is that it is a factor of the internal process of these groups. It is their general trajectory towards internally democratic, face-to-face methods of organization, and their striving to transcend sexist or racist patterns among their own members, which in large part determine anarchists' solidarity and will to cooperate with them. This is not to say that anarchists will not surface their differences with such groups or question what they see as their limited perspectives—but this would usually take the form of a (sometimes heated) debate among allies, rather than calling into question the alliance itself. In a similar way, anarchists feel far less comfortable cooperating with large, bureaucratic NGOs who do not put a strong emphasis on horizontal internal structures, even if they do take quite a radical position on capitalism, promote a multi-issue analysis, or call for grassroots empowerment from the teeth outward.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the anarchist drive towards a prefigurative politics of direct action is strongly related to anarchism's individualist aspect. Anarchists often explain their

[22] E.g. D. and G. Cohn-Bendit, *Obsolete Communism—The Left Wing Alternative* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2001).

actions and modes of organization as intended not only to help bring about generalized social transformation, but also to liberate *themselves* to the greatest degree possible. On such a reading, the motivation for anarchists to engage in a prefigurative politics lies simply in their desire to inhabit liberated social relations. In the words of US anarchist publishing collective CrimethInc.,

> It is crucial that we seek change not in the name of some doctrine or grand cause, but on behalf of ourselves, so that we will be able to live more meaningful lives. Similarly we must seek first and foremost to alter the contents of our own lives in a revolutionary manner, rather than direct our struggle towards world-historical changes which we will not live to witness. In this way we will avoid the feelings of worthlessness and alienation that result from believing that it is necessary to 'sacrifice oneself for the cause,' and instead live to experience the fruits of our labours … in our labors themselves.[23]

Diversity and open-endedness

The third and final conceptual cluster at the ideological core of contemporary anarchism is the one associated with its future visions. Here, anarchists' discourse strongly expresses an open-ended tendency, eschewing both the notion of revolutionary closure and unitary blueprints for an 'anarchist society,' in favour of a project based on diversity and perpetual experimentation. This is not entirely new—one prominent antecedent being the following statement from Rudolf Rocker:

> Anarchism is no patent solution for all human problems, no Utopia of a perfect social order, as it has so often been called, since on principle it rejects all absolute schemes and concepts. It does not believe in any absolute truth, or in definite final goals for human development, but in an unlimited perfectibility of social arrangements and human living conditions, which are always straining after higher forms of expression, and to which for this reason one can assign no definite terminus nor set any fixed goal.[24]

This type of thinking has, however, become much more prevalent in contemporary anarchism, where the commitment to diversity and to free experimentation with social and cultural alternatives in the present tense has become a central grounding point. This is traceable to the same process of convergence among social movements reviewed earlier, as a result of which activists developed a pluralist orientation which disemphasized unity of analysis and vision as a measure of appropriate political affiliation, contributing to the possibility of diverse *ad-hoc* coalitions. This was perhaps the result of the intriguing circumstance whereby several movements simultaneously purported to provide overarching, totalising perspectives as a vantage point for their analysis and action, as in the case of certain strands feminism, deep ecology, and post-war developments of Marxism such as Italian autonomist theory. The rise of such paradoxically 'competing

[23] CrimethInc collective, 'Alive in the land of the dead.' Internet: http://www.crimethinc.com/library/english/alive.html

[24] R. Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism* (New York: Secker and Warburg, 1938). Internet: http://www.spunk.org/library/writers/rocker/sp001495/rocker_as1.html

holisms' and their own versions of the sources of the world's problems (patriarchy, industrialism and/or anthropocentrism, continuing class divisions, etc.) sometimes led to entrenchment and unwillingness to acknowledge other viewpoints. In other cases, however, activists turned away from aiming at a single analysis and towards a 'theoretical pluralism' that was prepared to accord equal legitimacy to diverse perspectives and narratives of struggle. This displaced theoretical unity in favour of a bottom-up approach to social theorising, and a parallel interest in manifold creative articulations of social alternatives.

We should digress for a moment and note that such an orientation has evident affinities with post-structuralist thought. Indeed, over the past few years there has been a growth of interest in exploring the correspondences between anarchist politics and the diverse intellectual currents associated with post-structuralism. Saul Newman describes this endeavour as 'using the post-structuralist critique [to] theorize the possibility of political resistance without essentialist guarantees,' seeking fundamental critiques of authority in aspects such as 'Foucault's rejection of the 'essential' difference between madness and reason; Deleuze and Guattari's attack on Oedipal representation and State-centered thought; [and] Derrida's questioning of philosophy's assumption about the importance of speech over writing.'[25] Moreover, it has been argued that anarchism has had an indirect influence on the development of post-structuralism itself, seeing as major theorists associated with this current—Baudrillard, Lyotard, Virilio, Derrida, Castoriadis, Foucault, Deleuze, Guattari—were all active participants in the French May '68 events which had a strong libertarian dimension, and went on to develop their theories in their aftermath.[26] Contemporary post-structuralist anarchism (or simply 'post-anarchism') thus involves drawing on post-structuralist resources to flesh out new critiques and theories with a strong anarchist leaning, coupled with an explicit critique of classical anarchism's rootedness in essentialist Enlightenment humanism and simplistic conceptions of social dynamics.[27] For example, Todd May has pointed to classical anarchists' tendency to conceive of power monolithically, as a capacity concentrated in the state and the machinations of the ruling class.[28] Drawing on Foucault and contemporary feminist and queer theorists, May and others argue that the unfreedom of human beings is not reducible to the presence of explicit hierarchical structures and overt coercion, but often an insidious dynamic, reproduced through performative disciplinary acts in which the protagonists may not even be conscious of their roles. Foucault has famously explored how power is articulated in the 'capillaries' of social relations, in cultural grammar, routine practices, social mechanisms and institutions—in a much more subtle and potent form than in its rougher expressions as military violence. These insights feed into a post-anarchist critique of power which transcends the structural characteristics of hierarchy, while pointing to new potentialities for resistance. It should be emphasized that post-structuralist anarchism remains an intellectual preoccupation, limited to a handful of writers rather than being a genuine expression of, or influence on, the grassroots thinking and discourse of masses of activists (which is not, of course, to detract from its importance as a theoretical endeavour).

[25] S. Newman, *From Bakunin to Lacan: Antiauthoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power (*Lanham: Lexington Books, 2001), p. 158.

[26] D. Kellner, Introduction to A. Feenberg and J. Freedman, *When Poetry Ruled the Streets: The French May Events of 1968* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2001), p. xviii.

[27] For further reading and online resources see http://www.postanarchism.org/

[28] T. May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1994).

Returning to intellectual pluralism, another important contributing factor should be mentioned—the rootedness of the emergent anarchist movement in western subcultures. Throughout the 20th century anarchist ideas had attracted subcultural and artistic movements such as Dada, Surrealism and the Beats. Since the 1960s, this attraction took on a much larger scale with the advent of the 'counterculture' phenomenon. The punk subculture has been the most significant breeding ground for anarchists throughout the last two decades, due to its oppositional attitude to mainstream society and close affiliation with anarchist symbolism. Radical environmental groups such as *Earth First*! borrow from many 'spiritual' traditions including paganism, Buddhism, and various New Age and Native American spiritualities. Besides initiating multiple spaces of alternative cultural and social reproduction—from communes and squats to festivals and 'zines—subcultures also provided an impetus for the recognition of a great degree of diversity in the type of sociocultural orientations that could be envisioned for a post-capitalist, post-state society. Colin Ward's focus on everyday interactions without hierarchy and alienation,[29] and the many Situationist-influenced explorations of an anarchist micropolitics of resistance and reconstruction in daily life, were two further prominent contributions to this process.

The self-distancing from unitary visions and an anticipated closure of the 'successful' revolutionary project are very strongly apparent in anarchist-inspired works of fiction and imagination, in which the reorientation of the anarchist utopian horizon finds rich and poignant expression. Ursula Le Guin's 1974 novel *The Dispossessed* portrays an anarchist society that is far from perfect or unproblematic. The protagonist, Shevek, is driven to leave his anarchist society on the moon of Anarres, not because he rejects its core anarchist ideals but because he sees that some of them are no longer adequately reflected in practice, while others need to be revised in order to give more place to individuality. In the 170 years since its establishment, following the secession of a mass of revolutionary anarchists from the home-planet of Urras, Anarresti society has witnessed the growth of xenophobia, informal hierarchies in the administrative syndicates, and an apparatus of social control through custom and peer pressure. All of these contribute to a conformity that hinders Shevek's self-realization in his pursuit of his life project, the development of a groundbreaking approach in theoretical physics. Shevek embodies the continuing importance of dissent even after the abolition of capitalism and government. Through his departure and founding of the Syndicate of Initiative, he becomes a revolutionary within the revolution and initiates change within the anarchist society:

> It was our purpose all along—our Syndicate, this journey of mine—to shake up things, to stir up, to break some habits, to make people ask questions. To behave like anarchists![30]

Shevek's project renews the spirit of dissent and non-conformism that animated the original creation of the anarchist society on Anarres in the first place. As Raymond Williams observes, this dynamic portrays *The Dispossessed* as 'an open utopia: forced open, after the congealing of ideals, the degeneration of mutuality into conservatism; shifted, deliberately, from its achieved

[29] C. Ward, *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, 1973).
[30] U. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed* (London: Gollancz, 2002), p. 316.

harmonious condition, the stasis in which the classical utopian mode culminates, to restless, open, risk-taking experiment.'[31]

A similar open utopia is the vision of an alternative society forwarded in the book *bolo'bolo* by the Zurich-based author P.M. This book not only acknowledges but treasures the type of instability and diversity of social relations that can be ushered in by the removal of all external control on the behaviour of individuals and groups. The world anti-system called *bolo'bolo* is a mosaic in which every community (*bolo*) of around five hundred residents is as nutritionally self-sufficient as possible, and has complete autonomy to define its ethos or 'flavour' *(nima*). Stability is afforded by a minimal but universal social contract (*sila*), enforced by reputation and interdependence.[32] This contract guarantees, for example, that every individual (*ibu*) can at any time leave their native *bolo*, and is entitled to one day's rations (*yalu*) and housing (*gano*), as well as to medical treatment (*bete*), at any *bolo*. It even suggests a duel code (*yaka)* to solve disputes. However,

> There are no humanist, liberal or democratic laws or rules about the content of *nimas* and there is no State to enforce them. Nobody can prevent a *bolo* from committing mass suicide, dying of drug experiments, driving itself into madness or being unhappy under a violent regime. *Bolos* with a bandit-nima could terrorize whole regions or continents, as the Huns or Vikings did. Freedom and adventure, generalized terrorism, the law of the club, raids, tribal wars, vendettas, plundering—everything goes.[33]

While not all anarchists would want to go that far, the point here is that any anarchist orientation which looks to the absence of law and authority must also anticipate a great deal of diversity in the way in which communities choose to self-organize socially and economically. Furthermore, the commitment to unfettered diversity must lead anarchists to respond to the possibility of a re-emergence of patterns of domination within and/or among communities, even if at a certain point in time they have been consciously overcome. Thus, anarchists would be drawn to accept that 'the price of eternal liberty is eternal vigilance.'[34] If one insists on the potential need for anarchist agency under any conditions, then the notion of a closure of the revolutionary project loses its meaning. At most, then, an 'anarchist society' would be one in which everyone is an anarchist, that is, a society in which every person wields agency against rule and domination. To be sure, the frequency of the need to do so may hopefully diminish to a great extent, in comparison to what an anarchist approach would deem necessary in present societies. However, one has no reason to think that it can ever be permanently removed.

The primary conclusion that anarchists can (and often do) draw from the dissociation of their project form a post-revolutionary resting point is to transpose their notion of social revolution to the present-tense. Feeding back into the individualist grounding of prefigurative politics discussed earlier, anarchist modes of interaction—non-hierarchical, voluntary, cooperative, solidaric and playful—are no longer seen as features on which to model a future society, but rather as an

[31] R. Williams 'Utopia and science fiction,' *Science Fiction Studies*,5 (3), 1978; Internet: http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/ backissues/16/williams16art.htm

[32] P.M., *bolo'bolo* (New York: Autonomedia, 1985), pp. 68–70.

[33] P.M., *bolo'* bolo (New York: Autonomedia, 1985), pp. 68–70, pp. 77–78.

[34] W. Phillips 'Speech in Boston, Massachusetts, January 28'; in *Speeches Before the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society* (Boston, R. F. Wallcut, 1852), p. 13.

ever-present potential of the here and now. Such an approach promotes anarchy as culture, as a lived reality that pops up everywhere in new guises, adapts to different cultural climates, and should be extended and developed experimentally *for its own sake*, whether or not one believes it can become, in some sense, the prevailing mode of society. Also, it amounts to promoting anarchy as a feature of everyday life, in mundane settings such as 'a quilting bee, a dinner party, a black market … a neighborhood protection society, an enthusiasts' club, a nude beach.'[35] The task for anarchists, then, is not to 'introduce' a new society but to realize it as much as possible in the present tense.

Conclusion

Anarchism, in its re-emergence as a coherent global movement over the past decade, has been the site of manifold reconfigurations that distinguish it from previous cycles of left-libertarian political expression. Networked structures replace formal federations and unions, a stronger emphasis is given to direct action and cultural experimentation, and the target of resistance is generalized from state and capital to all forms of domination. This article has attempted to break some initial ground in the investigation of contemporary anarchism, delineating its emergent ideological core on the basis of an intimate embeddedness in activist discourse and a literate selection and reading of texts. The emergent picture of anarchist ideology was further related to material processes of social movement development, cross-fertilization and convergence, which have created a new formulation of anti-authoritarian activity and political language—'anarchism reloaded.'

While this article has mainly explored the ideological core of anarchism, whose conceptual clusters represent the broad consensus at the back of anarchist organising, much more remains to be explored in terms of the tensions that take place within the arena they demarcate. The most prominent and recalcitrant among these are discussions around 'internal hierarchies' or 'leadership' in the movement; debates on the definition, justification and effectiveness of violence; controversies on anarchist positions around technology and modernity; and an emerging set of dilemmas around international solidarity and support for the 'national liberation' struggles of peoples in the majority world. The investigation of these tensions and the ways in which they propel activists to generate creative and often confrontational discourses within the perimeters defined by the ideological core remains a richly interesting task for researchers.

However, if there is one message that this article would drive home it is that contemporary anarchism is to be taken extremely seriously by students of ideology. The re-convergence of anarchist politics has given rise to what is arguably the largest and most coherent, vibrant and rapidly-evolving revolutionary movement in advanced capitalist countries. As such, it deserves close attention from researchers who wish to unlock processes of political expression, agenda setting, identity formation and ideological development in social movements, as well as from socially-minded political theorists who want to relate their conceptual endeavours to a broader and more integrated array of social criticism and proposals for change.

[35] Hakim Bey 'The Willimantic/Rensselaer Questions,' in Mike Gunderloy and Michael Ziesing, *Anarchy and the End of History* (San Francisco, CA: Factsheet Five Books, 1991), pp. 87–92.

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