

CRITICAL UTOPIAN CITIZENSHIP: THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Abstract

This project seeks to bring a critical utopian methodology to bear upon the institution of citizenship in the hope of imagining a theoretical formulation that could encourage active, anti-hierarchical, participatory and empowering practices. The critical utopian approach disrupts conventional disciplinary boundaries, and allows theories and practices that would not normally be associated with citizenship to be brought into dialogue with the concept in thought and imagination, as part of a strategic intervention. This produces a perspective that is simultaneously estranging and creative, deconstructive and experimental. The body of the work considers three themes in particular: territory, authority and rights, which are frequently posited as foundational for politics and citizenship, and proceeds to deconstruct their dominant formulations by imagining an infinitely critical utopian ‘outside’. Diverse bodies of theory including post-structuralism, anarchism, post-structural and post-left anarchisms, ecology, critical geography and feminism are drawn upon to articulate critical utopias of space without territory, decision-making without authority and ethics without rights. The project then brings another ‘outside’ into dialogue with the theory: practices in what are termed ‘autonomous utopian communities’; including intentional communities, autonomous social centres, housing co-operatives and eco-villages. The aim of the project is to use a dialogue between critically resistant theories and practices to expose the obscured normative and indeed utopian foundations of many dominant theories of citizenship, and to consider the ethical and practical effects of hegemonic and truth-claiming discourses. The project also posits something different: a contingent and open-ended critical utopian citizenship that favours perspectival multiplicity, process over closure, and contingency over certainty, that can be engaged in by citizens and non-citizens in everyday life.

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1. Introduction

The work of an intellectual is not to mold the political will of others; it is, through the analyses that he does in his own field, to re-examine evidence and assumptions, to shake up habitual ways of working and thinking, to dissipate conventional familiarities, to re-evaluate rules and institutions and starting from this re-problematization (where he occupies his specific profession as an intellectual) to participate in the formation of a political will (where he has his role as a citizen to play).

(Foucault, 1989: 462-3)

What does it mean to be a citizen? What does it mean not to be a citizen? What is the relationship between intellectual activity and citizenship? The purpose of this project is to bring theory and practice into a dialogue in the hope of imagining new ways in which we can think, act, and enact change in everyday life by disrupting definitional and institutional boundaries.

1.1. *Rationale and context*

The topic of citizenship is poignant, topical yet intellectually elusive. In the weeks leading up to the submission of this thesis, the Labour Government of the United Kingdom has unveiled plans to dispense with previous customs whereby citizenship would often be granted after five years in the country in favour of a ‘points system’ to evaluate new migrants and a new category of ‘probationary’ citizen. Points will be allocated for attributes deemed desirable, such as ‘English language ability, earnings potential, qualifications, shortage skills, volunteering’ (Travis, *The Guardian*, 4 August 2009: 4) and deducted for ‘active disregard for UK values’ (Ibid: 4). This continues a long line of British governmental policies designed to define and control what the ‘citizen’ is or should be.

At the same time, there is a growing tendency in academia to move away from understandings of citizenship that tie it to the nation-state. Dominant notions of citizenship are often judged unable to deal with many social and environmental problems of the twenty-first century. The rise of global problems such as environmental degradation and escalating material inequality mean that forces beyond their democratic control often impinge upon ‘rights’ and ‘entitlements’ of citizens promised by the nation state (Held, 1995; Carter, 2001). Contemporary citizenship discourses are also problematised on the individual and subjective level. Advances in communication, transport

and technology mean that identities, relationships and communities are often formed through connections that are not contained within the territorial boundaries of the nation state. The question of what, exactly, binds citizens together within a political community arises. This has led contemporary citizenship theory away from a focus on state policy discourses of nationality towards a focus on everyday practices (see, for example, Faulks, 2000; Dobson, 2003; Hoffman, 2004; Isin, 2008; Isin & Nielsen (eds), 2008; Fairclough, Pardoe & Szerzinski, 2006).

Everyday practices have long been a concern for anarchist thought, which has largely been ignored by contemporary citizenship theory. In a plea for an ‘anarchist anthropology’, David Graeber posits that one aim of such a project might be to ‘theorize a citizenship outside the state’ (Graeber, 2004: 68). My project might be seen as a partial response to this entreaty. It is my contention that in failing to conceptualise an ‘outside’ to the state, citizenship theory remains trapped in a paradoxical situation where its ends, or normative content are contradictory with its means.

1.2. Contribution

My project emerges at the nexus between citizenship studies, utopian studies, anarchist studies and radical activism, and hopes to contribute to each of these as well as towards a wider unbounded movement for autonomy and non-hierarchy. The relation to each of these bodies of thought and practice forms the theme of the following two chapters. The contribution I hope to offer each is complex and overlapping. My contention is that aspects of canonical and contemporary citizenship theory rely on an implicit logic of hegemony, unquestioned hierarchy and domination, which can be disrupted through imaging and practicing alternative possibilities.

The project is thus seeking a space for politics outside the usually conceived terrain. This relies on a nuanced understanding of power. A traditional but comprehensive definition of power is that ‘*A* has power over *B* to the extent that he can get *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do’ (Dahl, 1957: 202-3). Aside from the pluralist position, it is now widely accepted within debates on power that a sufficiently broad definition of the political must include non-decisions (Bachrach &

Baratz, 1970) and the hegemonic shaping of interests (Lukes, 1974). Hegemony is best described as a process of domination (which is always partial) manifested when a social group ‘tends to “liquidate” or to subjugate [antagonistic groups] perhaps even by armed force’ whilst it ‘leads kindred and allied groups’ (Gramsci, 1971: 57). Domination thus operates through a complimentary process of coercion and manufactured consent: ‘the threat of the man with the stick permeates our world at every moment; most of us have given up even thinking of crossing the innumerable lines and barriers that he creates, just so we don’t have to remind ourselves of his existence’ (Graeber, 2004: 72). This definition exists in tension with some definitions of politics, which stipulate that politics always entails the *constrained* use of power and that use of force is anti-political (Goodin & Klingemann, 1996: 7; Hoffman, 2004: 25). In the context of domination, associated with the state, consent is always backed up by force.

My contention is that this does not have to be the case. This project therefore proceeds from the assumption that:

“‘another world is possible.’ That institutions like the state, capitalism, racism and male dominance are not inevitable; that it would be possible to have a world in which these things would not exist, and that we’d all be better off as a result’ (Graeber, 2004: 10).

This contention is ‘almost an act of faith’ (Ibid: 10) but is a commitment to optimism that is based upon a moral imperative:

since one cannot know a radically better world is not possible, are we not betraying everyone by insisting on continuing to justify, and reproduce, the mess we have today? And anyway, even if we’re wrong, we might well get a little closer’ (Ibid: 10).

Utopianism can be seen as a basis for resistance. If citizenship means belonging to a place, then it perhaps has a certain resonance with utopianism as a theory of imagined and alternative places. Some utopian beliefs work by turning existing arrangements upside down, leading to a ‘total reversal of the existing distribution of status and rewards’ (Scott, 1990: 80), whereby the slave becomes master and the master becomes slave. Other utopian beliefs operate as a ‘systematic negation of an existing pattern of exploitation’ (Ibid: 81) – that is, they involve imagining the complete absence of hierarchical distinctions. It is this latter kind of utopianism in which I am most interested. Where Scott concentrates primarily on the utopian imaginaries and discourses of

subordinate groups through history, Richard Day (2005) concentrates on the political practices of contemporary activist groups. He argues that rather than trying to establish a counter-hegemony that shifts the balance of power back in favour of the oppressed, some contemporary radical activist groups ‘are breaking out of this trap by operating *non-* hegemonically rather than *counter-* hegemonically. They seek radical change, but not through taking or influencing state power, and in so doing they challenge the logic of hegemony at its very core’ (Day, 2005: 8; italics in the original). Graeber argues that anarchist, or anarchist-inspired principles such as ‘autonomy, voluntary association, self-organisation, mutual aid and direct democracy’ now form the basic principles of organisation for ‘radical movements of all kinds everywhere’ (Graeber, 2004: 2). Despite the everyday proliferation of practices of resistance that work to overcome all forms of domination rather than seize power for themselves, these principles have ‘found almost no reflection in the academy’ (Ibid: 2; see also Day 2005: 8; Tormey, 2006: 139). It is my contention that some of these principles might offer a basis for an alternative conceptualisation and practice of citizenship – yet as I shall argue in the following chapter, many contemporary citizenship theorists who claim to be seeking a ‘citizenship beyond the state’ (Faulks, 2000; Hoffman, 2004) do not manage to overcome what Day calls ‘the hegemony of hegemony’ (Day, 2005: 8).

In this thesis, I seek to understand and articulate possibilities for citizenship that are disruptive, critical and resistant through a critical utopian approach, and a dialogue with anarchistic theory and practice. In so doing, I hope to develop critical utopian methodology in ways that might be transferable to further projects, to disrupt, broaden and offer alternative possibilities for citizenship studies, and to offer strategic possibilities for would-be critical utopian citizens, wherever they might be.

1.3. Research design

The research design is based upon the assumptions outlined above that the concept of citizenship is essentially contested, and relies upon two different logics or potentials, which exist in tension. One of these assumes hierarchy, rests on domination and hegemony and focuses on the relationship of the citizen with the state. The other emphasises participation, non-hierarchy, self-management and

focuses on everyday practices and relationships between citizens. Throughout the thesis, I argue that these offer different potentials for citizenship. The former seeks the integration of citizens into the higher totality of the state whereas the latter emphasises the multiplication of difference. The primary question motivating the research is:

How else could we live as politically active, participatory people, or, what other types of citizen could we be?

This is a rather broad question that can be disaggregated into the following research questions, which are further broken down and approached from various angles throughout the thesis:

- Out of what historical conditions do dominant models of citizenship arise, what do they have in common, and what are the effects of dominant modes of theorising citizenship?
- What alternatives to these dominant models of citizenship are offered by critical utopian theory?
- What theoretical and practiced alternatives to dominant models of citizenship are offered by political agents in autonomous spaces?
- What can a dialogue between theory and practice tell us about the conditions for a critical utopian citizenship?

Using a critical utopian methodology, I deconstruct dominant models of citizenship by bringing them into dialogue with estranged, critical utopian perspectives. These perspectives come from both academic theory and from radical alternative political practices.

The body of the thesis is structured around three thematic concepts: territory, authority and rights. Saskia Sassen describes these as ‘transhistorical components being present in almost all societies’ (Sassen, 2006: 4), and she asserts these to be foundational (Ibid: 4). Sassen uses them as variables that ‘assume specific contents, shapes and interdependencies in each historical formation’ (Ibid: 4). As should become clear throughout the thesis, I have ethical and intellectual objections to positing any concept as foundational, since this practice will tend to disguise the normative starting point and also to block the critical utopian function and radical potential. The reasons I have persisted with the concepts are twofold. First, they are themes that recur throughout the literature on

citizenship, as well as throughout my own fieldwork observations. Dominant theories of citizenship indeed assume specific formulations of territory, authority and rights, and these components structure the historical milieu out of which critical utopian alternative or oppositional approaches emerge. Viewing the political in terms of territory, authority and rights gives a broadened conception of politics and allows us to ‘historicise both the national and the global as constructed conditions’ (Ibid: 4), rather than taking any given spatial formation of politics or the state (itself an historical construct) for granted. Secondly, the very fact that these concepts are posited as foundational and recur throughout political theory and practice makes them important institutions to hold up to scrutiny and attempt to transgress in imagining the conditions for a critical utopian citizenship.

Each of these concepts is deconstructed in terms of the effects of specific theoretical and historical formulations upon the institution of citizenship. The implications for citizenship will be based upon the themes of participation, belonging and ethics, drawn from contemporary citizenship debates (see, for example Turner, 1992: 55; Dobson, 2003: 37). I consider the estranged perspectives that make critique possible, the critical utopias from theory and practice that help us to imagine new ways of living as citizens. Using this approach, I seek to offer new possibilities for a critical utopian theory and practice of citizenship. It is an approach and a method that is effective in the sense put forward in the quote from Foucault at the start of this chapter: it re-problematifies taken-for-granted assumptions, transgresses and disrupts institutional boundaries and in so doing opens up new avenues for thought. This also offers something in the way of a politics, but not a blueprint or a generalised theory of citizenship. Rather, this approach offers potential strategies for critical citizenship in everyday life.

1.4. Summary of thesis

Chapter 2 focuses on the critical utopian approach, explaining how it differs from blueprinting, truth-claiming and hegemonising utopianism. It includes a brief literature review outlining why citizenship is particularly amenable to this approach. Although the chapter includes a survey of literature relevant to these aims, it should not be considered a self-contained literature review, as

the nature of this work means that relevant literatures are interwoven with considerations of practices throughout the entire body of the thesis.

Chapter 3 outlines the relationship between theory and practice, and how the critical utopian approach outlined in the previous chapter is used in this thesis. The chapter capitulates criteria for theory and case selection, as well as the empirical methods used to obtain information on practices in autonomous communities.

The remaining body of the thesis attempts to disrupt, deconstruct and then re-imagine theories, public discourses and practices of citizenship through the conceptual lenses of territory, authority and rights. Each concept forms the basis for two complimentary chapters, one on theory and one on practice. Together, Chapters 4 & 5: “Transgressing Territory: Theory” and “Transgressing Territory: Practice” consider the effects of ‘dominant’ (as defined in Chapters 2 & 3) theories, public discourses and practices of territory in terms of the ways in which they shape and limit the institution of citizenship, and then consider alternatives that might inform a critical utopian citizenship. In Chapter 4, I outline features that are common to dominant theoretical constructions of territory: sovereignty, commodification and the hierarchical imposition of the built environment. I deconstruct these in terms of their effects upon formations of citizenship, and then outline the critical utopian ‘outside’, or estranged perspective from which such a deconstruction is made possible, involving deterritorialisation and autonomy as alternatives to sovereignty, appropriation and common ownership, and consensus design. Chapter 5 critiques and transgresses these formations further, using everyday practices in autonomous communities as another radical ‘outside’ offering alternative ways of conceptualising and transgressing territory. Sometimes practices reflect critical utopian theoretical approaches, and sometimes they parody dominant approaches. What is more interesting, is where they transgress both of these approaches and disrupt their boundaries, offering something new that requires further theorisation. This polyphonic dialogue (Bakhtin, 1984 [c. 1929]) between different perspectives informs the critical utopian approach. In the last section of the chapter on practice I consider the implications of the dialogue between theories and practices for critical utopian citizenship.

The subsequent chapters follow the same structure. Chapter 6, “Transgressing Authority: Theory” critiques the bases of legitimacy of dominant theoretical models of authority: contractarianism, democratic representation, instrumentalism, and natural hierarchy. It posits critical utopian alternatives to the modes of organisation presupposed by dominant models of authority: voluntarism, collective decision-making in small groups, immanent orientation to desires and non-hierarchy. Chapter 7: “Transgressing Authority: Practice”, considers how ideas and practices in autonomous communities both reflect and transgress theoretical models of consent, decision-making structures, orientation to desires and relationship dynamics. The final part of the chapter analyses the implications of the dialogue between theory and practice for critical utopian citizenship.

Chapter 8, “Transgressing Rights: Theory” critiques and deconstructs the foundations of dominant models of rights: foundationalism and universalism, binary thought and atomised subjectivity, the unequal relations disguised by abstract equality, the mediation and alienation of relationships and a politics of demand that perpetuates structural inequality. I posit some critical utopian alternatives that transgress and disrupt the foundations of dominant ‘rights’ theory: contingency and experimentation, transgressing binary thought, ethics of care and infinite responsibility, unmediated relationships and the active creation of alternatives in the present. Chapter 9, “Transgressing Rights: Practice” considers the analogous practices in autonomous communities: ontological difference, construction of subjectivity, privilege, equality and difference, community formations and models of political change, and how these either reflect or transgress theoretical models. The final part of this chapter considers the implications for the dialogue between theory and practice and the implications for critical utopian citizenship. Taken together, these chapters offer a critical utopian vision of space without territorial sovereignty, decision-making and organisation without political authority, ethics without moral and legal rights, and citizenship without the state. The final chapter reflects upon these findings in terms of what they mean for citizenship studies and what they mean for citizens, and also considers the limitations of, and further possibilities for the critical utopian methodology.

2. Approach

2.1. *Introduction*

This chapter introduces critical utopianism as a method that will be applied to citizenship throughout the project, and anarchism as a body of theory that contributes useful concepts and methods for resistance. I consider how we can conceptualise citizenship, if not as formal membership of straightforwardly identifiable legal political units and associated legal rights and duties. I argue that citizenship might more usefully be considered functionally, as a process and a relationship, and as a ‘utopia of autonomy’. It has empirical referents, which will be identified in the subsequent chapter.

The chapter should not be read as a traditional ‘literature review’, although it does have some aspects of this. The chapter identifies gaps in the literature to which I am contributing, and the bodies of theory that I would like to draw on to fill these gaps – anarchism and utopianism – which are largely ignored by mainstream citizenship theory. I use two loosely grouped bodies of theory in particular to inform my analytical framework: utopian studies and variations on anarchism. The final part of the chapter explains why insights from utopianism and anarchism are useful to articulate a utopian and anarchistic tendency for citizenship that has already existent references in the present, and will form the basis of the remainder of the thesis.

2.2. *Post-state citizenship theory: deferring autonomy*

Two theorists whose conceptions I find to be particularly useful, insofar as they take the potentially radical function of citizenship to its limits within contemporary theory, are Keith Faulks (2000) and John Hoffman (2004)¹. Where these thinkers differ radically from their cohorts is their shared desire ‘to challenge the assumption – almost universally held – that citizenship involves the

¹ Perhaps the most influential ‘postmodern’ or ‘post-Marxist’ theorist of citizenship with whom I shall not be dealing with in detail here is Chantal Mouffe (see Mouffe 1992 and 1996). I feel that the statist assumptions of her approach are effectively critiqued and transgressed by the thinkers that I shall be considering here (see particularly Hoffman 2004: 37 and 76-8), and in deference to the constraints of space I do not feel any need to further their critique here. For what I feel is an even more valuable critique of what he argues is a new paradigm based around a questionable ontological claim of ‘constitutive lack’, in which Mouffe and many other contemporary ‘postmodern’ or ‘post-Marxist’ theorists of citizenship partake, see Robinson 2005.

membership of a state' (Hoffman 2004: 1). I would like to transgress their critique by identifying the implicit utopian function of their theory of citizenship. Later in this chapter I will critique implicit utopianism more generally and argue for the value of explicit and critically resistant forms of utopianism.

Both thinkers stress the importance of rebuilding the concept of citizenship in order to recognise its emancipatory potential: 'an effective critique involves both deconstruction *and* reconstruction. One without the other is either nihilist or positivist – either a mindless destruction, or a triumphalist celebration, of the status quo' (Hoffman 2004: 137-8, see also Faulks, 2000: 3). An inclusive notion of citizenship is presented as incompatible with the state due to the use of force to address conflicts of interest – a tension is highlighted between the state, as a form of concentrated violence, and citizenship as autonomy and self-governance (Faulks, 2000: 127; Hoffman, 2004: 22-24). To this point, I agree. Where I begin to diverge is the point at which a sharp distinction is made between force, coercion and constraint, and between the state, as the concentration of power and the means of violence, and government as 'the settlement of conflict through arbitration and negotiation' (Hoffman, 2004: 31). Coercion and constraint, it is argued, result in a person wilfully acting in a way they might not have otherwise, whereas force means that no activity is possible since a person is unable to exercise power of will at all. Thus coercion (conceived as diffuse social pressure) and constraint (conceived of as internal/psychological pressure) are presented as compatible with a democratic citizenship, whereas the state (as the concentration of power-as-violence in a centralised institution) is seen to be incompatible with the notion of citizenship (Faulks, 2000: 128-9; Hoffman, 2004: 23-24). This view remains somewhat unconvincing in view of the conceptualisation of domination and hegemony given above, but is not the primary point at which I would like to pick apart the thoughts of these thinkers. This resides in their implicit and obscured utopianism, to which I will now turn.

At a conceptual level, and at the level of practice, citizenship is seen to be inherently progressive, and both thinkers use the idea of the 'momentum concept'. This was devised by Hoffman (1988), but first applied to the concept of citizenship by Faulks (2000: 3), and then taken up and further

expanded by Hoffman (2004: *passim*). Several other contemporary citizenship theorists also adopt the term (see for example: Roy, 2005; Lister, 2007) or describe similar ideas of deferall, and progress without perfection (Mouffe, 1992: 238).

Momentum concepts are opposed to 'static concepts', which are seen to be 'intrinsically repressive and exclusionary' (Hoffman, 2004: 138) and include the state, patriarchy and violence. They are seen to be 'not ... part of the "human condition" and they stand as barriers to emancipation and an inclusive citizenship' (Ibid: 138). Momentum concepts, by contrast:

Have an egalitarian and anti-hierarchical 'logic', using the term 'hierarchy' to mean a differentiation that is repressive and divisive. This logic invites us to link the different phases within a concept's formulation in a progressive manner, so that ... the 'movement' from ancient notions of freedom (for example) to liberal notions, constitutes a step forward. Momentum concepts are inherently progressive. They 'unfold' so that we must continuously rework them in a way that realizes more and more of their egalitarianism and anti-hierarchical potential (Ibid: 138)

The momentum concept, however anti-hierarchical its 'logic', is not conceived to have an end-point; inclusive citizenship and emancipation are thus seen to be concepts towards which we move, but never perfect or complete: 'Were we to say that an emancipated society had finally arrived, we would indeed have idealized a particular status quo, and abandoned the *infinitely* critical quality of the momentum concept' (Ibid: 139).

Although both Hoffman and Faulks claim to reject the state, they see it as necessary in the movement towards inclusive citizenship: 'We need a view of the state that sees it as transitionally necessary until a time that common interests are sufficiently robust to rely solely upon arbitration and negotiation to tackle conflict' (Hoffman, 2004: 161). Thus both theorists put forward similar policy suggestions to enhance citizenship, including the requirement to perform more duties (Faulks, 2000: 130; Hoffman, 2004: 105), compulsory voting and community service (Faulks, 2000: 130; Hoffman, 2004: 93,105), and a 'citizen's income' (Faulks, 2000: 130; Hoffman, 2004: 93). It is clear that a state would be necessary to implement these. Hoffman rejects anarchism, saying that its theory is 'still premised upon statist assumptions' such as 'the assumption of a sociable human nature and an abstract view of the individual' (Hoffman, 2004: 161). Although I

will be examining the anarchist view along similar lines later, I also feel that the arguments of both Hoffman and Faulks suffer from an inability to imagine a non-hegemonic outside to the state. I tend to concur with parts of their critiques, and my own work starts from a similar point of dissatisfaction with state-centred theories of citizenship. I am particularly sympathetic to the proposal that force and violence are incompatible with many of the conceptual tendencies of citizenship, particularly in its historical context of contrast with the feudal subject, since they negate will and agency². I also agree with the relational view that rights and duties are complimentary rather than contradictory when viewed in a social context rather than as abstractions bestowed by centralised power³. I would place particular emphasis on their argument that citizenship implies (or at least should imply) autonomy and self-governance so that participation is essential. Insofar as it emphasises process over finality, I also feel that the momentum concept is a useful device. However, I do not agree to the extent that I can support a view of citizenship as part of the ‘human condition’ (Hoffman, 2004: 12) with an *inherently* progressive and egalitarian ‘historical dynamic’ (Ibid: 12), which progressively undermines hierarchy and the state. As Graeber suggests, in reality the situation is more messy and complicated:

Modern Western notions of citizenship and political freedoms are usually seen to derive from two traditions, one originating in ancient Athens, the other primarily stemming from medieval England ... In fact, there is no consensus among historians that either classical Athens or medieval England were states at all – and moreover, precisely for the reason that citizens’ rights in the first, and aristocratic privilege in the second, were so well established ... It seems we just don’t have the intellectual tools to talk about such things (Graeber, 2004: 69).

There are contradictions between Hoffman’s criticism of the anarchists’ assumption of human nature and his own teleological view of momentum concepts as part of the ‘human condition’ (Ibid: 138), as well as between Faulks’ assertion that citizenship is fundamentally contested yet that it is also inherently progressive (Faulks, 2000: 6). To view a concept in this way could lead us to uncritically accept its use in future contexts and may also negate the necessity for – and ignore the pre-existence of – certain types of agency in the present. Groups of people are, and always have been, taking back power for themselves and participating in autonomy, self-governance and

² I consider the importance of participation and the articulation of desire, and their incompatibility with certain conceptualisations of authority in Chapters 6 & 7.

³ This is the focus of Chapters 8 & 9.

decentralised political activity without petitioning to the state for the right to do so (Scott, 1990: 118-119; Graeber, 2003: 2; Day, 2005: 4-5). I prefer to view citizenship as a concept which is *potentially* emancipatory, or which has progressive moments. These potentials and moments, I will later argue, can only be seized by the oppressed rather than imposed from ‘on high’ through policy recommendations or a transitory state. Although policy can be a potentially useful (but limited) strategic tool, it cannot be a sole means for instituting change that seeks to be anti-statist:

The notion of “policy” presumes a state or governing apparatus which imposes its will on others. “Policy” is the negation of politics; policy is by definition something concocted by some form of elite, which presumes it knows better than others how their affairs are to be conducted. By participating in policy debates the very best one can hope to achieve is to limit the damage, since the very premise is inimical to the idea of people managing their own affairs (Graeber, 2004: 9)

In summary my argument is that Hoffman and Faulks present a theory of agency and realisation that is at odds with their theoretical framework. This critique extends to other citizenship theories that emphasise agency, participation and change, yet fail to criticise the state (whether national or ‘global’) and seek the integration of difference and dissidence into a higher unity⁴.

It is my contention that citizenship theory would benefit from a conceptual dialogue with a critical utopian and anarchistic framework. In particular I will introduce the idea that viewing citizenship in terms of self-governance and autonomy is a utopian undertaking, and that the idea of the ‘momentum concept’ resonates with certain utopian and post-left anarchist notions of becoming, potentiality and lines of flight. I attempt to develop what I perceive as the emancipatory potentiality of citizenship, by transgressing the critiques of Hoffman and Faulks via an incursion through utopia and anarchism. I use these loosely grouped and diverse bodies of theory because they come closest to overcoming the ‘hegemony of hegemony’ articulated by Day. There is significant overlap between these two traditions, and it is at their nexus that I feel the relevance for a stateless conception of citizenship might emerge.

⁴ This includes most canonical and citizenship theory, and is referred to throughout the thesis. See particularly Young (1989), HMSO (1991), Mouffe (1992), Turner (1992), Held (1993, 1995), Kymlicka (1995), Crick (2001), Heater (2004).

2.3. *Utopianism: citizenship as potentiality*

The word ‘Utopia’ is a neologism that was coined by Sir Thomas More in 1516 (More, 2004 [1516]). The term comes from a pun on *eutopia* meaning ‘good place’ and *outopia* meaning ‘no place’ (Taylor, 2003: 554) so is derived from three Greek words, ‘eu’ (good), ‘ou’ (no) and ‘topia’ (place). From this preliminary etymology it can be discerned that ‘the primary characteristic of the utopian place is its non-existence combined with *topos* – a location in time and space – to give verisimilitude’ (Sargent, 1994: 5). ‘Utopianism’ may be seen to denote the movement or tradition of ideas and practices that have developed around this ambiguous concept. ‘Utopian’ is used to describe particular objects, subjects or processes within this canon. Since the term was first used it has taken on a much wider scope in terms of conceptualisations and associations, which will be further examined below. Even with this initial impression, however, it is possible to anticipate that utopianism will have some relevance to a project which seeks to examine the possibility and desirability of a citizenship without the state, since as discussed, such a project is seeking a space for politics outside or beyond that which is its more usually conceived terrain⁵. Utopianism, it shall be argued, offers a useful theoretical framework and methodology for both thinking about and practicing non-state relationships. However, any sufficiently engaged understanding of utopianism must first overcome wide-ranging criticisms of utopianism that have emerged from a variety of perspectives which tend to associate utopianism with domination. This association, I will argue, rests on a misunderstanding that associates utopianism with hegemony (or counter-hegemony) in thinkers who fail to disclose the utopian and hegemonic elements of their own perspectives.

2.3.1. **Utopia and domination**

Anti-utopianism has permeated political theory. Classical Marxists and liberals have variously suggested that utopia is unscientific (Marx and Engels 1998 [1846]: 26; Engels, 1999 [1892]: 60) and totalitarian (Popper, 2002 [1945]: 173). These precepts link to what I previously termed, following Day (2005), ‘the hegemony of hegemony’, that is, both classical Marxists and Liberals

⁵ The importance of space, or the *topos* of citizenship and emergent spaces for non-state citizenship will be further explored in Chapters 4 & 5.

claim an alternative and unifying truth against which deviations are labelled ‘utopian’ and are derided – when in fact, both modes of theorising themselves have utopian visions. Popper criticises Marx and Engels’ utopianism, despite their own refusal to associate their work with normative political theory and utopia (Popper, 2002 [1945]: 178). What I find contradictory is the distance that Popper tries to draw between his own ideological background and utopianism. Popper himself unwittingly sums up the crux of the problem, when he affirms that ‘what is common to Marx’s criticism and mine is that both demand more realism’ (Ibid: 177). Popper does not appear to grasp the radical and disruptive implications of the existence these two *simultaneous yet competing* demands for ‘more realism’. The important point here is that both the liberal and Marxist visions have utopian elements, but they are obscured by the ways in which each lays claim to truth. It is this truth-claiming, rather than the ability to use one’s imagination to create alternative possibilities, that Graeber argues lies at the heart of violence and oppression:

Stalinists and their ilk did not kill because they dreamed great dreams ... but because they mistook their dreams for scientific certainties ... In fact all forms of systemic violence are (amongst other things) assaults on the role of the imagination as a political principle (Graeber, 2004: 10-11).

The role of the imagination as a political principle is central to utopianism as a theoretical framework and as a methodology of resistance and for studying resistance. This is something that is lacking in citizenship theory, and I will later consider how utopianism might be applied to citizenship theory and the study of citizen practices. First, though, I will consider how we can move away from liberal and Marxist anti-utopianism to a conceptualisation of utopianism as non-hegemonic, critical and resistant.

2.3.2. Critical utopias

2.3.2.1. Utopia as function

Where for Marx, the function of utopia is purely compensatory and operates to sustain the status quo, for others the function is very much the opposite. Karl Mannheim (1960 [1936]) distinguishes between ideology and utopia. Ideology is defined as a force that operates at a psychological and societal level to maintain the status quo (Mannheim, 1960 [1936]: 50-2), propagating false consciousness (Ibid: 84). Utopia functions to raise consciousness and change society (Ibid: 87-8).

Despite the fact that Mannheim's theory exhibits contradictions around issues of categorisation and causality, tied up with the paradox that utopia is defined in terms of potentiality, yet can only be defined *after* it has fulfilled its purpose of social change, he makes a clear move towards identifying a positive social function for utopia. This analysis is furthered by Ernst Bloch (1986a, b & c [1938-47]), who offers a new approach to studying utopias and broadens the scope of what might be considered utopian. He takes as his objects of analysis a field which includes daydreams (Bloch 1986a, *Part 1*), fairytales, film and theatre (Ibid, *Part 2*), medicinal practices, technology, architecture, art (Bloch 1986b, *Part 4*) and religion (Bloch 1986c, *Part 5*). For Bloch, unlike for Mannheim, there is no clear distinction between ideology and utopia, and almost any human wish or dream can be defined as 'utopian', or as containing a utopian moment. For Bloch, utopia resides in the 'Not-Yet', which has two aspects: 'the Not-Yet-Conscious as a whole is the psychological representation of the Not-Yet-Become in an age and in its world' (Bloch, 1986a: 127; capitalisation in the original). The Not-Yet-Conscious is the psychological aspect and the Not-Yet-Become the material aspect of a hope or desire. This is an ontology of pure possibility and potentiality, of a multiplicity of things waiting, or just about to happen, which will have a real effect on a future that cannot yet be predicted. Insofar as it both expresses and affects the Not-Yet-Conscious, Utopia reaches towards the Not-Yet-Become through the potential effect on human activity: 'the *positive utopian function*; the *historical content* of hope, first represented in ideas, encyclopaedically explored in real judgements, is *human culture referred to its concrete-utopian horizon*' (Bloch, 1986a: 146, italics in the original).

Although there are remnants of Marxist teleology, Bloch's framework differs from Mannheim's ideology/utopia distinction insofar as the expressive function is not simply misleading, but has a function compensating for the alienation and disappointment of the present and in cultivating further hopes and desires, which may yet come to fruition (Ibid: 143-4). Indeed, it is the presence of potentiality which has the most radical implications within Bloch's framework, to the extent that this idea almost undermines his own distinction between 'abstract' and 'concrete' utopias (which bears the remnants of Marxist teleology):

And as long as the reality has not become a completely determined one, as long as it possesses still unclosed possibilities, in the shape of new shoots and new spaces for development, then no absolute objection to utopia can be raised by merely factual reality (Ibid: 197).

Bloch's ontology of possibility, potentiality and the intrinsic value of desire has much in common with a post-left anarchist ontology of immanent desire, lines of flight and becoming- which I shall consider later. It also has some resonance with the idea of the 'momentum concept', which was discussed previously insofar as it implies a continual process rather than an end-point. At this point, however, I would like to emphasise the aspect of Bloch's approach that undermines the essentialising and hegemonic (or counter-hegemonic) aspects of the anti-utopian critiques from both liberal and Marxist traditions. If utopia cannot be defined by reference to an unknown and unclosed future, then all expressions of potential futures might be deemed utopian, including those implicit within Popper's 'reformist' methodology and Marx's 'scientific' one. Levitas asserts that 'we have to recognise that utopias are not the monopoly of the Left' (Levitas, 1990: 185). This leads her to declare the existence of seemingly counter-intuitive neo-liberal and conservative utopias (Ibid: 188-9). This allows for the possibility of utopias which are pro- rather than anti- or post- statist: 'there is no doubt that there is an image of a desired society here, where there is unquestioned loyalty to the state ... where there is hierarchy, deference, order, centralised power' (Ibid: 180). Graeber also raises the issue of statist utopianism:

States have a peculiar dual character. They are at the same time forms of institutionalized raiding or extortion, and utopian projects ... In one sense states are the "imagined totality" par excellence, and much of the confusion entailed in theories of the state historically lies in an inability or unwillingness to recognize this. For the most part, states were ideas, ways of imagining social order as something one could get a grip on, modes of control (Graeber, 2004: 65).

All of this has relevance for citizenship – those theories that associate citizenship with the state and hegemony are exposed as 'utopian', but in the 'bad' totalising sense – 'we tend to assume that states, and social order, even societies, largely correspond' (Ibid: 65). It therefore becomes important to distinguish between critical, resistant utopias as the free expression of desires, and dominant (and dominating) anti-utopian utopias.

2.3.2.2. *Utopia as method*

This is something which is taken up by Susan McManus (2005), who suggests that all political theory is always-already utopian, in that it always rests on fictions of what exists, and what should exist, and that it is not only the content that theory puts forward which secures its affects, but the ways in which it lays claim to truth:

Epistemologies of “the given,” conservative and ostensibly authoritative modes of knowledge-production, are always already creative epistemologies, but creative epistemologies that efface their contingency and creative power in favour of their legislative and authoritative power (McManus, 2005: 1).

It is not then, the lack of a basis in ‘truth’, which makes particular theories or utopias potentially oppressive. Rather, it is their hegemonic or totalising affects, the *ways* in which they lay claim to truth, through abstract rationalism (or ‘pragmatism’, or ‘science’), which underlie their potentially oppressive nature.

At this stage, the important point is the difference of affect that resides between those utopias that are based upon truth-claims, and those that are not. The particularly radical and subversive potential of the latter kind is something that I feel is best brought out in the theories of the ‘critical utopia’ (Moylan, 1986, *passim*) and ‘transgressive utopianism’ (Sargisson, 1996 & 2000, *passim*), which are to a certain extent complimentary and form the meta-theoretical methodological basis of my project⁶. These theorists show how the creative function of utopianism that is so abhorrent to anti-utopian critics does not inevitably lead to blueprinting or a perfection-seeking totalitarianism. For Tom Moylan the primary function of utopia lies in the process or method of critique, which lies already within the literary genre and is inseparable from the creative aestheticism of the utopian method:

In generating preconceptual images of human fulfilment that radically break with the prevailing social system, utopian discourse articulates the possibility of other ways of living in the world. The strength of critical utopian expression lies not in the particular social structures it portrays but in the very act of portraying a utopian vision itself (Moylan 1986: 26).

⁶ The epistemological implications of these theories for the study of practice are further explicated in Chapter 3

Like the ‘momentum concept’ outlined earlier, yet without reference to an already foreclosed future or specified trajectory for reform, the critical utopia must remain infinitely critical, resisting closure in both its method and expressed vision: ‘There can be no *Utopia*, but there can be utopian expressions that constantly shatter the present achievements and compromises of society and point to that which is not yet experienced in the human project of fulfilment and creation’ (Ibid: 28; italics in the original). Lucy Sargisson furthers Moylan’s critique. Through an exploration of contemporary feminist utopianism, in both literature and social theory, she accords a function to utopianism which is not only critical, but through the ‘wilful transgression of generic or conceptual boundaries’ (Sargisson, 1996: 58) is simultaneously transformative (Ibid: 59), yet without reference to a preconceived ideal or foreclosed future. It is, rather, transformative of consciousness, and ‘creates new conceptual spaces – outopias – in which can be imagined different ways of conceptualizing the past, present and future’, allowing ‘the unthinkable [to] be thought and desired’ (Ibid: 59).

2.3.2.3. *Utopianism and citizenship*

Important points to be taken out of the foregoing discussion are, first, that any social, political or cultural product, dream, wish, concept or idea, indeed any form of expression of desire, can have a utopian moment, potential, or perform a utopian function. This idea is most evident in Bloch’s work, but also informs the assumptions of contemporary utopian studies, and is evident in the interdisciplinary approaches of Sargisson and Moylan. Secondly, I would like to highlight how these theorists have shown that the utopian function can only reach its full critical or transgressive potential where utopias and utopian thought resists closure. Closure, in the form of dualistic thought, universalism, offering full and complete explanation, and claiming ‘to name the truth’, inform ‘the repressive function of the dominant mode of conceptualization’ (Sargisson, 1996: 228). Coming back to the case of citizenship, the most poignant issue is that the concept has a utopian aspect, and may also be subject to utopian analysis, even where it is found in the context of hegemonic political discourse or the dominant mode of theorising. Hoffman and Faulks, who transgress the *status quo* somewhat by offering a vision of a citizenship beyond the state, clearly have a utopian vision– a utopia of self-governance and autonomy within a society free from force.

However, the utopian vision and its affective function are obscured by the assumption of impossibility and deferral to the future: ‘Citizenship is an emancipatory situation towards which we move, but can never actually reach’ (Hoffman, 2004: 185). This leads to a means of agency and realisation that is normatively and ethically incompatible with the critique and desired future. This is something that in the frame of reference provided by critical utopianism is potentially more oppressive than experimenting with self-consciously utopian fictions, visions and experiments in the present, insofar as it accepts uncritically what has already been judged to be an ethically destructive force as having a primary role in social change.

In later chapters (particularly 6 & 7, but also as a recurrent theme throughout) I discuss how a tension is highlighted by many theorists between the normative and formal aspects of citizenship, or between those who view citizenship as a relationship and a process, and those who view it as a legal status of membership within a nation state. It is arguable that both of these have a utopian vision – one of a strictly regulated, hierarchical and statist society where immigration and movement are strictly controlled and social relationships are mediated by the state through legal rights and duties; the other of a ‘bottom-up’ society which is composed of no more or less than the practices and relationships of the people who compose it. However, despite the fact that both trends within citizenship literature and discourse have a utopian vision, the latter is more open to own its normativity and contingency whereas the former tends towards truth claims. This legalistic approach is integral to what I shall be calling the ‘dominant’⁷ mode of political theorising and practice: ‘In this effacement of the fictions that *make theory work* inheres the reification of political theory into legislative, authoritative, and programmatic mode’ (McManus, 2005: 1, italics in the original). With all this in mind, I would now like to turn to anarchistic utopias.

⁷ By dominant, I do not mean to say more prevalent, but ‘dominating’; and therefore with a tendency to dominate other, more creative and contingent modes of theorising; a tendency which can be attributed to hegemonic, didactic form and the legislative mode.

2.4. *Autonomy, anarchism⁸ and the non-deferral of utopian practice*

A key concept in this project is autonomy, which is an important utopian function within many theories and discourses on citizenship. Indeed, one of the central debates of citizenship theory, and a primary tension in theorisations of the concept, might be seen to be the reconciliation of the autonomy or self-determination of the individual with that of the community⁹. To this extent, citizenship and anarchism might both be seen as a ‘utopias of autonomy’.

The term ‘autonomy’ has potentially problematic associations. The word ‘autonomous’ comes from the Greek, *autos-nomos*, meaning ‘self-legislation’ and has similarities with anarchism, meaning ‘without government’ (Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006: 732). The term can be distinguished from independence, which is often used to mean separateness from community, whereas autonomy refers to life within society, but by one’s own rule. Thus the term is often used in politics to refer to a government and its people. The concept also forms a basis for Kant’s account of practical reason, and his conceptions of moral obligation and responsibility, forming a justification for universalising and hegemonic models of morality and centralised constitutional politics (Kant, 1970 [1797]). Some of these themes clearly contradict those associated (above) with critical utopianism.

Attempting to reclaim ‘autonomy’ from centralised power and rule and move it smaller, voluntaristic communities, where the process of governing is not separated from processes of living and being, does not dissolve these problems completely. One problem is that ‘autonomous’ communities exist within, rather than outside of, states and centralised power, as well as within relationships to other entities and to power on other levels. Spaces, communities and the people

⁸ Not all thinkers I shall be describing under the rubric of ‘anarchism’ self-define as anarchist, often due either to historically negative connotations of the term (see Marshall, 1993: ix-x) or the association of the term with a particular type of anarcho-communism and the triad of Proudhon-Bakunin-Kropotkin. Sometimes people who do not identify with this tradition are less likely to call themselves anarchists (Ibid, p. xiii). Also, related to the politics of the tradition is the fact that many who might be subsumed under its umbrella do not like to associate themselves with ‘isms’ or fixed categories. Peter Marshall acknowledges the problem of self-definition and defines an anarchist as ‘one who rejects all forms of external government and the State and believes that society and individuals would function well without them’ (Ibid, p. xiii). Although this definition is useful, I find the term ‘government’ quite slippery as it is used in many different ways, both positive and negative, by diverse thinkers, and certainly many valorise the idea of self-government. I would therefore elaborate on this by distinguishing vertical government and forms of organisation from horizontal forms of affiliation (based on self-organisation, voluntary association and mutual aid), the latter being associated with the tradition of anarchism and anarchistic thought (Graeber, 2004, p.3).

⁹ See, for example, Janoski, 1998, p. 19; Heater, 1999, p. 177; Faulks, 2000, p. 4; Plummer, 2003, p. 111.

who comprise them are constituted on several levels, through several relationships with other people and communities. Pickerill¹⁰ and Chatterton acknowledge many of these problems, yet persist with their use of the term in what they call part of a ‘substantive and linguistic intervention’ (Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006: 731), using the term in a manner that parallels the critical utopian sensibility:

Calling forth autonomy does not simply lead to concrete solutions to change the world. Nor is the term a panacea. To offer it as such would sustain the problems of blueprints which plague the contemporary world. However, autonomous geographies are part of a vocabulary of urgency, hope and inspiration, a call to action that we can dismantle wage labour, the oil economy, or representative democracy, and that thousands of capable and workable micro-examples exist’ (Ibid: 731).

Thus, rather than being seen as complete, self-sufficient blueprints for a better future, autonomous spaces may be seen as moments of resistance and creation, and as a constant process of negotiation and interplay between autonomous and non-autonomous propensities and potentials. Indeed, autonomy lies at the heart of the critical utopian impulse in its first explicit formulation as put forward by Moylan:

The new movements of liberation insist on a multiplicity of voices, autonomous from each other, but commonly rooted in unfulfilled needs centring around the practice of autonomy. This shared goal of fulfilment of desire for collective humanity informs the utopian impulse at the heart of the historic bloc of opposition. The impulse, however, is one that must resist closure and systematization both in the steps taken toward it and in the vision that expresses it (Moylan, 1986: 28).

These understandings of autonomy resonate with the conceptual framework and political project of anarchism – in particular ideas of an always-already existent autonomous society of autonomous individuals that exists in opposition to the hierarchical political principle. Where mainstream citizenship theory aims to protect individual autonomy through rights¹¹, enforced by a highly centralised power such as the state, anarchism views power itself as a source of oppression, incompatible with individual autonomy. I will now turn to a brief history of ideas of anarchism in order to offer a genealogy of what I perceive to be the utopian vision of anarchism, which is

¹⁰ I met with Jenny Pickerill at Leicester University on 12 July 2007 and discussed the use of the term ‘autonomy’ in this context. A useful theme of this discussion was that although ‘autonomy’ can be slippery and ambiguous, it is often found within the vocabulary of activists, and is also a useful term for bringing together quite diverse activities and practices which serve a similar function of resisting neo-liberal society through the construction of creative alternatives.

¹¹ See Chapters 8 & 9

inseparable from the utopian function within anarchism: a drive towards autonomy through principles of self-activity, affinity and non-hierarchical organisation. The lack of contradiction between function and vision, or means and ends, within anarchism is of particular interest since it overcomes many problems of mainstream citizenship theory. Rather than reciting a chronological history of ideas, I will be grouping thinkers together broadly based on their standpoints concerning the function of utopia, and the nature and possibility of resistance. As well as offering a theoretical framework of a methodology for studying practice, anarchism also offers theories and concepts that will be referred to throughout the project, in particular utopia and autonomy.

2.4.1. Classical anarchist utopias

Common to most anarchist and anarchistic thought is an opposition to centralised, concentrated power and an ethical commitment to decentralisation. For classical anarchists the critique was often couched in foundational discourses of human nature and rationalism, which is somewhat problematic. A brief sample of the classical anarchists shows how each based his critique of the state on a specific conjecture concerning human nature. For Godwin, humans are fundamentally rational and truth-seeking (Godwin, 1985 [1798]: 251) and individual autonomy is realised not through the legislative apparatus but through communicative rationality within social relationships (Ibid: 554). Tolstoy's humanity is naturally spiritual and benign, actuated through love (Tolstoy, 1990 [1900]a: 69) whereas Kropotkin's is, by virtue of evolution, co-operative (Kropotkin, 1970 [1896]: 215). Although the concentration of power in the hands of the few is tied up with property relations, unlike Marx the classical anarchists do not see economic power as existing *a priori* to political power, but rather the relationship between the two is interdependent, and both forms of power are opposed to the principle of society (see particularly Kropotkin 1970 [1896]: 323). A recurring theme is human rationality and its individualised aspect of personal reason as the point of departure for linkage with common reality and truth. This allows for the convergence of the interests of the individual with the social and thus establishes 'a moral place of subjectivity' (Newman, 2001: 34). The state is thus seen to be an evil, malevolent and unnatural outgrowth of society (Godwin, 1985 [1798]: 542-3; Kropotkin 1970 [1896]: 323). The ontological thrust of

classical anarchism therefore revolves around two essentialist propositions: that power is essentially negative and oppressive and that humanity is essentially benign (May, 1994: 48).

If we posit essential human rationality, we also have to account for human actions that are incongruent with its posited foundations – such as the rise of the state! A major difficulty with positing essential entities in political philosophy is that when something is regarded as ‘natural’ or essential it is taken as given and ‘absolved from political analysis’ (Newman, 2001: 158). This is problematic, since all definitions have implications for inclusion and exclusion; for what is to be included within the definition of the entity’s essence, and for what is not. This in itself has ethico-political implications, particularly concerning the ability to cope with difference and anomaly, and exhibits many of the same ambiguities and contradictions as the anti-utopian theory that I discussed earlier, such as hegemonic and desire-blocking tendencies.

2.4.2. Evolutionary anarchism¹²

Although writing at the same time as some of the classical anarchists, and despite their shared valorisation of ‘society’, I feel that there is something in the thoughts of Martin Buber (1951; 1996 [1949]; 2004 [1937]), Gustav Landauer (1983 [1911]) and (writing later), Colin Ward (1973; 2005 [2002]), which moves towards overcoming hegemonic thought. These theorists are important to my project, because they introduce the value of bringing practice into dialogue with theory as a strategy for preventing ideas from becoming transcendental, ossified and dominating. Practice represents a realm of contingency, and potentially a critical utopian space in which fixed ideas and identities can be transgressed. This premise underlies my own emphasis on the importance of studying practice, and also provides some initial pointers to the kinds of practices that might be studied in a project that seeks to imagine a critical utopian citizenship.

¹² The term is not in wide usage but seems sufficient to describe those anarchists who do not believe in the possibility or desirability of revolution or rupture to institute an anarchist society, but prefer the idea of gradual evolution towards greater self-management and autonomy.

Although these thinkers ally themselves with the classical anarchists' emphasis on society, they often stress this as a function or a mode of relating rather than an essentialist entity, and come somewhat closer to an immanentist epistemology, recognising utopia as process and function in the present rather than deferring to the future. Rather than using utopia as a blueprint and taking a programmatic approach to politics they emphasise process over closure. Landauer offers an alternative to both revolution and reform, and therefore overcomes the problems associated with the deferral of utopia. Landauer was influenced by Max Stirner¹³, and his 'social Anarchism' was a 'union of individuals' (like Stirner's 'union of egoists'; see Stirner, 1993 [1844]: 308) who voluntarily founded and joined small socialist communities. This was based on the premise that the state is not a thing that can be destroyed in one fell swoop, through revolution. Rather, it is a particular perception of relationships between people (Landauer, 1978 [1911]: 141); in Stirner's terms, a 'spook' (Stirner 1993 [1893]: 39). It is a system of internal beliefs and values, rather than a concrete and identifiable external structure, which creates the conditions for agents of the state to act as agents of the state, and subjects of the state to act as such, and thus for the state to have any purchase in reality whatsoever. There are parallels with the critical utopian approach: the state becomes a fiction or an idea, perpetrated and gaining power solely through claims to, and beliefs in, its truth. It is not only the state that can be included under the rubric of 'statual', but any hierarchical relationships involving the abrogation of personal autonomy to a higher authority, be it state, church, capitalism, even 'society' in the abstract (Stirner 1993 [1893]: 143).

Perhaps the most comprehensive statement of the critical utopian potential of society comes from Buber. In his *Paths in Utopia* (1996 [1949]) he offers a comprehensive genealogy of utopian socialism, concentrating on 'its postulate of a renewal of society through its cell tissue' (Buber, 1996 [1949]: vii). Buber combines Kropotkin's idea of the social principle and Landauer's conception of the state as a particular logic of affiliation and practice rather than a 'thing' that can

¹³ Although Stirner is often placed within the classical anarchist tradition due to his contemporaneity with the previously discussed thinkers (see for example Marshall, 1993: 220), this is somewhat misleading since his thought deviates drastically from their foundational premises. More recently, Stirner has been acknowledged as an important precursor to poststructuralism, and is increasingly being read within this framework (Newman, 2001: 56). Stirner occupies a particularly important role in later chapters of this project due to his unsurpassable critique of essentialist discourse and abstract transcendental thought (see Stirner 1993 [1844]: 72 and *passim*).

be destroyed, in order to articulate the contradictions inherent within the Marxist epistemology and theory of social change:

We can see with the greatest clarity what it is that connects Marx with “utopian” socialism: the will to supersede the political principle by the social principle, and what divides him from it: his opinion that this supersession can be effected by exclusively political means – hence by way of sheer suicide, so to speak, on the part of the political principle’ (Buber, 1996 [1949]: 83).

The social principle is defined as ‘the principle of inner cohesion, collaboration and mutual simulation’ (Ibid: 80): it relates to direct experience and doing things in person, creating social adhesion through the direct experience of overcoming problems of collective interest. It is defined in opposition to the political principle, which is an abstract principle that sacrifices the social reality of fellowship and solidarity for the domination of government and the surplus, ossified power of the state. This surplus power overcodes¹⁴ identities: the universal liberal ‘citizen’ or the class-based Marxist ‘proletarian’. This is a relation to a certain type of political space: a pyramidal, hierarchical, representative, hegemonic, or vertical political space.

Buber’s contention that Marx shared with the utopian socialists the same *goal*; the supersession of the political by the social, is interesting. Like the utopian socialists, Marx imagines a society that does not yet exist on a large scale, and in this respect it is also utopian. The difference inheres in the attitude as to how change will be achieved. For Marx, universal change should be achieved through a revolution on the part of a hegemonic vanguard, or a representative common identity: the proletariat. The image of ‘sheer suicide’ of the political principle is a particularly vivid image to describe the means/ends contradiction inherent within Marxist theory, whereby domination of one group over another is overcome by further domination. This parallels the idea that the emancipation of citizens can be bestowed from ‘on high’, through policy reform to integrate difference into a higher totality¹⁵. For Buber, change should be achieved through non-coercive structural renewal -

¹⁴ The concept of ‘overcoding’ is borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari (1988, p. 9, 68-70) and refers to a loss of excess desire, or the suppression of difference, through unification, totalisation, integration into a hierarchical system and finalisation. It is a useful concept that is almost the antithesis of critical utopianism, so is used frequently throughout the thesis.

¹⁵ This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

through the creation of new types of political space in the here and now, on a small scale, and the formation of new identities and forms of interaction *in practice*.

A more recent theorist who applies a very similar methodology to many contemporary problems, such as education, architecture and town planning is Colin Ward (1973 & 2005 [2002]). In his book *Anarchy in Action* (1973), Ward offers a model of anarchism as a theory of organisation and a method of action, rather than a strategy for revolution or a vision of a future society, to a certain extent dissolving the tension between what *is* and what *might be*: ‘it is about the ways in which people organise *themselves* in any kind of human society, whether we care to categorise those societies as primitive, traditional, capitalist or communist’ (Ward, 1973: 8; italics in the original). He chronicles examples of self-organisation in fields of housing (see also Ward 2002 *passim*), schooling, sexual relationships and the family, workers’ self-management and welfare. Ward shows us the importance of having means of realising utopia that are congruent with the ends, and of not deferring to the future what can be practiced in the present.

The role of existing ‘social’ spaces, or practical utopias, is particularly important. In his 1951 article, “Society and the State”, Buber traces a widespread inability of social science to distinguish the social principle from the political principle since antiquity, in both Western and Eastern thought. In this article, Buber recognises the difficulties of essentialising the social principle, and the contradictions of setting something up as a *principle*, when the principle itself is unrepresentable:

The new concept of society loses concreteness because it is deprived of its limitations; this occurs in the most sublime manner in that the ideal of universal humanism is formulated without any indication as to how it is to be realised. Whether the Stoic speaks in the new terms of a society of the human race (*societas generis humani*), or in the old terms of a megapolis, it amounts to the same thing: a high-souled idea emerges to confront reality but cannot find a womb from which to propagate a living creature because it has been stripped of corporeality (Buber, 1951: 7).

This corporeality is seen to consist in the community, a preliminary justification for my own study of certain types of community that will be further discussed in the following chapter. Using the example of ancient China, Buber shows how the village community ‘interposed between the

individual and the State...two purely social structures, namely the home and the community' (Ibid: 6), which is counterposed to urban civilization where there remained 'only one of these structures – the home, the family, which, contrary to its status in the village, was in its urban form completely integrated into the State' (Ibid: 6). It is only within the former spatial formation that the individual can exist in relation to a multiplicity of not 'families alone, but of societies, groups, circles, unions, co-operative bodies, and communities' (Ibid: 11) as opposed to his or her identity being overcoded by a pre-eminent relation to the political principle of the state. Buber resists essentialising the social:

There is no form of social activity which cannot, on some side or at some moment, become political; we must realize that social forms on the one hand and State institutions on the other are crystallisations of the two principles. But it is most essential that we recognise the structural difference between the two spheres in regard to the relationship between unity and multiformity (Ibid: 11)

This is a vision of an already existing, immanent utopia, expressed through multiple and particular crystallisations of community. The state, however, persists, and utopian community borders on potential oppression.

2.4.3. Anarchist utopia and political agency

The theme of developing an adequate praxis will be developed below, and then re-articulated in the context of the utopian potential of citizenship in the conclusion to this, and in forthcoming chapters. The problem of utopian agency has recurred throughout the foregoing work. An important function of the critical utopia, which has informed these approaches, has been the potential to transform individual consciousness through allowing space for the education of desire that is 'free from the constraints, norms and codes of present society' (Sargisson, 1996: 50). However, the relationship of utopianism to wider social and political change remains uncertain, and this has been the basis of Marxist criticisms of utopianism. In this context it is useful to consider Levitas' distinction between hope and desire (Levitas, 1990: 190). Despite the fact that some utopias are, in theory, possible and thus capable of being hoped for, some such as "The Land of

Cockayne”¹⁶ are not even intended to be so. It is the issue of possibility that distinguishes between hope and desire:

Utopia expresses and explores what is desired; under certain conditions it also contains the hope that these desires may be met in reality, rather than merely in fantasy. The essential element in utopia is not hope but desire – the desire for a better way of living (Levitas, 1990: 191).

If utopianism does not translate directly into political action, this is because desire alone cannot bring about social transformation. The difficulty arises in the quest to conceive of an autonomous place from which utopian desire and action can take place. For Buber, the small-scale community modelled on the kibbutz was the answer, whereas for Ward, this is immanent to all societal relationships and interactions involving co-operation rather than authority. However, autonomy is still only partial since utopian practices are defined in opposition to dominant practices, and functions such as structural renewal are oriented towards a particular future goal (a stateless society), which does not yet exist: the basic premises point to an *evolution* towards a future utopia which is deferred. This is something that is criticised and transgressed by the post-left anarchy tendency. Post-left anarchy informs my wider project only partially, in combination with the other forms of anarchism discussed above as well as poststructural anarchism, as part of a more general critical utopian tendency. It is an important body of thought to consider because it offers a novel conceptualisation of the orientation to utopia and the role of practice. Some of the concepts and ideas emanating from post-left anarchy, in particular those relating to autonomy, space and organisation, are useful to describe and analyse some of the practices considered later in the thesis.

2.4.4. Post-left anarchy and utopia

Recently, there have been efforts within ‘post-left anarchy’¹⁷, to adapt the anarchist theory and practice of non-dominatory social space as a response to poststructural critique and postmodern

¹⁶ A mythical medieval land of plenty and excess pleasures, with rivers of wine, edible architecture and ready-cooked food that appeared spontaneously (Plej, 2001: p. 3).

social conditions. There is a significant trend within this strand of contemporary anarchist thought to reject political tendencies associated with leftist anarchism and leftism more generally – such as ideology, hegemony/counter-hegemony, progressivism, mass-politics, categorisation/identity politics, organisation, representation, struggle, politics of demand and collectivism¹⁸ – in favour of ‘the immediate expression of desire, constructing the kind of world one wants to live in immanently and horizontally, and radically and antagonistically rejecting or attacking the social forms and institutions of the dominant social system’ (Robinson & Tormey, 2009: 159).

Thinkers who tend to be associated with post-left or post-anarchist thought include Hakim Bey (1985, 1993 & 1994), Alfredo Bonanno (1998 [1977]; 1988 & 1998 [1996]), Bob Black (1996 & 1997), Wolfi Landstreicher (2002), John Zerzan (1996), Jason McQuinn (2002) and others¹⁹. Other thinkers who I would somewhat reservedly associate with the tendency are Deleuze and Guattari, particularly their 1988 work *A Thousand Plateaus* (1988). Although neither in this work nor elsewhere do they identify as ‘post-left’ or ‘post-anarchist’, many of their concepts are used extensively by other theorists within the movement, particularly Bey and the anonymous author of “Desire is Speaking: Utopian rhizomes” (1999). There are also many connections between the epistemological proclivities of these theorists and other thinkers from the post-left tendency, particularly in relation to a preference for immanence or immediacy over the deferral of desire, a rejection of the idea of rupture between the present and future goals or society, a refusal of foundations, a recognition of contingency and a creative and playful mode of theorising that

¹⁷ *Anarchy: A journal of Desire Armed* – a publication closely associated with the development of post-left anarchy – states on its website that post-left anarchy ‘is not an independent “movement” as such but rather a critical way of thinking about anarchist ideas’ (from <http://www.anarchymag.org/node/8> accessed 22 July 2008). In the same place it is stated that ‘Post-leftists frequently use the word anarchy instead of anarchism to avoid the -ism suffix’s connotations of doctrine’. Despite this proviso there are sufficient theoretical similarities to identify this heterogeneous collection of groups and individuals collectively, which I shall attempt to do with reference to tendencies and inclinations rather than to ‘movement’ (a term that can also imply a similar goal or direction which would be theoretically misleading).

¹⁸ This list is partially drawn from Wolfi Landstreicher’s paradigmatic 2002 essay *From Politics to Life: Ridding anarchy of the leftist millstone* from http://www.geocities.com/kk_abacus/loaa/life.html accessed 22 July 2009

¹⁹ Much of the material that has emerged from post-left anarchy is available primarily on the internet due to a commitment to widespread and unrestricted access to information and rejection of intellectual vanguardism. Since the mode or genre of theorising is for political reasons often stylistically informal and is distributed freely under anti-copyright practices, many of the texts are not readily available in an ‘original’ or officially published format. Also, many writers prefer to remain anonymous, or to use pseudonyms. For this reason, the references for this section might, due to lack of information, be somewhat sparser or less accurate than they would be when dealing with other bodies of thought. Many of the articles, and the list of thinkers above, have been drawn from two publications which are particularly associated with the tendency; *Anarchy: a journal of desire armed* which can be accessed online at: <http://www.anarchymag.org/> and Killing King Abacus which can be accessed online at http://www.geocities.com/kk_abacus/ (both last accessed 11 December 2008). Both of these journals are also available in print.

experiments with form and style. I shall also be considering Robinson & Tormey's (2009) discussion of the conceptual relationship between utopia and post-left anarchism. My main concern here, as in the rest of the chapter, is the relationship of practice to utopia, which will later be interpreted in connection with the relevance for citizenship theory.

In "Desire is Speaking: Utopian rhizomes" (Anon, 1999), the post-left critique of the idea of separation or rupture between present and future is evident, as is the refusal to defer utopia or the creative expression of desire to the future, but rather to experience and live it in the present. There are reflections here of the previously considered critique of utopia-as-blueprint, which emphasised the importance of utopia-as-function:

A lot of people are disappointed that there isn't a shared utopia anymore, no expectation of a better future. According to some of them, the shared utopian vision has always been 'the core of left politics, and that has to stay that way.'...Well, if this is true, then perhaps the movement isn't 'left' anymore. But the discord with the existing order and the desire to create something different here and now still remains. The shared utopia disappeared, but the utopian practices didn't (Anon, 1999, from <http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no8/desire.html> accessed 22 July 2009).

Here, the specific function appears to be a do-it-yourself ethos and immediate approach to the expression and satisfaction of one's own desires; 'most important is that the movement shows that you can have fun doing what you do. That you can play instead of work' (Ibid). An explicitly Deleuzoguattarian framework is used to theorise groups of agents acting together to form alternative ways of life, not as intentional or prefigurative communities, but as assemblages of desire:

What we see here is not a community, nor solidarity groups, but configurations of desire: networks of friendship and expression which undermine the prevailing relations of production, society, politics, family, the body, sex and even the cosmos. Lacking a single clear goal or programme, we see a multitude of struggles. There is no utopian tree from which readymade ideas about another world can be picked, but endless rhizomes on which at unexpected moments flowers appear (Ibid).

It is with the post-left anarchist vision of utopia that the content and function of utopia are reconciled in a truly present autonomy, rather deferred to the future. In a piece called 'Brittle Utopias' (Anon, 2001 from http://www.geocities.com/kk_abacus/kka/UTOPIAS.html accessed 22 July 2009), another anonymous author elaborates on the theme discussed earlier; that although all normative

theory is utopian, the utopian function becomes blocked where claims to truth and power take precedence over creativity and contingency:

Some dreams are supple and resonate with the ever renewed present, others become fossilized, they are so dry and brittle that they crack and shatter to pieces when they try to move from the dream into reality. Some utopias are visions of places in which humans can be truly present, places that lack the ever proliferating forms of mediation of this society. Others are non-places, these are dreams that are old even if just conceived of though they don't crack, they are too unified, too pristine. Ethnic cleansing, Communism with a big C, the nation, pure capitalism, these utopias can never be fully brought into practice, but that is not the problem. The problem is that there are powerful structures which try to bring these grand-plans into being, to the letter and with scientific precision.

(Anon, 2001, http://www.geocities.com/kk_abacus/kka/UTOPIAS.html accessed July 22, 2009)

The difference between claims to truth and the recognition of contingency is mirrored in this passage in the relationship between presence and mediation. A more general refusal of representation, deferral and indeed anything that lies above or beyond immanent experience is also articulated. The importance of process, constant transformation and movement is summed up in a vivid metaphor emphasising the seemingly counterintuitive necessity for destruction and death within utopia:

Where death is packed in Styrofoam, one has to wonder what kind of life can be lived. Creation which doesn't include a little death isn't part of life, it is instead the clonelike reproduction of the same. We dream of other ways of relating, of a utopia that is a real living dying rotting place, a utopia of process not a brittle non-place (Ibid).

This living immediacy and refusal of separation can also be found in Bonanno: 'this is the secret of life: never ever separate thought from action, the things we know, the things we understand, from the things we do, the things with which we carry out our actions' (Bonanno, 1998 [1996], from http://www.geocities.com/kk_abacus/ioaa/tension.html accessed July 7, 2009). The valorisation of presence also translates into an emphasis on the importance of action: 'We cannot wait for things to come to an end in our absence. We want to be in the game ... so are acting here and now, recognising no point of reference on which to pin our hopes and expectations' (Bonanno, 1988: 20-21). This equates to more than acting without thinking, or to practice without theory, however. We are brought back to the earlier theme of theory in its playful, fictive, and contingent mode – theory (utopia) as immanent to the experience of life itself rather than a static and removed abstraction:

There is not one "place" for theory and another for practice therefore, except in an abstract consideration suspended like a ghost outside the world. The fact that this ghost turns out to be

anything but outside this world but acts and produces effects inside it merely confirms what we have just said (Ibid: 22).

Such a mode of theorising has a clear relevance for my project, which seeks dialogue between theory and practice, and a reconceptualisation of citizenship as a living practice rather than an abstract identity. There are resonances between critical utopianism and post-left anarchy, although the two are not synonymous. Post-left anarchy exists in somewhat of a tension with modernist utopian thinking because it embraces an atemporal and immanentist epistemology, which rejects orientation to a future goal, calling for action instead of hope or dreaming as the appropriate modality of relation to one's desires (Robinson & Tormey, 2009: 157). Whilst the utopian approaches that I considered previously tended to view utopia as either deferred (Bloch & Mannheim) or prefigurative (classical and evolutionary anarchists), post-left anarchy refuses to acknowledge either reform/evolution or rupture/revolution, and indeed any idea of progressivism. As an orientation to social change – based in non-deferral and hedonism, post-left anarchy offers some useful concepts and methods for social change that find articulation in my considerations of critical utopian practices and practitioner discourses throughout the thesis, although they are often transgressed and disrupted by simultaneous orientation to a future goal or reform within the system.

It is intriguing that despite this refusal of transcendence, post-left anarchist thinkers and activists (the two roles often go hand in hand) often embrace the practices that are traditionally associated with utopianism – such as creative writing, intentional communities and transformative action. We saw in the preceding discussion how the theme of process over content of utopia is emphasised in post-left anarchy, but unlike Mannheim and Bloch, who distinguished between types of utopia by reference to an unforeseen future, a distinction can be made between what Robinson and Tormey term 'utopias' and 'utopianisms' (Robinson & Tormey, 2009: 164), the distinction being based on 'the energies and potentialities they express or actualize' (Ibid: 164). Whilst *utopianism* might be seen to be on the side of structure (Ibid: 165) - or in my previous terms, a didactic, legislative, truth-claiming mode – *utopia* 'consists of something akin to the Situationist idea of "demanding the impossible", something which defies and exceeds the system's insistence that its own limits be taken as limits of the possible' (Ibid: 164), so that 'utopia has the function of escaping the limits on

the possible which are posited by the system' (Ibid: 164). Robinson and Tormey proceed to reconcile the relationship between post-left anarchy and utopia by theorising social dreaming as a variety of the broader phenomenon of 'lines of flight' (Ibid: 172), a concept taken from Deleuze and Guattari (1998: 561-2 and *passim*). Deleuze and Guattari play an important role in this thesis, particularly because many of their concepts have been useful in understanding and interpreting other theories and the practices studied later in this thesis in meta-theoretical terms of ethical effects.

2.4.5. Deleuze & Guattari and ontological anarchy²⁰

Deleuze and Guattari do not self-define as either utopian or anarchist, and indeed it would be fair to say that their thought is uncategorisable (Tormey, 2006: 154). However, there are fairly apparent connections with both critical utopianism and post-left anarchism. Deleuze and Guattari offer two ways of experiencing and living in the world, variously expressed as rhizomatics versus arborescent schema (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 361-3), micropolitics versus macropolitics (Ibid: 229-255) and Royal (capitalised in the original) versus nomad science (Ibid: 405-6). It is important to emphasise that the dichotomy or juxtaposition between these two ways of being is not between the way society is now and the way that society ought to be in the future, nor between a 'true'/'right' understanding and a false/wrong one, but between two different ways of perceiving, desiring, knowing, acting and being - between two different modes of experience, dominant and minor, which are distinguishable through their ethical effects. The dominant set is termed by the authors 'majority' and is a standard measure against which all variants are measured. This atypical understanding of the term 'majority' rests on an understanding of difference and multiplicity as ontologically prior to sameness or identity: to perceive two (or three, or *n*...) things as 'the same' suppresses or obscures the difference presupposed by there being more than one thing in the first place: 'A determination different from that of the constant will therefore be considered minoritarian, by nature and regardless of number, in other words, a subsystem or an outsystem'

²⁰ This section of the thesis is admittedly too short to do justice to the complex ideas of Deleuze and Guattari, and I will be using the conceptual tools offered by their work throughout the thesis. What I am offering here is a preliminary justification of my use of their epistemological position to inform my wider approach in the remainder of this thesis.

(Ibid: 117). This has implications for issues of subjectivity, in that the majority status blocks flows of creativity and desire by fixing people, groups, and other assemblages into predetermined identities. This ties in with the idea considered earlier that political theories are always already fictions. Dominant fictions disguise their creativity behind claims to truth, whereas minor tendencies propagate multiplicity and celebrate the impossibility of fixing truth. This again articulates the critical utopian function that I would like to bring into a dialogue with citizenship, through the study of critical utopian theories and practices, in the remainder of this thesis. First, though, I will conclude this chapter by considering how critical utopian, anarchistic modes of thought and suggestions for praxis might inform a broader theory of citizenship. Although this is not the place to provide an overview of canonical and dominant theories of citizenship, which will be interspersed throughout the forthcoming chapters, in dialogue with utopian theories and practices, I would like to offer some preliminary considerations on how function of citizenship might relate to the functions of utopian thought and practice considered above.

2.5. Citizenship, anarchism and utopia: towards a critical utopian citizenship

2.5.1. Anarchy against citizenship

A tension between the concept of citizenship and critical utopianism/anarchism can be exposed to Stirnerean critique: the identity of the citizen tends to privilege the state as a singular, special, or primary affiliation: a good citizen is a citizen first and family/social community/ethnic group/political party/activist group affiliations, linked to the 'private' sphere, are presumed to come second²¹: 'Everything un-human or "egoistic" that clings to us is degraded to a "private" matter and we distinguish the State definitely from "civil society", which is the sphere of "egoism's" activity' (Stirner, 1993 [1844]: 99). This abstracted identity can repress or oppress aspects of a subject's identity in the 'public'/state sphere, and such an identity may not be liked or accepted; it separates

²¹ This is a thread that runs through citizenship theory. Where there is an emphasis on a 'deep' state and duties over rights, there is a strong emphasis on the autonomy of the community over and above the individual, whose differences are expected to be entirely subjugated to the higher unity (Machiavelli, 1988 [1513], p. 21; Hobbes, 1991 [1651], p. 32). Where the state is seen to play a relatively minimal role, the citizen is endowed with an abstract public equality and any differences which do not infringe upon others' rights and duties are seen not to be of public concern, so are relegated to the 'private sphere' (Locke 2002 [1689]; Paine 1984 [1791] & Madison et al 1987 [1787]; see also Chapters 6 & 8 of this thesis).

the individual from his or her autonomous activity, which is in turn watched over and regulated by the state.

Although Deleuze and Guattari do not mention citizenship explicitly, Richard Day (2003, 2005) has used some of their concepts and terminologies to articulate alternative, anarchistic forms of subjectivity and ways in which humans can exist within social and political spaces. Day proceeds to posit three articulations of subject identification; the citizen, the nomad and the smith. Day's 'citizens' are 'Oedipalized subjects making demands of those in authority' (Day, 2005: 173); they are the subjects of the liberal-democratic state, who campaign for rights and accept responsibilities within the system without questioning the authority of the system as such. In direct contrast to, yet in symbiotic relationship with, the citizen exists the 'nomad'. To Day, the nomad represents 'attempts to abandon paternal protection finally and absolutely' (Ibid: 173), that is to abolish the system in a revolutionary moment, yet with an inherent risk of reterritorialisation - of positing a new hegemony: 'The inside and outside of any social space are *interdependent*, each potentially giving rise to the other, each warding off the other, in an ongoing play of relations of co-operative and competitive power' (Ibid: 173-4). Also drawn from Deleuze and Guattari, is 'the smith', who 'exists in a complex relation to both the citizen and the nomad', in that 'rather than attempting to *dominate* by imposing all-encompassing norms, the smith seeks to *innovate* by tracking and exploiting opportunities in and around existing structures' (Ibid: 174).

2.5.2. Citizenship and the strategic terrain

I have some difficulties with Day's citizen/nomad/smith distinction, both at an analytical level and at the level of relating them to my project. I feel that Day's dismissal of the 'nomad' as counter-hegemonic (and therefore relying on a logic of hegemony rather than affinity/resistance/criticality) rests on a misreading of Deleuze and Guattari, who are careful to conceptualise the nomad as a

multiple, minoritarian, and infinitely critical mode of subjectivity²². I also feel that his dismissal of the citizen as intrinsically deferent to authority disregards many of the ways in which gaining recognition as citizens has aided women, racial minorities and others through the ages, and also the ways in which material and ideological resources associated with the concept can be exploited for transformative, critical and resistant purposes²³. In this respect Day has not gone far enough to conceptualise and describe the different modes of identity/belonging/action, nor to iterate their practical significance, and they remain largely abstract, so are difficult to apply in the context of a project using empirical evidence. It is notable that despite the fact that the distinction between these three modes of being forms a large part of Day's theoretical discussion, he rarely seems to apply the terms to his practical examples in a coherent way²⁴. This is indeed a difficulty with an approach (that I admittedly share) that attempts to bring theory into dialogue with practice in this way.

Naming a tendency will always involve representing and hegemonising it to some extent, and there will always be an overcoding of the kind that Day and the anarchist and poststructuralist traditions he traces are seeking to resist. In Stirner's moving words, 'I live after a calling as little as the flower grows and gives fragrance after a calling ... no concept expresses me, nothing that is designated as my essence exhausts me; they are only names' (Stirner, 1993 [1844]: 366). Yet, it is still necessary to speak: 'For thinking and speaking I need truths and words, as I do foods for eating; without them I cannot think nor speak' (Ibid: 347), or in the words of Deleuze and Guattari:

It's nice to talk like everybody else, to say the sun rises, when everybody knows it's only a manner of speaking. To reach, not the point where one no longer says I, but the point where it is no longer of any importance whether one says I (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 1-2).

What is perhaps more interesting and important than naming subjects/citizens, is recognising that they/we are constituted in and by multiple belongings and affiliations, which are created through

²² *Indra, the warrior god* [...] is like a pure and immeasurable multiplicity [...] he bears witness, above all, to other relations with women, with animals, because he sees all things in relations of *becoming*, rather than implementing binary distributions between states' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 388, italics in the original). Here Indra works as an image for the nomad assemblage 'the war machine'.

²³ Particularly informative upon these topics is Holloway Sparks' (1992) excellent article 'Dissident Citizenship: Democratic Theory, Political Courage and Activist Women', wherein she points to the fact that theorists of citizenship tend to ignore the public (not just private) activities of women and excluded racial groups. In order to bridge this gap, she attempts to develop a more expansive theory of citizenship that recognises dissidence and political courage as vital elements of political life. She uses a case-study of a black woman's activism: Rosa Parks, whose refusal to give up her seat on a bus to a white man led to public boycotts of busses, widespread political debate on segregation policies, and eventually political change.

²⁴ Day limits his focused discussion of activist practices to a section of the penultimate chapter (Day, 2005: 189-197).

multiple choices, actions and interactions. This may sometimes involve acting as a ‘citizen’, sometimes a ‘nomad’, sometimes a ‘smith’ and always as a plurality of other overlapping roles and identities. In this sense, the attempt of this project to separate out different modes of belonging and social subjectivity could be seen as an exercise in abstraction and universalism. With an ontology of pure difference – informed by critical utopianism and various strands of anarchism, Stirner and Deleuze and Guattari - we might be overwhelmed that no assemblage is self-existent or separable. There is no singular utopia and there are no autonomous subjects or spaces, only assemblages constituted in and by their surroundings, constituted in and by actors also conditioned by and conditioning their spaces and relationships, including the state. However, in choosing to create resistant spaces, actors are creating spaces that are becoming-utopian, or becoming-autonomous, or in Deleuze’s interpretation of Nietzsche’s (1996 [1887]: 22-4; 54-5) terminology, they are constituted by active, rather than reactive forces, where reactive forces are those which ‘separate active force from what it can do’ (Deleuze, 2006 [1983]: 57). They represent a consciously chosen and voluntary ‘line of flight’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 213) from the state apparatus, from the imposed identity of the citizen of the state, by subjects who have taken an experimental approach of trial and error, to create workable alternative spaces and relationships, which are never finished, but open-ended. ‘Strategic terrain’ refers to the everyday *milieu* in which the resistant subject or group must live and practice resistant, simultaneously ‘inside’ whilst attempting to live by an ethic that looks ‘outside’. This can involve some complex negotiations, such as ‘working inside the system, using dominant forms and means; but it should remain outside on the level of intentionality and desire, never reducible to these forms and means, always treating them as strategic choices, as means to be used for a purpose should they fail to serve it’ (Robinson, 2007: 48). My use of the term citizenship in the current project implies that it is a useful tool in the present strategic terrain, but should always remain open to change and negotiation, and to being discarded should it cease to be useful.

2.6. *Summary of approach*

Through an examination of post-state theories of citizenship, I have attempted to argue that citizenship, as a concept, has utopian content and has the potential for a utopian function.

Mainstream theorists, however, tend to obscure the utopian potential of citizenship. Herein arises my critique of legislative, didactic and definitive approaches to citizenship, which through seeking finality and integration into a higher unity, have an anti-utopian function of blocking flows of desire. I have also argued that anarchism and post-left anarchy have a particular affinity with utopianism, since they seek to liberate, rather than block, lines of flight and emphasise process over closure. As a utopia of self-governance and autonomy, the concept of citizenship has a surprising resonance with anarchistic theories. For these reasons I will be using anarchistic critical utopianism to inform my general approach and guide theory and case selection. The core concepts driving this thesis, therefore, are:

- **Citizenship:** Viewed as a ‘utopia of autonomy’, informed by, but transgressing post-state theories of citizenship (Faulks 2000; Hoffman 2004) and post-representational modes of belonging such as the ‘nomad’ and the ‘smith’ (Day 2005). The concept of citizenship is seen to have radical disruptive and strategic potential.
- **Critical utopianism:** Ideas of critical utopia, utopia as function, and the relationship of utopia to hope, desire and transformation are crucial to the structure of the thesis and the presumption that autonomous spaces and intentional communities are relevant to citizenship. The approach is interdisciplinary and draws on a tradition of scholarship on utopias and utopianism particularly emerging from the work of Bloch (1986 [1938-47]) and continuing through the more recent ‘critical’ and ‘transgressive’ utopianisms of Moylan (1986) and Sargisson (1996). The approach envisages the utopian impulse as something that is not confined to social engineers but is endemic to, and transformative of, everyday life.
- **Autonomy:** The way in which autonomy is used in this thesis presumes two levels of autonomy: autonomy *from* the state and the autonomy of the individual *within* their community through ideas and practices of non-hierarchy and self-governance. This is informed by the idea of the ‘social principle’ derived from classical anarchism, evolutionary anarchism and post-left anarchy, and the epistemological anarchism of Deleuze and Guattari (1986). It is presumed that autonomy may only be partial, but that *qua* critical utopianism it is defined in relation to hope, desire, and transformation rather than needing to be actualised in totality, and there is a particular emphasis on everyday practices (Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006).

In this chapter I have tried to identify and clarify the conceptual boundaries of my core terms and the epistemological approach that drives the project. The ways in which the meta-theoretical approach and core concepts are operationalised will be further elaborated upon in the following chapter, which outlines the methods used in the remainder of the thesis.

3. Methods

3.1. *Introduction*

In the previous chapter, I outlined the theoretical approach and conceptual framework of the project. I introduced a distinction between hegemonising utopias and critical utopias, and between citizenship of status and of identity, which I associated with the former, and citizenship of process, relationships and praxis, associated with the latter. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methods used to obtain information used in the remainder of the thesis, which are informed by critical utopianism. In this chapter, I will consider the relationship between theory and practice that informs the methodological basis of this project. I will then consider the criteria used for theory selection and empirical case selection. I then discuss particular data collection methods used to obtain data from cases, how others have used these methods, and how these have raised various problems when introduced into the context of my own research. Throughout the chapter, I aim for reflexivity by referring to conceptual, theoretical and practical difficulties that I have encountered, and how these were overcome, if at all. Some contradictions remain, and I shall endeavour to be explicit where this is the case.

3.2. *The relationship between theory and practice*

- How *else* could we live as politically active, participatory people, or, what other types of citizen could we be?

This broad question was disaggregated into a number of smaller questions in section 1.3 of the Introduction. The methodology will involve attention to both theoretical and practiced alternatives to orthodox modes of political existence. I feel that to study solely within the realms of formal political theory would contradict and remove the vitality of an argument that emphasises activity and participation, and impoverish the final theory. I therefore posit that some kind of primary empirical research into alternative participatory practices is necessary in order to furnish the theory. This project does not claim to be an empirically rigorous exercise in political science. Although some rigour, in line with the aims of the project, is necessary, my aim is not primarily to explain,

describe or classify political phenomena (although this will play a part), but rather to take the worldviews, experiences, practices, aims and actions of practitioners seriously in formulating a normative theory. There will of course be some overlap. The project therefore requires a nuanced understanding of the different ways in which ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ overlap and intersect.

An important purpose of this project is to bring theory into dialogue with practice in interesting and transgressive ways. This disrupts many of the traditional boundaries between political science and political theory. There is a clear normative vision, which places the project within the discipline of political theory, but this is informed by practices and takes inspiration from ‘data’ gleaned through empirical research. A number of specific points should be noted:

3.2.1. Shared function of critical utopian theories and practices

Both radical theories and practices can be viewed as critical utopian liminal spaces that offer an estranged perspective from which it becomes possible to critique and transgress conventional models of citizenship. This links to the idea of ‘praxis’, a term derived from Gramsci (1971) whose view was that all meaning derives from the relation between human practical activity (or ‘praxis’) and historical and social processes. This has influenced contemporary radical thought which shares commitment to ‘expose the socio-spatial processes that (re)produce inequalities between people and places; challenge and change those inequalities; and bridge the divide between theorisation and praxis’ (Fuller & Kitchin 2004: 5). This commitment has led to an emphasis amongst critical academics on embedding research within the groups and communities that are being studied, using methods such as Participatory Action Research and scholar-activism (discussed below), which partially inform the ethos of this project. Whilst I view this move towards embedded forms of knowledge and praxis in radical research in a wholly positive light, an exclusive emphasis on relevance could ‘limit the scope of critique, and especially that ‘utopian’ capacity to think beyond what is’ (Wilbert & Hoskyns, 2004: 71). I would therefore like to maintain the importance of utopian dreaming not only in practice but also in social theory and literature, which can educate desire (Levitas, 1990), critique the status quo (Moylan, 1986) and transform consciousness (Sargisson, 1996; 2000). Critical utopianism – where the emphasis is on perspectival multiplicity

and unalienated life - can thus be seen as a practice (even where that practice is largely theoretical) that exists within and derives from the existing social milieu yet simultaneously signals to something 'outside' or 'other' and thus has the transgressive potential to disrupt and transform habitual ways of thinking and living (Sargisson, 1996: *passim*). This conception of critical utopianism as (one form of) praxis informs the structuring of this thesis into separate yet connected chapters upon 'theory' (divided into mainstream and alternative) and 'practice' which is inspired by the idea that alternative practices embody the critical and transformative function of everyday philosophies and conceptions.

3.2.2. Theory as practice

Theorising is itself a mode of practice. It involves the creation of concepts, which have effects upon the real world, lived experience and everyday life:

I ... love remembering to queer any supposed border separating theory from practice. To theorise *is* a social practice. Like any other practice, theory has effects –whether that be to challenge or to contribute to relationships of domination (or, as often is the case, both simultaneously) (Heckert, [Forthcoming]).

The way in which citizenship is conceptualised by dominant political theory has effects upon citizens. Alternative conceptualisations also potentially have concrete effects upon lives, so should remain open to renegotiation in light of these effects, in order to maintain the critical utopian modality (McManus, 2005: 165). Studying practice can alert us to the limitations and effects of different theories, and act as a prompt for further theorising. This does, however, raise issues of the purpose of theorising and routes of transmission between academic theory and practice, linked to the discussion of praxis above, particularly in the context of such an individualised work as a PhD thesis. In some respects, however, it is important not to overplay divisions between academic theory and practice: 'we often forget just how pivotal academics are in the production of commonsense and hegemonic ideas' (The Autonomous Geographies Collective, 2010: 263), and it is unlikely that those academics working within the dominant paradigm feel it so necessary to question their positionality as those who are critical. Critical theory, research and publications can also be of use to activists (Ibid: 263-4), and being in a position to produce such research often

means being willing to engage strategically within institutional constraints whilst also challenging and organising outside established structures (Ibid, p. 264).

3.2.3. Practitioners as theorists

Practitioners and activists are '*always already doing theory and theorists are always already political subjects*' (Day, 2005: 206, italics in the original). The individuals and groups being researched have their own sets of views, beliefs, ideals and values – their own 'political theory', whether or not this is consciously articulated as such. One task of this research is to give expression to these theories in a context that is 'outside' the usual domain – to bring the voices and theories of practitioners into academic theory wherein they might otherwise have been ignored. There is a presumption here that political theorists have often neglected to attend to the views of those practitioners who do not consider themselves theorists, and that this is an interesting and valuable thing for a theorist to do. This links with the above point that theory should remain as open as is possible to its ethical effects upon lived experience, and bringing in the views of practitioners is just one way in which this can be done.

3.2.4. Empirical research and theorising practices

Ascertaining the views and practices of practitioners will involve primary empirical research. As a researcher, I will also have a theory to bring to bear upon the empirical material when interpreting its significance for the programme of research. Usually, in the field of political science, where most empirical research takes place, this is an explanatory or classificatory theory. In this case, however, it is an explicitly normative theory relating to the concept of citizenship: namely, that other ways of thinking about and doing citizenship are both possible and desirable. There are therefore two levels of discourse and practice in operation simultaneously: those of practitioners and those of the researcher, and a potentially reciprocal relationship between the two. Attending to the relationship between theory and practice, without closing the one off from the other, is essential to promote sustainable alternatives to the neoliberal order:

This can only be a practical theory and a theoretical practice, one that avoids both the quiescence brought on by excessive abstraction *and* the frustrations inherent in setting out to

‘do something’ without paying adequate attention to what others are doing now and have done before (Day, 2005: 205).

The critical utopian methodology used in this project attempts to bring theory and practice into a mutually reconstructive dialogue, whilst critiquing and transgressing images of academy as an elite prescriptive vanguard of authoritative knowledge production. Both critical utopian theories and critical utopian practices oppose the status quo and offer alternatives that are creative and affirmative. Bringing critical utopian theories and practices into dialogue also allows us to consider how each informs but also transgresses the other: theory can highlight the limitations of, and new possibilities for, practice, whilst practice can reveal inadequacies of theoretical abstractions.

3.2.5. Positionality: theorist as engaged practitioner

A traditional view of the production and dissemination of knowledge tends to assume that knowledges produced through research will dissipate from the academy into the wider world through publishing, the media, the internet, (Mitchell, 2004) through teaching and on-campus activities (Castree, 1999), and through influence on policy and decision-makers in the traditionally conceived public arenas of state politics and bureaucracy (Blowers, 1974). An ethos of non-hierarchy and anti-hegemony suggests a different relation to the production of knowledge. This kind of relation is fairly well established in participatory- or solidarity-action research, which attempts to disrupt and transgress the boundary between research participants and the researcher by conducting research as a mutual process between the researcher and practitioners, who jointly define the subject and guide the process of research through a mutually engaged programme of social or political action (Pain, 2003; Pickerill & Chatterton 2006). Solidarity action research involves a dual role for the researcher: ‘we are unashamedly commentators on – and also embedded participants within – autonomous projects’ (Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006: 732). This kind of research does not claim the impartial viewpoint and dispassionate distance required by most traditional social science: ‘Our encounters are as academic-activists, undertaking embedded participatory forms of action research which are empathic and interactive rather than extractive and objective’ (Ibid: 732).

Although I am not undertaking action research in this project, my positionality as researcher reflects this ethos. A commitment to solidarity and mutual aid has been a guiding principle of the research agenda and practices. I am neither a fully involved participant in the communities that I study, nor do I retain a safe distance and objective viewpoint. Whilst I have not been involved in self-consciously political actions with the subjects of this study, I am involved in grassroots radical educational and cultural projects and have aims, viewpoints and experiences that overlap and intertwine with participants in this study, and attempt to contribute to a broader movement for autonomy. My interstitial role reflects a growing body of literature on ‘scholar-activism’ (Chatterton, 2008; The Autonomous Geographies Collective, 2010), which entreats radical academics ‘to collectively organise, strategise and act’ (The Autonomous Geographies Project, 2010: 264-5).

3.3. *Theory: role and selection criteria*

Above, I argued that theory can be viewed as a practice that has effects upon everyday life. The critical utopian approach, outlined in the previous chapter, allows us to differentiate between two different types of theory – dominant, hegemonising theory and critical utopian theory. A brief summary of the differing aspects of these will operate as selection criteria for theories used in the following chapters. In each theoretical chapter, I will begin with dominant theorisations of the concept at hand (territory, authority or rights). These will then be criticised and transgressed using theories that fulfil the criteria for a critical utopian approach. The selection criteria for the theories used in theoretical chapters, summarised from Chapter 2 are as therefore follows:

Mode of theorising	Dominant	Critical Utopian
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truth-claiming • Foundational assumptions • Efface contingency • Hegemonising • Hierarchical • Seek integration of difference into a higher unity • Seek closure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative • Oppositional • Disruptive and transgressive • Non-hegemonising • Anti-hierarchical • Valorise difference • Infinitely critical
Examples	Most ‘canonical’ theory; (some) liberalism, civic republicanism, classical Marxism, ‘identity politics’	(Some) anarchism, post-structuralism, post-structural and post-left anarchism, post-structuralist influenced feminism, queer theory, deep ecology

Figure 3-1: Theory selection

3.3.1. Limitations of theory selection

There are some potentially serious problems with dividing up bodies of theories in this way. Focusing on what theories have in common rather than how they differ can lead to oversimplification, particularly in the case of dominant theories where it may appear that I am attacking a ‘straw man’. It is important to note that since they are defined in terms of function rather than a specific or identifiable form or content, critical utopianism and dominance can exist within the same theories: dominant theories may have critical utopian aspects and vice versa. However, it is my contention that some theories are more dominant, and dominating, than others, and I will stand by this contention in the face of the acknowledged limitations, with the proviso that in the upcoming chapters I will be careful and explicit in each case as to why I have chosen a specific theorist or body of theory as representative of dominant thought. Sometimes this will mean only picking out one aspect of a theorist’s work as ‘dominant’ when other aspects might be considered ‘critical utopian’. I also hope to ameliorate the problems of oversimplification when I consider practices, which often transgress both dominant and critical utopian formulations, and thus highlight the critical utopian aspects of dominant theory and the dominating effects of some critical utopian theory. Indeed, it is frequently the case that oppositional practices parody dominant models. In some cases this might be viewed as a co-optation or recuperation of the radicalism of the individuals and groups who I study. In other cases, however, it is a consciously chosen strategy for achieving radical goals. The ‘implications’ section of each of the chapters on practice forms a kind of metatheoretical analysis of the implications of the dialogue between different theories and practices, and highlights gaps and weaknesses of both dominant and critical utopian theories as well as in the theories of practitioners, in the hope of opening up space for further theorising. It is this final part of the dialogue that begins to imagine the conditions for a critical utopian conception of citizenship – but does not seek closure or conclusion, since the critical utopian process is ongoing.

3.4. *Studying practices*

Practitioners who are involved in activities positioned self-consciously outside the domain of what is usually associated with citizenship have something valuable to offer a critical and transgressive

theory of citizenship. The case study method is particularly useful for my purposes here. In particular, I will be studying what I am terming ‘autonomous spaces’ as specific and clearly identifiable instances of critical utopian practice (the links between autonomy and critical utopianism were outlined in Chapter 2). Although I would not like to suggest that these are the only places in which critical utopian practices occur, they are places where people engage in such practices as part of their core intent. Although the groups and communities that I am terming ‘autonomous spaces’ do not always self-define as such²⁵ the terminology is useful for a preliminary outline of selection criteria, since they encompass a broader range of activities that speak to this project than would be included if I decided to look at, for example, ‘intentional communities’ or ‘housing co-operatives’, and certainly more so if than if I decided only to look at communities that self-defined as any singular category²⁶. Due to these complexities, it is important to clearly justify why I consider autonomous spaces to be useful places to look for critical utopian practices, and also the selection criteria that I will use to identify such spaces.

3.4.1. Case selection

3.4.1.1. Case selection criteria

I have based my case selection on the concept of autonomy, as outlined in the previous chapter (section 2.4). I will specifically be using the terminology of ‘autonomous spaces’ following the research of Jenny Pickerill, Paul Chatterton and Stuart Hodkinson in their collaborative ‘Autonomous Geographies’ project²⁷. Defining autonomous spaces is not uncontroversial, since in line with the critical utopian impulse, movements for autonomy ‘do not subscribe to the belief that there is one over-riding truth or one true form of autonomy’ (Katsiaficas, 2006 [1997]: 8). However, a definition is necessary for case selection. Katsiaficas has outlined ‘a number of

²⁵ The term is, however, within the vocabulary of some activists. For a small selection of examples of the use of the term ‘autonomous’ to denote spaces of resistance and the creation of alternatives in activist-oriented media, see: Schnews. (2008, April Friday 11). *Weekly Schnews: Issue 628*. from Schnews: <http://www.schnews.org.uk/archive/news628.htm> accessed June 9, 2009; WOMBLES, (2002, May 1). *Mayday Autonomus Actions*. from Our May Day: <http://ourmayday.org.uk/autonomous.html.j25.or.html> accessed 6 June, 2009; Do or Die Web Team. (1999, June Friday 18). *Autonomous Spaces*. from Do or Die (Issue 8): <http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no8/space.html> accessed June 9, 2009

²⁶ Communities’ self-definitions are incredibly variable and diverse, and individual members sometimes define the natures and purposes of the same community in different terms.

²⁷ The outputs of this collaborative research have included a website (Chatterton, Hodkinson, & Pickerill, 2007, <http://www.autonomousgeographies.org/> accessed April 9, 2009), pamphlets aimed at activist communities (Chatterton, 2007; Chatterton & Hodkinson, 2006) and academic articles (Hodkinson & Chatterton, 2006; Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006; Chatterton & Hodkinson, 2007).

principles that provide coherence' to the specifically European autonomous movements, although he states that these principles do have wider significance internationally (Ibid: 9). I have used these as the basis of my case selection criteria. It is important to reiterate that these principles of autonomy are based in desire and intent rather than needing to be fully realised.

My benchmark for case selection has been that communities' aims speak to the following criteria:

- Independence from hierarchically organized political parties, trade unions and traditional conceptions of politics as well as from "pseudo-democratic" capitalism'²⁸
- Collectivism
- Participative forms of decision-making, such as consensus or direct-democratic
- Oppositional and resistant
- Belief in diversity and continuing differentiation
- Belief in self-management and the need for individuals and groups to take responsibility for their own actions
- Orientation toward the transformation of everyday life

(Adapted from Katsiaficas, 2006 [1997]: 7-8)

Examples of autonomous spaces, using this definition, may include, but are not limited to: social centres, eco-villages, housing co-operatives, intentional communities and workers' co-operatives (Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006: 731; Bey, 1993). The forms of these spaces, and the nature and extent of their autonomy, are as multiple as the futures they propose. It is therefore important to note that my case studies are very different from one another. Selecting very different case studies is a well-established method in the social sciences, but is usually undertaken to establish comparability and representativeness (Gerring, 2004, p. 348). In this study, however, the necessity for selecting very different cases arises due to practical constraints – because autonomous communities in the UK are all very different – and also because I am interested in the idea of critical utopianism, and in my cases' function of critiquing dominant models of citizenship, which presupposes difference and even division rather than a unified singular utopia. Thus it may seem that I concentrate on certain functional or processual similarities between cases – particularly

²⁸ This principle is defined in terms of shared intent, rather than actuality, since complete autonomy is arguably impossible. Also, independence is defined in terms of the community, rather than individuals, who may have various overlapping affiliations with other groups and organisations.

shared critique and methods of resistance and creation – rather than in differences of form and content.

3.4.1.2. *Limits of case selection*

I decided to confine my study to the United Kingdom. This is problematic in some respects. It raises issues of cultural exclusivity and generalisability. However, I do not believe that this problem would diminish if I took my research further afield, since considering the potentially limitless numbers of autonomous spaces worldwide, it would be hard to justify singling out any particular examples, were generalisability a goal. Indeed, the purpose of this study is not to make generalisations but rather to open a field of thought to difference. ‘Critical utopian citizenship’ does not propose a single model or blueprint for the future or universal model of citizenship, but rather an ongoing criticality that is always open to difference. It is a method rather than an institution. This exercise is potentially limitless and indeed spaces and communities further afield could form a basis for further study, as well as resistant groups that do not fall under the rubric of ‘autonomous spaces’, such as countercultural, indigenous, networked and online movements. Restricting the study to the United Kingdom has reduced the environmental impact of the study, and unnecessary air-travel in particular would have been difficult to justify in the context of a project premised on issues of social and environmental justice. This is in line with the scholar-activist ethos that ‘our work as academics should be socially and ecologically responsible’ (The Autonomous Geographies Collective, 2010: 265). The restriction of the study was also based on practical reasons – expense, linguistic ability and time constraints were all prohibitive.

3.4.1.3. *Practicalities of case selection*

Potential cases were identified using the *Diggers and Dreamers* website (<http://www.diggersanddreamers.org.uk> accessed August 13, 2009) which provides a directory of groups dedicated to communal living in the United Kingdom, and also using Paul Chatterton and Stewart Hodkinson’s (2006) article “Autonomy in the City?” which provides a list of social centres in existence in the United Kingdom at the time of its going to print. Communities’ aims and principles were researched on the *Diggers and Dreamers* website, which provides brief descriptions of

communities, or through communities' own websites which often provide copies of their constitutions or agreed aims and principles²⁹. Occasionally it was necessary to request further information via email. Those communities that met the selection criteria stated previously (section 3.4.1.1) were contacted through email or written letter with a brief explanation of my research and a request to visit.

A surprisingly small number of communities replied to my initial contact. This was perhaps due to the fact that the communities use participative decision-making processes, often requiring consensus, which can often be slow. Sending a physical letter through the post to follow-up emails ameliorated this somewhat, since it meant that the person who dealt with such communications had something tangible to present at a meeting. In total, I was invited to visit twelve communities, and after discussion and planning ten of these visits turned out to be feasible. A brief description of my cases can be found in Appendix 1.

3.4.2. Empirical methods

In this section, I will outline the research methods that I used before and during visits to communities, how these methods were adapted for this project, and how the methods attempt to address the research questions. The first two of the four research questions outlined in the Introduction (section 1.3) are addressed through theoretical analysis, the fourth is addressed after empirical data has been gathered, taking an interpretive approach with relation to the relevance for citizenship studies. The focus for empirical research is therefore on the third research question: What theoretical and practiced alternatives to dominant models of citizenship do political agents in autonomous democratic communities offer? It might be useful to unpack this question:

- What shared vision of alternative modes of belonging, participation and ethics do autonomous communities put forward?
- What theories³⁰ of belonging, participation and ethics do individual members of autonomous democratic communities have, and how do these speak to the shared vision?

²⁹ These are usually decided by the communities as a whole through consensus – the process of consensus is described more fully in Chapter 7.

³⁰ Although this terminology might seem adventitious, I have previously argued that I believe members of communities do have their own 'political theories', even if these are not consciously articulated as such (see section 2.3.2).

- How do practices affirm, and in what ways do they transgress theories?
- Do autonomous spaces provide conditions for critical utopian modes of belonging, participation and ethics?

The following research methods were used to obtain the information:

3.4.2.1. *Documentary analysis*

Documentary analysis is a well-established method in the social sciences (Burnham et. al., 2004: 165-188; Bryman, 2004: 380-397). Documentary analysis was undertaken before, during and after visits to communities. Documents included community websites, published books and pamphlets and documents obtained from communities through the mail or during visits (such as community maps and organisational diagrams – for examples see appendices 3 & 4). Documents were particularly useful for obtaining information needed to answer the first of the above questions, on the shared visions of the communities (where they were presented as such) and were usually the outcome of consensus. Documents such as websites³¹ and published works³² often provide detailed insight into community histories and organisation, and some documents, in particular pamphlets, newsletters and published works, provide information on individual perspectives³³. It can sometimes be difficult to verify the content of documents, as they are designed to appear authoritative and can disguise particular interests (MacDonald 2001: 205). To increase reliability, this method was triangulated with interviews and participant observation. This was particularly important when considering matters of organisation and decision-making processes, since practices often transgressed the formal rules or procedures outlined in written formats.

3.4.2.2. *Interviews*

Interviews are a central qualitative approach in social studies primarily used to gain information on subjects' worldviews (Wengraf, 2000: *passim*; Burnham et. al., 2004: 205-220; Bryman, 2004:

³¹ See, for example, Kebele Community Cooperative. (n.d.). *History*. Retrieved June 16, 2009 from Kebele Community Cooperative website: <http://www.kebelecoop.org/History.html>

³² See, for example, Walker (ed.) (1994), an edited collection of writings by community members about the history, work, beliefs and practices of the Findhorn Foundation.

³³ See for example Coventry Peace House. (n.d.). *I Came Here for Safety: The reality of detention and destitution for asylum seekers*. Coventry: Coventry Peace House publication. This self-published booklet provides factual information on the British asylum system, personal accounts from asylum seekers and also personal accounts from members of Peace House and volunteers at the community's refugee shelter of experiences of working with asylum seekers.

318-314). Interviews were particularly important in this project which attempts to take the worldviews of activists seriously and the method was used to gain insight into individual members' perspectives on participation, belonging and ethics, as well as the effects of shared beliefs and practices – the conditions of the community - upon individuals. They are also used to compare personal opinions on how things work to the outward statements of groups' aims and purposes. These themes were kept in mind when compiling an interview schedule, which can be found in Appendix 2. I also included number of questions asking for interviewees' opinions on citizenship. My assumption was that I was operating with a wider conceptualisation of citizenship than that held by participants in the study, but the question was included to ascertain whether this was really the case. These questions were strategically placed at the end of the interview, since they are of secondary importance and I did not want the themes to influence or dominate interviews. The interviews were also strategically structured so that more personal or sensitive questions were placed towards the middle and end of the interviews, allowing me time to build a rapport with participants. I chose to use semi-structured, rather than structured or unstructured interviews, since they allow the interviewer to cover the central themes of the project whilst allowing flexibility for participants to develop their own issues. Interviews were undertaken with 22 consenting participants and with written permission all interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed.

Wolcott (1994) makes a useful distinction between description, analysis and interpretation in qualitative enquiry. All of these have been of importance in understanding my findings. Description means 'to stay as close to the data as originally recorded', under the assumption that 'the data speak for themselves' (Wolcott, 1994: 10). Part of the purpose of this research is to allow activists to speak where otherwise their voices might have been ignored. This has involved quoting participants sometimes at great length, bringing their voices into the project. Sometimes participants articulate their experiences and worldviews more clearly and with greater articulacy and clarity of reflection than I possibly could my own, rendering further interpretation unnecessary. This is certainly the case when addressing the research question concerning personal viewpoints, although the questions on the relationship between individual and group theories, and on the

conditions for critical utopian modes of participation, belonging and ethics required further work on my part.

Analysis expands and extends beyond a merely descriptive account (although is often built upon one which has already been given) and ‘proceeds in some careful, systematic way to identify key factors and relationships among them’ (Ibid: 10). Analysis involved looking for key themes across interviews, and organising extracts into common themes³⁴. This process is necessarily reductive, since potential ‘categories’ or ‘themes’ are infinite. The process is time consuming and involves getting very close to the data, getting to know it with incredible familiarity, which alleviates the reductive character somewhat. Frequent return to the transcripts is also important, because often unique, original and inventive articulations are just as important as those that recur through interviews. Interpretation follows from analysis and description, and:

does not claim to be as convincingly or compulsively “scientific” as [analysis], being neither as loyal to nor as restricted by observational data only. The goal is to make sense of what goes on, to reach for understanding or explanation beyond the limits of what can be explained with the degree of certainty usually associated with analysis (Ibid: 10).

Interpretation addresses meanings and contexts of interview extracts, the relationship between individual and community theories, between theories and practices, and between all of this and the wider purpose of my project – critical utopian citizenship. Here I pay attention to any linkages between my observations and the theory that I have been criticising, transgressing and attempting to build. Interpretation will form the basis of my broad theory of critical and transgressive citizenship.

3.4.2.3. *Participant observation*

Participant observation has its roots in anthropology but is now widely used in many disciplines across the social sciences (Burnham et. al., 2004: 221-249; Bryman, 2004: 291-317). It has played an important role in this project, which involves the study of activities, behaviour and attitudes that

³⁴ For this, I used *NVivo*® software which allows the coding and organisation of data into themes in something akin to a linked electronic filing system. For the purposes that I used the software, more traditional methods of colour coding, or cutting up and filing extracts from printed copies of interviews would have worked equally as well, but would have been (even) more time consuming.

are outside the realms of my own previous experience. The values, beliefs, language and behaviour of some of the participants may differ somewhat from political behaviour to which myself as the researcher, and potential readers of my research, are accustomed. The project also involves trying to map the participatory discourses and practices of individuals who are very closely involved with one another often in the context of a strong sense of shared purpose (communities and groups may have their own in-group quasi-theory, set of references and symbols, akin to a kind of ‘group-slang’, of which it could prove problematic and difficult for an ‘outsider’ immediately to understand the significance). Thus it is important to gain an insider’s point of view (as a participant) in order to interpret or translate what is seen and heard as a researcher (observer). Participant observation involves taking extensive field notes, including ‘thick descriptions’ (Geertz, 1973). I have quoted extracts from my diaries occasionally in the ‘practice’ chapters of this thesis, although I have relied more heavily on interview extracts, as a more important aim of the thesis is to give voice to practitioners. Participant observation was useful to verify information and to fill in gaps.

Participant observation and interviewing are intimate, embedded and embodied forms of research. Unlike documentary analysis they encourage the researcher to observe and participate in emotions, feelings and relationships. There is an emphasis on the everyday. The focus of this approach is on intersubjective understanding and empathy. Bruyn says of his first impressions during his first use of participant observation: ‘I realized that what I was studying was not human behaviour so much as the inner collective life of people who were deeply involved personally in changing their community and in being changed by it’ (Bruyn, 1966: x). This kind of reciprocally constitutive relationship between the individual and their community is one of the important aspects of autonomous spaces I am trying to understand, study and articulate through critical utopian citizenship. However, it is likely that community members will not understand their collective life in the same terms as myself, and participant observation is one way to access their experiences before bringing them into dialogue with academic theory and developing them as sources for my own theory-building. In this sense, ‘citizenship’ becomes what Bruyn terms a ‘sensitising concept’, that is a term which is not derived indigenously from the culture under observation, but rather is

‘formulated by the scientist who sees significant areas of social life that require definition. He takes the conventional meaning into account in his own definition but he is not ruled by it’ (Ibid: 38). This reflects the anthropological distinction between ‘emic’ (from ‘phonemic’) research, which focuses on the intrinsic cultural distinctions that are meaningful to the members of a given society, and the ‘etic’ (from ‘phonetic’) perspective, which relies upon the extrinsic concepts and categories that have meaning for ‘scientific’ observers (Gellner, 1986: 144-5). Here, the concept of critical utopian citizenship is being deployed mainly in an etic sense: there is a strong possibility that as the researcher, I am operating with a broader (or different) view of citizenship than the practitioners/participants of the study. This becomes problematic in light of the possibility that some participants may have a negative evaluative judgement concerning the concept of citizenship itself (as I do, within many of its current formulations or constructions). It has therefore been necessary at times to translate my understanding of ‘citizenship’ in other terms to the participants – belonging, participation, ethical values - in order to investigate their beliefs and attitudes concerning my formulation, and then to translate words and actions, which practitioners might term otherwise, as critical utopian citizenship. It is important to emphasise the multiple, contested and constructed nature of the concept I am attempting to give voice to, which might perhaps better (although more clumsily) have been termed critical utopian *citizenships*, so as to avoid the ethical and conceptual pitfalls (particularly in the context of the theoretical framework in which I am operating) of positing a transcendental model. Participant observation has helped me to gain understandings that have allowed me to interpret the significance of data for the wider aims of my project.

I undertook participant observation in nine communities during the course of this research between April and September 2007, with visits ranging from one day to two weeks (further information can be found in Appendix 1). Participant observation involved attending meetings in order personally to observe decision-making in action as well as participating in everyday situations in an attempt to read in terms of power what was occurring behind seemingly self-evident interactions. This has allowed me to gain a perspective on how participation and relationships in alternative spaces work in practice. Above all, it has given me first hand experience of how it *feels* to live and work in a

wide variety of autonomous communities, even if only for short periods of time. This has involved a large amount of gardening and cooking, eating delicious (vegetarian) meals in good company, pointing a stone wall, painting and decorating, cleaning, attending seemingly endless meetings, visiting community-made saunas and compost toilets, demolishing a caravan by hand for recycling, feeding pigs, composting waste, cutting wood, meditating, dancing, attending classes and workshops, engaging in community outreach, making new friends, and innumerable other fantastic, enjoyable, extraordinary and sometimes scary experiences that unfortunately, for lack of space, do not enter this project as much as I would like them to. All of these activities speak to themes of belonging, participation, ethics, and social and environmental justice, and have relevance for critical utopian citizenship³⁵.

3.4.3. Limitations

There are some limitations to these forms of research, some of which I have outlined in the foregoing discussion. Qualitative research can be messy, fuzzy and indeterminate – even more so in a project such as this where the population is indeterminate. This research does not attempt to generalise as it is about transgressing boundaries – the population is purposefully undefined because it refers to an open field of unfolding differentiation. Having said this, it has also been necessary to continually make generalisations, since without doing so it is impossible to speak. My hope is to continually undermine and transgress even my own categories and generalisations.

It is important to remember that what I am observing represents a limited snapshot of a continuing process; that the communities and people that I am studying are involved in processes of change and negotiation, rather than presenting a finite and static ‘product’. A renowned participant observer describes how time itself became a key element in his study, and how through a very extended stay, he realised that ‘I was taking a moving picture instead of a still photograph’ (Whyte,

³⁵ I also attempted one further method - Q-methodology – which gives participants an opportunity to evaluate academic theories and discourses by sorting discursive statements printed on cards into piles depending on their level of agreement. I thought that this method would be useful since it transgresses the often one-way direction in which academic interpretation and evaluation operate (see Stephenson, 1953; Brown, 1980; McKeown & Thomas, 1988; Dryzek & Berejikian, 1993; Barry & Proops, 1999). Unfortunately, in the context of this project, the method was unsuccessful, since participants were either unable or unwilling to sort the statements in the manner required. However, the discussions arising from these attempts often provided further material for interpretation.

1987 [1943]: 323). It is unlikely that I was able to fully understand processes of change during my short visits, although this was sometimes discussed with participants.

3.5. *Ethics*

I have consulted the University of Nottingham's "Research Code of Conduct" and the Economic and Social Research Council's "Research Ethics Framework" and have considered all the issues covered which are relevant to my research: all subjects were fully informed of the purpose, methods and intended uses of the research and what their participation would entail; participation was voluntary and free from coercion; written consent was obtained from all interviewees in the form of a signed consent form and the names of those who requested anonymity³⁶ have been changed in the text of this thesis. I have also considered some issues particular to this project, and further issues also arose during fieldwork:

- Some of the conceptual and methodological issues discussed in this chapter include ethical components. Just as there is a danger of misrepresenting political thought to practitioners, there is also a possibility of misrepresenting or over-theorising the actions, beliefs and experiences of practitioners in my own research.
- Whilst this is endemic to research practice, here there is the particular problem of (mis-)representing participants' actions as pertaining to citizenship, when they might not self-describe them as such or indeed may have personal objections to terminologies and values put forward in this thesis. Whilst a small number acknowledged that they were uncomfortable with my terminology, they still wished to be interviewed since they wanted their views to be heard.
- Whilst participants expressed consent for material to be used for this research, which expressly stipulated a chance of publication, there is a danger that they might be unprepared for it to fully enter the public domain, or change their minds in retrospect. For this reason I will consider anonymising all names in any publications likely to have wider or commercial distribution.

³⁶ In practice only two participants requested anonymity, and only one has been quoted in this thesis.

- There is also a need to protect people living at the margins of legality or conventional society. On one occasion this meant excluding information from the thesis where I had doubts about the effects of bringing it into the public domain.
- Due to the nature of this project, research necessarily involved going into private spaces and homes. This was only done after appropriate permission had been sought and due respect and care were observed at all times. Whilst the vast majority of community members welcomed me happily into their spaces, some were more wary. I was careful not to approach anyone for participation in the project who seemed unwilling.

In conclusion to this chapter and to address the first three of these points I would like to emphasise that although many of the ideas offered in this project have been influenced by and formulated through discussions with participants, full responsibility for values and political views expressed herein remains my own.

4. Transgressing Territory: Theory

4.1. *Introduction and working definitions*

Issues of space, place, and scale are incredibly important for politics and citizenship, with public space forming an integral feature of western democracy going back to the *agora* of ancient Greece (Isin, 1997: 118; Bickford, 2000: 355; Hirst, 2005: 10). A conceptual distinction is often drawn between “space” and “place”. Space is often viewed as more abstract than place – ‘when we speak of space we tend to think of outer-space or the spaces of geometry. Spaces have areas and volumes. Places have spaces between them’ (Cresswell, 2004: 8). Place, on the other hand, has a social element: ‘When humans invest meaning in a portion of space and then become attached to it in some way (naming is one such way) it becomes a place’ (Ibid: 10). This chapter is not primarily concerned with the particular significances of particular places, but rather with the ways in which spaces are made into places, the power dynamics that are involved in such processes, and the ethical effects of these. Following Massey (2005) I would like to move away from the image of space as a surface, and place as a bounded mark upon a map, and move towards an understanding of space as ‘a simultaneity of stories-so-far’ (Massey, 2005: 130) and of places as ‘collections of these stories, articulations within the wider power-geometries of space’ (Ibid: 130). For Massey, viewing space in relational terms means refusing to map dichotomies such as space/place and local/global onto the couplet of concrete/abstract - the local and the global should be seen as mutually constituted (Ibid: 184-5). For Massey, the distinction that should be drawn, rather, is between understandings of space that are static and totalising – embedded in concepts of ‘stasis, closure and representation’ (Ibid: 13) and those understandings which emphasise ‘heterogeneity; relationality; coevalness... liveliness indeed’ (Ibid: 13; elipsis in the original). A politics that is open to the future ‘entails a radically open time-space, a space which is always being made’ (Ibid: 189). This mirrors the distinction between dominant, totalising utopias and critical utopias. As a theory of imagined and practiced alternatives, and a politics experimentation and the education of desire, critical utopianism clearly has a role to play here in the construction of radically new spaces.

As a tentative, working definition (which will be developed throughout the chapter): Territory is a type of place, insofar as it is a manner or organising space that operates through human signification, but with an added political element - sovereignty. Territory defines the boundaries of the polity that the citizen exists in relation to (Sassen, 2006: 277). A political geographic definition implies that the concept of territory has material significance as a model of organising space and people: 'territory appears as a material, spatial notion establishing links between politics, people, and the natural setting' (Gottman, 1973: ix). This chapter engages theoretically with the concept of territory. The structure of this chapter mirrors those on "Transgressing Authority: Theory" (Chapter 6) and "Transgressing Rights: Theory" (Chapter 8), and begins by outlining dominant theorisations of the concept of territory, and associated formations of citizenship. Dominant models of territory will be drawn from the western political cannon, contemporary state-democratic citizenship theory and political geography, with an emphasis on the liberal tradition which has arguably had the most influence on the contemporary organisation of space (Gottman, 1973: 53-90).

The grouping together of theories as 'dominant' presents dangers of oversimplification. These theories are multiple and diverse, with some historically or potentially more 'dominant' than others. As throughout, I will be using 'dominant' in the Lefebvrian sense of 'dominating' (Lefebvre, 1991: 164-168), or in the Deleuzian sense of major or Royal science (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 405, 412)³⁷. In this chapter, I argue that despite their diversity, dominant approaches to the concept of territory share certain foundational assumptions. These include the ontological construction of territory as alienated sovereignty³⁸, the commodification of physical space, and the hierarchical imposition of the built environment. In the first part of this chapter I critique dominant approaches by deconstructing their foundational assumptions and considering

³⁷ See section 3.3 for logics guiding theory selection.

³⁸ Massey warns against associating the local with the 'concrete' and other scales with 'abstraction': 'If space is to be viewed relationally then it is no more than the sum of our relations and interconnections, and the lack of them; it is to utterly "concrete" (Massey 2005: 184). For Massey, romanticising the local is another form of dangerous abstraction (Ibid: 184). It is therefore important to note that my understanding of abstraction is based on *kinds* of relationships involving hierarchy, representation, and hegemonic unification rather than on scale. However, it is also important to note that all of the communities that I study in this thesis could be described as 'local' and although I view them as having porous boundaries and wider significance (discussed particularly in chapters 8 & 9), I also view the small-scale as a particularly important site for resistance and the creation of non-totalising alternatives (discussed in chapters 6 & 7).

their normative implications for citizenship. I will then attempt to map the theoretical positions that proceed from this deconstruction: the ‘critical utopia’ that makes critical engagement possible, or the ‘no place’ from which we can reflect upon and deconstruct dominant notions of territory and citizenship. In this section I have focused upon radical political geography, post-structuralism, post-feminism, psychogeography, situationist theory and contemporary (post-structural and post-left) anarchism. I have selected these theories since they offer non-territorial and non-foundational approaches to the understanding of physical space and place. This discussion will form the basis for the following chapter on utopian praxis, where I use examples from my fieldwork to consider functioning alternative practices of understandings, arrangements and uses of the physical environment in autonomous spaces. In the concluding part of this section on territory I consider the relationship between theory and practice and the implications for a critical understanding and practice of citizenship.

4.2. Dominant approaches

4.2.1. The ontological construction of territory as alienated sovereignty

Historically and etymologically, the notion of territory is tightly bound with the notion of sovereignty and implies ‘land belonging to a town, a ruler or a state’ (Onions, 1966: 912). In ancient times through to the middle ages, city-states and regions had territorial sovereignty, whilst the sovereignty of aristocracy and royalty rested on individual allegiances or organised bodies rather than on the possession of areas of land (Gottman, 1973: 17). It was during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries that legal and political doctrine established territorial sovereignty as the exclusive attribute of kingdoms or states (Ibid: 11-12). This process occurred through a combination of ‘practical need’ and ‘moral debate’ (Ibid: 17).

The shifting process of territorialisation from city-states, through nationalism, to contemporary dynamics of globalisation, is reflected in the history of political thought. For Plato, self-sufficiency and unification were sufficient to define the limits of a city (Plato, 1992 [c. 380 B.C.]: 98). For Aristotle, ideal territory was also seen to be defined by self-sufficiency (Aristotle, *Politics*, 2000 [c. 350 BC]: 268-9). For Aristotle, the criteria by which this might be judged was conceptualised

differently, exposing the normativity of this formula. Machiavelli (1988 [1583]: 35-36) emphasised the importance of the political partitioning of space in a manner that ensured each unit had a strong and unified sovereign power.

During the sixteenth century, the discovery of new lands led to an influx of resources to western Europe and the expansion of trade (to the detriment of the sources of these resources!). This led to rapid urban growth and the expansion of industry, as well as to a series of destructive wars (Gottman, 1973: 44). In 1648 the major European powers agreed to abide by principle of territorial integrity, signified by the Treaties of Westphalia, establishing the modern principle of the territorial sovereignty of clearly bounded nation states (Ibid: 44). It is with the historically contemporaneous theories of Hobbes (2006 [1651]) and Locke (2002 [1689]) that the territorial state comes to be asserted in theory as an ontological necessity rather than a normative proposition. Although each posits an alternative in the form of a pre-territorial 'state of nature' (Hobbes, 2006 [1651]: 68-71; Locke, 2002 [1689]: 2-7), this is formulated as either so unattractive that no rational being could possibly desire its return (Hobbes, 2006 [1651]: 70), or so far removed through historical progress that the status quo has become both instrumentally and morally *right*³⁹ (Locke, 2002 [1689]: 20-21).

Hobbes and Locke both posit (different) naturalistic historical foundations for the formation of the sovereign territorial state, which are now widely considered to be myths (Clastres, 1977 [1974]: 5-6; Johnston, 1982, Ch.3 *passim*). Their accounts are inadequate, in that they fail to account for situated networks and kinship networks (Clastres, 1977 [1974], *passim*) and the role of ideology in the formation of the territorial state (Johnston, 1982: 36-38). Hobbes and Locke claim to give historical accounts, when really their propositions are normative, and themselves play a role in the formation of the territorial state. Going back to the first of my disaggregated research questions in section 1.3 of the introduction, this serves to highlight that the historical conditions through which

³⁹ The meanings and implications of this term are considered in more detail in Chapter 8.

dominant models of citizenship came to be associated with the territorial nation state are rooted in utopianism, but a mode of utopian theorising that disguises its own fictive and creative origins (McManus, 2005: 3 and *passim*). It is important to consider the ethical and political effects of this mode of theorising the practices that it entails.

The alienated sovereignty put forward in theories of territorial sovereignty has implications for citizenship. A theme of citizen homogeneity is evident throughout the foregoing discussion on territory, and finds particular expression in the advocacy of a common belief system or civil religion by many canonical philosophers (Plato, 1992 [c. 380 B.C.]: 91-92; Machiavelli, 1988 [1583]: 39; Hobbes, 2006 [1651]: 60-61; Rousseau, 2004 [1762]: 154-156). This begins in the city-state, showing that even non-representative democracy rests on an assumption of the total alienation of the rights of the individual to the entire community (see also Rousseau, 2004 [1762]: 15). During the nineteenth century in particular, rising nationalism meant that ‘citizenship became grafted onto an ideal of cultural and ethnic homogeneity rooted in a particular territory’ (Cowen & Gilbert, 2008: 12). The nation constitutes a cultural, rather than a political, identity, but liberalism has tended to conflate the two:

A portion of mankind may be said to constitute a Nationality if they are united among themselves by common sympathies which do not exist between them and any others — which make them co-operate with each other more willingly than with other people, desire to be under the same government, and desire that it should be government by themselves or a portion of themselves exclusively. (Mill, 1946 [1861]: 291).

This notion of cultural exclusivity creates a tension with liberal ideals of egalitarianism and universality. It not only creates a unified cultural identity which is internally injurious of difference, but it also creates a basis for exclusion; not only of those outside any given state, but particularly in times of increasing migration, of those inside the state. Citizenship defined by membership of sovereign territory thus has several implications for exclusion and the oppression of difference. Whereas in Plato’s time it was women and slaves who were excluded from citizenship and thus participation in politics (Hirst, 2005: 10) contemporary society usually excludes those born outside the territorial boundaries of any particular state leading to a discourse and institutional practice of citizenship/alienhood that is ‘a highly racialised rhetorical and disciplinary apparatus

that classifies immigrants, refugees, and border crossers' (Marciniak, 2006: xii; see also Croucher 2004: 90).

Territory is therefore part of a narrative of inclusion and exclusion that determines who is, and who is not, a citizen. This leads to an increasing tension between the rise of a discourse of human rights, in which 'personhood' rather than 'nationhood' is 'positioned as the criterion legitimating claims to welfare resources and other "public goods"' (Lewis, 2004a: 2). At the same time we have witnessed 'a more strident policing of international borders and an increased demonization and criminalization of asylum seekers and refugees' (Ibid: 2). Belonging is an important aspect of citizenship that is often articulated in terms of membership and identity of a bounded territorial nation state; but it is a shifting and unstable form of membership that is undermined by, and in tension with other particular forms of identity and belonging – those of the excluded, and also identities of class, sexuality, gender, ethnicity or religion (Ibid: 8). In Deleuze and Guattari's terminology, a citizenship of status and identity overcodes these complexities, which are excessive of the concept of citizenship that tries to impose unity on multiplicity (see Deleuze & Guattari 1988: 9). It is therefore useful to view citizenship as a relationship – between citizens and the state, citizens and other citizens, and citizens and non-citizens; as well as a process – that shifts across the life-course of individuals and within and between specific groups through historical time (Lewis, 2004a: 3).

As well as having implications for belonging, status and identity, the scale at which territorial sovereignty occurs also has implications for the processes of participation and governance by which citizens' lives are organised. The alienation of the rights of the individual citizen to the community is a symptom of classical democracy based on the city-states, as well as the small-scale direct democracy of Rousseau (Rousseau, 2004 [1762]: 15). Although in Rousseau, as in classical democracy, all citizens are entitled to participate in decision-making, decisions are applied to all as though they voted the same, even if they did not. For Hobbes, the process of unification leads to the concentration of power in one person, who comes to be the embodiment of morality: 'A multitude of men, are made *One* Person, when they are by one man, or one Person, Represented' (Hobbes,

2006 [1651]: 91). Although Locke's government is more limited in the scope of its power over citizens, it still relies on a logic of representation (Locke, 2002 [1689]: 88). When sovereignty exists at the national scale, power is also concentrated at this level, and citizens are represented and ruled by an abstracted government. This abstracted view of morality leads to 'hegemonic discourses of citizenship [which] have embedded within them ideas about the "best" and most appropriate ways of organizing domestic, sexual, work, or leisure activities' (Lewis, 2004a: 8) that are again unified at the abstracted level of territorial governance. These overcode 'practices of the everyday' (Ibid: 8), which again tend to be in excess of these universal moral codes. Such forms of everyday life and experience are also potential bases of critique and resistance: 'the actual practices of everyday life ... might be deployed in opposition to hegemonic conceptions and/or be the basis of claims for an extended or deepened citizenship' (Ibid: 8).

4.2.2. The commodification of physical space

Traditionally, political theory and practice externalises the physical environment. Space is seen as separate from, and categorically outside, our human bodies and subjectivities. This tendency to 'other' space also implies a relation of domination. Consider the Christian belief, evident in Locke, that nature was given by God to mankind to make use of as he willed: 'The earth, and all that is therein, is given to men for the support and comfort of their being' (Locke, 2002 [1689]: 12).

This externalisation and domination of nature leads to a second property with which dominant approaches imbue the physical environment: the appropriation and marketability of space. When space is seen as something that can be treated as humans will in a one-way relation of domination, it does not take a great leap to transform it into an exchange commodity:

God gave the world to men in common; but since he gave it them for their benefit, and the greatest conveniences of life they were capable to draw from it, it cannot be supposed he meant it should always remain common and uncultivated. He gave it to the use of the industrious and rational, (and labour was to be his title to it) (Locke, 2002 [1689]: 16).

For Locke, the essence of property is labour, which brings property into the domain of the self: 'The labour of his body and the work of his hands we may say are properly his' (Ibid: 13). Locke,

in a double move, asserts that land is originally owned in common, but that individual ownership is *necessary* (and must be defended by the state) in order that land can be properly cultivated and made use of: ‘Locke’s astonishing achievement was to base the property right on natural right and natural law, and then to remove all the natural limits from the property right’ (Macpherson, 1962: 199). Locke thus ‘justified the specifically capitalist appropriation of land and money’ (Ibid: 208).

This mythologisation of land enclosure goes some way to concealing the fact that the enclosure of land, which was occurring in earnest in the seventeenth century and increased throughout the eighteenth century (Thompson, 1991 [1963], *passim*), was something that was occurring during Locke’s lifetime (and probably influenced by theorists such as himself) rather than during some mythical, pre-civilized past. At this time, escalating industrialisation and the application of capitalist principles to farming struck to the heart of traditional communities because it involved removing land from common use (‘the commons’); a practice for which the contemporaneous moral justifications were usually couched in similar terms to Locke’s efficiency principle: ‘The arguments of the enclosure propagandists were commonly phrased in terms of higher rental values and yield per acre’ (Ibid: 237). This was to the serious detriment of the poorer smallholding and landless commoners (Ward, 2005 [2002]: 139-151). An alternative conception of land enclosures to those posited by state of nature theorists portrays them as ‘deliberate and necessary mechanisms of domination, exploitation and power’ (Chatterton & Hodkinson, 2007: 202).

The ideas of possessive individualism and the instrumental necessity of private ownership of land continue in contemporary political theory and practice. Most notably, rational choice theory has been used to explain why rational actors, in seeking to maximise their own gain, can produce collective outcomes that are at best sub-optimal, at worst destructive. In “The Tragedy of the Commons”, Hardin (1968) uses the metaphor of a pasture where herdsmen are free to graze as many cattle as they wish. In ‘rationally’ seeking to maximise this opportunity, each herdsman allows as many cattle as possible to graze, so that the pasture is grazed beyond carrying capacity and thus ruined for everyone. The conclusion is arrived at that ‘freedom in a commons brings ruin to all’ (Hardin, 1968: 1244). This is used as a metaphor for overpopulation and environmental

destruction. The policy prescriptions implied by this metaphor are made explicit: we must institute 'taxes and other coercive devices to escape the horror of the commons' (Ibid: 1247). Contemporary possessive individualism thus provides continued justification for practices of domination. Citizens are simultaneously given rights to ownership of land and property at the same time that these rights are undermined by the very fact that the guarantor of rights is a hierarchical and abstract entity able to reframe and restrict these rights (this is the paradox of sovereignty, which is further discussed in Chapters 8 & 9). This leads to an image of 'citizenship as an abstract status in which formal equality to make claims against the state ... masks forms of inequality that are linked to social divisions and inequalities of social power' (Lewis, 2004a: 8; see also Marshall & Bottomore, 1992 [1949]).

A major problem with dominant theories of territorial enclosure and possessive individualism is that private ownership is posited as an ontological necessity, based in discourses first about God and nature, and then about rationality. The normativity of these theories can be exposed through empirical evidence suggesting alternative possibilities. Ostrom takes issue with Hardin's, and other rational choice models, which suggest the necessity in commons-governance of either 'an external Leviathan' (Ostrom, 1990: 9) or 'the imposition of private property rights' (Ibid: 12). She stresses the danger of using metaphors as the basis for policy when these metaphors may not necessarily be borne out in reality and contends that there are both 'theoretical and empirical alternatives to the assertion that those involved cannot extricate themselves from the problems faced when multiple individuals use a given resource' (Ibid: 21). Ostrom identifies her problem early on: 'the key to my argument is that some individuals have broken out of the trap inherent within the commons dilemma, whereas others continue remorsefully trapped into destroying their own resources' (Ibid: 21). She is able to provide a series of counterfactual case studies, which although not generalisable to all situations, certainly provide sufficient evidence of the possibility of mutual co-operation in the context of common ownership to undermine possessive individualistic models of citizenship based on the ontological necessity of private land ownership.

Once we have undermined notions of private property rights rooted in ontological necessity, the ethical implications of their effects and the implications for citizenship gain increasing importance. These include a process of privatisation akin to eighteenth century enclosures of the public spaces of society and politics. It is important to note that enclosure should not be conceptualised as a one-off event that ended in the nineteenth century, but rather as ‘a constant feature of capitalism in response to its contradictions’ (Chatterton & Hodkinson, 2007: 202). Chatterton and Hodkinson chart how land enclosure has been paralleled in contemporary society, particularly during the ‘neoliberal turn from the mid 1970s onwards’:

International business and its state partners in government and the International Finance Institutions (IFIs) have orchestrated a dramatic and unprecedented enclosure of land and life in almost every corner of the globe (Ibid: 202).

This has had devastating implications on a global scale, leading to the replacement of “colonialism” and formal independence with “neo-colonialism” (Ibid: 202) by which ‘the rich North strips poor countries of their natural resources and wealth’ (Ibid: 203)⁴⁰.

The commodification and capitalisation of space are widely understood to create uneven economic development, often articulated in terms of ‘core’ or ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’ (Gottman (ed.), 1980, *passim*; Johnston, 1982: 73 & 123). On a global scale, the core consists of ‘the successful colonial powers of the nineteenth century plus the more recent neoimperial powers (Johnston, 1982: 73). Core countries are ‘recipients of the surplus exploited elsewhere in the world economy’ (Ibid: 73). The periphery is ‘the other extreme of the world economy, the set of states in which neocolonial and neoimperial exploitation is greatest, where the returns to indigenous labour are smallest and levels of consumption lowest’ (Ibid: 75).

⁴⁰ There is a large and useful literature from critical geography on the dynamic between commons-enclosure and commoning practices, in particular in relation to primitive accumulation and dispossession, which furthers this critique (see particularly The Midnight Notes Collective 1992 & 2003; Harvey 1996 & 2000; DeAngelis 2006; Linebaugh & Rediker 2008; Linebaugh 2009). A key theme is the difference of perspective between the social forces of capital and the accumulation of monetary value, and social forces that strive to rearrange life in their own terms through self-sufficiency and unalienated collective action. In the context of this literature I would like to acknowledge the limits of my own work on commons-enclosure, although themes are considered with a slightly different focus and terminology in sections 4.3.2, 5.2.2 and 5.3.2 of this thesis.

The core-periphery structures are echoed within states, even where the entire state is clearly within one zone at a global scale: ‘for most countries the processes of economic and social development create a spatial pattern of inequality focused on a core’ (Ibid: 75). This has implications for the spaces of politics and citizenship. Chatterton and Hodkinson argue that global capitalism has locally instigated the destruction of social commons and the selling off of land and space to the highest bidder, leading to the loss in the West of public housing, community centres, local shops, post offices, working-class clubs and open spaces (Chatterton & Hodkinson, 2007: 204). All of these previously have been spaces of participation and belonging where citizens formed and enacted their political roles, and their loss leads to what might be termed ‘the enclosure of *everyday* life’ (Hodkinson & Chatterton, 2006: 305, italics in the original). This can serve to strengthen the already ‘rampant individualism’ of neoliberal life (Ibid: 311) and causes government to become an activity that is increasingly alienated from the citizenry, leading to a ‘reduction of citizenship to the sum of provisions and entitlements (disposable goods and legitimate claims of access to them)’ (Illuminati, 1996: 176). Neoliberal citizenship thus becomes an apolitical condition reflected in social fragmentation and ‘inauthenticity’ of collective desires (Ibid: 176). The ‘exodus’ (Virno, 1996) from dominant institutionalised politics and political spaces, which is both enforced and elected, also implies a particular politics of resistance embedded in the idea of ‘autonomy’, which will be further discussed under critical utopian alternatives (section 4.3.2).

4.2.3. The hierarchical imposition of the built environment

Architecture and planning in the contemporary world, and particularly in modern cities, are highly technical and specialised professions. This results in a situation where the processes of these professions are removed from the everyday lives of citizens, but their results have dramatic consequences upon everyday practice and experience. In their dominant formations both architecture and planning can be subsumed under the heading of the new field of practice called ‘urban design’; defined as ‘the derivation of a set of principles that recognise the importance of composition and appearance in the built form while integrating this recognition with a commitment to the public benefit and a wider set of stakeholders than the building owner or client’ (Bounds, 2004: 248; see also Schurch, 1999). When space is territorialised and is not owned in common,

design, planning and architecture become the remit of those who have money and power. The process of organising space is therefore imposed from 'on high' rather than negotiated from below. This process has occurred through time: 'The impact of architecture and architects is determined by the historical coalescence of design ideas and the material power of patrons, whether they be emperors, corporate capital, or the state' (Bounds, 2004: 245). Planning is a practice particular to the age of industrialisation, with its foundation as a recognised profession beginning in the 1900s (Hall, 1996 [1988]: 383) as a very technical profession suffused with the styles of design-based professions such as architecture and engineering (Ibid: 384). It was also very much about hierarchy and control: 'the job of planners was to make plans, to develop codes to enforce those plans, and then to enforce those codes' (Ibid: 384). Planning from the start was a profession that was 'mystical', 'arcane', and alienated from ordinary citizens (Ibid: 384). Historical processes and events, such as the baby boom of the 1950s continued to influence the profession of planning, 'bringing pressures for new investment in factories and offices' (Ibid: 385-386), leading to an escalation of urban change and development 'to an almost superheated level' (Ibid: 386). At the same time, the professions of planning and architecture were increasingly coming to be influenced by academic theory, in particular a logical positivist turn in geography and the social sciences:

The subject changed from a kind of craft, based on a personal knowledge of a rudimentary collection of concepts about the city, into an apparently scientific activity in which vast amounts of precise information were garnered and processed in such a way that a planner could develop very sensitive systems of guidance and control (Ibid: 386).

This brief history shows how the history of planning is tightly bound up with the historical processes of capitalism and industrialisation. The discipline simultaneously became increasingly technical and specialised at the same time that increasing emphasis was placed on the potential of planning to predict and control, based upon an alliance with logical positivism in the social sciences. There are two main criticisms of this approach to planning. First, the account does not adequately account for complexity, leading to aesthetic and instrumental failures. Second, the organisation of space has ethical effects, in particular upon those who are expected to live in such spaces, and have little or no input into the process of design. One of the effects of the interweaving of capital and planning is that they produce alienated and alienating environments: 'the idea of an authentic place with an authentic past is being manufactured as an image for consumption ... the

actual buildings are mass-produced by large companies' (Cresswell, 2004: 96). There are particular implications for citizenship insofar as both the processes and outcomes of contemporary planning procedures alienate citizens from their environment, from each other, and from the processes that govern their lives. This suggests a rather passive vision of citizenship, and undermines the association with activity, self-governance and self-management.

The hierarchical imposition of space also has ethical effects upon subjectivity and belonging, and can be exclusive or oppressive of difference. I shall now turn to a consideration of these effects, and how they are normatively detrimental to the concept of citizenship. When the organisation of space is inscribed by power relations, through the hierarchical imposition of territory and built structures, the intermingling of space with subjectivity has ethical implications. Grosz, using the example of the city, shows how this is a complex relation, where human (bodies and identities) both produce, and are produced by, the physical environment around them:

Cities have always represented and projected images and fantasies of bodies, whether individual, collective, or political. In this sense, the city can be seen as a (collective) body-prosthesis or boundary that enframes, protects, and houses while at the same time taking its own forms and functions from the (imaginary) bodies it constitutes. Simultaneously, cities are loci that produce, regulate, and structure bodies' (Grosz, 2001: 49).

Since bodies are heterogeneous, there is always an excess, or bodies which do not fit the (imaginary) archetypal body that architects and planners had in mind when the city was built – often the white, able-bodied male⁴¹. Grosz's emphasis on process and constant negotiation in the construction of space is important: 'the task for architecture, as for philosophy, is not to settle for utopias, models, concrete ideals, but instead to embark on the process of endless questioning' (Ibid: 150). This resonates with my methodological conception of critical utopia as opposed to hegemonic or fixed utopianism.

There are implications for citizenship. Citizens are excluded from both the processes involved in constructing the environments in which they live their lives, which are seen to be the domain of

⁴¹ For a fascinating book that articulates this problematic in terms of the marginalisation of diverse inhabitants of the contemporary multicultural city, and the challenges that this poses to contemporary city-building professionals and city-dwellers, see Sandercock (2003).

technical experts, as well as from the spaces of politics, where decisions governing their lives are made (Bickford, 2000: 356). Bickford shows how spheres of life (the public and the private; different neighbourhoods) are segregated through 'deliberate institutional policies' (Ibid: 359) that 'shape political possibility' (Ibid: 360). She details a variety of constructions common in contemporary cities; gated communities, condominiums, gentrified areas, shopping malls, and 'prickly' space that is designed to be difficult to occupy - particularly by the homeless. These are seen to 'exhibit distinctly antipolitical impulses toward exclusion, control, security, sameness, and predictability – yet often under the guise of public space' (Ibid: 362). All this is seen to operate according to a logic of 'purification', in the interests of a privileged or dominant section of the citizenry: 'If the consuming white middle-class public comes to feel at risk in the presence of those who do not look or act like them, then purifying public space of risk for them means increasing danger, discomfort, or outright exclusion for those typed as alien or unknown' (Ibid: 362). Citizens are simultaneously alienated from each other, from non-citizens, and from the political process. The spaces in which governance takes place, such as parliaments, reflect the centralised and abstracted nature of state-capitalist territorial sovereignty through their placement in capital cities, and their inaccessibility to the general public. This is often reflected in the architecture of such buildings, which symbolises the desire for cultural unification and homogenisation: 'The architecture [of the palace of Westminster] was intended to help along an idea of British identity that was rooted in place, and rather pious' (Ballantyne, 2002: 34). This leads to a concept of citizenship that is rooted in status and membership based upon a national identity that is imposed from 'on high', undermining the participatory, contingent and creative potential of the relational aspects of citizenship, and resulting in a rather passive view. There are, however, possibilities for resistance and creation through critical utopianism and critical utopian citizenship. Alternative theoretical approaches address my second disaggregated research question from section 1.3 of the methods chapter: what alternatives to dominant models of citizenship are offered by critical utopian theory?

4.3. *Critical utopian approaches*

4.3.1. **Deterritorialisation and autonomy**

Previously, I considered how territory has historically been associated with alienated and abstracted sovereignty. This implies a particular (utopian) organisation of space, invested with power relations, that is mystified through ontological discourses such as self-sufficiency, rationality and human nature. I considered how dominant theories of territory actually serve to justify and perpetuate the organisation of space and place around clearly bounded, sovereign territorial units with centralised political power. This was seen to have implications for citizenship, which comes to be associated with exclusive notions of place resting on ideas of cultural homogeneity, unification and sameness. This is internally injurious of difference and excludes alien ‘others’. By positing bounded sovereign territory as ontologically necessary, early liberal theorists failed to account sufficiently for the possibility and actuality of autonomy from the state. I will here consider theorists who offer critical utopian visions of living in and relating to the physical environment that do allow for the possibility of autonomy from the state, capitalism, and hierarchical power dynamics.

A useful starting point for a critical utopian critique and transgression of territoriality can be accessed through an interpretation of Deleuze and Guattari’s distinction between smooth and striated space (Deleuze and Guattari 1988 [1980]: 408-11). Striated space is seen to be ‘homogeneous and centred’ and occupied by the sedentary (Ibid: 408), whilst smooth space is ‘nonmetric, acentred, rhizomatic’ (Ibid: 409) and occupied by the nomad. The state operates to capture, territorialise and striate by suggesting an *a priori* territorial space or arena which gets filled with social and political relationships, which it ‘legitimately’ governs. Smooth space, on the other hand, is constituted by relationships themselves and is in a constant state of flux – it is excessive over and overflows the territory of the state. These relationships are not spatially exterior to the state- they operate in, through, above and below the state – but they do constitute an ‘outside’ or potential for autonomy:

The outside appears simultaneously in two directions: huge worldwide machines branched over the entire *ecumenon* at a given moment, which enjoy a large measure of autonomy in

relation to States ... but also the local mechanisms of bands, margins, minorities, which continue to affirm the rights of segmentary societies in opposition to the organs of State power (Ibid: 397).

The latter part of this quote refers to relationships, forces or flows that are seen to contain mechanisms which ward off the formation of organs of power and leadership, of hierarchical organisation, in favour of 'a fabric of immanent relations' (Ibid: 395). Contrary to Isin's (2007: 214-215) interpretation of this conceptualisation, I would argue that this distinction is not made at the level of ontology and therefore ahistorical, but rather is a normative and experiential proposition - a possibility for experiment. Striated and smooth spaces do not exist independently of experience or practice, but rather through the intermingling of desire, theory and practice, and the effects that they produce (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 524, 530). Smooth space is that which undermines and transgresses the striated space of the state through a process of continual criticism and creativity. This is not a case of positing an ontological binary:

One can never posit a dualism or dichotomy, even in the rudimentary form of the good and the bad. You may make a rupture, draw a line of flight, yet there is still a danger that you will reencounter organizations that restratify everything ... Good and bad are only the products of an active and temporary selection, which must be renewed (Ibid: 10).

Thus, there is potentially a mode of being, perceiving and relating, which although spatially coterminous with the state, contains something which constitutes an absolute difference or exteriority – that being the *desire* (and/or ability) to ward off mechanisms of power. This difference cannot be reduced to 'an ontological difference between the city and other bodies such as the state' (Isin, 2007: 221). The distinction that should be made, rather, is a matter of both theory and practice; it derives from the way in which we perceive the world and interact within it, and the difference between potential effects of our beliefs and practices – one mode of which functions as hierarchy, abstraction, sovereignty, striated space and the culminates in the ossified power of the state, the other of which functions through multiplicity, social relationships and non-hierarchy. The latter can, indeed must, still be embodied in tangible forms, but these are not fixed territories.

Smooth space is something that is close to a critical utopian understanding of space, since it constitutes a difference or exteriority to dominant, or striated space. Where striated space is centred, and always looking inward from the limits of a system (of materialised space, or of a

system of thought), smooth space moves outward beyond the limits of a system, undermining territorial boundaries or boundaries of thought through the assertion of difference or excess (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 408-9). Smooth space and the ‘nomadic’ subjectivities that inhabit it are thus infinitely critical. The state operates to limit free movement and to capture movement and flows of desire, and to partition space, rendering it ‘striated’ (Ibid: 472). The state and striated space thus represent stasis, and are inimical to continuous critique. I find Deleuze and Guattari a particularly useful starting point for thinking about alternatives to territorial space, since they articulate it specifically and in colossal detail. Deleuze and Guattari are not, however, the only thinkers to conceptualise a mode of thinking about, and living within space, which although territorially coterminous with the state, occupies it differently and to a certain extent constitutes an ‘outside’. This is also a theme that runs through much radical and utopian theory.

Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) seeks to expose the ideologically obscured production of space, which is created from the raw material of nature through relations of production and consumption (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]: 84). Yet space also ‘commands’ bodies, by determining what activity may occur (Ibid: 143). This much has already been deduced from the foregoing critical discussion. What is most interesting about Lefebvre’s analysis, and which connects to the previously made distinction between smooth and striated space, is the normative primacy which he affords space, in the context of a political discussion. Capitalism is seen as unable to produce a space that has purpose outside its own replication, yet it is also able to conceal the signs of its production (Ibid: 160). This resonates with the project of critical utopianism and critical citizenship:

Is space a social relationship? Certainly – but one which is inherent to property relationships (especially the ownership of the earth, of land) and also closely bound up with the forces of production (which impose a form on the earth or land); here we see the polyvalence of social space, its ‘reality’ at once formal and material. Though a product to be used, to be consumed, it is also a means of production; networks of exchange and flows of raw materials and energy fashion space and are determined by it. Thus this means of production, produced as such, cannot be separated either from the productive forces, including technology and knowledge, or from the social division of labour which shapes it, or from the state and the superstructures of society [...] Here a unity transpires between levels which analysis often keeps separate from one another: the forces of production and their component elements (nature, labour, technology, knowledge); structures (property relations); superstructures (institutions and the state itself) (Ibid: 85).

This unity of analytic categories, of relationships and forces, appears to be all-encompassing and spatially totalising; somewhat akin to the striated space in Deleuze and Guattari's conceptual framework. However, Lefebvre does offer some hope in the form of an 'outside' to capitalist and state space when he draws the distinction between 'dominated (and dominant)' and 'appropriated' space (Ibid: 167). The former is 'a space transformed – and mediated – by technology, by practice' and 'its origins coincide with the roots of political power itself' (Ibid: 164). The other type of space appears rather vague; it is said to resemble, but not imitate a work of art (Ibid: 165); appropriated spaces 'recount, though in a mumbled and confused way, the lives of those who built and inhabited them' (Ibid: 165). The concepts of domination and appropriation can also be applied to the space of the body (Ibid: 165), and 'the true space of pleasure, which would be an appropriated space par excellence, does not yet exist' (Ibid: 167). Like Deleuze and Guattari, Lefebvre emphasises the importance of desire, and the education of desire through theory and practice, in a form of resistance that occurs through the (re-) appropriation of space from dominating forces:

Domination has grown *pari passu* with the part played by armies, war, the state and political power. The dichotomy between dominated and appropriated is thus not limited to the level of discourse or signification, for it gives rise to a contradiction or conflictual tendency which holds sway until one of the terms in play (domination) wins a crushing victory and the other (appropriation) is utterly subjugated. Not that appropriation disappears, for it cannot: both practice and theory continue to proclaim its importance and demand its restitution (Ibid: 166).

For Lefebvre, then, the alternative, or 'outside' to state/capitalist space – appropriation - is always-already pre-existent within the dominant order of dominated space (albeit only in nascent form), and exists through the 'appropriation' of space.

This theme of an already existent, critical utopian (my terminology) 'outside' to hierarchical statist relations, that is partially articulated in spatial form⁴², is found in several bodies of theory including

⁴² This idea of a critical utopian *spatial* 'outside' links to the idea of a *textual* 'outside' in deconstruction (Cixous & Clement 1986; Derrida 1978 [1967]) and utopian literary criticism (Sargisson, 1996, Chapter 4; Moylan 186, p. 10). The question of whether there *can* be an 'outside' given conditions of immanence is therefore a poignant one, yet somewhat misplaced. Utopianism is 'embedded in the text which it critiques; it does not come from above, or outside...A text which critiques from *inside*, but which introduces a perspective that is *outside*, external or O/other, cannot be objective. Nor however can it be purely subjective...this kind of complicity with the (cultural) text is subversive of the boundary between these two approaches. No external 'truth' is imposed on the text, no normative conclusions are drawn, but rather the text is opened to enquiry. Truths and norms are challenged, and flux and ambiguity displace certainty' (Sargisson, 1996: 230; italics in the original). The ethical imperative of introducing an 'outsider' perspective mirrors the Deleuzian idea of 'lines of flight' discussed elsewhere in this thesis and also the poststructural anarchist ethics articulated by Todd May: 'our claim is that a guide for action cannot be derived entirely from an "is"; but neither can it be derived from an "ought". It is, in fact, the interaction of the two in ethical discourse that provides the grounds for action' (May, 1994: 149).

classical and evolutionary anarchism (Buber, 1996 [1949]; Buber, 1951; Kropotkin, 1970 [1896]; Landauer, 1983 [1911]; Ward, 1973); autonomist Marxism (Virno, 1996; Illuminati, 1996; Montagna, 2006; Membretti, 2007), radical political geography (Hodkinson & Chatterton, 2006; Chatterton, 2007; Chatterton & Hodkinson, 2007), social and cultural history (Clastres, 1977 [1974]; McKay, 1996; Ward, 2005 [2002]), post-structuralism (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988), situationist theory (Unsigned, 1959; Debord 2002 [1967]: 99; Vaneigem 2006 [1967] 185-189; Plant, 1992: 1; Tester 1994: 5; Andreotti, 1996: 13) and post-left anarchism (Anon, 1999; Bey, 1985, 1993, 1994). Although they articulate it variously, all these theories have in common the articulation of an always-already existent, unalienated, non-abstract 'outside' to relations and spaces of domination that operates through practice and is identifiable in spaces and times.

The idea is lent historicity beyond theory by Colin Ward (2005 [2002]), who provides historical empirical examples of a principle of relating, organising and existing within space that contradicts or runs contrary to the dominant mode, and is analogous to 'smooth space' discussed above. Particular examples which Ward provides of this wider principle – cottages built overnight on common land (Ward 2005 [2002]: pp. 5-11; 41-52), cave dwellings (Ibid: 15-25) squatted houses (Ibid. pp. 159-166; Ward 1973: 67-73), gypsy and new-age traveller sites (Ward 2005 [2002]: 134-136), spaces used for parties and raves (Ibid: 164-165) – constitute empirical examples of phenomena akin to Lefebvre's appropriated spaces, or Bey's (1985; 1983) autonomous zones. Similar concepts are also expressed within George McKay's cultural history, which begins by introducing the concept of 'the Albion Free State' (McKay 1996: 11). The idea was first used by a self-described loosely federated network of collectives and communities to describe another, territorially coterminous but subterranean, non-authoritarian England, which is later picked up by various fairs, festivals and protesters to declare their sites as autonomous zones expressing the Albion concept (Ibid: 35-8, 42-4, 46, 59, 134, 146). These approaches to the creation of critically resistant spaces signal new spaces for politics and new possibilities for citizenship. They shift the focus from an emphasis on status, identity, rights and responsibility to self-governance, self-

management, and ‘practices of the everyday’ (Lewis, 2004a: 21)⁴³. This has particular implications for participation and belonging, which are further discussed in Chapter 5 in the context of the communities that I visited, which also potentially actualise this conceptualisation of a wider logic of ‘smooth’, appropriated or autonomous space.

4.3.2. Appropriation and common ownership

Under dominant approaches, I considered how theories and practices based on a state-capitalist system of territorial organisation have tended to categorise the physical environment as something that is ‘outside’ or ‘other’ to our human bodies and subjectivities. The physical environment is also viewed as something that can be appropriated by individuals, protected by land and property rights, and sold in a market. This leads to the removal of land from common use and its enclosure. This was seen to lead to the reduction of citizenship to rights and entitlements, to the detriment of public responsibility and participation, as the spaces of public participation and social commons are closed off, and individuals and households are separated and segregated.

A critical utopian alternative to possessive individualism and the loss of social commons connects to the foregoing discussion on the appropriation of autonomous spaces and the practice of unalienated and unmediated experiences. I have already considered how utopian, ‘smooth’ space finds articulation in the setting up of concrete manifestations of ‘autonomous’ alternatives to capitalist space. This practice connects directly to issues of ownership, since without an alternative theory and practice of property and ownership, such places could hardly be considered as autonomous from state-capitalism. New forms of collective ownership form a utopian moment of creation simultaneous with the resistant moment of reclamation.

Colin Ward shows how the organisation of common land has tended towards democracy and anarchism against state and bureaucracy (Ward 2005 [2002]: 140). Like Ostrom (1990), Ward

⁴³ It is interesting to note that in Bolivia, with a long history of very active local *juntas*, or small-scale committees, the term *vecino* can mean both ‘neighbour’ and ‘citizen’ (Crabtree, 2005: 96), removing the association of citizenship with abstraction and alienated territory.

shows us that when land or ‘property’ (buildings) are held in common, without or against state sanction, this does not imply that they will lie neglected, but rather people can and do continue to use and maintain space autonomously, for collective purpose and through democratic self-governance. This implies a kind of collective *stewardship*, or *custodianship* rather than individual ownership. Throughout Ward’s historical work, examples are provided of co-operative behaviour between often poor and oppressed individuals to help house one another and secure access to the land, and a distinction is made between ‘the appropriation of land by squatters and that by enclosers’ (Ibid: 168) which parallels Lefebvre’s distinction between dominated and appropriated land, and Bey’s distinction between autonomous and state space. Mostly, the ‘cotters’ and ‘squatters’ to whom Ward refers are networks of friends and relations who co-operate to build dwellings for those of them who have none and are in need. Colin Ward sums up this distinction succinctly quoting Gerrard Winstanley: ‘No man ... shall have any more land than he can labour himself, or have others to labour with him in love, working together and eating bread together’ (from Christopher Hill, (ed.) *Gerrard Winstanley: the law of freedom and other writings*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1973 cited in Ward 2005 [2002]: 168). The distinguishing factor appears to be the absence of centralisation of land, unequal distribution and accumulation, mediation and organised hierarchies - in other words: the striation of space.

This has implications for citizenship that are discussed in contemporary studies of appropriated or autonomous spaces. The praxis of such spaces, a ‘coming together of theory and practice’, is based on a belief in prefigurative politics and an ethos of ‘be the change you want to see’ (Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006: 738). This implies a ‘do-it-yourself’ politics of ‘creating workable alternatives outside the state’ (Ibid: 738; see also McKay 1996; McKay (ed.), 1998). Studies on social centres, a particular type of autonomous space, are seen to have a particular relevance for citizenship: ‘what sets social centres apart from residential squats or housing cooperatives is their simultaneous politicization of the very act of reclaiming private space and opening it up to the public as part of a conscious refusal and confrontation to neo-liberalism and the enclosure of public space’ (Hodkinson & Chatterton, 2006: 310). As such, social centres ‘play an important role in re-thinking and re-making “citizenship” by bringing people together in spaces whose *raison d’être* is to

question and confront the rampant individualism of everyday life' (Ibid: 311, italics in the original). A central part of recreating social ties is seen to lie in the concept of 'horizontality', the non-hierarchy or relationships 'that goes beyond liberal notions of equal rights and instead encompasses all aspects of human relations', relying on a principle of 'cooperation, solidarity and mutual aid' (Ibid: 311). Horizontality also means relying upon those who are present for all aspects of running the centres, including self-production, self-management and self-financing by the group (Hodkinson & Chatterton, 2006: 311). This involves a reinvention of the political process to include direct democracy, decentralisation and consensus, as well as deliberate mechanisms for warding off the accumulation of power by any individual or group (Pickerill & Chatterton 2006: 739-740). Services are frequently offered to the public, such as radical bookshops and libraries, cheap cafés, cinema and gig spaces, computer lessons, benefit advice, language classes, bike workshops and crèches and temporary refuge for the homeless, international activists and destitute asylum seekers (Hodkinson & Chatterton 2006: 311). Such groups can be seen as 'claiming new rights of citizenship', not by appealing to the state, but by defining needs that are not being provided by the system and taking concrete, bottom-up action to fulfil these needs collectively (Membretti, 2007). However, such actions should be viewed as something more than 'providing public services on the cheap', but more importantly, and more radically, in terms of 'inventing alternative economic models based on need not profit and respect for the planet' (Hodkinson & Chatterton, 2006: 311). This speaks to my conception of critical utopian citizenship: rather than taking the limits of the system for granted and working within the system for change, individuals and groups are re-inventing citizenship, by attempting to forge an 'outside' and alternative to state-relations that is run on different principles.

The above shows that where there is intent, the internal dynamics of ownership and possession within a community potentially offer a critical utopian alternative to capitalist models of land ownership. It is important to note, however, that such spaces still exist within state capitalist territory, and as such must confront this challenge politically. This raises tensions in practice, particularly regarding ways in which spaces are appropriated (for example, through squatting or buying on a market), which will become further evident in section 5.2.2 of the following chapter.

4.3.3. Non-plan, consensus design and squatting

Previously, I argued that dominant approaches consider the organisation of space through architecture, planning and design to be the remit of those who have money and power. Whilst cities and buildings are built according to the needs and desires of a dominant group, there is always an ‘excess’; people with ‘different’ bodies that deviate from this norm, or have deviant desires. This has effects upon citizenship: citizens are excluded from participating in the built environment in which they lead their lives. Users of the built environment are left feeling disempowered, de-valued and alienated from their physical environment, which can lead to a lack of care for their surroundings and the loss of a sense of community (Day, 2003: 11).

Christopher Alexander, a renowned radical architect, argues that alienation is produced by the inability of traditional models of planning and architecture to account for complexity, resulting from a particular pattern of thought that he terms a ‘tree’ (Alexander, 1996 [1965]: 119). He counterpoises the tree with the ‘semi-lattice’, another pattern of thought (Ibid: 119). He makes a distinction between ‘natural cities’, which have ‘arisen more or less spontaneously over many, many years’ (Ibid: 119) and ‘artificial cities’, which signify both entire cities, as well as parts of cities, ‘which have been deliberately created by designers and planners’ (Ibid. p. 119). He judges the latter type of city, informed by ‘tree’ thought, to be entirely unsuccessful (Ibid: 120). The distinction he makes between ‘tree’ and ‘semi-lattice’ patterns of thought is technical, but in more abstract terms, the former seems to operate on a principle of the distinct separation of disparate units, whereas the latter involves overlapping and intertwining. Although Alexander does not draw the connection himself, there seems to be a strong resonance with Deleuze and Guattari’s conceptions of the ‘tree’ and the ‘rhizome’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 6-7). Alexander displays a strong preference for the spontaneity of the semi-lattice over the excessive orderliness of the tree: ‘In any organized object, extreme compartmentalization and the dissociation of internal elements are the first signs of destruction’ (Alexander 1996 [1965]: 130-131).

Each mode of planning is seen to have different effects not only on the aesthetics of a situation, but also upon societies and lives (Alexander, 1996 [1965]: 130). Alexander provides particular examples the effects of planning informed by ‘tree’ thought. One is the example of manufactured retirement villages, whereby the elderly are separated from the rest of urban life:

[I]t not only takes from the young the company of those who have lived long, but, worse, causes the same rift inside each individual life. As you will pass into [a retirement village] and into old age, your ties with your own past will be unacknowledged, lost, and therefore broken. Your own youth will no longer be alive in your old age – the two will be dissociated, your life will be cut in two’ (Ibid: 131)

Other examples of tree-like separation include the separation of neighbourhoods according to discontinuities of building, income and job type, the separation of the ‘campus’ university from the rest of a city and the creation of asphalted and fenced-in playgrounds, creating a ‘pictorial acknowledgement of the fact that “play” exists as an isolated concept in our minds’ (Ibid: 126), and in which ‘few self-respecting children will even play’ (Ibid: 126). Tree thought thus leads to contradictions and overflows of the kind Deleuze and Guattari call ‘overcoding’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 9). The problems of the separation of spheres of life are highlighted by Stirner, who considers how economic competition and division of labour alienate one from the processes necessary for the sustenance of life. For Stirner, involvement in the production of all of the goods we desire is important for personal empowerment:

Bread is a need of all the inhabitants of a city; therefore they might easily agree on setting up a public bakery. Instead of this, they leave the furnishing of the needful to the competing bakers. Just so meat to the butchers, wine to the wine-dealers, etc. ... If I do not trouble myself about my affair, I must be content with what it pleases others to vouchsafe me (Stirner, 1993 [1844]: 275-6, italics in the original).

Spaces are always awaiting alteration according to the changing needs and desires of their users and inhabitants. This can be done through processes initiated ‘from below’, rather than hierarchically. The devolution of power from planners to users was the central aim of a movement that had its origins in 1967, called ‘*Non-Plan*’ (Barker, 2000: 4; Hughes & Sadler (eds.), 2000). The movement largely operated through publications based on criticism of modern planning disasters and the question: ‘Could things be any worse if there was no planning at all?’ (Barker, 2000: 5). The basic premise behind *Non-Plan* was that ‘it is very difficult to decide what is best for *other* people’ (Ibid: 5). The argument against planning is based both on aesthetic outcomes (Ibid:

4) and an anti-doctrinaire and anti-hierarchy ethical commitment (Ibid: 10). The political strategy proposed by the movement was to campaign to the government for ‘a precise and carefully observed experiment in non-planning’ in ‘a few appropriate zones of the country, which are subject to a characteristic range of pressures, and use them as Launch-Pads for Non-Plan’ (Ibid: 11). *Non-Plan* implies what the name indicates – the absence of all imposed planning by external agents.

The movement’s literature is less clear on the agents who will construct buildings and spaces. It seems to implicitly be taken for granted that the users of a given space will be responsible for the design process. This theoretical neglect of an analysis of mechanisms of power in capitalism combined with the reformist strategy of *Non-Plan*, has led to accusations that the project had more in common with the New Right than with the New Left or any kind of radicalism, despite the largely socialist leanings of those involved (Franks, 2000). Interestingly, the renowned historian and anarchist, Colin Ward, has countered such claims in the same volume, claiming that the reformist strategy was ‘useful for propagandists since it implied a controlled experiment rather than a wholesale rejection of the planning system’ (Ward, 2000: 50). This strategy could then be used by ‘people who want to make room for freedom of experiment in architecture and planning ... to make room for do-it-yourself alternatives to the rival orthodoxies of the bureaucracy’ (Ibid: 51). The relationship between strategy, radicalism and co-optation runs as a theme throughout this project.

What is important at this point, however, is that although *Non-Plan* articulates a very clear *vision* and an explicit normative desire, this is not done in spatially blueprinting terms, as are, for example, eco- and garden- city utopias of Murray Bookchin⁴⁴ and Ebenezer Howard⁴⁵. In this instance, the utopian vision has been the *process* of building (that is, a process of building without

⁴⁴ Bookchin (1974, 1992) offers an ‘eco-anarchist’ vision of the space of citizenship based on the Athenian polis, which he argued was scaled to ‘human proportions’ (Bookchin, 1974: 97). Although Bookchin’s vision of the city does not seek integration into existing models or structures - Bookchin claims to be coming from an anarchist point of view - his vision still shares certain alienating and hegemonic features. Utopia is posited in terms of a particular content - a deferred and specified end - rather than in terms of a critical function, and thus exhibits hegemonic and truth-claiming features (see Bookchin 1992: xxi). Bob Black exposes Bookchin’s naturalistic, rationalistic, truth claiming discourse (Black, 1997: 129).

⁴⁵ Ebenezer Howard (1996 [1902])’s attempts at social change and environmental reformism have led to widespread criticism that utopian visions for cities are ‘authoritarian attempts to remould urban space and behaviour according to abstract and supposedly universal rules’, leading to ‘an environment that denies and suppresses local identities’ (Pinder, 2000: 233)

externally imposed planning), which is viewed as an ‘experiment’ and is valorised in terms of the opening up of new possibilities:

Even if matters ended up much the same, in terms of durable successes or disastrous failures, the overall pattern would be sure to be different: the look of the experiment would be sure to be different from what we have now ... at least, one would find out what people want; at the most, one might discover the hidden style of mid-twentieth century Britain (Barker, 2000: 11).

Unfortunately for the project, and to the detriment of its ethos of experimentation and the veneration of difference, this attempt was unsuccessful, and *Non-Plan* never received mainstream recognition or the legalisation that it required for its proposed experiments (Barker, 2000: 11; Ward, 2000: 50). However, for writers such as Franks (2000), for whom the reformist tendencies of the project were not wholly desirable, a more cohesive and potent counter-force to planning was located in the contemporaneous squatters’ movement, formed in November 1968 (Franks, 2000: 37). Franks argues that this movement highlighted the conservativeness of *Non-Plan* since it did not take capitalism to be value-neutral but rather a system of class domination; it viewed dominant architectural practices as repressive; that social divisions were due to hierarchies that could be confronted, and importantly ‘that this confrontation itself provided opportunities for the realization of libertarian ways of living’ (Ibid: 39). It is less the political implications of these beliefs that I am interested in here, than the alternative (utopian) vision that is provided as a counter to the hierarchical imposition of the built environment, which is again one of process. In particular, the squatters challenged the traditional hierarchical division of the professional categories of planner and architect from space-users through ‘radical self-build projects and participatory democratic decision-making’ (Ibid: 41). This was something that was practiced by squatters, often through necessity, as they modified the spaces that they were able to appropriate motivated by the necessity of their needs (Ibid: 40). This practice has implications for a critical conception of citizenship that favours process and participation over legal status and passive entitlements. Both buildings and participation are seen to be something that should be built ‘from below’, by those who are affected by the decisions, rather than imposed from above by external professionals and their funders or patrons. Although there were problems in the squatters’ movement, such as internal gender hierarchies and anti-social behaviour, this does not undermine the viability of the utopian vision since the vision does not claim truth-status or propose a blueprint that is somehow failed: ‘there is

not necessarily a connection between such activities and squatting. The practice provides a possibility, even if only occasionally successful, for more egalitarian social relations' (Franks, 2000: 42).

There has also been resistance within the field of architecture to the separation of the roles of architect and user. In this case, experiments with 'consensus design' have yielded highly successful results. The architect most associated with this process is Christopher Day, who in his book *Consensus Design* (2003) argues that not only do space-users know their requirements better than anyone else, but they also 'know the place, its climate and the micro-climactic subtleties of every valley and hillside, every street and open space' (Day, 2003: 11). Users are less likely to make the 'stupid mistakes outsiders do' (Ibid: 11). Involving users in the design process not only leads to a more effective build, but also means that users are more likely to feel connected to the space, to 'feel their value confirmed by the places where they live' (Ibid: 11) and to feel a sense of 'stewardship' (Ibid: 31). Such users are less likely to feel disempowered and alienated by their environment, meaning they are more willing to contribute to the maintenance of the place, and to abuse or vandalise the surroundings (Ibid: 11). For Day, the best way of getting everyone involved in a decision is through the process of consensus⁴⁶, which is 'more constructive and more conscious – more fully involving – than voting' (Ibid: 21). The consensus process itself is also seen to be 'bond-forming', and to build a sense of community that is as essential to building a thriving *place* as are the built surroundings, and thus consensus is 'a practical as well as a moral imperative' (Ibid: 13; see also Ward, 1973: 41-42).

What unites Non-Plan, the squatter movement and consensus design is the emphasis on *process* over blueprinting. Each offers theoretical criticisms of hierarchical planning and design, and justifications for alternative processes but buildings themselves are to come through theoretically

⁴⁶ 'Consensus design is about everybody getting – if not what they originally wanted – what, after working together and listening to the whole situation, they have *come to want*' (Day, 2003: 20). Consensus is also a mode of decision-making used by most of the communities that I visited. I will not be considering the consensus process in detail here – in the context of consensus design process, this is described in great detail in the book under discussion. The process of consensus as a broader mode of decision-making within communities will be considered in more detail in Chapters 6 & 7 of this thesis.

informed *practice*. Whereas squatters have to do the best with the spaces that become available, groups and communities involved in consensus design (and *Non-Plan*, had the scheme been implemented) have the opportunity to design their own buildings from scratch. Both have implications for a critical conception of citizenship. *Non-Plan*, and consensus design are more easily incorporated into existing structures, whilst at the same time being critical of these structures by offering something different: an alternative that favours process, self-activity and flexibility over finite spatial blueprints. Squatting also does this, but is doubly politicised, both in the fact of offering an alternative, and in the fact of directly confronting capitalism by seizing its spaces and resources.

4.4. Summary of chapter

In this chapter, I have attempted to partially address, through the category of territory, two of the research questions put forward in section 1.3 of this thesis: ‘out of what historical conditions do dominant models of citizenship arise, what do they have in common, and what are their effects?’ and ‘what alternatives are offered by critical utopian theory?’ I have considered how the concept of territory is central to dominant understandings of citizenship, and has effects upon formations of citizenship. Dominant theorisations of territory were judged to have certain features in common: the ontological construction of territory as alienated sovereignty, the commodification of physical space, and the hierarchical imposition of the built environment. The practices associated with these theorisations were seen to have political and ethical effects on citizenship: the exclusion of non-citizens and of ‘different’ citizens from full belonging, the alienation of citizens from one another and from their environment and the exclusion of citizens from spaces and processes of participation. Many of these problems were seen to originate from an implicit utopianism based in ontological and foundational assumptions resulting in a static and fixed vision of citizenship as a legal status and identity rather than a relationship and a process. This overcoded vision of citizenship is exceeded and transgressed by practices and processes of everyday life. Critical utopian theories attempt to account for this complexity by offering bottom-up, autonomous possibilities that begin from a position of critique but simultaneously offer creative alternatives. These include the appropriation of social space for face-to-face relationships and participation,

transgressions of the urban/rural divide through unalienated experiences, occupation and common ownership of spaces, and bottom-up consensual design practices. What is immediately noticeable about critical utopian approaches is the primacy that they afford the mutually constitutive relationship between theory and practice. For this reason, it is important to consider examples of critical utopian practices (as defined in Chapter 3 section 3.4.1.1) in order to address how they speak to, and even more importantly, how they transgress and further critique, critical utopian alternatives to territorial formulations of citizenship. The upcoming chapter, “Transgressing Territory: Practice”, addresses in terms of territory the third and fourth research questions of section 1.3 of Chapter 1: ‘What theoretical and practiced alternatives to dominant models of citizenship are offered by political agents in autonomous spaces?’ and ‘what can a dialogue between theory and practice tell us about the conditions for a critical utopian citizenship?’

5. Transgressing Territory: Practice

5.1. *Typology*⁴⁷

	Kebele	S.hill	HHP	CPH	Find.n	MGC	LSC	Corani	LH
Shared Kitchen(s)	X	X	X	X	Fdn.	X	X	X	X
Private Kitchen(s)		X	X		NFA				X
Communal social space	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Shared gardens	planned	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Community outreach space	X		X	X	X		X		X
Urban/ suburban	X	X		X		X	X	X	
Rural			X		X				X
Residential	Prev.	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Non-residential	X						X		
Some non-resident members					X			X	X
Owned (outright/ mortgage)	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Rented							X		
Squatted	Prev.								
Collective Ownership/ fully mutual	X			X	Fdn.	X		X	X
Private stake/ investment		X	X		NFA				
Intentional design		X	X		The Park				
Adapted design	X			X	Cluny	X	X	X	X

Figure 5-1: Typology showing forms of spatial organisation in autonomous communities

⁴⁷ Community names are abbreviated in all tables. The key to abbreviations, as well as more detailed descriptions of communities can be found in Appendix 1.

5.2. *Actualisations: transgressing ‘territory’ in utopian practice*

In the previous chapter I considered hegemonic and critical utopian approaches to physical space. Dominant, hegemonic approaches to the organisation of space are territorial⁴⁸: they emphasise clear legal boundaries with a centralised sovereign power, the privatisation and commodification of physical space and the hierarchical imposition of the built environment. Critical utopian approaches emphasise autonomy based on the appropriation of space for the actualisation of non-hierarchical relationships and self-management, resistance to individualistic forms of ownership through collectivism, and adapted or consensus design. The implications for citizenship focus on effects upon participation and belonging. Dominant theoretical approaches that favour individualism and centralised power tend to disempower citizens, reducing citizenship to a series of rights and entitlements within an alienated public sphere, but de-emphasise participation and responsibility in the immediate social sphere. These approaches are based on possessive rational individualism, and ignore the ways in which the organisation of space can affect citizen participation, through controlling citizen movement and excluding people from public spaces. Critical utopian approaches emphasise the importance of involvement in the reconstruction of our own lives by opening up spaces for participation, do-it-yourself politics and the reconstruction of social commons.

I will now turn to the realm of utopian praxis by considering discourses, attitudes and practices concerning the above themes in the ‘autonomous communities’ in which I undertook fieldwork. I will be considering the existing physical spaces of communities, their policies towards building and the use of space, and the attitudes of community members toward physical spaces. Information on existing spaces will come mainly from my own observations, and through information from tours that were frequently offered to me upon arrival. Community-wide policies toward space imply some kind of formalisation, often accessible from websites or constitutional documents, and will

⁴⁸ I would like to thank Paul Chatterton for pointing out that the situation is often more complex than this, and that the dominant can often look more like the alternative – for example the global business elite, who are very dominant, are also very deterritorialised, as are right-wing militia networks such as al-Qaeda. Robinson & Karatzogianni (2010) theorise this precise problematic in Deleuzian terms of active and reactive forces, social logics and assemblages, and maintain the distinction between dominant and ‘minor’/alternative by theorising the re-territorialisation of capitalism on alienated exchange-value and of militia networks upon identity hierarchies. Although it is not the focus of this thesis, it is possible to conceptualise these complexities using a framework similar to my own, and I would refer the interested reader to this excellent book.

usually have been decided by consensus. Individual attitudes vary a lot more than the former types of data, and will be reaped from interviews, although it should be noted extracts of interviews with individuals are not necessarily representative of their community as a whole, and will mainly be used to consider the effects of policies and practices upon individuals, or the roles of individuals within communities. I will contextualise some of this with information from participant observation. I will also offer interpretations of praxis in terms of the implications for a criticism of dominant models of citizenship through the positing of an alternative, and the implications for participation and belonging. The final section of this chapter will consider the implications of the dialogue between theoretical models and utopian practices for a wider praxis of critical utopian citizenship. The structure of the chapter mirrors the themes drawn from theory in the previous chapter.

5.2.1. Spatial relations and boundaries of belonging

In the previous chapter, I considered how dominant conceptions of physical space operate through a political division of clearly bounded sovereign territories, creating a sense of place imbued with a unifying cultural logic of nationalism. This was seen to alienate citizens' identities from their own autonomous activities and to abstract sovereignty, which is injurious of difference and disempowering. I also considered other approaches, in line with the critical utopian framework, that imagine and desire an 'outside' to statist relations and ways of occupying space, yet without blueprinting or deferring to a future goal. Such approaches emphasise multiplicity over unification, and community exists through creating spaces for participation, 'peak experiences' (Bey, 1985: 98), non-hierarchy, and self-management. This is articulated in terms of 'autonomy' from the state and from statist, hierarchical relationships, and the emphasis is on intent, desire and process over outcome. Here, I would like to take these themes as a starting point for a consideration of practices in autonomous communities and have used them as a basis for formulating the following questions:

- Do autonomous communities question dominant models of territorial organisation and transgress territorial boundaries?
- What alternative kinds of spatial organisation or use do autonomous communities espouse, and how?

- What are the effects of alternative spatial models upon everyday praxis, belonging and participation?

5.2.1.1. *Do autonomous communities question dominant models of territorial organisation and transgress territorial boundaries?*

In the previous chapter, I considered how questioning dominant models of territorial organisation is something that can begin at a subjective, psychological and experiential level. Because of this, I will be concentrating on attitudes expressed in interviews in this section. One of the communities I visited where members expressed a particularly interesting perception of, and relation to, physical space and the environment was Findhorn. This may in part have been due to the spiritual foundations of the community, which espouses an holistic and pantheistic ontology⁴⁹. A strong sense of place was expressed by this interviewee, not only at a personal level, but also of the community itself as blending with the topography of the local landscape:

[Findhorn] is a complicated set of community, it isn't a firm boundary, it's a very permeable boundary. There are also lots of visitors and guests joining for a week or a month or a year, feeling like, and our intention is for them to feel like, they are part of the community so they are part of the community, but that's the transitory kind of orb. We are also on the sandy peninsula with our tides going back and forth three times a day, so the transitory motif is quite strong in any case. And because we are a spiritual community of course, impermanence of course has merit, so we have it in our lifestyle and in our format (*Interview: Mari Hollander, Findhorn Foundation, 18 June 2007*).

This quote reflects themes in the critical utopian literature of transgressing boundaries based on exclusive notions of place, and sovereign boundaries, resting on ideas of cultural homogeneity, unification and sameness.

Interviewees from other communities criticised territorial boundedness. This interviewee, who favoured a sense of belonging based on multiplicity and the recognition of difference, expressed a political critique of the unifying cultural logic of nationalism:

At one level, I could say 'I want to be proud to be British'. And if I was proud to be British, the kind of things that I want to be proud of are being welcoming to people from other countries, really caring about human rights, treating people equally and all that type of thing. We do all have responsibilities to other citizens. So I think we all do have responsibilities to each other in

⁴⁹ This is considered in more detail in *Chapters 8 & 9*, and can also be seen in Findhorn's (1996) constitution, the "Common Ground" a copy of which can be found in Appendix 5.

this country and beyond, and we are global citizens (*Interview*: Penny, Coventry Peace House, 10 May 2007).

Penny's notion of 'global citizenship' is compelling, and rests on a notion of responsibility for others that is personal, and vested in emotions and relationships such as 'welcoming' and 'caring' rather than in a notion of belonging based on national identity. This dynamic works against the ideas of integration into a higher unity such as the nation state, or even a 'global' state, as in hegemonic theories of global citizenship. This interviewee expressed similar feelings:

I find it really sad right now because people ... when they want to live in this country have to swear allegiance to the queen and I never had to do that, I just got born here, so I don't know if I am a citizen, because I never swore allegiance to the queen, but I live in this country. I think citizenship means abiding by the laws and value system of the country and knowing the cultural history, and that history is written by some people with certain agendas, so my, kind of links to the past are, what I'm interested in is the social history of revolution, and how people lived, and dealt with landlords and stuff, so I'm a kind of 'folk citizen' rather than a citizen because I wouldn't ever swear allegiance to the queen. I'm not a citizen, I'm a person, an autonomous person (*Interview*: Tash, Kebele, 7 April 2007).

The idea expressed by Tash, above, of being a 'folk citizen', as well as an 'autonomous person' rather than a citizen of a country is compelling, and speaks particularly to much of the autonomous spaces literature in the foregoing chapter, such as George McKay's (1996) concept of 'Albion', and Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) 'rhizomes'. It is an articulation of a coexistent, subterranean and non-authoritarian relation to space that exists simultaneously with, yet outside or underneath dominant, hegemonic territorial spatial models. This connects with the situationist and anarchist critiques of abstraction: that territorial spatial organisation alienates individuals by emphasising a primary relation to a centralised sovereign power. The anarchist alternative – a living togetherness and immediacy of relationships expressed through the small-scale community (see sections 2.4.2 and 4.3.1 of this thesis), resonates with ideas expressed in interviews:

I'm certainly a citizen of Laurieston Hall, I mean that would certainly be a *fine* thing to say, and I would say, I'm a citizen of here more than anywhere else. But if I was to ask what supports me, and what expresses my values, and what places its feet on the earth in a way that I approve of, it's this one, so it's not an abstract connection, it's a real connection. Whereas with British citizenship, it's just a pure matter of chance and an abstraction, it has absolutely no meaning whatsoever (*Interview*: Patrick. Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007; italics signify vocal emphasis).

The foregoing quotes illustrate well the idea that these small spaces express and actualise a different logic to hierarchical, territorial, models of territorial space, and thus to a certain extent are ‘outside’. A relation to the ‘inside’ was also expressed, however:

The main purposes and aims of Kebele are to provide a space for the community to take part in creating the world they want to see. Its aims are for people to be able to express themselves in safety and to respect themselves and others. The aim is to create a space that is different from capitalist space so it’s a place for a cross-over between capitalism and autonomy. But we are a part of the world, we are not separate from it so we are engaging in it (*Interview: Tash, Kebele, 7 April 2007*).

This again reflects themes that autonomous spaces offer moments of resistance and creation, and a constant process of negotiation between autonomy and embeddedness.

5.2.1.2. What alternative forms of spatial use do autonomous communities espouse, and how?

Ways of organising and using space that differ from dominant models were clearly observable during my visits to communities, and in this section I will predominantly rely on extracts from my participant observation diaries and notes taken during guided tours. A particularly noticeable pattern through all the communities was the way in which all had prioritised communal space in the layout and design of their spaces. I will here give an extended extract from my notes taken at Findhorn⁵⁰, since this is physically the largest of the communities, and therefore gives the broadest example of potential uses of space:

Apart from bedrooms, both members and guests share the space of Cluny. Bathroom facilities are situated off hallways and shared between rooms. Communal space includes two meeting rooms for groups and a further two meeting spaces in the Pavilion behind Cluny, a ballroom used for sacred dance and workshops, a lounge, a library, a spacious dining room, a sauna and a meditation sanctuary. Shared facilities contribute to a feeling of community and co-operation, allow guests and members to meet and socialise, and also contribute to a lower ecological footprint. Outside the buildings are large and beautifully kept gardens, in which members and guests frequently spend time alone, socialise, eat, play games or take part in activities. These have an enchanting variety of unexpected hidden spaces and features, such as stone carvings, statues and other artwork left by previous guests and members, water features, tree swings, a ‘chakra garden’, bee hives, a spiral walk leading up to a ‘power point’, where two lay-lines supposedly cross, and wild-flower gardens. There is also a small herb and vegetable garden that contributes some of the food produce for the Cluny Kitchens.

The Park offers a completely different atmosphere and is a space that serves different functions to Cluny. It is a 30-acre site that was once a caravan park, and part of it still is used as such for

⁵⁰ More detail on the physical space of Findhorn community is given in appendices 1, 2 & 3.

paying visitors. It is situated next to the village of Findhorn, further up from the coast beside Findhorn Bay. It very much has the feel of a work in progress, as the caravans, mobile homes and chalets that used to house the community members are gradually being replaced by ecologically sound alternatives, such as yurts, eco-mobile homes, straw-bale housing, grass-top eco-houses (soil and grass on the roofs provide insulation) and whisky-barrel houses (made from huge wooden vats donated by a local distillery). These structures create a big patchwork of an astounding variety of small dwellings near pathways that weave around the larger communal spaces. These are the Universal Hall, which houses various events such as music and poetry nights, dances and conferences, and the Community Centre, with an adjoined kitchen where members and guests are invited to share meals. The Community Centre also has space for meetings and singing events that do not require the huge capacity of the Universal Hall. The Universal Hall also houses a 'hot tub'. Particularly outstanding is a beautifully stone-built Nature Sanctuary, built in 1986 by one man, Ian Turnbull, entirely from recycled found materials. It houses a meditation room and small anteroom where attendees can remove their shoes. There is a shop and a café on the site, which are run as business enterprises separate from, yet associated with the Foundation ... The Park also has a large working plot, Cullerne Garden, which has the important purpose of providing 60-70% of the community's fresh food in the summer, and 10-20% in the winter. It also provides salad, herbs and vegetables for the local Earthshare organic box scheme (*Extracts from participant observation notes: Findhorn, 9-20 June 2007*).

What I would particularly like the reader to take from this extract is the wide variety of different uses for which communal space can be used. This has resonance with all of the communities that I visited. As can be seen in the typology at the beginning of this chapter, all of the communities had shared kitchens and shared social space, and most had shared gardens. Like Findhorn Community, Laurieston Hall also had a sauna. Findhorn, Springhill, Laurieston Hall and Hockerton all had children's play areas. Some of the communities also had crèches. Many of these spaces were meant particularly for community members and guests, but communities also frequently had spaces meant for wider community use and outreach activities. The typology shows that six of the communities had space expressly designated for wider use and outreach activities, although this does not mean that the other communities do not accommodate for this on a more ad-hoc basis. Spaces for wider community use included bicycle workshops (Kebele and Coventry Peace House), a refugee shelter (Coventry Peace House), cafés (Kebele, Findhorn and Liverpool Social Centre [planned]), meeting rooms and classrooms for educational enterprises (Hockerton Housing Project, Coventry Peace House, Findhorn and Laurieston Hall) Libraries (Findhorn, Kebele) and Computer facilities (Findhorn, Kebele, Springhill and Liverpool Social Centre [planned]). Some of these spaces had flexible and shifting functions. Coventry Peace House in particular illustrates the sometimes-ambiguous uses of space:

At the opposite end of the block of houses, the first house is also somewhat separated, as it has no through corridors, although upstairs it has a security door with a digilock which joins it to the remainder of the houses. This house serves two purposes. In the day, after 8:30 am, the

large room downstairs offers a huge space for local community meetings. After 9:30 pm it opens as a refugee shelter. The large room has sliding wooden panels which can be used to separate the space, in order to create separate areas for male and female refugees at night. Refugees sleep on the floor. There is a storage cupboard at the back for blankets and clothes. There is also a small kitchen where refugees and volunteers can cook their own food (although they are also provided with free food from the local Sikh temple). In the day, this kitchen is used to make tea for the meetings that take place within the space. Upstairs there is a bathroom, and also a small bedroom with two beds for volunteers at the shelter ...

The variety of activities that the space is used for and also the busy environment seem to create some tensions and difficulties. This was highlighted by two incidents ... both of which seem to come down to a blurring of boundaries, or a difficult negotiation between public and private space. One of the incidents occurred during a formal meeting taking place in the large room which doubles up as a meeting space and night-shelter. One of the shelter-users attempted to enter this space during the meeting⁵¹ and had to be physically prevented from doing so. He got very angry and started shouting and banging on walls and windows and threatening to break them, and eventually had to be forcefully removed from the premises by one of the male members of the housing co-op, who was not in attendance at the meeting, but heard the commotion from the kitchen nextdoor ... It turned out that he had been having difficulties over his possible deportation and really wanted to speak to Penny, who had offered him a lot of support previously, and who was in the meeting at the time. Penny explained to me that he was about to be deported, and Peace House had been unable to offer him the support that he needed, as this was not within their remit. They were only really able to offer shelter, but often refugees wanted help with the legal system or emotional support. It was explained to me that often the boundaries between these issues were difficult to explain, especially to people whose first language was not English, or who were unused to the British culture and legal system, which sometimes led to problems (*Extracts from participant observation notes: Coventry Peace House, 9 May 2007*).

This serves as a poignant example of how boundaries and territories (even at the small scale) can impact upon everyday lives and subjectivities, and how they work to include and exclude, and how boundaries are exceeded by complexity. It also serves as a dramatic and emotive instance of how citizenship associated with bounded national territories serves to physically exclude non-citizens, with drastic consequences upon individual lives. Even where 'autonomous spaces' attempt to provide refuge from this system, as in the above example, they are never totally 'autonomous' from the national legal framework.

5.2.1.3. *What are the effects of alternative spatial models upon everyday praxis, belonging and participation?*

Communal spaces have several functions. They facilitate the breaking down of boundaries and the immediacy of face-to-face relationships that I was discussing in the previous section, sometimes fostering a sense of community and belonging:

⁵¹ The meeting was a curriculum strategy meeting for a two-day world citizenship project in a local inner city school.

I think if we look at the situation in the Western world, community is definitely something that has been lost, and we have to re-engage with community at a different level of awareness. This isn't going to be the little family that all grew up on the land in the same vicinity. That's long gone, we've all migrated and mobilised everywhere, so rebuilding community and not just the people part of community but also the landscape and all of the life of the place. And although we are in a fairly rural setting, I think it also applies to urban areas that have neighbourhoods. It's just as much a neighbourhood thing as a rural community thing of really working to what brings people together. And so much of the design of things, you know high-rises and things, just doesn't build community, you can actually build community by design, by landscape (*Interview: Mari Hollander, Findhorn, 18 June 2007*).

Shared spaces create a space for members to socialise, talk, and bond outside of more formal community meetings. They can also break down boundaries between the community and the outside, by allowing members and guests to socialise together. They may also have a practical or educative function, in the case of working gardens, classrooms and workshops. They break down dominant boundaries between the public and the private, illustrating an alternative to the atomised family unit, particularly in the case of shared kitchens, where people are able to eat with others on a daily basis. Play areas and crèches meant that childcare could be shared on a regular basis between households. Communal spaces also sometimes had more expressly political functions:

We use the building itself for lots of practical peace projects and environmental projects, like the cycle workshop that encourages people to bike. We take in donated bikes and do them up and sell them on to people cheaply, so that's our practical environmental project, and then we've got a night shelter, and the Worldwise project, that is our practical peace project (*Interview: Penny, Coventry Peace House, 10 May 2007*).

I mean essentially we want the focus of it to be an anti-capitalist space. Most of the people involved are political, some are anarchists, some are anarcho-communists, and generally non-aligned people who want to be involved ... we want to try and create a political hub ... and just to make the space open for politically-slanted stuff, but nothing too dogmatic. I mean community groups will be able to come in and organise a campaign, we will have different facilities, we will have computer facilities and printing, photocopying, all that kind of stuff that we will give to people for free. So we will be helping people with campaigns, as opposed to trying to run campaigns, we'll just help them and provide stuff (*Interview: Carl, Liverpool Social Centre, 10 July 2007*).

The above quotes illustrate how spaces can have functions that simultaneously benefit or cater for members and users, exist as illustrations of a wider, non-hierarchical logic, and also engage with political power directly. Some interviewees, however, were not so confident in their role as political agents in a wider sense:

There was a film years ago called passport to Pimlico, about when part of London declared independence from the rest, and there is a feeling sometimes that Laurieston Hall, particularly among some people, has declared independence from the rest of the world, but at the same time it absolutely totally relies on it for a massive amount of its inputs. So I think I'm a citizen of this, I'm a citizen in almost a humorous way of this funny little place called Laurieston Hall, which

is just a pin-prick on the map, and I don't think of myself as a citizen of the world in that way, I think that's just a bit of an overblown phrase. So that's what I'm a citizen of, I'm a citizen of Laurieston Hall (*Interview*: Patrick, Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007).

We seem to have two types of political agency operating in the foregoing discussion. Penny and Carl show great enthusiasm for wider political activity and engagement with power structures. The latter quote from Patrick brings to the fore the way in which communities might be viewed as apolitical enclaves, with little wider significance outside their own existence. It is worth noting that this quote is somewhat extreme in this respect - in the context of the interviews as a whole, but also in relation to the rest of the interview from Patrick, who elsewhere in his interview shows a lot of enthusiasm for engagement in wider politics. However, it still raises an important issue. It seems that autonomous spaces can have two functions. In the terms of the literature, the first might best be termed 'autonomous', insofar as it engages with hierarchical power structures, but from a position of exteriority. The position is exterior since it does not take the limits of the system for granted - that is, it does not engage in the representative or hierarchical politics in an attempt at reform but rather attacks or resists this system from without. This is made possible partly through having a space to practice non-hierarchical, non-representative relationships, as well as to organise for action. It is here that the overlap with the 'utopian' function occurs. The utopian function to some extent requires an enclave, or a degree of isolation from the outside, in order to practice these unmediated relationships, to learn to desire something 'other'.

Both of these functions have relevance for a critical utopian citizenship. The utopian function shows an example of something different, transgresses boundaries, and shows possibilities beyond the limits of the system. Communal spaces, shared kitchens, mutual childcare are examples that transgress the ontological and methodological individualism of the state-capitalist system and the spaces that it builds. The autonomous function engages directly with mechanisms of power, using the ideas and energies nurtured and learnt in the utopian 'enclave' to resist the system from a position of relative exteriority. The relationship between utopian and autonomous forms of politics does not seem to be adequately theorised in academia, since the two literatures are often treated as separate (for discussions of this, see Day, 2005: 215 and *passim*; Robinson & Tormey, 2009, *passim*). However, it is important to note that in the context of the spaces that I have visited, they

co-exist, interweave and overlap – often with a third type of politics – that is, participation in conventional political activities such as voting, lobbying and standing in elections – which can also be informed and inspired by activities and relationships in communal space. This relationship between different forms of politics, or political agency, forms a major theme that runs through this project and is discussed particularly in Chapters 8 and 9. At this point, however, most relevant is the breaking down of boundaries – including spatial boundaries – that this implies. When communal space is opened up, it is not always easy to predict or dictate what will occur there, or what it will be used for.

Bringing spheres of life together in shared space benefits people and communities. It allows people to share responsibilities such as cooking and childcare, reduces daily errands for individuals, increases enjoyment and sociability, creates bonds and builds community. It is also more efficient, better for the environment and can save money:

3 times a week, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, if you wanted to, you don't have to but if you wanted to, you can come here and have an evening meal, for £2.50, cooked by people here. It's usually very nice food, and also what we do have to do and it is part of the lease agreement, is to be part of the team every month that cooks. I do this, and I get to cook with 3 other people, and it is great fun, I enjoy it ... The main purpose and aim is to be in a community which has the co-housing principles, which was to basically share facilities, to reduce the amount of use, and therefore to reduce carbon emissions and to reduce the use of valuable resources, to benefit from, for example if you are a family, to benefit from good childcare, lots of good role models, so for example in Denmark, where co-housing is very popular, the message that you get there is that co-housing is a family paradise, certainly I think that the families here really enjoy it, because there are lots of people who know the children quite well and so when it comes to it if you have to get involved with a dispute or something with the children, you know the parenting styles of their parents so, there is lots of childcare (*Interview: Max, Springhill, 21 April 2007*).

This historicises the dominant model of citizenship, offering a glimpse of something new, which transgresses the too often taken-for-granted separation of spheres of life and individual households. It also politicises activities that would usually be relegated to the 'private' sphere, and not associated with the 'public' activities of citizenship.

5.2.2. Forms of ownership and property relations

In the previous chapter, I considered how dominant notions of territory rest on the ontological construction of the physical environment as external to our human subjectivities, but at the same

time appropriable and marketable through an ontologically posited ethos of possessive individualism. This leads to unequal distribution of economic and political power and the enclosure and destruction of public places of politics and social commons, and therefore the reduction of citizenship to a series of market rights and entitlements at the expense of participation and responsibilities. I also considered critical utopian approaches that offer alternatives to possessive individualism by adopting an ethos of stewardship or custodianship and practice of collective ownership and self-governance. Theoretical approaches that I considered also offered the possibility of reaching out from spaces to reconstruct social commons at a local level by providing cheap or free services. There was also a possibility of the appropriation of space through squatting as a mode of resistance to capitalist modes of ownership. Here, I will concentrate on resistance to dominant models of the ownership of land and property and the creation of alternative models with a concentration on the following questions:

- What alternative models of ownership do autonomous communities use?
- What are the implications of different forms of ownership for everyday praxis, participation and belonging in autonomous communities?

5.2.2.1. What alternative models of ownership do autonomous communities use?

The typology shows four different models of ownership of spaces: squatting, renting, the ‘fully mutual’ model and private ownership. Each of these implies a means of appropriation. Since models of property and ownership often derive from community histories and are based on legal models, I will mainly be using information gleaned from documentary analysis and notes from participant observation.

Squatting

None of the communities I visited were squatted⁵². Liverpool Social Centre⁵³ had considered squatting a space, but found a space available to rent relatively cheaply that was in the cellar of a radical bookshop called *News From Nowhere*, within the city centre, and this was appealing since ‘both kinds of things would complement each-other, that is the bookshop and social centre could form a radical partnership, so we pursued that’ (*Interview*: Carl, Liverpool Social Centre, 10 July 2007). Kebele was originally squatted. The reasons for the community’s purchase of the place are stated on its website:

Through resisting certain eviction and after negotiations with the owners, the Housing Co-op was formed to buy the building with a mortgage. Frantic fundraising ensured a significant deposit. By providing secure affordable housing for its resident members, the Housing Co-op was able to cover the mortgage repayments. This has ensured the continuation of Kebele as a secure space ever since. (Kebele Community Cooperative, *History* from <http://www.kebelecoop.org/History.html> accessed July 30, 2009)

The way in which Kebele eventually bought the property was very similar to many of the other communities, and they now use the fully mutual model.

Fully mutual ownership

Fully mutual ownership is a legal model, which requires a community to own a place either outright or on a mortgage, so although it differs greatly from private ownership in terms of the mode of ownership, the initial methods of appropriation for the two methods are the same. The ways in which communities organised their resources in order to purchase land and properties on the market varied drastically. As the typology shows, this model holds for the majority of the communities that I visited, including Kebele, Coventry Peace House, Findhorn Foundation,

⁵² I have, in fact, visited squatted spaces, but have not undertaken any formal research. None of the squatted spaces that I contacted during my period of formal research agreed to be part of the study. From what I was able to gather the reasons for this were threefold. Many squats are temporary, and do not have internet access, so initiating contact is difficult. The temporary nature of squatted places also means that members’ reaching consensus to partake in research is more difficult. Secondly, this is possibly symptomatic of the fact that squatted spaces are not as widespread in the United Kingdom as elsewhere (this was mentioned during interview by Tim and Ingo at Kebele). Third, due to the complex legal nature of squats, inhabitants are more reluctant to allow access to external researchers who they do not know. A study of squatted spaces could potentially form the basis of further research with a narrower remit focused solely on squatted spaces, allowing more scope to overcome these difficulties.

⁵³ At the time of my research, Liverpool Social Centre had very recently, within the previous month, secured the space that was going to form its base. This space was still under construction. At the time of writing, however, the Social Centre has become established within this space, and has been renamed *Next To Nowhere*, which reflects its relationship with, and position next to the *News from Nowhere* bookshop (see Appendix 1 for more detail).

Mornington Grove, Liverpool Social Centre, Corani and Laurieston Hall. This is a legal model, where a small fee, usually £1, is paid for membership (this is a legal requirement). Once somebody is a member, they own a 'share' in the community property along with the other members, and in this sense are both landlord and tenant simultaneously. Many fully mutual cooperatives are also non-equity sharing, which means that were the community to dissolve for any reason, no member would make a profit, and any wealth that had been generated in the duration of the community's existence would then be distributed to a similar organisation or organisations.

Within this model, communities operate differently. If there is a mortgage to be paid, usually members pay something analogous to rent, often termed 'cost-share', which is then pooled to pay the monthly installments. If there is no mortgage, there is usually still a contribution to be made towards cost-share for bills, food, council tax and other expenditures involved in owning and maintaining a property. All members are involved in decisions concerning the level and use of cost-share, usually through consensus. There is often also an expectation that a certain amount of time will be invested in the co-operative:

On a strict level people don't share their income, but everybody pays the same rent regardless of what space they are inhabiting, each pays the same rent to the housing co-op which is us, so it's a fully inclusive housing co-op, fully mutual, which means that you have to be a member to live here, and to live here you have to be a member, so it goes round in a circle which is very important. So people then, within that structure, can earn what they want, but at the same time there is an expectation that you give about half your working week to the group, ... two or three days a week, what I do is primarily for no money, but it goes towards the co-op and in return the rent is kept low because of that giving of the work, ... So then outwith that people can earn in theory what they want but because it does mean that almost, you can't have a full-time job while you live here but you can have jobs where you can be a consultant or whatever you want (*Interview: Patrick, Laurieston, 22 September 2007*).

In return for cost-share, which is usually relatively low, and the time commitment to the co-op, members of Laurieston Hall get to live in a beautiful Edwardian 73-Roomed mansion, with 150 acres of land and two lochs in a beautiful area of South-West Scotland. There was a feeling in many of the fully mutual co-operatives that although all members should be entitled to their own income, drastic inequalities would cause problems:

It wouldn't work if some people here were earning an awful lot more than other people. There have been a very few times, there was once a time when that happened, and it doesn't feel good, so whilst we don't go around declaring everything we earn, nobody knows exactly what everybody earns, we are aware, nobody lives an ostentatious lifestyle in relation to other people, so that's quite important (*Interview: Patrick, Laurieston, 22 September 2007*).

Most of the co-operatives do not income-share⁵⁴. There was frequently, however, a feeling that non-monetary goods should be shared:

There is definitely a sense of things being shared, and there was an example recently where a member got given a second-hand computer and one of the other members was looking to have that themselves, which wouldn't have been a problem we would just have discussed it, but because they were a bit impatient they were suggesting that they might just go out and buy one, and I suppose there was still that whole thing about encouraging communal ownership of things (*Interview: Nick, Coventry Peace House, 9 May 2007*).

Amongst the communities I visited, and indeed within the United Kingdom as far as I and the members of this community are aware, there is only one co-operative that shares income – Corani. Members of this co-op are *obliged* to income share. In theory they can be part of any income-sharing group, but in practice there is only one in operation, the *Snowball Income Sharing Group*. The *Snowball Income Sharing Group* operates according to a fairly specific set of procedures, which require participants to specifically declare all intended expenditures that are above the (very!) basic weekly allowance of £25, so that these can be prioritised (see appendix 9 for an outline of procedures). *Snowball* had three members at the time of my visit, two of these presently living at Corani, and one ex-member who continues to income share. Although there are more than two people living at Corani, and income sharing is a requirement of membership, one of the people living at the housing is retaining long-term guest status since he does not want to income share. Membership of the income-sharing group has fluctuated in the past, with the lowest membership being two, and the highest sixteen. Income sharing meetings are usually held every two weeks, although sometimes they are every 3 weeks in order to fit them neatly into calendar months. Income sharing meetings rely on trust and honesty. Although many would see this kind of process as very restrictive upon personal autonomy, the opinion of the member who I interviewed was quite the opposite:

The main aim is to house people in a way that removes the oppression of ownership, because you're your own owner, because as a group we insist on income sharing, which is a speciality almost of this particular housing co-op (*Interview: Guy, Corani, 7 July 2007*).

⁵⁴ The exception is Corani, and this is discussed in more detail below. See Appendix 9 for income sharing procedures at Corani.

This idea of being your own owner, in the absence of private ownership is particularly interesting, and reflects a vision of autonomy in equality similar to that put forward in the critical utopian literature discussed in the previous chapter. This view was not widespread however. Members of other communities interpreted the practice of income sharing as a distinct loss of personal freedom:

At one point Peace House had, almost like a kind of an allowance which was your own money which was only about 20 pounds a week, and anything over that you had to justify to other people. That seems very radical to me, I would give it a go, but whether and how anyone ever put it into practice, I just don't know, because that seems quite amazing to me, in terms of the personal freedom you would be giving up! (*Interview: Nick, Coventry Peace House, 9 May 2007*).

The member was referring to an income sharing scheme that had many years previously been in place at Peace house, but had long since been discontinued. Members of Corani and a founding member of Peace House informed me that income sharing had previously been a fairly popular practice amongst co-ops, mainly during the 60s and 70s, but this was no longer the case.

Private ownership

As can be seen in the typology, private ownership is also a model used in some of the communities, where one buys into the community simply by buying a property, or renting from someone else who owns. This was the case for the New Findhorn Association (NFA), which will be discussed later and also for Springhill Cohousing Community⁵⁵ and Hockerton Housing Project. In these cases, however, it is important to note that the community originally bought the land collectively before the houses were built. There is also usually some kind of mediation when a property is put up for sale, rather than it being available on an open market, so that the community has a say in who joins. I will discuss the example of Hockerton Housing Project to illustrate how private ownership can work for communities.

All of the houses at Hockerton are owned by their inhabitants, either outright or through mortgages. The main goal when the project started was to build ecologically sustainable houses at no extra cost to a conventional new build, in line with the members' consensual decision to demonstrate that

⁵⁵ More information on the ways in which Springhill procured land and approaches property relations can be found in Appendix 1.

sustainability could be achieved by ‘ordinary’ families. To date the project’s costs have been remarkably close to the budget that was set at the outset:

Three-bed home (171 m²) cost breakdown:

• Basic house construction:	£51k
• Conservatory	£12k
• Landscaping, water systems and amenities	£9k
• Set-up costs and Supervision	£20k
(High due to extended timings in both planning and construction phases)	
• Estimated construction costs	£450/m ²
(Very favourable compared to conventional build)	

(Source: *HHP Launch Brochure* 1999: 5)

Each of the households was responsible for raising the capital for their own home. For some families, this meant selling their houses and living in caravans on the site while construction was taking place. It should also be taken into account that most of the members were involved in the construction phase, which cut costs, but was expensive in terms of time. Each dwelling has an associated 999-year lease. Although the leases have a lot in common with standard leases, they have also had to incorporate elements of the innovative set up of the project. These include specific conditions, such as restriction on fossil-fuelled cars and an obligation to contribute a minimum number of hours to the co-operative⁵⁶.

Mixed

Findhorn community uses a combination of models so does not fit easily into any of the above categories. The nature of ownership varies between the Foundation and the New Findhorn Association (NFA). The NFA is the wider community that has developed around the Findhorn Foundation.

The NFA has developed in the local surroundings, and members tend to own their own property, or rent from a private landlord, yet express an affiliation with the community. A significant proportion of the NFA live on ‘The Field of Dreams’, a piece of land owned by the Foundation, which sells

⁵⁶ Thanks are due to Paul Chatterton for pointing out that at Hockerton the high prices are due to the absence of a social process to determine resale value.

building plots to interested parties, and mediates the sale of built houses, according to various conditions. Land and houses are bought, owned and sold as they would be anywhere else in the UK. The only real differences being that a fee of £100 per year, per member, is paid for NFA costs yearly to cover administration costs. Also, for those living on the Field of Dreams, plots are bought and houses have to be built according to certain ecological stipulations. Houses are bought from The Housing Company, a subsidiary of NFD Ltd. (Walker, 1994a: 71-3).

The Findhorn Foundation can best be viewed as the ‘core’ of the community, and espouses collective ownership, and members work full time for the community. The property owned by the Foundation, including the Park and Cluny college, Cullerne gardens, and properties now used for the Moray Steiner School, Newbold house, a separately run educational and holistic therapy centre, was bought over the years as the Foundation gained more money, particularly through the success of educational courses during the 1970s (Riddell, 1994: 64-5). The Park, where the community was founded and the majority of members lived and still live, was finally bought in 1983. At this time, the owner of the land knew that the purchase of this land would be almost imperative for the Foundation, and drove a very hard bargain. Foundation income was supplemented by a sustained period of fundraising in order to raise the sum (Ibid: 69). The Park is now owned by all members of the Foundation according to the fully mutual model.

5.2.2.2. What are the implications of different forms of ownership for everyday praxis, participation and belonging in autonomous communities?

Interviews suggest that private ownership encourages a different relation to the maintenance of space to other ownership models outlined above – that is comparatively more individualistic, and oriented towards the maintenance of one’s own particular portion of space:

So, you know, I own my own home, whereas in the Foundation nobody owns because everybody owns and everybody has a say in what’s done about that. Nobody could tell me what to do with my house, so if I decided to paint it pink with blue stripes, whilst it may not be popular, they couldn’t really stop me doing that because we don’t have an agreement that can control how people paint their houses (*Interview*: Kay Kay, NFA, 18 June 2007).

The fully mutual model appeared to encourage a particular sense of responsibility in caring for the community property - for fellow members and also for future members. This appears to be

analogous to the models of common ownership, custodianship and stewardship put forward by Ostrom (1990), Ward (2005 [2002]) and Day (2003) as discussed in the previous chapter. The association of collective ownership or ‘custodianship’ with immediacy of relationships and self-activity within a small-scale community suggested by evolutionary anarchists is also apparent, since fully mutual ownership stipulates decision-making by all members and tends to encourage consensus as a procedure. I was also told (and observed) in several of the places I visited that a feeling of *equality* in ownership/‘custodianship’/‘stewardship’ tends to encourage a willingness to participate in tasks related to maintaining the physical space of the community. I will explore this dynamic using the example of Mornington Grove Community (MGC) in Bow, London. This is a particularly interesting example, since the community (a housing co-operative) was particularly longstanding, at 27 years old. For this reason it can possibly be seen as a success story for the principle of custodianship, although the ethos was fairly widespread throughout those following the fully mutual model:

[we aim to] get better, obviously, and look after the houses, and make them greener, that’s for sure, you know make them more energy efficient, so I think that’s the main purpose at the moment, to keep it going. And we have a lot of other things, and a lot of maintenance too, but that’s something that happens anyway because they are old houses (*Interview: Angela, MGC, 8 July 2007*).

I think heart⁵⁷ was two-folded, one it was about caring about each other, and two it was about a sense of continuity and maintaining our link with what went before, not necessarily by following old traditions but more about maintaining a sense of what the community was born out of and what’s gone before and that everything that we do will have an impact of what will happen in the future, so when we are making changes, we need to realise that maybe we won’t be here for the outcome and it is going to have an impact on people who are here in the future, you know what are we creating for others (*Interview: Kate, MGC, 8 July 2007*).

It is important not to idealise the model, however, and at last once during interviews at MGC, the problem that collective ownership, far from encouraging commitment, could conversely lead to a problem of abdicating responsibility, or free-riding:

We need money for kitchens to be re-done and that has been held over and held over for the last few years. And then it is up to someone to say ‘look, this has not been done, I want it done now and I’m really upset that it’s not been done!’ Because again the scared ones would want lots of money in the bank but nothing so spend on the community for the people that live here,

⁵⁷ ‘Heart’ was agreed as an aim and a principle of the community during a consensus meeting on values which had been held a week prior to my visit. This information was gleaned from interviews, and from a series of cards that had been posted on the wall after the meeting that I was shown during my visit.

or for the building ... Officially, it all makes sense on paper, but then come the personalities, the fears and the realities of people and relationships (*Interview: Kenny, MGC, 8 July 2008*).

The themes of custodianship and stewardship, and the importance of individuals feeling that they had ‘a stake’, or more specifically ‘an equal stake’ in the physical space of community came up frequently during interviews and informal conversations. This was particularly the case in communities using the fully mutual model of ownership. At the level of the domestic sphere this was seen by many to encourage participation and collective endeavour, since people felt that their activities were going towards something of which they had part and equal ownership. This might be seen to contrast with dominant models of citizenship, where individual ownership, competition and inequality in property ownership are often seen to inhibit participation in the public sphere, and also result in a vision of citizens as consumers, rather than political actors.

It is important to note, however, that however much collective ownership might transgress, critique, and sometimes directly oppose capitalist modes of citizenship by offering alternative public space for participation, organisation and dissidence, and also creating a physical barrier to the encroachment and enclosure of capitalism, fully mutual ownership is still a legal model, so in some senses might be seen as being complicit with state power, or as offering a compliment to, or parody of, state citizenship, rather than a radical alternative form of political subjectivity. The drive for autonomy therefore occurs at the nexus between social utopianism and capitalism:

So following on from this question of tension between the values that we in Corani hold and the values of capitalist society, we view that it does create a conflict, it creates a conflict with the state, the state will be minded to not be supportive of what we do and to, certainly if it doesn't actually set out to destroy us, to minimise our impact, unless we persuade those that govern that actually capitalism is not the right way, that our course is a better course, then there will be a conflict (*Interview: Guy, Corani, 7 July 2007*).

This interview extract reflects issues from the autonomous spaces literature discussed in the previous chapter, that there is always a tension between resistance and creation, and that rather than being seen as complete self-sufficient blueprints for a better future, autonomy is better conceptualised as a constant interplay between self-reliance and embeddedness (Pickerill and Chatterton, 2006). One way in which communities help to build self-reliance and autonomy is by

contributing to the local community, opening up spaces for the provision of cheap or free services.

This reflects themes of horizontality, solidarity and mutual aid discussed in the previous chapter:

So it's six houses, five of them are joined together at the top, which is our living area; everyone has a room each to sleep in. And downstairs, two of the houses are for the community space, which is like one large room. The next house is a cycling workshop, and the next two houses are co-op kitchen and living room, and then the end house which is separate houses the Worldwide office and also another peace project office upstairs. And that's it, so every part of the building is functioning doing lots of useful work, and it means lots of people come here. So we have a night shelter for example, every night, and two volunteers come and that's for refused refugees and also Eastern Europeans who are destitute and sleeping in the park, but they can work so we just help them until they can get back on their feet (*Interview: Penny, Coventry Peace House, 10 May 2007*).

Coventry Peace House in particular provides an invaluable service for refugees and asylum seekers who might otherwise be destitute, and the night shelter was a huge project requiring enormous input from dedicated volunteers, both living within the housing co-operative and from the local community. The practice of providing welfare and services to local communities was widespread throughout the communities that I visited, particularly urban housing co-operatives and social centres, and included but was not limited to: cafés providing cheap and healthy vegan food, bike repair workshops, computer access and open-source software workshops, art and cultural events, music gigs and events, craft workshops, benefit and debt-handling advice, asylum advice, refugee shelter, temporary accommodation for visiting activists, holistic therapies and alternative health education, childcare and crèches, radical libraries and infoshops, meeting space for organising protests, film nights, gardening workshops, home education workshops. In many places these were provided free or for a donation, in other cases they were paid services provided by a workers' co-operative associated with the community. Although some negotiation with the state and capital is always necessary in the opening up of these spaces, even in the case of squatting (Chatterton and Hodkinson, 2007: 212-3), alternative economic models can then be set up, that are based on need rather than profit, on responsibilities and bottom-up participation rather than on claiming rights and entitlements from an abstract state.

5.2.3. Creation and modification

In the previous chapter (section 4.2.3), I discussed how dominant territorial approaches assume a separation between the roles architect, planner or designer of a place and the intended users. I

argued that the ability to plan and dictate the shape of community surroundings was imbued with the logic of money and power. Citizens are alienated from the processes of building the spaces in which they are to live, as well as from places of society and politics. They may feel disempowered and alienated from by their physical environment. Critical utopian approaches, rather than offering spatial blueprints, emphasise processes by which places can be designed and built from the ‘bottom up’, through modification of existing spaces according to the changing needs or desires of inhabitants (Barker, 2000), or through the building and design of new places through consensus design involving users and experts (Day, 2003). Such processes, it was argued, produce an outcome that is more suited to users, empowers them with a sense of pride and stewardship over their physical environment, and participation in the procedures can build a feeling of community that is vital to the sense of a place. Here, I will consider practices relating to the design and building of space in autonomous communities using questions drawn from the theoretical discussion as a basis:

- Do autonomous communities challenge the hierarchical imposition of the built environment?
- How do autonomous communities account for differing and changing desires in the layout of spaces?
- What are the implications of different models of spatial design for everyday praxis, participation and belonging?

5.2.3.1. Do autonomous communities challenge the hierarchical imposition of the built environment?

The foregoing discussion considered how spaces both reflect, and form, subjectivities. I considered how opening design processes to the input of potential inhabitants and users might encourage participation and belonging, through the process itself and also through the opening up of public space. This may have implications for citizenship, disrupting the usual organisation of space associated with dominant models of citizenship and opening up a new space for different, critical, creative and transgressive modes of self-governance. As the typology shows, some communities were purpose-built for the community, and some were adapted from previous structures.

As a Co-housing community, Springhill was an interesting example of intentional design. Co-housing communities are intentional communities where particular attention is paid to design, and how the architecture and layout of the community can facilitate a sense of community amongst residents. The modern theory of cohousing originated in Denmark in the 1960s among groups of families who were dissatisfied with existing housing and communities that they felt did not meet their needs (Scotthanson & Scotthanson, 2005: 2). The basic design principles of Cohousing are:

- Neighbourhoods are designed and created by the future residents.
- Neighbourhoods are managed by the residents, through a body corporate.
- Self-contained private houses are bought and sold on the open market.
- Selected shared amenities are co-owned where people can meet their neighbours and more economically share particular equipment
- Cars are usually located at the periphery of the site, with internal circulation being predominantly pedestrian.
- Houses are built in clusters and often adjoining and are usually built to a medium density standard in order to protect open space.
- Kitchen windows face the pedestrian street.

(McCamant & Durrett, 1994: 35-43)

Some of these factors are intended to support community, and were evident at Springhill. Involvement of initial residents in the design process meant that the community building process could begin before residents even moved into their homes. Negotiations between residents and architects produced a generic house design plan for all on the site, which indicated the walls that were structural and those that could potentially be moved around by individual households. Prospective residents were then free to design the houses as they willed within the constraints stipulated. One of the houses I was able to visit was an 'upside down' house, with the bedrooms and bathrooms downstairs, and the kitchen and living area upstairs, since the resident had requested this at the time of design. Cars are located on the periphery of the site, allowing children to play around the site, and minimising the social impact of cars on the site more generally. Having an active area of the home (the kitchen) facing the pathway aids security and allows adults to observe children playing outside. There is a centrally located common house with three storeys. The space on the ground floor is used as a work and games space. It can be used by people requiring larger work areas than they might have in their own house, for example for art or do-it-yourself projects.

There is also a play space with a snooker table and table-football game. The second floor has a large common room, for music, theatre, dance, yoga and various workshops and events. The third floor contains a kitchen and dining room that can seat up to fifty people. Shared facilities allow residents to socialise and eat with other residents when they prefer, or to retreat to their private homes and facilities at other times.

The architectural design of Springhill also has some environmental credentials, and was described by a resident as ‘sort of medium green, in terms of buildings’ (*Interview*: Max, Springhill, 21 April 2007). This includes triple-glazed windows, high levels of insulation, photovoltaic panels on the roofs and a Sustainable Urban Draining System (SUDS), which replicates the way that rain would naturally fall into a field, and circulates under the ground. This contrasts to conventional new-build estates, where the use of hardstanding and pipes means that water is channelled into rivers, leading to the depletion of low-level aquifers; a particular problem in the South-East. Thus geographical situation can raise particular concerns in terms of co-existing sustainably with the environment, as well as global concerns, and these were taken into account during the design and building of Springhill. Hockerton Housing Project is another example of intentional design, where ecological credentials were paramount, and earth-sheltered housing means that no artificial heat is needed to maintain temperatures throughout the year, and a reed-bed lake provides sewage filtration.

As can be seen in the typology, groups and communities whose physical environment was intentionally designed with the needs of the community in mind are in a minority of those I visited. Most groups have had to adapt a previously standing structure. This process of adaptation is something that often takes a lot of time and energy initially. Coventry Peace House hosted activity weekends where young people and asylum seekers could attend to help out whilst at the same time learning building skills:

So it's evolved over the years, but we have always done stuff here, even when we moved in and it was in a really really awful state because it had been empty for three and a half years, so it was all stripped out and everything and bare, it was just awful. We very quickly, within that Easter time, March or April, we put on two weekends of courses. So we've always had people coming here and people have always been involved in it, so it's much bigger than just the people that live here. And we've done lots of things over the years. So the houses themselves have got renovated through activity weekends that we have on the first weekend of every

month and through projects we have run with excluded young people who've learnt building skills, or refugees and asylum seekers, we have got funding from the Home Office bizarrely for, to get them volunteering, so we've had lots of clever ways of getting the place renovated, and so now it's, well everywhere is used, which is great (*Interview: Penny, Coventry Peace House, 10 May 2007*)

5.2.3.2. How do autonomous communities account for differing and changing desires in the layout of spaces?

The above quote illustrates just one example of several innovative schemes that groups and communities have devised to deal with the expensive and time-consuming tasks of initially adapting a space to suit a community's needs, and also the continual maintenance and adaptation to changing needs and desires that is necessary over time. These processes are often at least as inclusive as those for intentional design. Since a lot of the work is done by members of the group themselves, there is not the same kind of separation between the skilled architect and the client, as is still often the case in the initial stages of intentional design (note how although residents at Springhill were involved in the process of design, they still employed a clearly professionalised architect). An interesting example of changing the way a space is used was evident at Kebele:

We're already adopting being a community co-operative, because it is a housing co-operative already, so because housing is an issue, and this is how it started, because people needed housing and they also wanted to do some really cool stuff then they started doing meetings and campaigns and stuff. We already are a co-operative but to stay a housing co-operative we have to do stuff with housing. There's some rooms upstairs but we came to the decision not to have residents anymore because it made it feel like someone's house, with people coming in and out and you feel like you can't do stuff. So now we have more rooms to do things (*Interview: Tash, Kebele, 7 April 2007*).

This quote serves as a perfect example of how needs and desires can change over time. Housing was always central to Kebele's history, since it started as a squat for homeless activists, then became a housing co-operative. However, even such a central aspect of its identity was not sacrosanct or immune from changing needs and desires, as activities such as the café, infoshop and library gained popularity. The idea that having housing made the place 'seem like someone's house' is interesting; it implies that a conflict existed between the 'public' and participative aspects of the space, and the 'private' or household aspects. Another issue that arose in several of the communities that I visited, particularly Findhorn and Laurieston Hall, was the issue of an ageing population. As the average age of members in these places was rising, they were beginning to consider how their housing and access needs might change, as they got older, and the ways in which the design and layout of the spaces would have to be altered to adapt to these.

A problem with consensus as a process for changing physical surroundings is that it can often be very slow:

It's really slow getting round to maintenance, and you have all these great ideas about 'let's to this, let's do that', but actually getting round to implementing things can be a really slow procedure. I think that's where consensus decision-making can really slow things down and that's one of the things you just have to accept if you are living in a community, that the pace is just much slower and you can't just go 'right let's do it', even if it's a great idea everyone's got to agree, everyone's got to talk to the right men, and then by the time they get back to you, you have got 2 weeks before you have another meeting. Anyway I think that is one of the big bugbears we have here is trying to get maintenance work done (*Interview: Kate, MGC, 8 July 2007*)

The difficulties of consensus decision-making as a process for initiating change will be further discussed in Chapters 6 & 7.

Intentional design has its own problems. As well as also being a potentially very slow process it is also often very expensive, requiring huge investments of money and, for the initial owner or founding group, the investment of personal time and energy during the design and building process. This was particularly the case for Hockerton, where residents were involved in building their own houses. Since several members had to sell their previous homes in order to invest, this meant that they had to live in caravans on the site for up to two years. Perhaps mainly due to this high investment level, a glance at the typology will show that intentional design appears to be associated with private, rather than collective ownership, allowing residents to recuperate their investment through private sale fairly easily. During interview, a member of Springhill stated that the community as it stands 'is a very capitalist arrangement and I will make no bones about it' (*Interview: Max, Springhill, 21 April 2007*).

5.2.3.3. *What are the implications of different models of spatial design for everyday praxis, participation and belonging?*

I did not find any evidence that intentional design did facilitate feelings of belonging or participation any more than adapted buildings. Although the pedestrianised streets of a cohousing community possibly facilitate community integration, and the common room also allows for shared activity, bonding, and participation in several activities, shared facilities and safe outdoor areas

were certainly not lacking in other communities that I visited. Perhaps the greatest advantage of newly and intentionally built communities is the ability to build-in environmental credentials (although it might be worth considering the environmental costs of building from scratch); at Hockerton, Springhill, and the eco-village at Findhorn it was possible to integrate sustainable technology into the initial design of buildings, whereas groups such as Kebele, Corani and Coventry Peace House were gradually adding features such as insulation or solar panels as and when they could afford to do so.

What seems to be more important than intentional design is adaptability; having a space which is amenable to being used in flexible ways, to account for changing desires, but more importantly having discussion and decision-making procedures in place which allow members to discuss their changing needs and desires and translate these into action when necessary. This in itself requires space for meetings and for informal discussions. The importance of common space in each and every one of the groups and communities that I visited was pronounced, and often seemed to revolve around the kitchen - there appeared to be a distinct affinity between cooking, eating, socialising and making decisions! Formal meetings often took place in kitchens after dinners.

5.3. *Implications*

What does all this mean for a critical and transgressive citizenship? In this section I will consider what dynamics we have in operation here, summarising the ways in which actualisations either replicate and parody, or critique and transgress, dominant state-centred models of citizenship as well as critical utopian theoretical alternatives⁵⁸. I will also consider whether there are any implications for wider social change. All this will be done with a particular awareness of the implications of the dialogue I have undertaken between theory and practice.

⁵⁸ Although I aim to recognise complexity, complicity and co-optation, there is however an emphasis throughout the thesis on where critical utopian alternatives are actualised. This is in line with the critical utopian methodology articulated in Chapter 2 and further explicated in footnote 42, as well as with the ethical imperative of a poststructural anarchist approach of valorising difference and promoting alternative practices (May, 1994: 133).

5.3.1. Territorial sovereignty versus autonomy

The way in which we perceive space is an ontological concern. Using a utopian approach we can question the apparent ‘truth’ or verifiability of an ontology and instead concentrate on its desirability. By studying practice we can consider the effects of theories. Critical utopian theories and practices serve an important function of historicising and undermining the ontological foundations of dominant formations of territory and citizenship. They also simultaneously point to new possibilities. Critical utopian theory transgresses dominant models of territorial sovereignty and cultural unification by stressing the normative problems of this approach: the alienation of the rights of the individual to an abstract entity, the suppression of difference, desire and creativity, the disempowerment of citizens and the oppression of excluded groups. Theory also provides an ethical basis for a potential praxis: the appropriation of autonomous spaces and the articulation of desire for a wider ethic of non-hierarchy, creativity, peak experience, solidarity and immediacy.

Critical utopian practices potentially actualise such theory: they offer a means by which it can be brought into reality. Although there is no clear evidence that any of the individuals and groups that I interviewed and observed were in any way informed by theories that I considered, they often had similar concepts as part of their discourse: autonomy, non-hierarchy and equality are all terms used in interviews. Critical utopian practices also highlight new problems: the problems of engaging with power in specific situations and the tension between autonomy and embeddedness. They also raise yet new possibilities for praxis: an interweaving of different types of politics.

Like critical utopian theory, these practices transgress the self-evidency of the nation state as the pre-eminent scale of citizenship. They illustrate different scales at which human beings can participate and belong: consider the ‘folk citizen’ and the ‘citizen of Laurieston Hall’ conceptualised by my interviewees. There was a clear critique of conventional models of citizenship as a status and identity of nationhood, and a normative vision that expressed the importance of respect and responsibility for all people, regardless of their nationality or citizenship status:

Citizenship isn't about being patriotic and understanding the systems by which each country runs, it is about respecting each other and thinking about what we need to change to reach proper equality. But I don't think people think of that when they think of citizenship, I don't think that's anybody's definition. It's not looking at the voting system and stuff, and saying what's crap about it, it's just saying 'you must understand the voting system if you're going to be a citizen'. But then understanding is not the same as understanding to the level of knowing how to be able to challenge, and to suggest better alternatives (*Interview: Penny, Coventry Peace House, 10 May 2007*)

This quote resonates with the project of critical utopian citizenship. The idea of both challenging and suggesting alternatives raises new avenues for citizenship, which will be further discussed in throughout the thesis and in the conclusion.

A vital issue lies at the heart of citizenship debates: Is citizenship a relation to a territorial community, or is it a process and a practice? The latter understanding always overflows and problematises the former; relationships and practices do not fit easily into clearly delineated boundaries. The segregation of sovereignty into clearly delineated territorial nation states is reflected in the separation from the urban from the rural, the public from the private, work from play, industry from art, separation, alienation, and the all-encompassment of 'the spectacle' – a term drawn from situationist theory that refers to a condition of capitalist society where one experiences life as 'a frozen moment of history in which it is impossible to experience real life or actively participate in the world' (Plant, 1992: 1). Critical utopian theories argue for immediate resistant practices rooted in a critical subjectivity informed by theory. Theory can offer a no-place that distances the reader allowing him or her to reflect upon dominant spatial formations from a position of critical distance. Utopian spaces can form a similar function, whilst simultaneously opening up space for grassroots participation. I considered how utopian spaces removed some of the traditional boundaries between the public and the private by creating communal space for shared activities, from organising political activities to fixing bicycles. This is done without following fixed or hegemonic spatial or theoretical blueprints, but rather through an ethos of process and experiment. This amounts to a politicisation of *everyday* life. Having highlighted the historical situatedness of dominant formations of citizenship, we might well ask, what are the contemporary historical dynamics that most require collective action? If we feel that environmental degradation is one such issue, as many of the communards that I spoke to did, then this

politicisation of the small-scale level at which we produce, consume, and produce waste is highly important. This comes close to what Andrew Dobson calls ‘ecological citizenship’ (Dobson, 2003, *passim*), which ‘deals in the currency of non-contractual responsibility, ... inhabits the private as well as the public sphere’ and is ‘explicitly non-territorial’ (Ibid: 89). I will further consider issues of ethical responsibility in Chapters 8 & 9. My main point here is how inhabiting space differently – for example, by living in an shared community with a permaculture garden – can have desirable *political* effects. The fact itself of inhabiting space differently sometimes brings people and groups into conflict with the sovereign territorial state – consider the example of squatting, discussed in this chapter, or protest activities that are considered elsewhere in this thesis (Chapters 8 & 9). Under these circumstances, powerful structures will probably be minded not to regard such actions as ‘citizenly’ – a sovereign claim on a monopoly of territory also implies a claim on a monopoly of citizenship. A critical utopian citizenship, like ecological citizenship, is based on a transgression of territory however, and on process rather than fixity: ‘Ecological citizenship ... obliges us to rethink the traditions of citizenship in ways that may, eventually, take us beyond those traditions’ (Ibid: 90).

5.3.2. Claims and stakes

Dominant notions of citizenship tied to territorial sovereignty posit possessive individualism as an ontological reality and the enclosure of land and accumulation of property as instrumental necessity. This has political and ethical effects: the destruction of social commons, the enclosure of everyday life and the physical alienation of governors from the governed. This reduces citizenship to a sum of rights and entitlements at the expense of community, participation and responsibility. Critical utopian theoretical approaches advocate a process of reappropriating land for common use, and imply decentralisation, autonomy and egalitarianism. The picture in critical utopian practice is somewhat more mixed. The absence of an ‘ideal’ model in practice seems partly to derive from the difficulties of dealing with power structures whilst simultaneously attempting to think and live differently – to exceed the limits of these structures. In the context of territorial sovereignty, some kind of ‘tactical compromise’ or negotiation is always required, even in the case of squatting (Chatterton and Hodkinson, 2007: 210). However, the absence of a single, ideal model may also

have been very much to do with differing needs and desires. Whilst members of Corani took part in income sharing, to others this was somewhat less than desirable. There was a culture of sharing non-monetary goods, and also sharing costs in many of the communities, particularly those that used the fully mutual model. Members a particular relation to the place that they lived in – they articulated feelings of ‘stewardship’ or ‘custodianship’ rather than ownership. This model also had internal problems, such as the reluctance of members to invest in large maintenance projects.

Communities also shared their properties, spaces and time with non-members (including myself!), in an effort to provide welfare and services at a local level – what theorists have termed rebuilding ‘social commons’ (Chatterton & Hodkinson, 2007: 202). These practices speak to a theory of critical utopian citizenship, since rather than attempting to take the limits of the system for granted and working within the system for change, individuals and groups are re-inventing citizenship from the bottom-up, by attempting to forge a space ‘outside’ and ‘underneath’ the state and capitalism that is run according to different values. This happens within the communities through the various alternative property models (such as cost-share and income sharing), and also outwith the communities in the local outreach initiatives. Compromise seems inevitable between the negative aspects of autonomy (reclaiming physical space from capitalism) and the positive and utopian aspects of creating something new, and opening up space for unmediated self-activity and participation. What does seem to be notable, however, is how grassroots models of property ownership seem to be under-theorised in academia – the theories that I considered do not seem to account for the extent to which individuals engaged in radical practices do still wish for a degree of economic independence. It is arguable that this is a symptom of living within a capitalist economy, but considering the vast amount of sacrifices that many of the people have been willing to make in other areas (time, energy, career, to name but a few) it seems that this point does merit further consideration, and could form a basis for further study.

5.3.3. ‘Top-down’ versus ‘bottom-up’ design

Physical space both reflects and shapes needs and desires - In David Harvey’s words ‘As we collectively produce our cities, so we collectively produce ourselves’ (Harvey, 2000: 159). Thus,

appropriating, producing and reproducing alternative, resistant spaces can be seen as a basis for the formation of a critical political subjectivity: a critical citizenship. Harvey argues, however, that ‘to materialize a space is to engage with closure (however temporary) which is an authoritarian act ... If, therefore, alternatives are to be realized, the problem of closure cannot endlessly be evaded’ (Ibid: 183). He argues that we cannot ‘leap outside of the dialectic and imagine we are not embedded and limited by the institutional and built environments that we have already created’ (Ibid: 159). However, following Marx, he argues we cannot evade the issues of utopianism and the imagination either, for ‘what distinguishes human labour and the worst of architects from the best of bees is that architects erect a structure in the imagination before realizing it in material form’ (Ibid: 159).

Critical utopian theory and practice emphasise the importance of self-activity and opening up physical space for participation. Planning, creating and designing spaces themselves become modes of participation, with the potential to facilitate belonging and feelings of ownership or having a stake in the community. These processes can take place either at the initial stages, in intentional design, or older buildings can be adapted. It is important, however, that this is not a closed process, which takes place at the start of a group’s lifespan, but remains open to the changing needs and desires of inhabitants. Spatial utopias are political phenomena. They engage with the future by making the present a better place, and in so doing create a space from which reflection on the problems of the present – both within, and outwith the utopian space – can occur.

6. Transgressing Authority: Theory

6.1. *Introduction and working definitions*

This chapter is a theoretical exploration of the concept of authority, and the ways in which formations of authority impact upon citizenship. In this first section, I will begin by summarising the relationship between citizenship and authority, and offering a working definition of authority, as a starting point for analysis. This preliminary definition will be expanded upon throughout the chapter. Marshall and Bottomore define the political element of citizenship as ‘the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body’ (Marshall & Bottomore, 1992 [1949]: 8). This sentence implies that through the institution of citizenship, political authority is made legitimate since it reflects decisions made by the body upon which authority is to be exercised. It is important to reach a working definition of authority here, but also to note that this is a complex concept debated throughout the history of political thought and is essentially contested (Connolly, 1993: 107-116). A fairly standard definition of authority is ‘the right or capacity, or both, to have proposals or prescriptions or instructions accepted without recourse to persuasion, bargaining, or force’ (Reeve, 2003a: 30-1). This will form the basis of my working definition, although I intend to expose its normative aspects, particularly with respect to the terminology of ‘right’. Definitions and debates upon the subject of authority invariably include some reference to legitimacy: authority is differentiated from power since it is in some sense justified or ‘right’ (Heywood, 1999: 130; Christiono, 2004), or simply *believed* to be justified or right by those who are motivated to act by authority (Weber, 1948: 324). An important distinction is often drawn between *de jure* and *de facto* authority (Heywood, 1999: 136; Reeve, 2003a: 31), where *de jure* authority describes the existence of a law or rule which ascribes authority that can be applied to, and *de facto* authority describes a degree of practical success. There is also an important distinction to draw between being *an* authority and being *in* authority (Connolly, 1993: 108). Both forms of authority have in common, returning to the original working definition given above, that they involve getting someone to do something they might not otherwise do without recourse to persuasion, bargaining or force. The

difference is that the former involves the subject of the authority ‘voluntarily obeying a command because one thinks it is the proper thing to do even if it is against one’s interests’ (Ibid: 109) whereas the latter involves ‘the idea of responding to coercive powers that are justifiably applied’ (Ibid: 109). The latter comes closer to a specifically political form of authority, the analytical importance of which lies in ‘its presumptive claim to be the authority of last resort, able to exert its commands within all other such relations and thus reconfigure them, if only momentarily, in the public realm’ (Smith, 2003: 107). This connects to the idea of territorial sovereignty, discussed in previous chapters – a political authority is that which can claim to hold sovereign power over a given territory. This chapter will focus mainly on specifically political authority, although there will be some overlap with other forms of authority.

Theorists of political authority often focus their arguments around different accounts of legitimacy. Max Weber divided legitimate authority (which he defined as the belief in authority, rather than its actuality) into three types; rational-legal authority depends upon formal rules and established state laws (Weber, 1948: 294-5), traditional authority relies upon long-established customs, habits and social structures (Ibid: 296-7), and charismatic authority relies on the personal appeal of a strong leader (Ibid: 295-6). Weber argues that although these bases of legitimacy are analytically separate categories, ‘the majority of empirical cases represent a combination or a state of transition among several such pure types’ (Ibid: 299-300). This intermingling of analytic categories in practice is an important theme that I will return to later.

Contemporary theorists put forward different theories of authority, but at least three important potential bases for the legitimacy of political authority recur throughout the literature: contractual consent, democratic representation and instrumentalism (Connolly, 1993: 107-116; Green, 1998: 585; Christiono, 2004: 245-6). Although these are analytically distinct forms of justification for authority, in practice they overlap and intertwine. The structure of this chapter will be based on these categories. A fourth category will also be drawn out as a common feature of all theories of authority – that they all presume hierarchy and the subordination of the autonomy of the individual to the state, another individual or a community. This theme is drawn from some forms of

anarchism, which reject all forms of authority over the individual (Godwin, 1985 [1798]; Wolff, 1998). In this chapter, similarly to the other thematic chapters on *Territory* and *Rights*, I will begin by outlining dominant theorisations of the concept of authority. The structure of this argument will be based upon the themes given above, with relevant literatures drawn from the canon of political theory. Although these imply differing views on what makes authority legitimate, they all take the structural limits of the state-capitalist system as given rather than thinking or desiring an ‘outside’ to authority, and are therefore grouped together as ‘dominant’ theories. Relationships of authority embodied in decision-making structures and processes will be criticised from the standpoint of anarchism, in particular philosophical anarchism, which argues for the illegitimacy of state authority over the individual through an immanent critique.

The second part of the chapter considers critical utopian alternatives that imagine or desire an ‘outside’ to authority, and formations of citizenship that assume authority, yet do so without attempting to blueprint or hegemonise. As a critical utopian alternative to contract theory, voluntarism is proposed; small group size and collective decision-making are counterposed to representation; immanence is opposed to the external goals of instrumentalism and non-hierarchy or disorganisation to hierarchy. As the anti-authoritarian body of theory *par excellence*, much of the theoretical basis for critical utopian alternatives will be drawn from anarchism. Critical utopian alternatives will mostly be drawn from the works of Deleuze and Guattari⁵⁹, post-left anarchism and ‘practical’ anarchism – activist literature that has arisen from movements. Post-left anarchism is useful because it provides a normative theoretical starting point for thinking about an outside or beyond to authority. Rather than simply analysing or deconstructing structures of power and authority, as is the case in much post-structuralism, these thinkers do offer something in the way of positive proposals for a potential politics. However, the language used by these thinkers is complex, metaphysical and figurative, which sometimes obscures the recommendations for praxis. Literature written by and for activists, that has emerged from movements engaged in social change,

⁵⁹ The work of Deleuze and Guattari thought is very difficult to categorise as belonging to any discrete ‘body’ of thought - see Tormey, (2006: 154) for a brief footnote discussing different ways in which other theorists have attempted (and largely failed) to ‘pigeonhole’ Deleuze’s thought. However, their work fits my criteria for a ‘critical utopian approach’ as outlined in the “Approach” chapter of this thesis.

if often less philosophically nuanced and has more simple idiom. There are many parallels and overlaps in the alternative visions coming from both the philosophical and practical viewpoints. It is unclear from whence these parallels issue: it may be that unknown routes of transmission allow for flows of language and discourse between the literature and the movement, or it may be that starting from a similar point of criticality with relation to the same dominant system, each has independently reached similar inferences. Whatever the source of the commonalities, each holds a position that is both critical of the dominant system and also suspicious of any attempts to blueprint or hegemonise, so I will consider both as critical utopian alternatives. As with the chapters on *Territory* and *Rights*, this theoretical discussion will form the basis for a consideration of praxis in utopian, autonomous communities, which again, through either coincidence, unknown transmission or similar critique reflects a critical utopian standpoint.

The foregoing discussion, which is in no way exhaustive, shows two predominant themes that run through debates on authority: power (as in power *over*)⁶⁰ and legitimacy. These again are contested concepts. In this chapter, as in the other thematic chapters of this thesis, authority is used as a sensitising concept (Bruyn, 1966: 38; Plummer, 2003: 58), or a variable tool through which different formations of politics and citizenship can be examined (Sassen, 2006: 4). Most accounts of authority, even when they are explicitly critical and view it as essentially contested and/or variable through time, do not consider that a society without any kind of authority is possible (see, for example, Pateman, 1985 p. 135; Connolly, 1993: 134). Authority is therefore widely seen to be a foundational concept. The purpose of this chapter, as with other thematic chapters, is not to evaluate the possibility of a society without authority, but rather to consider the value of imagining an ‘outside’ or alternative to authority, and the implications of *desiring* decision-making without authority for a critical utopian conception of citizenship.

⁶⁰ This is, of course, not the only way in which power can operate. The idea of ‘power *to*’ as the ability to achieve desires individually or collectively is an important one within political theory (Heywood, 1999: 123) as are poststructuralist ideas surrounding the dislocation of power and its diffusion throughout society (Newman, 2001: *passim*). ‘Power over’, however, is the form of power most associated with the idea of political authority, which is the focus of this chapter.

6.2. *Dominant approaches*

6.2.1. **Contractarianism**

Contractarianism is the political and/or moral theory that the legitimate authority of government and social moral norms must derive from the consent of the governed. Contractarianism originates from the Hobbesian line of social contract thought (Hobbes, 2006 [1651]) and continues through the classical contractarians Locke (2002 [1689]), Rousseau (2004 [1762]) and Kant (1970 [1797]) to contemporary thinkers such as Rawls (1971) and Gauthier (1986). Contractarians do not agree on the nature of the social contract. For the subjects or citizens of a contract theory, the choice to enter into the contract may create society (Rousseau), civil society (Locke), a sovereign (Hobbes and Rousseau), procedural rules of justice (Rawls), and even morality itself (Hobbes) (Boucher & Kelly, 1994: 2). The variety does not end here:

The reason why it is such a flexible tool in the hands of the theorist is that the choice posited, when one is posited, is variable ... it may be a choice of contract that binds in perpetuity, or one renewed with each succeeding generation. The choice may be historical, ideal or hypothetical, expression explicit or tacit ... motivation may be religious duty, personal security, economic welfare, moral self-righteousness (Ibid: 2).

Hobbes (2006 [1651]) is often viewed as the classic contractarian (Ibid: 1) and his defence of the social contract rests on the assumption that individuals are primarily self-interested, and are motivated by passions. Fear of others' passions in a state of nature will lead humans rationally to consent to governmental authority, and to act morally, where the moral norms are determined by a maximisation of mutual self-interest and are enforced by legitimate coercion on the part of the sovereign (Hobbes, 2006 [1651]: 70-80). Individuals in the state of nature are therefore seen to alienate their right, and also the right of future human beings, to make their own decisions, in favour of the authority of the sovereign who is subsequently entitled to coerce dissenters legitimately (Ibid: 98).

Locke (2002 [1689]) attempts to create a contractarian argument that rests on the consent of the individual, rather than upon historical consent. Although Locke's contract differs from Hobbes' in many ways, he still agrees that persons in a state of nature would willingly form a state. The authority of the state is also given legitimacy by subsequent generations through the consent of

each person. The way in which Locke defines consent is somewhat controversial. Although express consent seems favourable, and makes a man [sic] ‘a perfect member of that society’ (Locke, 2002 [1689]: 55), Locke also makes provision for individuals who do not explicitly consent to government through the idea of ‘tacit consent’: ‘every man that hath possessions, or enjoyment of any part of the dominions of any government, doth thereby give his tacit consent, and is as far forth obliged to obedience to the laws of that government during such enjoyment as anyone under it’ (Ibid: 55).

For Rawls (1971), as for Kant (Kant, 1970 [1797]), persons have access to universal reason that allows them to formulate principles of justice from a universal point of view. This allows Rawls to formulate an ‘original position’ where consent for legitimate governance is given from a situation of an epistemological veil of ignorance which corresponds to social contract theories except that it is ‘a purely hypothetical construct characterized so as to lead to a certain conception of justice’ (Rawls, 1971: 12).

All of these notions of ‘consent’ make provision for assuming or enforcing consent upon those who have not provided it expressly: they promulgate non-voluntary or indeed compulsory application of the outcome of public decisions to citizens, and to other residents excluded from the status of citizenship. What characterises the social contract tradition and modern contractarianism is ‘the philosophical search for foundations’ (Boucher & Kelly, 1994: 13). It is for this reason that I have grouped these theories under ‘dominant approaches’ – they contain implicit utopian visions that are obscured through foundational discourse.

Philosophical anarchists highlight the fictional basis of contract theory and the normative effects of positing fictional or hypothetical contracts as truth. For Godwin, it is the nature of obligation that is particularly problematic since it precludes spontaneous moral decisions in light of further information or better knowledge (Godwin, 1985 [1798]: 214). This reflects Wolff’s concern that authority is incompatible with personal autonomy, which is the primary moral obligation of the individual (Wolff, 1998 [1970]: 13). Contract theory is, to a certain extent, reflected in

contemporary democratic practice, which is open to similar criticisms. First, the notion of voluntary support for the system by all (or indeed any) citizens is hypothetical. Although ‘democratic’ choice is possible within the system, consent for the system itself is assumed as always-already given (as in Hobbes and Locke), or at the limit, unnecessary, because the system is viewed as just in itself (as in Rawls). This leads to a second point; that the system as overall frame is beyond question, and in this sense is space-determining, defining an outer limit to the possible, and therefore not only limiting the decisions that can be made by citizens, but also by rulers or ‘the sovereign’. In a sense, the system therefore becomes sovereign, rather than any individual or collection of individuals, leading to a structural bias that impedes citizens’ agency. This is even more the case with some particular citizens. Pateman (1989) in *The Sexual Contract* and Mills (1997) in *The Racial Contract* show how contract theory both reflects and plays a role in group oppression, and that the political, moral and epistemological terms of social contracts have tended to justify the domination and exploitation involved in systems of patriarchy and white supremacy respectively.

6.2.2. Democratic representation

A second way in which dominant political theory attempts to legitimise authority is through the democratic method of decision-making. Democracy, again, is an attempt to ground the state in empirical foundations: ‘for liberals (and indeed non-liberals) the answer was to create a unified aggregate, The People, which could then be represented by those who govern’ (Tormey, 2006: 144). This need to ground authority in something other than tradition arises with the modern thinkers in the need to ground authority in something other than tradition or religion (Ibid: 144; see also Wolff 1998 [1970]: 22). Democracy is an attempt to reconcile individual autonomy with authority; ‘insofar as a man [sic] participates in the affairs of the state, he is ruler as well as ruled’ (Wolff 1998 [1970]: 22).

The notion of representation is important, and usually takes the form of political representation – a physical alienation of choice, expression, action and decision-making which occurs when political actors speak, campaign, act and decide on behalf of others in the political arena. This form of

representation is prevalent within canonical and contemporary liberal theory as well as contemporary political practice (see, for example, Hobbes, 2006 [1651]: 96-97; Rawls, 1971: 199-200). In liberal democratic theory, representation (which is a form of authority, as well as a method of legitimising authority) is made legitimate through the fair inclusion of the people to be represented in the processes through which representatives are chosen and decisions are made (Christiano, 2004: 266) – usually through voting in elections. There is the implicit assumption that power is solely reflected in concrete decisions.⁶¹

Representative democracy is the most widely used in western liberal states, but is of course not the only possible form of democracy, and I would like to justify my inclusion of ‘direct’ or ‘participatory’ democracy under this heading before I proceed to highlight some problems common to both models of democracy. Rousseau (2004 [1762]), criticises the notion of political representation altogether, saying that sovereignty rests in the hands of the people, and public choice must be performed by all: ‘will cannot be represented – either it is the general will or it is something else – there is no intermediate possibility’ (Rousseau, 2004 [1762]: 112). Like the other contractarians, Rousseau bases the authority of his community in an original social pact involving the alienation of the rights of the individual ‘to the whole community’ (Ibid: 15). His notion of direct democracy by majority voting leads to the contention that such a thing as a ‘general’ will, that all ‘rational’ individuals would agree to, is indeed possible, resulting in the paradoxical contention that someone (irrational) who dissents can be ‘forced to be free’ (Ibid: 19). This rests upon an understanding of the general will as an ontological proposition – direct democracy is not only desirable because it is *fair* that all citizens are included in decision-making, but also because it allows the community to discover the *right* decisions, embodied in the ‘general will’ (Ibid: 30-31).

Rousseau’s theory is taken up by contemporary participatory democrats such as Carole Pateman, who favours Rousseau’s ‘substantive equality of active citizens’ over ‘the formal equality of

⁶¹ The quintessential statement of power-as-observable-decisions is put forward by Dahl (1961), who is comprehensively criticised by Bachrach and Baratz (1970) and Lukes (1974), who show that power is also exerted through hidden dynamics, such as agenda setting and hegemonic interest formation.

political subjects of liberal theory' (Pateman, 1985: 151). Pateman overcomes some of the criticisms of Rousseau, since she allows a role for minority voices, and views dissent as a constructive force in the political process: 'the transformation of consciousness brought about through political participation is itself a source of strength' (Ibid: 159). However, Pateman, still assumes the necessity of integration into a higher unity, and disobedience and dissent are 'evaluated' in terms of 'whether they are compatible with the principles of political morality ordering the association, and whether they contribute to the democratic ideals and goals of the community' (Ibid: 162).

6.2.3. Instrumentalism

Instrumentalism refers to theories based on the premise 'that the way in which democratic decisions ought to be made is entirely a matter of what will produce the best outcomes' (Christiano, 2004: 266). It derives from the Hobbesian idea that rational individuals leave the state of nature in order to achieve peace and stability. Instrumentalism in the contemporary context encompasses functionalist, utilitarian and operationalist approaches, and usually evaluates functional efficacy in terms of economic and/or social goods and the accumulation and distribution of wealth and resources. Authority is thus legitimate to the extent that it produces whatever is stated as the best outcome, rather than in terms pertaining to the fairness or justice of the procedures undertaken to reach this goal. Joseph Raz (1986) provides the prototypical contemporary statement of instrumentalism as the justification for legitimate political authority. His argument has two parts: the dependence thesis and the normal justification thesis. The dependence thesis states that 'all authoritative directives should be based on reasons which already independently apply to the subjects of the directives and are relevant to their action in the circumstances covered by the directive' (Raz, 1986: 47). This is linked to the second part of the thesis, called the 'normal justification thesis':

The normal way to establish that a person has authority over another person involves showing that the alleged subject is likely better to comply with reasons which apply to him ... if he accepts the directives of the alleged authority as authoritatively binding and tries to follow them, rather than by trying to follow the reasons which apply to him directly (Ibid: 53).

Merton, also a canonical functionalist, echoes this thesis, when he states that authority is effective to the extent that the orders issued by authority are consistent with group norms (Merton, 1957: 339). According to Raz and Merton, then, the state is justified in exerting authority when its commands and laws enable citizens to do what they already would reasonably desire to do; citizens have good reasons to wish for the personal well-being of themselves and other members of society, so the government is justified in helping them to achieve these goals through establishing an efficient and fair system of redistribution (Ibid: 313-320). Individuals also have an interest in having certain constitutional rights upheld, so the state is justified in passing laws and employing enforcement agencies that will uphold citizens' rights (Ibid: 261-263). There is a perceived duty to obey authority regardless of one's own assessment of the right or just thing to do in a particular instance, since a person with authority has the advantage of a transcendental viewpoint of the overall rationality of a group (Merton, 1957: 346; Raz, 1986: 61). The instrumentalist approach to decision-making and governance thus conceives of the whole of society as the integrated totality of disparate parts; a sort of problem-solving machine, seen to embody rationality and efficiency in relation to a transcendental goal such as increased production, economic growth or technological progress, which is seen as external to the machine itself and its constituent parts and citizens, and yet determines their structure and interactions.

Functionalism also assumes the division of society into separate, but inter-related and apparently integrated components as a necessary feature for the maintenance of stability and fulfilment of individual and collective needs: 'A formal, rationally organized social structure involves clearly defined patterns of activity in which, ideally, every series of actions is functionally related to the purpose of the organization' (Merton, 1957: 195). Such organisation also assumes that authority should inhere in clearly defined roles rather than in individuals (Ibid: 195). In the public sphere, bureaucratic departmentalisation and technical specialisation creates clearly defined and separated spheres for economic, political, legislative, judiciary and executive activities. There is also a complex social ritual of formality that manifests a division between the public persona of individuals and their private social lives: 'formality facilitates the interaction of the occupants of offices despite their (possibly hostile) private attitudes towards one another' (Ibid: 196). The

division between public/private, formal/informal, (discussed in more detail in Chapter 8) is mirrored in certain other divisions, for example work/leisure, production/consumption. In the social field, this is paralleled in a very distinct organisational separation between (and within) such fields as social work, medicine and education as well as in intra-field bureaucratic division such as the division of the university into separate disciplinary departments.

Deleuze and Guattari offer us some useful concepts for thinking about criticisms of instrumentalism. Segmentarity refers to the way in which phenomena are divided in order that sensing subjects can get a grip on them and applies to semiotics, perception and society (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 233). They draw a distinction between primitive, supple segmentarity, and state segmentarity. Primitive segmentarity functions through polyvocal codes that emerge from relationships that exist in local divisions that overlap rather than through a discrete state with dedicated political institutions. Communication and the formation of interests and desires occur immanently within such societies via a process of shifting relationships and experimentation rather than via a centrally organising power. State segmentarity, on the other hand, comes close to the instrumentalist vision. It is organised through an overarching and unifying logic of global capitalism that defines and motivates desires according to a unifying global economic logic, situated in an abstract field external to local groups. It then defines and organises groups according to their function in the machine (the bureaucratic departments of functionalism) and fixes people into formalised roles and identities that operate through fear and insecurity:

The administration of a great organized molar security has as its correlates a whole micro-management of petty fears, a permanent molecular insecurity, to the point that the motto of domestic policymakers might be: a macropolitics of society by and for a micropolitics of insecurity (Ibid. p. 237).

There are clear pointers here to a criticism of instrumentalism and functionalism. Whatever realm the segmentarity occurs in, its effects intertwine with and spill into other realms. At the frontier of segmentarity is the use of authority to organise bodies through the concept of ‘incorporeal transformations’ which are ‘the expressed of statements but are *attributed* to bodies’ (Ibid: 95). These are *decisions* such as prison sentences and doctors’ diagnoses, which are applied to embodied subjects against their wills and desires, categorise them and then limit their potential

interactions (see also Foucault, 1979 [1975]: 19 and *passim*). The idea, put forward by Merton, that formalised roles allow people to interact efficiently (in terms of the organisation) when fixed into formal roles, despite any personal grievances may be underwritten by a harmful psychological dynamic of fear and insecurity, fixing people into unitary (but schizophrenically divided), working/consuming identities, at the expense of psychological integration and self-creativity. State segmentarity is seen to block the flourishing of difference and newness at micro-political and macro-political levels. The previous example of dividing the university into clearly defined subject departments, preventing the interdisciplinarity and cross-over that might occur in a system with more supple segmentarity, gives an example of ways in which state segmentarity causes an increase in overcoding, so that segments ‘lose their ability to bud’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 233).

State segmentarity leads to a technocratic mode of decision-making where certain decisions are taken out of the public, democratic remit and relegated to distinct sectors - stratified or segmented, expert-led fields and areas of knowledge, each to be thought of, worked in and engaged with separately. This has implications for citizenship. Separation and mediation leads to a technocratic politics and society where experts, elites, professionals, or those with particular technical knowledge take on the task of representing others’ interests and making decisions within a particular sphere, leaving few unmediated choices for citizens to exercise in public democracy. Rather, citizen decision-making becomes an individualised and consumerised choice oriented to the desiring-goals of the transcendental capitalist economic machine. This was made explicit as a state policy in the 1991 *Citizens’ Charter*, a British political initiative launched by the then Prime Minister, John Major, ostensibly to improve public services by publicising service standards. This was couched in the discourse of citizenship, but seemed to empty citizenship of its immanent political aspects, in particular through its use of the term ‘citizen consumer’ (HMSO, 1991).

6.2.4. Hierarchical organisation

In the foregoing discussion I have considered common justifications for authority from dominant bodies of thought. Although these are to some extent competing views of legitimacy in theory, in

liberal-democratic practice they overlap and intertwine. Dominant theorists of authority start with the premise that the state is inevitable, and then attempt to make it legitimate, which leads to a series of different theories that share the same methodological inability to think outside established structures of authority. All imply and are implied by an almost defining feature of all forms of authority: hierarchy.

Hierarchy comes in various forms and is arguably present in all of the liberal justifications for authority given above. Contractarianism implies the moral and epistemological authority and coercive agency of the sovereign over subject-citizens. Representation implies a division between embodied subjects and the source of decisions and codes that partly control their bodies: there is a hierarchy of control between the representative and the represented. Wherever separation occurs within this model, for example between representative/representee and between public/private, one of the terms is elevated to the domain of agency, endowed with decision-making power, where the other is depreciated as the passive element to which the decision is merely applied. In instrumentalism, separation of society into various specialised spheres also implies hierarchy, not only often between different fields, but also within them through expertise, official positions, division of labour, variegated roles, differentials in economic reward and relations of command and respect.

The case against authority comes predominantly from anarchism. For Wolff, authority is always illegitimate, as it undermines the duty of autonomy, or the ‘fundamental assumption of moral philosophy ... that men [sic] are responsible for their actions’ (Wolff, 1998 [1970]: 12). Stirner objects to authority because it oppresses self-creativity and uniqueness, which are of primary importance (Stirner, 1993 [1844]: 5). Anarchists have been accused of radical individualism and an inability to deal coherently with social relationships (Pateman, 1985: 135). However, this criticism fails to grasp some of the complexities and nuances of the anarchist analysis of authority, which Stirner, at least, sees to be injurious of relationships and collectivity as well as the individual:

Never does the State aim to bring in the free activity of individuals, but always that which is bound to the *purpose of the State*. Through the State nothing *in common* comes to pass either, as little as one can call a piece of cloth the common work of all the individual parts of a

machine; it is rather the work of the whole machine as a unit, *machine work*. In the same style everything is done by the *State machine* too; for it moves the clockwork of individual minds, none of which follow their own impulse (Stirner, 1993 [1844]: 227, italics in the original).

It is the idea of transcendence - a value or purpose that is hierarchically abstracted from the embodied subject and his or her desires and relationships - that draws together state and capital and defines dominant models of authority and decision-making. Although the case against authority is refuted and dismissed by most normative political theory, political activism shows many instances of people trying to find an 'outside' or beyond to the various forms of hierarchy embodied in structures of 'legitimate' authority, for example the Zapatistas of Chiapas who are experimenting with models of politics that defy hierarchy and representation (Tormey, 2006) or the 'third wave' of cultural politics marked by a desire to think affirmatively about difference without being fixed into static identities or recuperated into a higher unity by the 'hegemonic "other"' (Isin & Wood, 1999: 14-5), as well as many of the groups and communities discussed in this thesis.

Anarchists have also been criticised for viewing authority as solely a property of individuals, and therefore failing to distinguish between political authority and the authority of someone who has special knowledge or skills (Pateman, 1985: 136). However, anarchists and others who attempt to conceptualise an 'outside' to authority often view the authority of the state as arising from the micro-political level (Stirner, 1993 [1844]: 165 and *passim*; Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 235). This provides a theoretical basis for resistance and the creation of alternatives.

In the upcoming section, I will discuss critical utopian alternatives to hegemonic attempts to ground authority that act as an immanent critique of hierarchy. Critical utopian approaches begin from a different logic, which asserts the possibility of an outside to authority, which is not fixed or grounded in unifying truth-claims. Critical utopian approaches begin from a standpoint of resistance – in this case resistance to hierarchy and authority. However, they are also active and creative. Here, I use 'active' in the Deleuzian sense of resisting subordination to transcendental forces. This point is important as it guides my theory selection in the upcoming section (see Chapter 3 section 3.3). For Deleuze, critique is not a reaction, but an affirmation of difference, 'the active expression of an active mode of existence' (Deleuze, 2006 [1983]: 3). What is important is

that this requires continuous critique - continuing to resist authority, representation and fixed identity in a process that Deleuze and Guattari call 'becoming'. This involves an ongoing process of active affirmation of difference through rejecting attempts to fix one's difference to a denumerable set, or majority (in the atypical understanding discussed previously in this chapter) by becoming-minor, by refusing to consent to being represented or fixed into a higher unity or purpose: 'becoming minoritarian as the universal figure of consciousness is called autonomy' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 118). Autonomy is therefore seen to be a process of flux rather than a fixed state, blueprint or outcome. The upcoming section will focus on alternative theories which attempt to conceptualise an 'outside' to authority, through autonomy, but do not posit this as a blueprint or a final state. Much of the theory is anarchist, as this is the body of thought that has most consistently attempted to think outside or beyond authority. I have purposefully selected literature from both high theory and from anti-authoritarian activist movements. Although often phrased differently, both types of literature resonate with the critical utopian approach that I am taking insofar as they attempt to conceptualise an 'outside' to relations of authority without positing a new hegemony. They emphasise creativity, self-activity and experimentation.

6.3. *Critical utopian approaches*

6.3.1. Voluntarism

Under dominant approaches, I considered how many theorists ground the rise of the state and the legitimacy of authority in a pre-historical past, a hypothetical situation or through the notion of 'tacit consent'. All these theoretical models provided a foundation for the legitimacy of authority in the consent of the governed, without this consent actually having to be expressed, or indeed believed. In contrast to this, I would like to consider theorists who put forward voluntaristic models of group membership that do not rely upon legitimate authority to cohere the group, but rather upon elective autonomy. These theories are chosen because they do not attempt to 'fix' people to a specific group or identity and attempt to enable spontaneous self-creativity, autonomy and becoming. The approaches I will consider are critical utopian, because they posit alternatives not as blueprints for a better future but rather as processes, beginning from a different logic. They do not posit fixed ontological foundations but rather the possibility for continual reassertion of difference.

A notable articulation of voluntary, non-hierarchical community is Stirner's vision of a union of egoists, where self-interested individuals⁶² unite for some common purpose, which they set out to achieve without competition or domination. He criticises production models in which economic competition and division of labour alienate one from the processes necessary for the sustenance of life. For Stirner, involvement in the production of all of the goods we desire is important for personal empowerment:

Bread is a need of all the inhabitants of a city; therefore they might easily agree on setting up a public bakery. Instead of this, they leave the furnishing of the needful to the competing bakers. Just so meat to the butchers, wine to the wine-dealers, etc. ... If I do not trouble myself about my affair, I must be content with what it pleases others to vouchsafe me (Stirner, 1993 (1844): 275-6, italics in the original).

Stirner favours a state of affairs where each one is involved in the processes that matter to that individual:

In the *guild* baking, etc., is the affair of the guild-brothers; in *competition*, the affair of chance competitors; in the *union*, of those who require baked goods, and therefore my affair, yours, the affair of neither the guildic nor the concessionary baker, but the affair of the *united*. (Stirner, 1993 (1844): 275)

Decisions are therefore taken and implemented at a level that is not abstracted from the individual. Each individual fundamentally chooses which areas of life's activities concern him or her, and enters into a *voluntary* agreement with other individuals in order to settle these issues. The groups would have to be small without complex organisational structures in order to avoid mediation or alienation of the individual from their original purpose or desire: 'What every one requires, every one should also take a hand in procuring and producing; it is *his* affair, his property, not the property of the guildic or concessionary master' (Ibid: 276). There is therefore no notion of 'tacit' consent such as we find in classic social contract theories, nor is there any issue of representation

⁶² The word 'individual' has liberal connotations, and suggests atomisation and a degree of self-identification and abstract stable subjectivity that I do not always mean to imply when I use the term. Although Stirner is popularly known as an 'individualist' anarchist, he does not actually use the term 'individual' very often, and does so mostly when he is considering liberal ideology (for example, Stirner 1993 [1844]: 200-201). He is more prone to using terms such as 'I', 'one', 'the only one' (Ibid: 5) and 'the unique one' (Ibid: 361). However, as Bob Black says 'Like it or not – personally (and "personalistically"), I like it – there's an irreducible individualistic dimension to anarchism, even social anarchism ... if it sounds as if anarchism has ... filiations with liberalism, that's because anarchism *does* have filiations with liberalism' (Black, 1997: 41). The problem comes when 'the individual' and 'the citizen' become statuses and terms abstracted from individuals themselves and their relationships – through the state, and become a representative identities. For these reasons, I will continue to use the term 'individual' with the proviso of this disclaimer.

or hierarchy. There is also no separation of the agencies of decision and action; if one is interested in eating bread, one joins a group where bread is made and does not have to follow orders from elsewhere. Each individual may therefore be involved in several groups, but not necessarily the same as any other individual, depending on where his or her interests and desires lie. Stirner's thesis has many parallels with contemporary anarchist models of affinity groups⁶³.

The voluntary nature of these imagined and practised groups is important, and avoids many of the problems of tacit consent discussed above. Voluntarism means that an individual need not be subject to any decisions that they do not agree to; in the last instance they can simply leave the group and join or form another⁶⁴. This also links in with the idea of physical space, discussed in a previous chapter. As a spatial strategy, voluntarism defies centralisation and territorial sovereignty since it requires multiple groups to exist within unbounded space. In terms of a transgressive and critical citizenship, this would tend towards multiple overlapping affiliations, none of which was sovereign over another, and would ameliorate problems of exclusivity associated with state-centred views. This comes close to Derek Heater's view of 'multiple citizenship'. Heater argues that when citizenship is understood as a social relationship involving a mutuality of rights and duties, it becomes possible and desirable to view citizenship as a practice that can occur within overlapping

⁶³ I thank Tony Burns for pointing out that my apparent endorsement of Stirner's 'union of egoists' raises the issue of whether members of the autonomous communities studied herein might be considered to be 'egoists' in Stirner's sense, especially since it is evident in the chapters on 'practice' that I do not consider them to be 'nihilists'. This is connected to the previous footnote and rests on a complex and unconventional interpretation of Stirner. In particular it is important to move away from negative associations of the translated word 'ego' with 'egotistical' in the English language (Acosta, 2009: 32). Rather, the emphasis is shifted to Stirner's conceptualisation of the 'Unique': 'from the perspective of an empty and creative self, we are thinking of multiple selves already going on in one body. There is no particular reason to think of (always imperfectly) individual bodies as the best or highest instance of the Unique, as opposed to unique desires and impulses – or unique groups... Thus what ends up being *I* or *me* – my Cause, my property, oneness, finally – has to be redefined beyond the individual body' (Ibid: 36). The suggestion is that Stirner is implying something similar to the anarchist concept of voluntarism and 'mutual aid' (Ibid: 34) through simultaneous recognition of the other's irreducible otherness and the recognition of mutually constitutive subjectivity and need for collective realisation of shared desires. This is best articulated by Stirner when he refers to the meeting of unique ones: 'The last and most decided opposition, that of unique against unique, is at bottom beyond what is called opposition, but without having sunk back into "unity" and unison' (Stirner, 1993 [1845]: 208-9). Stirner thus offers us a reversal of perspective that goes beyond opposition or nihilism, but *qua* critical utopianism overcomes the binary division of inside/outside and objective/subjective through unmediated experience. A similar concept from anarchism is articulated later in this project (chapters 8 & 9) in terms of 'affinity' and is also linked to ethical discourse through comparison with the thought of Levinas. Insofar as they advocate or experience such experience I do consider practitioners to be like 'unions of egoists' although as stated elsewhere such conceptualisations are always partial and incomplete. I would refer the yet unconvinced reader to the excellent (2009) article by Alejandro de Acosta.

⁶⁴ This idea is, of course, also present in Locke, who states that the owner of land in a commonwealth, having given only tacit consent to a government, may sell his land and is then 'at liberty to go and incorporate himself into any other commonwealth, or agree with others to begin a new one, *in vacuis locis*, in any part of the world they can find free and unpossessed' (Locke, 2002 [1689], p. 56). The problem with this view is that it is not particularly realistic when the majority of the world has been territorialised under the jurisdiction of nation states, and again implies being 'fixed' into yet another territorialising entity. The important point about the kinds of group under discussion is precisely that they are not territorial, but are rather in process; indeed, to use Deleuze and Guattari's terminology, they constitute a de-territorialisation: 'in a becoming, one is deterritorialized' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 321). The difficulty still arises with these theories, however, of how to deal with intra-group dissent or the desire of a member of a group to change the group that they are in. These are problems that do arise in practice and will be discussed in the upcoming chapter.

entities at different scales, for example local initiatives, EU-wide welfare and global environmental protection (Heater, 1999: 179). I find this idea of multiple citizenship compelling, but it becomes contradictory when associated with a sovereign state. Heater argues for a sovereign world state as a ‘universal polity’ to which civil allegiance will be transferred (Ibid: 155). The problem with this view is that it remains state-centric, and therefore continues to rely on the same foundational premises as contract theory, and necessarily privileges an exclusive form of citizenship above all others (Hoffman, 2004: 131). What is needed is a way of conceptualising group membership that does not involve centralisation and the alienation of selfhood to an abstracted entity. This also brings up issues of avoiding or warding off the formation of centralised authority. Such issues are common within activist literature that has arisen from groups and movements involved in voluntaristic affinity groups⁶⁵.

6.3.2. Small groups and collective decisions

Previously, I examined a body of mainstream political theory that attempts to ground the legitimacy of authority in the inclusion of citizens in decision-making through the process of democracy. I criticised democratic theory, saying that it presupposes some form of representation, which can oppress minority voices and self-creativity. A wider critique of ‘representation’ such as that put forward by Tormey (Tormey, 2006) encompasses the theories of participatory democrats such as Rousseau and Pateman as well as the early liberals. The act of representation occurs when Rousseau assumes that a body of people can exist as a unified aggregate, ‘The People’ (Rousseau, 2004 [1762]: 51-63 *passim*)⁶⁶. The idea of a singular ‘people’ who share a singular will or set of desires is what Max Stirner would term a ‘spook’ (Stirner, 1993 [1844]: 39) - an ideological construction to which the self-creativity and contingent desires of embodied subjects are subordinated. One can only be said to be a part of ‘the people’ to the extent to which one conforms

⁶⁵ See Chapters 8 & 9 for an explicit discussion of the concept of affinity as a logic and strategy of ethics and resistance. The ‘small groups’ discussed in this chapter might also be termed ‘affinity groups’. In this chapter I am concentrating more on internal organisation (or dis-organisation) as transgressive alternatives to relations of authority and hierarchy.

⁶⁶ Indeed, this is the basic premise of all democratic theory, which translated from the Greek literally means ‘rule by the people’ (Rittberger, 2003: 139).

to the desires of the majority. This is in itself an act of representation – one is represented to one's self as a member of an imagined community with interests and desires that are not one's own.

Representation of any kind (including both the political and ideological forms discussed above) leads to what Deleuze and Guattari (1988: 70) call overcoding – the loss of an excess of meaning through translation. In the context of political representation, overcoding is happening in at least two respects. First, there is the overcoding of the population at large, the excess being citizens (and non-citizens!) who did not vote for the winning party, and therefore have played no role whatsoever in decisions that will govern their lives. We also have the excess of individuals' own subjectivities even when they did vote for the winning party, insofar as fluid and multiple desires cannot be re-presented by a fixed and static other, be it another individual, party line, ideology and so forth, without a loss of excess meaning. Even the very idea of a fixed subjectivity, a single subject who speaks when (s)he says 'I', is brought under question by Deleuze and Guattari, and seen as imposing a false unity on multiplicity, and stasis on flows and variance:

The only assemblages are machinic assemblages of desire and collective assemblages of enunciation. No significance, no subjectification: writing to the n th power (all individuated enunciation remains trapped within the dominant significations, all signifying desire is associated with dominated subjects). An assemblage, in all its multiplicity, necessarily acts on semiotic flows, material flows, and social flows simultaneously (Ibid: 25).

Unified subjectivity is seen to be a product of arborescent Western thought and results in stagnant, oppressive social forms. Power relations and social forces are able to express a person's identity. They are represented to themselves and are organised. Deleuze and Guattari's atypical understanding of the concept of 'minority' is important here, as it allows us to gain access to the ways in which democratic representation does not only lead to the authority of either an elite group of people over a smaller number, nor the majority over the minority, but to the authority of ideology over agency.

For Deleuze and Guattari, difference is conceptualised by an act of comparison to a dominant set. The dominant set is termed by the authors 'majority' and is a standard measure against which all variants are assessed – the majority is therefore always lesser in number than minorities. This

atypical understanding of the term ‘majority’ rests on an understanding of difference and multiplicity as ontologically prior to sameness or identity: to perceive two (or three, or *n*...) things as ‘the same’ suppresses or obscures the difference presupposed by there being more than one thing in the first place: ‘A determination different from that of the constant will therefore be considered minoritarian, by nature and regardless of number, in other words, a subsystem or an outsystem’ (Ibid: 117). This has implications not only for the oppression of minority individuals, but also for the quality of decisions, in that the majority status blocks flows of creativity and desire by fixing people into predetermined identities. To substantiate this in the context of decision-making: people are making decisions every single moment of every day, and their choices will vary from minute to minute depending on mood, context and so on. To imagine that another individual, or even an abstract party line, can always speak for multiple others in their multiple states of being or represent their interests and desires is problematic, and results not only in the suppression of desiring subjects’ choices, the oppression of those subjects to the outcome of decisions, but also the limitation of choice itself, which can only be multiplied by uninhibited experimentation.

This has implications for citizenship. Contra theorists such as Young (1989) and Kymlicka (2005), who propose that the problem of minority be solved through special citizenship rights and representation for variously defined social or cultural ‘groups’, a Deleuzoguattarian framework denies static modes of individuation altogether. What Tormey (2006) calls the ‘post-representational’ politics of Deleuze and Guattari stands against any forms of fixed identity: ‘A singularity is something active, something one becomes, whereas an identity is something that is passive, something that others construct for you’ (Tormey, 2006: 9). I will be further considering the alternative politics that might be offered by a post-representational politics under critical utopian alternatives. I would like at this point to note a parallel between post-representational theories and what has been called a ‘third wave of cultural politics’ (Isin & Wood, 1999: 14) that also resists the identity politics of previous eras, exhibiting ‘a growing dissatisfaction with these efforts to accentuate difference and a desire for thinking affirmatively about identity without either *freezing* or *dissolving* difference among groups’ (Ibid: 14). Critical utopian citizenship may have

something to offer here, by thinking beyond traditional static structures of representation and identity.

Literature written by and for anarchistic activists also tends to cover the issue of decision-making structures explicitly and extensively. Two texts have been particularly important in informing anarchist ideas about group organisation and decision-making structures in movements for social change. These are “The Tyranny of Structurelessness” written around 1970 by Jo Freeman, a woman engaged in the women’s liberation movement, who argues on the side of structure and formal organization. A follow-up text to this was written by Cathy Levine called “The Tyranny of Tyranny”, which refutes the premises and political conclusions made by Freeman⁶⁷. Although Levine’s is the seminal reply, Freeman’s controversial article has provoked other demonstrative replies, such as that of McQuinn (2002), which I shall also discuss.

Freeman’s analysis revolves around the idea that informal groups without clear organisational structures are susceptible to power struggles and undemocratic hierarchies. She argues that a lack of formal structure encourages ‘unquestioned hegemony’, since ‘the rules of how decisions are made are known only to a few and awareness of power is limited to those who know the rules’ (Freeman, 2005 [1970]: 2). She also argues that lack of formal structure leads to the formation of elites, where cliques of friends dominate groups and decisions, and also encourages a “Star” system’ (Ibid: 3; capitalisation and quotation marks in the original) where certain members are perceived to be representative of a whole group or movement, without having to undergo democratic election. Her final criticism is that informal groups are not politically effective, and are only useful for a consciousness-raising phase of a movement, rather than for achieving any real change (Ibid: 4). She then proceeds to recommend seven principles of ‘democratic structuring’. These are: delegation of authority for specific tasks by democratic procedures, requiring those in

⁶⁷ The precise date for Levine’s essay seems to be unknown, as is sometimes the case for texts emerging from activist movements. The two essays were published together in 1984 in a paperback edition by rebel press called “Untying the Knot: Feminism, Anarchism and Organisation”. The *Anarchist Federation* produced a freely distributed pamphlet based on this edition, with additional commentary. That this pamphlet is still in wide circulation in radical activist movements attests to its influence. I will be referring to the 8-page *Anarchist Federation* version of the texts in the upcoming section. The pamphlet is undated, but was obtained from The Anarchist Bookfair, London 2005, so I will refer to this date in the text.

authority to be responsible to those who selected them, the distribution of authority among ‘as many people as is reasonably possible’, rotation of tasks, allocation of tasks along ‘rational criteria’, frequent diffusion of information and equal access to resources (Ibid: 5).

Freeman’s essay has been widely criticised, particularly by those tending towards an anarchist viewpoint. In her reply to the essay, Cathy Levine argues that small, structureless groups are not as Freeman seems to argue, ineffective and unintentionally oppressive, but are rather ‘a valid, conscious strategy for building a revolutionary movement’ (Levine, 2005: 5). Small groups, without leadership or organisation, are in fact seen to be less ‘tyrannical’ than large, hierarchical groups that alienate their members through size and organisation:

A large group functions as an aggregate of its parts – each member functions as a unit, a cog in the wheel of the large organisation. The individual is alienated by the size, and relegated to struggling against the obstacle created by the size of the group – as example, expending energy to get a point of view recognised. Small groups, on the other hand, multiply the strength of each member. By working collectively in small numbers, the small group utilises the various contributions of each person to their fullest, nurturing and developing individual input, instead of dissipating it in the competitive survival-of-the-fittest/smarest/wittiest spirit of the large organisation (Ibid: 5).

It is interesting that in the above quote, the metaphor of the ‘machine’ re-emerges, which is also evident in Deleuze and Guattari (see particularly (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004 [1984]: 1-57) and Stirner (Stirner, 1993 [1844]: 227, quoted previously). When tasks are too far removed from an abstracted transcendental goal, and divided up between too many people who play only a small part in its realisation, these authors argue, the individual is estranged from her autonomous activity and experiences alienation. The small group, for Levine, is the antidote to mass hierarchical organisations with centralised control - such as the capitalist, imperialist state - but also, Levine argues, traditional (male) Left party politics (Ibid: 5). Levine argues that Freeman fails to recognise that small groups are particularly fitting for the social politics of the women’s movement, which involves a rejection of the patriarchal values of the male left and therefore also of their organisational structures. Organising, for Levine, should not concentrate exclusively on a revolution or power takeover, but rather become a matter of personal development and ‘building a women’s culture’ (Ibid: 6). This culture should be resolutely opposed to mainstream culture and defy cooptation. Working at this micro-level is seen to be vital, since ‘the ruling class has

representative pigs inside the head of every member of society' (Ibid: 6). Again, we have the theme of representation and the idea that authority operates on and at the micro-political and psychological level of the embodied subject.

Small groups are seen to be the point at which 'psychology intersects political involvement' (Ibid: 6), and therefore the best space for making and implementing decisions. The problems of implicit elitism and hidden hierarchies are not solved by instituting formalised hierarchies, but rather something which should also be addressed at the micro-level, by recognising personality differences and insecurities and working with them (Ibid: 7). This idea that psychology is political, and we should attend to the micro-politics of personalities and relationships when organising in groups is repeated by another critic of Freeman, who attacks the 'fear of freedom, friendship and community, as well as the fetish for sterile, reified, rule-bound relationships' (McQuinn, 2002, http://www.geocities.com/kk_abacus/iaaa/tyranny.html, accessed July 2, 2009) that emanates from her article. McQuinn argues that Freeman's 'principles of democratic restructuring', listed above, are on the whole better accomplished by smaller groups than the large, organised groups that Freeman advocates, bar two of her suggestions that he argues are explicitly based on authoritarian assumptions (they are, indeed, the two of the principles that explicitly refer to the term 'authority'):

"distribution of authority among as many people as is reasonably possible" (anathema to anarchists in the sense of political authority that she apparently includes in her definition) and "requiring all those to whom authority has been delegated to be responsible to those who selected them" Tell that to the politicians you elect, suckers! (Ibid)

There is a tendency amongst Freeman's critics, in common with Stirner, to repudiate structure and mediation in favour of spontaneity. Bringing decisions down to the level of the small group allows for the integration of the politics of organisation and decision-making with the politics of personalities and personal relationships. Although the problem of authority is raised, it is seen as something that should be acknowledged, brought into the open, and overcome, rather than reified into formalised and rule-bound roles. This is appropriate to feminist politics, which often insists that the personal is political.

The foregoing discussion posits small groups as an alternative to large, centralised representative democracy. However, it might be noted that Rousseau, whom I also included under dominant approaches, also proposed a limit to the size of states (Rousseau, 2004 [1762]: 109). Small groups for decision-making do not preclude representation of the type considered previously, and majority voting, even in a small group would exclude and oppress the desires and self-creativity of minorities. For this reason, activist groups in movements of resistance often rely on the process of consensus decision-making. In a recent book written by and for activists, the reasoning behind consensus is explained:

At its core consensus is a commitment to find solutions that are acceptable to all. Instead of voting for an item, consensus works creatively to take into account everyone's needs. Consensus is about finding common ground with decisions reached *in a dialogue between equals*, who take each other seriously and who recognise each other's equal rights. No decision will be made against the express will of an individual or minority. Instead the group constantly adapts to all its members' needs (The Seeds for Change Collective, 2007: 53).

Consensus means that all members of a group have to agree to a decision before action is taken. It means that minorities have the power to veto and so cannot be ignored, but that creative solutions must be found to their concerns through a (sometimes long) process of negotiation, before any action can be taken.

There are many different procedures for consensus, some of which will be discussed in the next chapter when I move on to a consideration of practices in the communities that I visited. At this point, it is important to note that consensus differs from both representative and direct democracy in that it does not involve representing the group as a coherent and unified body, or 'a people' before the decisions are made – conflict is indeed assumed and can lead to more creative solutions. The process itself builds commitment to the group and empowers individuals since decisions must be fully supported by all members before action is taken. It also helps to avoid the formation of hierarchies (Ibid: 62). It is a critical utopian process, because decisions are made immanently, with no presumed outcome and no foundational grounds are posited that limit the outcome. The process opens decisions to the assertion of difference and criticism from any angle. It also heralds a new kind of politics and a transgressive role for critical citizens. By practising and showing something new and different, that *works*, groups who make decisions by consensus are also engaged in the

political act of exiting from the dominant system, in what Deleuze and Guattari would call a ‘line of flight’, whilst simultaneously creating and illustrating something new, that allows for the autonomous becomings of all members within the context of the group. Consensus favours creative ideas over opinions, as termed by Alfredo Bonanno in the following passage:

What is an opinion? It is a flattened idea, an idea that has been uniformed in order to make it acceptable to the largest number of people. Opinions are massified ideas. It is important for power that these opinions be maintained because it is through opinion, the control of opinion, that they obtain given results, not least the mechanisms of propaganda and electoral procedures through the use of mass media (Bonanno, 1998 [1996], http://www.geocities.com/kk_abacus/ioaa/tension.html accessed April 8, 2009).

Consensus means understanding our own desires, needs and ideas but also being willing and open to listen and to modify and negotiate these in the light of what others have to say, and their needs, desires and ideas. No member’s needs or desires are represented, fixed or oppressed by founding myths that limit the decisions that can be made but are rather assumed to be open to negotiation and creativity within the context of the group.

6.3.3. Immanence

I have previously considered the instrumentalist view of legitimate authority, which posits that authority is legitimate to the extent that it embodies and enforces group rationality as defined in relation to a transcendental goal or outcome. This leads to a splitting of functions and formalised organisational structures and integrated components, turning the group into a kind of problem-solving machine. A critical utopian alternative to this comes from a body of theory, or more accurately a grouping of concepts, sometimes referred to as immediatism – associated with post-left anarchy, and also found within literature arising from activist movements. There is a particular emphasis on the immanent articulation and realisation of desires, rather than the transfer of authority to abstract structures, as in instrumentalism and in the vanguardist politics of the traditional left. Bey articulates this in his idiosyncratically poetic language:

A utopian poetics helps us to know our desires. The mirror of utopia provides us with a kind of critical theory which no mere practical politics nor systematic philosophy can hope to evolve. But we have no time for theory which merely limits itself to the contemplation of utopia as “no-place place” while bemoaning the “impossibility of desire”. The penetration of everyday life by the marvellous – the creation of “situations” belongs to the “material bodily principle”, and to the imagination, and to the living fabric of the present (Bey, 1994: 4)

A problem with instrumentalism highlighted in the foregoing discussion was that it separated the individual from his or her immediate desires which were then abstracted to a distant goal (an implicit and obscured ‘utopia’) that is then deferred and separated from individuals’ autonomous activity. Consumerism is offered as a promise of self-fulfilment, but one which is separated from the productive work which individuals have to undertake in order to partake in its pleasures: ‘The Totality isolates individuals and renders them powerless by offering only illusory modes of self-expression, modes which seem to promise liberation of self-fulfilment but in fact end by producing more mediation and alienation’ (Ibid: 27). Immediatist approaches not only criticise the separation of different spheres of economic activity, but the separation of production from consumption, and of work itself from leisure or ‘free time’ (Bonanno, 1998 [1977]: 16-25; Black, 1996, *passim*). Like Deleuze, Bonanno shows how we can move from negation to autonomy through a logic of creativity and autonomy:

Through the need for communism the need for non-work moves from the negative aspect (opposition to work) to the positive one: the individual’s complete availability to themselves, the possibility to express themselves absolutely freely, breaking away from all models, even those considered to be fundamental and indispensable such as those of production (Bonanno, 1998 [1977]: 19)

These approaches are critically utopian because they start from a different logic – a logic which is anti-authoritarian, anti-hierarchical, anti-mediation and anti-alienation, but they do not simply define themselves in opposition, nor imagine an impossibly distant blueprint for a better future, but extol the joys of realising it in the here and now, through practice and continual experimentation. These themes have echoes in activist literature.

The Anti-Mass: Methods of Organizing for Collectives, usually referred to simply as *Anti-Mass* is a pamphlet written in the 1970s (the exact date of origin is unknown) by members of the countercultural scene in Berkley, California, who were critical of both Leninism and Liberalism (The Red Sunshine Gang, 1999 [c. 1970]). The authors of the pamphlet make an innovative distinction between ‘mass’ and ‘class’, using an atypical understanding of the concept of class: a distinction that is seen to be fundamental to revolutionary practice but previously neglected. Mass

denotes a specific form of organisation; that of dominant culture and society. It is characterised by the atomisation of individuals and households:

Most people think of the mass in terms of numbers – like a crowded street or a stadium. But it is actually structure that defines its character. The mass is an aggregate of couples who are separate, detached and anonymous. They live in cities physically close yet socially apart.’ (Ibid: 1).

The mass is a product of hierarchical organisation and unequal capital, an instrumental machine geared towards the maximisation of economic growth: ‘The social existence of the mass – its rules and regulations, the structuring of its status, roles and leadership – are organised through consumption (the mass market)’ (Ibid: 1). To this idea of mass – atomisation and hierarchy – is opposed class; a ‘consciously organized social force’, which is composed of what the authors term ‘small groups’, very similar to Stirner’s union of egoists or contemporary affinity groups. The function of a small group is to ‘break out of the mass – specifically from the isolation of daily life and the mass structure of the movement’ (Ibid: 2). The small group develops into a ‘collective’ when it manages to create an independent existence and purpose of its own, and neither defines itself exclusively in negative or oppositional terms, nor in relation to a transcendent goal: ‘the formation of a collective begins when people not only have the same politics, but agree on the method of struggle’ (Ibid: 2).

This brings up an important point concerning authority and decision-making. Despite the fact that this section aims to concentrate on forms of decision-making that offer an alternative to hierarchical, statist forms, it is very difficult to discuss these without also discussing wider social change. Decision-making implies processes that are organised in some way, and organising decision-making processes in a way that is different from the hierarchical dominant modes of the status quo is always-already a mode of resistance. It implies structural renewal and the wilful privileging of the social principle over and against the political principle. There is therefore no separation between decision-making for daily life, and decision-making for social change, nor is there a separation between the organisational structures before ‘the revolution’ or after: ‘the answer to alienation is to make yourself the subject, not the object, of history’ (Ibid: 2).

This spatial strategy also removes the separation or mediation of spheres of life and activity that occur through orientation to a deferred and transcendental goal: ‘the priority of local action is an attempt to unify everyday life and fragment the mass. This level of consciousness is a result of rejecting the laws of mass behaviour based on Leninism and TV ideology’ (Ibid: 8). Decisions are taken *by* the group, *for* the group, and not for any externalised aim or purpose dictated by an authority with access to a transcendental reason⁶⁸.

Wider social change may be perceived as desirable, but this is not the sole or primary aim of the group, since the group has immanent pleasure. The fact that there is no segregation of fields of activity and no division of labour also means that no group is subordinate to another group. Although hierarchies may emerge in this model, of the informal kind which Jo Freeman instances, this spatial strategy does not allow them to escalate: ‘Small size restricts the area which any single individual can dominate. This is true both internally and in relation to other groups’ (Ibid: 4). The small group size means that ‘relations of inequality can be seen more clearly and dealt with more effectively’ (Ibid: 4). The solution to inequality and emergent authority becomes one of personal and group development, rather than one of mass politics, abstracted identities and formalised roles – a critical utopian citizenship of presence and activity, rather than representation, absence and inactivity. This is a politics that acts upon dominant models of citizenship both by defining itself against the abstract individualism and alienated status of the concept of citizenship whilst simultaneously positing an alternative practice of activity, creativity and participation in everyday life.

⁶⁸ The way that such groups might engage with one another and with wider society is through the network form, as theorised by Juris (2008) and Robinson & Karatzogianni (2010). The communities in this project were involved in networks such as Radical Routes (<http://www.radicalroutes.org.uk/> accessed 11 February 2010) and Diggers and Dreamers (<http://www.diggersanddreamers.org.uk/> accessed 11 February 2010). Issues of networking and connection are not the focus of this thesis but do overlap with some of the issues raised in chapters 8 & 9 in sections on ethics, community and politics.

6.3.4. Non-hierarchy

In the previous section on dominant approaches, I considered how many thinkers view hierarchy as a natural state of affairs, both in terms of the state and within personal relationships. I also began to consider how theorists such as Deleuze and Guattari and Stirner have conceptualised ‘becoming’ and autonomy, which undermine authority by asserting difference, self-activity and experimentation as a mode of resistance to authority which is always-already creative and affirmative. It is important to note that anarchists are also suspicious of power that arises at the micro-level of personal relationships, and not only of state authority.

This does not mean that an anarchist would necessarily deny the authority of someone with special knowledge or skills. Bakunin, for example, in his essay on authority states that he would happily submit to a boot-maker in the matter of boots, and an architect or engineer should he want to build a canal, yet would ‘allow neither the boot-maker nor the architect nor the savant to impose his authority on me’ (Bakunin, 2004 [1971]: 19). However, the same reason that would persuade him to accept the authority of the knowledge of a specialist, he argues,

forbids me ... to recognise a fixed, constant and universal authority, because there is no universal man, no man capable of grasping in all that wealth of detail, without which the application of science to life is impossible, all the sciences, all the branches of social life. And if such universality could ever be realised in a single man, and if he wished to take advantage thereof to impose his authority upon us, it would be necessary to drive this man out of society, because his authority would inevitably reduce all the others to slavery and imbecility (Ibid: 20).

Authority, and hierarchies of knowledge in relationships should be fluid and changing, according to this view. There is still an explicit suspicion of authority, even at this micro-political level, should it be allowed to accumulate. The avoidance or warding-off of accumulating and stultifying authority is thus something that critical utopian approaches have to address in the positing of any alternative. It will not do to simply posit a utopian society with no forms of authority – again, this reflects the critical utopian approach, which begins from a different logic to the dominant society but views this as contingent and open to constant negotiation.

Some recommendations for a continual reappraisal and critique of conditions of hierarchy and authority can be found in Deleuze and Guattari and Stirner, and these have previously been outlined in terms of ‘becoming’ and ‘lines of flight’. More lucidly practical advice can again be found in activist literature. The authors of *Anti-Mass* set out some particulars for organising collectives in a way that operates against the mass. First and foremost comes the issue of size, which should:

not be larger than a band – no orchestras or chamber music please. The basic idea is to reproduce the collective, not expand it ... the difference between expansion and reproduction is the difference between adding and multiplying. The first bases its strength on numbers and the second on its relationships between people (Ibid: 4).

The collective should reject mass politics and vanguards, and focus on local action and micro-politics: ‘the aim of the collective is to feel new thoughts and act new ideas – in a word create its own spaces’ (Ibid: 7). The collective should also recognise difference rather than attempting to impose unity, both in internal relations, and in external relations with other groups (Ibid: 9). There should be a concentration on ‘self-activity’, which is opposed to work/labour and defined as ‘the reconstruction of the consciousness (wholeness) of one’s individual life activity. The collective is what makes the reconstruction possible because it defines individuality not as a private experience but as a social relation’ (Ibid: 15-16). It is also important to turn criticality inward, to the micro-political relationships of the group, in order to avoid emergent hierarchy and stultifying authority:

One of the hardest things to do is see social relations – those within the collective – in political terms. The tendency is to be sloppy ... about relations between friends. Rules can no longer be the framework of discipline. It must be based upon political understanding. One of the functions of analysis is that it can be applied internally (Ibid: 16).

Again, we have the theme of ongoing critique and the recognition that even in a small group with similar political views there will always be difference and disagreement, and that these must be recognised, and worked out in practice. This has implications for a critical utopian conception of citizenship – the emphasis on activity and working out differences without mediation suggests an active and participatory form of membership beyond the mere rhetoric of neo-liberal governmental discourse, exposing citizenship as a process and a relationship, rather than simply a formalised and static status. I will consider this more in the concluding section of the next chapter, on transgressing authority in practice.

6.4. *Summary of chapter*

In this chapter, I have attempted to address two of the research questions put forward in section 1.3 of this thesis: ‘out of what historical conditions do dominant models of citizenship arise, what do they have in common, and what are their effects?’ and ‘what alternatives are offered by critical utopian theory?’ I have done this by concentrating on how formations of authority affect the institution of citizenship, particularly in terms of participation and belonging. Dominant theorisations of authority were judged to draw on four potential bases for legitimacy: contractarianism, democracy, instrumentalism and natural inequality of hierarchy. The practices associated with these theorisations were seen to have political and ethical effects on citizenship: citizens become subject to a determinate system that they play no role in forming or selecting, minority voices and belonging are further suppressed or oppressed by being subjugated by the majority, citizens’ desires and interests are subjugated to a transcendental goal, and citizens are excluded from areas of knowledge and decisions that affect their lives. Many of these problems were seen to originate from an implicit utopianism based in ontological and foundational assumptions resulting in a static and fixed vision of citizenship as a legal status and identity within a hierarchical and differentiated state rather than as a relationship and a process in a face-to-face society. This vision of citizenship is exceeded and transgressed by practices and processes of everyday life. Critical utopian theories attempt to account for this complexity by offering possibilities for non-hierarchy and anti-authoritarian processes of governance that begin from a position of critique but simultaneously offer creative alternatives. These included voluntarism, collective decision-making in small groups, the immanent expression of desire through the transgression or removal of boundaries between spheres of life, such as work/leisure, governing/living, and an ethos of non-hierarchy in personal relationships. What draws critical utopian approaches together is an emphasis on everyday life and practice. For this reason, it is important to consider examples of critical utopian practices (as defined in the “Methods” chapter section 3.4.1.) in order to address how they speak to, and even more importantly, how they transgress and further critique, critical utopian alternatives to formulations of citizenship founded on the idea of legitimate authority. The upcoming chapter, “Transgressing Authority: Practice”,

addresses in terms of authority the third and fourth research questions of section 1.3 of the Introduction: ‘What theoretical and practiced alternatives to dominant models of citizenship are offered by political agents in autonomous spaces?’, and ‘what can a dialogue between theory and practice tell us about the conditions for a critical utopian citizenship?’.

7. Transgressing Authority: Practice

7.1. Typology

	Kebele	S.hill	HHP	CPH	Find.n	MGC	LSC	Corani	LH
Formal/ written procedures for meetings	X occasional	X Coloured cards	X unused		X			X	
Informal/ unwritten conventions	X		X in practice	X		X	X		X
Delegation of decisions to subgroups	X	X			X		X		X
No formalised delegation			X	X		X		X	
Representation for some/all decisions			X		X				
Full participation	X	X		X		X	X	X	X
Full consensus required to pass a decision	X			X		X	X	X	X
Majority vote sometimes/always sufficient to reach decision		X	X		X				
Interpersonal session				X	X	X			?
Group size <10 for decisions			X	X		X	X	X	
Group size 10-19 for decisions	X						X		
Group size 20-49 for decisions		X					X		X
Group size >50 for decisions					X				

Figure 7-1: Typology showing forms of organisation in autonomous communities

7.2. Actualisations: transgressing authority in utopian practice

The foregoing discussion has outlined how dominant state-centred models of authority define this concept by reference to its legitimacy. Theories of legitimate authority included notions of consent given through historical or hypothetical contracts, notions of fairness through forms of inclusion in democratic decision-making, instrumentalism as orientation to a shared transcendental goal, and hierarchy as inequality of personal skills or knowledge. I contrasted these to critical utopian models, which are voluntaristic, non-representative, rely on immanent social relations and self-activity rather than the separation of spheres of life and mediation between deciders and doers, and attempt to overcome emerging relational hierarchies. In this chapter I turn to a discussion of how practices within autonomous communities address these themes.

The sources for the information given in this chapter include interviews, participant observation and documentary analysis. Interviews are most important for considering the effects of structures of authority and decision-making upon individuals, and how individual's beliefs and desires are either actualised or suppressed through these processes. They are also important for obtaining factual information about community organisation and processes, although this is verified through participant observation and documentary analysis. Some interviewees have more knowledge in certain areas than others, which is also an integral part of structures of authority, and I will try to take this into account. Formal structures and processes are often accessible through documentary analysis of publications by the community or written constitutions. These must also be triangulated or verified through observation and interviews, however, as the fact of something being written down does not confirm its establishment in practice. The first part of the chapter attempts to address the given themes descriptively, and also provides some interpretation of the effects of various structures and processes, with a particular concentration on the quality of decisions and inclusion (these themes have been drawn from the previous chapter's theoretical discussion as being important effects of structures of authority). The second part of the chapter takes a more analytical approach, considering the importance of the dialogue between theory and practice for the central theme of this thesis: critical utopian citizenship. Here, I will try to account for how practices

address or parody either dominant or critical utopian theoretical models, and where they diverge from and transgress theory.

7.2.1. Consent

In the previous chapter, I considered how some dominant models of authority attempt to justify the legitimacy of the state by positing some kind of foundational consent. Consent was seen to be given in either a pre-historical past or hypothetically, and was usually grounded in discourses of rationality or reason. I criticised these notions by highlighting the fictive nature of their posited ontological bases and then by highlighting their excluding and oppressive effects upon minorities. As an alternative to these theories I considered the critical utopian approach of voluntarism that relied upon elective autonomy to cohere groups, which allowed for spontaneity and self-creativity of group members. From this discussion, I have drawn out the following questions, which I shall use to structure a discussion of practices in autonomous communities:

- Do autonomous communities challenge contractarian models of consent, and if so, how?
- What are the effects of alternative models upon inclusion, belonging and commitment?

7.2.1.1. Do autonomous communities challenge contractarian models of consent, and if so, how?

All of the communities that I visited had voluntary membership. Members choose to join⁶⁹. As a spatial strategy, voluntarism means that members of a group might be united by shared values, aims or purposes⁷⁰, rather than by birth or nationhood or the fact of sharing a territory. These are often instituted in a ‘contract’ or constitution⁷¹ of some sort, which will pre-exist members’ joining (except for founding members) and so preclude them from the process of deciding on the content at the point of joining, although they may have opportunity to change the constitution once they are a

⁶⁹ A notable exception would be children of members who were under an age of independence, although I will have to exclude children and young people from this analysis, because I did not have the opportunity to interview any during my fieldwork.

⁷⁰ The variety and nature of communities’ shared beliefs, principles and goals and the ways in which they are constitutionalised are considered further in Chapter 9.

⁷¹ Examples of community constitutions that I was able to access can be found in appendices 5, 6, 7 & 8.

fully fledged member. Unlike the historical or hypothetical consent models of contractarianism, members *expressly* and voluntarily ‘sign up to’ the ‘contract’:

In joining you would be [signing up to the agreed aims and principles]. I mean you are taking on the full package if you join, and the joining process is not quick for that reason. One, we wish to get on together and two, we have particular aims, so unless, well, somebody could get involved with us, challenge us about our aims, convince us all to change them and then join on that basis, but it’s more likely to be the other way round, people come along and find out what we are about, they are attracted to it, and then they join (*Interview: Guy, Corani, 7 July 2007*).

Long joining processes are typical to all of the residential communities⁷² that I visited during fieldwork, for example Mornington Grove Community website provides the following outline of membership procedures:

- First we ask all enquirers to write us a letter saying something about yourself and why you would like to live communally.
- This is followed by an invitation to an open afternoon.
- If both the community and the enquirer wish to continue the process, you are then invited to a meal at each house.
- The next stage is to spend four days living in the community.
- The enquirer can then apply, and a consensus decision about their application is reached at a meeting.
- After moving in there is a 6 month probation period. A review meeting at the end of the 6 months gives the new member and the rest of the Community a chance to raise any issues. Membership may be terminated at this time, but chances are you’ll be accepted as a full member.

(Morning Grove Community, 2006, *How to Join*, from <http://www.morningtongrovecommunity.org.uk/join.htm> accessed July 4, 2009)

Although the lengths and timing of each stage vary between communities, this example serves as a fair illustration of the procedures involved. These procedures exist so that the community members and the applicant can have time to get to know each other, and also so that the applicant can be fully aware of the commitment that they making.

Voluntarism also implies an exit strategy for discontented members. A member of the New Findhorn Association (NFA) mentioned the potential for departure at the last instance if someone disagreed with a decision⁷³:

⁷² See typology in Chapter 5, “Territory” for a list of residential and non-residential communities

RF: *What would happen if somebody refused to abide by a decision which had already been made?*

KK: Well, I mean people usually leave by that point. The thing is that we do so much together, and if you are not together you're outside. We wouldn't deliberately, or I hope we wouldn't deliberately, push someone to feel outside. But they would probably feel outside anyway (*Interview: Kay Kay, NFA Findhorn, 18 June 2007*).

Leaving a group or community is not easy, particularly if it is your home, and is something that is only done as a last resort. Most communities lose members due to conflict or inability to come to terms with a decision. Most groups have decision-making and conflict-resolution structures, procedures and processes in place, which aim to be as inclusive as possible, which will be discussed in section 7.2.2. on 'decision-making'.

It is clear that autonomous communities *do* offer an alternative to the consent models of contractarianism. In joining, a person would be voluntarily signing up to the aims and principles of group, rather than consent being assumed as always-already given through foundational discourses of rationality and historical/hypothetical consent. However, it is also clear that residential communities at least, do not exhibit the spontaneity proposed by some critical utopian theoretical models. Kebele and Liverpool Social Centre were non-residential communities. However, even these groups had procedures and conditions that applicants would have to undertake in order to become 'core members'. These were usually more informal than for residential communities, but involved someone frequenting the group for long enough to come to be known and trusted, and then committing a certain number of hours to the group each week. Commitment is clearly an important issue for communities, as joining procedures usually revolved around ascertaining commitment⁷⁴.

⁷³ Findhorn has a complicated organisational structure with two bodies that operate according to different principles, the *Findhorn Foundation* and the *New Findhorn Association*. The nature of these and the relationship between them is discussed more fully elsewhere in this thesis and also in appendices 1 and 4.

⁷⁴ For an historical study on the importance of commitment for building successful communities, see Kanter (1972).

7.2.1.2. *What are the effects of alternative models upon inclusion, belonging and commitment?*

Joining processes are designed to ensure that new members are committed to the community.

Commitment is important, and a lack of commitment can have injurious consequences for the community, even in the cases of non-residential communities:

[A good member is someone who is] going to make a commitment to be involved in Kebele on a consistent basis for a period of time, because otherwise you get people who come for a short period with lots of enthusiasm and ideas and they start things off, then they piss off, because they move on, or they travel, or decide to do something else, and like something's been coming to shape and it falls back to the same core group to carry through (*Interview: Tim, Kebele, 7 April 2007*).

Joining and commitment-building processes can institute hierarchy between probationary or new members and more established members:

I would definitely say I have felt different once I had done my 3 months and become a full member, now I feel that I can be more vocal with my opinion, and more fully expressive, which is strange because it is still just my opinion (*Interview: Nick, Coventry Peace House, 9 May 2007*).

Long joining procedures are also in place to make sure that all existing members are happy for the new person to join. It must be remembered that in residential communities, these are people's homes – commitment is not only requisite from the prospective member, but on the part of those who will have to live with the new person. The decision on whether to let someone new join or not was often cited as the one instance in which a single member could veto a decision without social pressure to negotiate, compromise or find a creative solution:

Well we run by consensus and consensus decision-making about everything, except inquirers, who are people looking to move in, and then that's like one vote can veto that (*Interview: Layla, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007*).

This quote is interesting, as in theory consensus always mean that one 'vote'⁷⁵, or more accurately one voice, can veto – this quote illustrates the extent to which in all circumstances except decisions concerning new members, the minority veto is rarely used or settled upon. This theme was a frequent one throughout the interviews: it was an accepted norm that existing members had the

⁷⁵ 'Vote' is perhaps a misleading term here, although used by the interviewee – as has been shown in the previous chapter, section 6.3.2, the purpose of consensus is to privilege process over the aggregation of interests, and the process does not usually involve voting.

absolute right of refusal concerning who they would and would not be willing to live with. Even Bey, who places great emphasis on spontaneity and immediacy, recognises the importance of being able to choose who we live with:

People probably ought to choose the people they live with. "Open-membership" communes invariably end up swamped with freeloaders and sex-starved pathetic creeps. PAZs [Permanent Autonomous Zones] must choose their own membership mutually - this has nothing to do with "elitism". The PAZ may exercise a temporarily open function - such as hosting festivals or giving away free food, etc. - but it need not be permanently open to any self-proclaimed sympathizer who wanders by (Bey, 1993, <http://www.hermetic.com/bey/paz.html> accessed May 5, 2009).

Joining procedures that attempt to build commitment therefore do seem to exhibit some tendencies towards exclusivity, hierarchy and conservativeness. There is always, however, potential for prospective or new members to change the group:

Sometimes, you know one person if they are really strong then they can turn around the whole body. And it happens, I have seen it a couple of times in the Foundation where one person has managed to turn around the whole thing (*Interview: Kay Kay, NFA Findhorn, 18 June 2007*).

As a fairly new member I think it takes a while before you feel fully confident and knowledgeable to really stand for your point of view ... I suppose there's that whole 'we've done this before and it didn't work', although there is always the eye to everybody's viewpoint is equally valid and fresh blood can sometimes flip something around (*Interview: Layla, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007*).

This issue links with the issue of hierarchies, and the most commonly mentioned hierarchy was longevity within the community. This is discussed more fully in section 7.2.4 of this chapter. At this point the important point to make is that communities are almost certainly closer to voluntaristic than contractarian models, since there is no obligation to join the group, consent is not assumed as always-already given, indeed it is much harder to actually join the group than not to! This approach has its own problems, however, including hierarchies of authority between longstanding members and probationary or new members.

7.2.2. Decision-making

In the previous chapter, I considered how dominant political theory attempts to legitimise authority through the democratic model of decision-making, which includes citizens in decision-making processes, either directly or through elected representatives, through majority voting procedures.

Both direct and representative democratic models were seen to have in common that they presume the existence of a unified aggregate ('The People') to which 'minority' desires are subordinated. Critical utopian approaches attempt to resist this approach whilst simultaneously experimenting and creating an alternative spatial strategy that is based on small groups and consensus decision-making. This model allows desires to be articulated immanently from the group in a manner that allows for the becoming or autonomy of individual members, leads to more creative decisions, whilst simultaneously building group belonging and commitment to decisions. I will focus this section on practices in autonomous communities around the following questions drawn from the theoretical discussion:

- Do autonomous communities challenge conventional models of democratic decision-making, and if so, how?
- What are the implications of alternative models of decision-making for the process and outcome of decisions?
- What are the implications of alternative models of decision-making for inclusion and commitment?

7.2.2.1. Do autonomous communities challenge conventional models of democratic decision-making, and if so, how?

As the typology shows, most of the communities that I visited did not employ representative structures for decision-making. In these cases, all members, or all available members would participate in decision-making. The two exceptions were Hockerton Housing Project and Findhorn. At Hockerton, each household (usually a family) would choose one representative to send to meetings⁷⁶. At Findhorn, the structure is a lot more complex, and also differs, as do most organisational procedures, between the Foundation and the New Findhorn Association (NFA)⁷⁷. Due to its complex and exceptional nature, I will consider Findhorn as an example of a community with representative decision-making structures. I will here concentrate on the Findhorn Foundation

⁷⁶ Unfortunately I was unable to undertake any recorded interviews at Hockerton to ascertain why this was the case. During informal discussions with members, I gained an impression that what members referred to as 'community aspects' of the project were viewed as being of secondary importance to environmental aspects (see also Hockerton Housing Project. (n.d.) from <http://www.hockertonhousingproject.org.uk/SEFS/ID.780/SEFE/ViewItem.asp> accessed August 3 2009), where only a small section is dedicated to 'community aspects'.

⁷⁷ See appendices 1, 3 & 4 for further information on the complicated organisational structures of Findhorn Community.

(the NFA structure is fairly similar) consisting of an elected committee and advisory board. After considering Findhorn as an example of representative decision-making in voluntary autonomous communities, I will turn to the more usual model, consensus.

Representation

At the Foundation, the 'Management Team' consisting of 11 people makes decisions that affect the organisation as a whole. This team consults with a 'Council' of committee members, approximately 40 in number, who are elected by the approximately 120 members of the Foundation. The Council and Management Team meet regularly to discuss issues and to participate in team-building activities. The Management Team are responsible to the 'Trustees' of the Foundation, who meet four times per year. The management team has a 'Focaliser', somewhat akin to a general manager⁷⁸.

In meetings of representatives, the aim is to make all decisions by consensus, which has been defined as 'everyone involved agreeing to the course of action', or those who do not agree with the decision agreeing to be a "loyal minority", that is, registering their disapproval, but agreeing to go along with the whole (Walker, 1994b: 373). After decisions have been made, those who are going ahead with whatever project has been decided upon are encouraged to continue liaising with and listening to the views of loyal minorities. Loyal minorities cannot be constituted of people who agree to a decision then attempt to subvert it afterwards:

We ask them [those who disagree or dissent] to be a loyal minority, and that is this thing that we have had for many years now. We said, 'obviously you don't have enough support for this, and can you be a loyal minority?', so you don't agree, but you won't sabotage the thing. You won't say behind out backs, 'ph what a bad decision'. So usually people accept to be loyal minorities (*Interview: Kay Kay, NFA Findhorn, 18 June 2007*).

If consensus, including a 'loyal minority' cannot be reached amongst representatives in NFA, Foundation and community-wide (NFA and Foundation) meetings, the decision can be made by a

⁷⁸ Information gleaned from notes taken during unrecorded conversations and participant observation. A more detailed account of decision-making procedures at Findhorn is given by Walker (1994b), although some of the information given in Walker's account was out of date at the time of my visit.

90% majority of those voting at a *subsequent* meeting. Individual departments⁷⁹ are smaller and tend to make all decisions by consensus. In *all* cases where a decision is made by a majority, rather than consensus vote, the chairperson is obliged to place an article in the *Rainbow Bridge*, the Foundation's weekly internal newsletter, explaining the background, reasons and decision. I will consider the implications for process and outcome, as well as inclusion, of Findhorn's representative system in a later section. First, I will consider the alternative model used by most of the communities that I visited – consensus.

Consensus

Most of the communities use some form of consensus. Consensus as a process, rather than an ethos, is not wholly incompatible with representation, as consensus amongst representatives might be used. This combination of consensus and representation is used at both Findhorn and Hockerton, who use representatives. Interestingly both Findhorn and Hockerton have allowances allow for varying degrees of majority to pass a decision when consensus cannot be reached, which is not the case for any of the communities that do not use representation, with the exception of Springhill. This may be due to the fact that communities who use representation are not committed to the ethos of consensus to the same extent that communities who always use consensus are.

Consensus decision-making is a group procedure that seeks the agreement of all participants. In the upcoming interview fragments, it may be observed that participants' use of the term 'consensus' is interesting. The term tends to be defined as both the process of decision-making, and the outcome, which reflects the fact that consensus is an ongoing process. The practical details of consensus vary from group to group. In nearly all cases there will be a 'facilitator'; something like a chairperson, whose role is to make sure that everyone has an equal chance to speak and that procedures (if any) are followed correctly. Some groups have very informal procedures, literally just discussing a subject until agreement is reached. Others have certain procedures that are designed to make sure

⁷⁹ Findhorn has a system of delegation. Delegation will be discussed in more detail in section 7.2.3 of this chapter.

everyone's voice is heard, for example Springhill used a convention involving coloured cards. There are two ways of using the cards, one during the process or debate and one at the point of decision-making to decide on the outcome. The process was described in detail by one of my interviewees:

During the debate, a red card can interrupt, but that is quite rarely used. A green card means 'yes I agree, ok move on'. A yellow card means 'I have something to say or a question'. A chairperson picks up on the cards and asks the people to do whatever they have indicated. Then, when it comes to decision-making, a green card says 'yes, I fully agree with the proposal, I vote for it'. A yellow card says 'I still have some doubts, I'm not sure', and a red card says 'I block it' (*Interview: Max, Springhill, 21 April 2007*).

This is a fairly widespread convention for consensus and is used by other communities, although none of the other communities that I visited used coloured cards. There are analogous procedures for consensus that use hand signals instead of coloured cards – these were used by most of the communities that I visited that did have formalised procedures for meetings (see typology)⁸⁰. The intention behind these procedures is to stop people from interrupting verbally, which allows each speaker to have their say, and when well facilitated prevents louder voices, dominant personalities and those who are more confident and assertive from dominating.

Interpersonal sessions

Some groups have procedures for ensuring clear communication that occur before decision-making procedures (see typology), for example attunement at Findhorn:

Attunement involves a meditation in which each person is encouraged to let go of preconceptions, and to find an inner state in which feelings of goodwill are uppermost and any decision will be one which is not based on selfish desires, but a perceived outcome which will be best for all of those involved. This sometimes involves holding hands in a circle, with closed eyes, whilst a 'focaliser' voices some themes for meditation, often involving 'letting go' of any previous stresses and strains of the day, feeling oneself to be fully present with the group and surroundings, and sometimes giving a brief summary of the aims and purposes of the coming together of the group. There is then a short period of silent meditation. This might occur before any task, including working duties such as cooking or gardening, before joint leisure activities, before a decision-making process, and even before eating together the entire group holds hands around the table of food for attunement (*Extract from participant observation notes: Findhorn, 11 June 2007*).

⁸⁰ I was able to observe this process in action in three of the communities: Coventry Peace House, Corani and Liverpool Social Centre.

During decision-making, the hope is to produce a unanimous decision after attunement, but if this does not happen, then there will be further discussion and attunement:

If it's a controversial and unclear issue then [attunement] is time to pause, or meditate, or tune in and double check, and if it's not clear then it's not clear and it means it waits, because something is missing, or it goes around the room again and everybody speaks to it and sometimes you get things that you wouldn't get in a ping-pong discussion, and you just slow down and say 'oh, I didn't see that, didn't feel that.' So we trust our intuition at least as much if not more than our rational head, and we know that the history of this place is full of irrational things coming good and rational things not working out (*Interview: Mari Hollander, Findhorn Foundation, 18 June 2007*)

Coventry Peace House had a similar convention of having a 'heart session' at before meetings began, where each member would have time to say how the week had been for them emotionally, and discuss any important events or news, without being interrupted by another member:

We start off with a heart session before we get on to deciding decisions, because if anybody is feeling particularly low for some reason or angry or whatever, or there is something they really need to sort out, it is much better to start off by sorting it out, and then the rest of the meeting will flow easily. If we try and do all the decision-making stuff first, we will only be acting it all out and it won't get resolved anyway (*Interview: Penny, Coventry Peace House, 10 May 2007*).

This idea of a pre-session where personal anxieties, resentment or other psychological perspectives are revealed is interesting and important. Often, exerting authority might be a symptom of an underlying anxiety, and an interpretation of Penny's quote would be that revealing our hidden worries or agendas can help to overcome this through self-reflexivity and a deeper understanding of others. In a meeting that I observed at Peace House, the response of the first member to speak during the heart session in fact turned out to take up the entire meeting:

The meeting you were at last night wasn't that typical actually, I was only just thinking this morning we didn't actually go round in the heart session at all, because the big issue that we really needed to deal with came up, and then by the time we had dealt with all that everybody just wanted to get on with the business. But that was ok, I think if anybody else had wanted to say something else they would have, but I ought to have given them the chance, that was my fault, I should have said 'does anybody else have any issues' (*Interview: Penny, Coventry Peace House, 10 May 2007*).

Informal conventions and political culture

Some groups had neither a heart session nor any formal conventions for meetings, yet they all strove to proceed with an ethos of openness and inclusiveness, and a culture of reflexivity:

Gender hierarchies obviously emerge most in meetings for example, all the myths are true, men tend to talk to men and ignore women and men tend to be more confident. There's also class hierarchies and people that are more educated will tend to dominate meetings. The way we deal with that or try to get around it is that we all try to be aware of it. The consensus decision-making does help to overcome that because everyone has an equal say. And so the way that we do it, there's a lot of ways to get around it but the way that we do it is that those who are aware that they are more articulate, like myself for example, we try and regulate ourselves in meetings and allow space for people who may be a bit more reticent (*Interview: Boyd, Kebele, 7 April 2007*).

This idea of reflexivity and self-criticism is important and forms a central theme in what I am calling critical utopian citizenship. It involves opening ourselves up to our own darker, dominating sides as well as to the needs and desires of others. This is echoed in Deleuze and Guattari, who see the psychological state of the unconscious repression of desire as the basis of authoritarianism:

Desire is never separable from complex assemblages that necessarily tie into molecular levels, from micro-formations already shaping postures, attitudes, perceptions, expectations, semiotic systems, etc. ... It's too easy to be antifascist on the molar level, and not even see the fascist inside you, the fascist you yourself sustain and nourish and cherish with molecules both personal and collective (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 237).

There are, of course, problems with consensus. These will be discussed further below. It is notable, however, that in my observations, most interviewees were satisfied with the consensus process, and although many reported hierarchies in other situations and spaces within their groups and communities (which will be further discussed in Chapter 9), relatively fewer reported implicit hierarchies during meetings where consensus was used. I will further consider the parallels and divergences between practices and theory, and the implications for critical utopian citizenship, in the latter part of this chapter.

Group Size

Group size is something that is given great theoretical importance by the critical utopian thinkers who I considered earlier. Group size has relevance for all of the sections in this chapter. It has particular significance for models of decision-making, so I will consider the relevance of group size at this stage, referring back where appropriate in later sections.

Representation appears to be necessary when groups reach over a certain number:

We would all try to aim for consensus, because we do. Consensus of around 400 people can take years. And bear in mind, it's a floating population. When I first came, the average length of stay was seven and a half months, because people would come to the Foundation for a week. Now, because we have built 50-odd houses, and there are businesses here, and people are growing their children up here, the length of stay is much longer than it used to be, much much longer now. But even still there is a tremendous turnover of people who come for a while and then leave. So you might have got nearly a consensus decision on this particular issue at this meeting. Three or four people leave and three or four new people come and you are back to where you were before (*Interview: Kay Kay, NFA Findhorn, 18 June 2007*).

The extent to which consensus is viable rather than majority voting also appears to be associated with group size, since it is very hard to reach consensus in a large group. During a visitor tour at Findhorn, the guide claimed that it took a floating population of 400 people two years to decide on the colour of a new carpet for the lounge at Cluny hotel – this being the event that sparked a move away from full consensus⁸¹. Critical utopian normative theories tended to recommend small groups. Findhorn, which strays furthest from the normative position regarding organisation - for example they use representation in decision-making, have greater and more reified separation of different spheres of activity - is the group that is the largest.

7.2.2.2. *What are the implications of alternative models of decision-making for the process and outcome of decisions?*

Consensus decision-making is slow

Full consensus is very difficult and time-consuming, and this aspect of consensus was noted repeatedly in interviews. People joked, laughed, and expressed frustration about consensus:

It took us a long time because not only do we have to reach consensus, but the Radical Bookshop is a workers' co-op so the decision-making process is quite slow there as well! [Laughs emphatically] And it took us several months to really secure the place (*Interview: Carl, Liverpool, 10 July 2007*).

The extension that we have [a glass conservatory], that took 20 years to reach consensus, because even when they were almost reached the decision, and then someone moved in and started to disagree. From the moment they started talking about it to the moment they finished it, it was 20 years! Such a long time! (*Interview: Angela, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007*).

⁸¹ I have been unable to independently verify that this decision took place, nor that it was the deciding event in the decision to abandon full consensus. However, this time scale is certainly not unrealistic, and as shall be seen later in this chapter much smaller communities have taken significantly longer to reach similar decisions.

Inclusive forms of decision-making are certainly time consuming, even for those groups that do not aim for full consensus. It could, however, be argued that all forms of decision-making are time consuming, but that in dominant models, we delegate the task to others (who make a full-time career of the activity) by voting in few and far between elections. In autonomous communities, people are taking charge of their own decisions.

Consensus can yield creative and empowering decisions

Despite the fact that decisions tended to take a lot longer, often over seemingly trivial things such as the colour of a carpet, or the colour of paint for a wall, there seemed to be a general agreement that, all in all, this was a positive thing, and that the quality of the decisions is much better. Quality tended to be defined by participants in terms of the wellbeing of the community itself, rather than in terms of any external goal or outcome:

If we had anything that was based on voting, I don't think you would have anything like the stability that we have got now (*Interview: Patrick, Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007*).

We know that if a decision is made it's an inclusive decision and not a stupid democratic decision where 51% can tell 48% what to do (*Interview: Patrick, Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007*)

Consensus is a powerful decision-making process because everyone has to agree before something changes. It may seem slow, but it's effective (*Interview: Guy, Corani, 7 July 2007*).

Consensus is a mode of decision-making that therefore resists hierarchy, representation, and overcoding, as is expressed in the quote above. Decisions are also often perceived to be of better quality – people are more likely to abide by a decision if it is something that they have personally agreed to, and there is also the chance that a discussion and compromise might lead to surprising solutions which would not have been thought of otherwise:

That is a fundamental thing about consensus, that you are thinking in a group-way, you are thinking not only 'I don't like this at all and I don't know if I can put up with it', but also thinking 'I think we can find a better decision' (*Interview: Patrick, Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007*)

Everybody has a say about a decision and what they think, and often decisions do turn round the other way because everyone really does think about what other people have to say and sometimes they say something they hadn't thought about before, and if people do think really differently then you just keep going until there's a group agreement (*Interview: Angela, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007*)

The idea that the group can provide space for mutually creative becomings, in which no person's desires are suppressed, recalls the ideas from Deleuze and Guattari, that representation and forms of organisation associated with the ossification of the majority status block flows of creativity and desire, turning them against themselves, and that these can be freed through resistance and the assertion of difference. However, another interpretation of consensus decision-making contradicts this viewpoint, and the following interview quote arguably comes somewhat closer to Rousseau's General Will:

And sometimes you do have to say that you might not particularly like something but you can see that other people in the group like it, and you can see that it is in the interests of the community, so you will say yes. And really consensus is about reaching a point where everyone is in agreement about what is best for the community (*Interview*: Kate, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007).

This quote seems to suggest that sometimes there is a 'good' or a general interest for the community that can contrast with that of an individual, and that an individual, or individuals, in these circumstances would be right to subordinate their personal desires. I will consider further implications of the relationship between theory and practice later. Consensus can also result in blockages of a different kind, which I will turn to now.

Decision-making is conservative

Consensus decision-making processes can be very conservative – sometimes a long time is spent over a decision that is never actually reached, and nothing is changed, because agreement cannot be reached, and because a minority of one has the power to veto any decision, where full consensus is required. There are several examples of decisions that failed, and were discarded, since it became impossible to reach consensus:

Consensus is sometimes terribly conservative because it's a restrictive form of decision-making, it tends to be in favour of what *is* because making changes when you need consensus decision is damn hard (*Interview*: Patrick, Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007).

I am a big fan of efficiency and with consensus things just take ages to get things done and I find myself very frustrated. But it's a very good concept and we do try to work like that. Sometimes people have different points of view and with consensus someone has got to give in, that's how it is. In theory it is good but I am not sure how it is in practice. So it's quite

difficult if there isn't consensus over consensus in some ways! How do you change it?
(*Interview: Angela, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007*)

These, and other descriptions of consensus somewhat undermine the idea of spontaneity in thought and action that were put forward by radical alternatives to dominant models, and the latter quote also draws an interesting parallel to the critical utopian critique of dominant models – what do you do to question or change the system itself? Is the consensus process also space-determining insofar as the overall frame is beyond question?

7.2.2.3. What are the implications of alternative models of decision-making for inclusion and commitment?

When decisions are made at this face-to-face level issues have to be resolved in immanent social relations, rather than at an abstract level. This can be emotionally exhausting and destructive, and can sometimes result in people having to leave. Several of the respondents offered stories during their time in one community or another about a very stubborn or aggressive personality, or simply someone who truly could not agree to a decision, who had dominated, 'hijacked', or 'hoodwinked' the consensus procedure, or repeatedly blocked a decision. This sometimes resulted in long periods of unhappiness for all involved:

It can be hijacked, the consensus, by the minority, so you could spend ages trying to find consensus on a subject and there could be just one person saying 'no, no' on a subject. Just before I moved in there was a person who was always saying no, it was his way or no way, and in the end he had to leave because it wasn't working (*Interview: Angela, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007*).

RF: Do you ever get somebody who blocks decisions so that they cannot be made, and just keeps blocking it?

G: Yes. I've been there myself, I think everybody has.

RF: You've been the blocker?

G: Yes, if you think that things are not going in the right direction. You get to a point where if everybody else thinks that you're wrong, you perhaps have to leave, and that has happened for me, I've left and come back. Perhaps 'left' is not quite the right word, I have never actually resigned, but I have got very close to it, probably I was a meeting away from having to resign. I 'withdrew' would be more correct perhaps, to describe the situation, I was not getting involved in decision-making because I thought things were going in the wrong direction. Interestingly I came back, and things changed. I came back realising that I could influence things without being withdrawn, and without going, was what was happening, and then the others did swing back to my view, which was pleasing (*Interview: Guy, Corani, 7 July 2007*).

So consensus, if it's working well, works in that way, and part of that working well, is in the skill of the facilitator of the meetings makes that work well, and partly it's our skill as a group

to be inclusive and to hear people well enough, and for those who are in the minority to realise when they use that power, that awful power, which is terribly difficult and can alienate them from other people to block something (*Interview*: Patrick, Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007).

When decision-making is not alienated from the individual through centralised mediation, they take full responsibility for their decisions in the eyes of others, which can have implications for their relationships outside of the decision-making field. This can lead to difficulties, and can put a strain on the whole community. Examples that I was given of this having happened resulted in people leaving, having to call in external facilitators, and even legal action having been taken against someone. However, a more typical view was that consensus was a worthwhile and valuable procedure when done properly, and as can be seen from many of the foregoing interview extracts, the process as well as the outcome is participative and empowering.

7.2.3. Orientation to desires

In the previous theoretical chapter, I argued that one means by which dominant models of authority construct legitimacy is through instrumentalism, or orientation to a deferred and abstracted goal or unified set of interests. This creates a vision of a whole society integrated into a complex and highly differentiated ‘machine’, seen to embody rationality in relation to the goal. This leads to the separation of rationality from desire, work from leisure, and the segregation of society into distinct departments relating to spheres of activity. I criticised instrumental theories with a critical utopian approach, highlighting the implicit utopianism of transcendental goals. Instrumentalism was judged to have deleterious effects upon inclusion and belonging, such as inhibiting the flourishing of difference, damaging psychological integration and blocking creativity and experimentation. Critical utopian alternatives advocated the formation of small groups that cohere through shared orientation to unmediated desires generated immanently. In this section, I will consider the orientations to desires in the groups that I visited, with a focus on the following questions drawn from the theoretical discussion:

- Do communities’ orientation to desires challenge instrumental models of rationality, and if so, how?

- What are the implications of orientation to desires for inclusion, belonging and commitment?

7.2.3.1. Do communities' orientation to desires challenge instrumental models of rationality, and if so, how?

The theoretical discussion of Chapter 6 focused on how hierarchical modes of authority have a tendency to separate and segregate different areas of life. Critical utopian theories posit greater integration of the activities and processes needed to sustain and enable life, so that an individual might be involved in decisions governing the production of most aspects of their life, and not subject to the decisions of another in which they did not play a role. A parallel to the separation of spheres of activity is the practice of delegation, which transgresses both dominant and critical utopian theoretical approaches.

Delegation

Delegation in the context used in the groups I visited means the formalised assignment of authority and responsibility to smaller group or subgroup for certain decisions, functions or tasks. The person or group who has been given the responsibility usually remains responsible to the whole collective, and has to report back to community-wide or core group meetings. One example of a group that had successfully used delegation for a long time was Kebele. The established sub-collectives at the time of my visit were the café, infoshop, bike workshop, finance, IT and library sub-collectives. There were also sub-collectives that were still in their infancy, but were aiming to become permanent, such as the art, maintenance and permaculture collectives. People can participate in these without being core members. The sub-collective scheme was started in the summer of 2006, with the aim of creating a structure which allowed Kebele to run more efficiently, yet still through a horizontal structure which did not introduce unnecessary hierarchies⁸². Collectives are seen to make meetings more functional and more accessible to newcomers who want to get involved in

⁸² See Kebele Community Cooperative, (n.d.), *History*. Accessed June 16, 2009 from Kebele Community Cooperative website: <http://www.kebelecoop.org/History.html>

specific aspects of the community, and also for people who want to be involved yet are unable or do not want to commit to the four hours per week participation requirement for core membership.

One interviewee explained the process at Kebele:

And there's obviously a horizontal organisation, everyone has got an equal – well, one person one vote I suppose, we make decisions by consensus, but that's how it's organised, and everything flows from that core group meeting but then below that we have a series of semi-autonomous sub-collectives so there's a café collective, an infoshop collective, a bike workshop, etc. etc., and they are responsible for their particular activity and they sort of put up a monthly or bi-monthly report to the core group saying, this is what we have done, this is currently who is involved, we're applying for a loan, or this is our incomings, this is our outgoings and stuff like that. And then they need to bring decisions to the core group if they want to do something dramatically different. So say if the Caf group decided they wanted to open and run a caf every day, they would bring it to the core group and say look, this is a proposal, do we have the support of the core group because we need you to help us [laughs]. But basically they function quite smoothly on their own and they could always do with more people (*Interview: Tim, Kebele, 7 April 2007*).

There was often a large amount of overlap between subgroups, with some people involved in three or four of the subgroups at once, and many people in the subgroups would also be involved in the 'core' group, although some people who had less time to devote would be members of subgroups, but not of the core group. In residential communities all resident members are obliged to attend general meetings, and where formal delegation takes place are also obliged to be involved in one or more subgroups or committees, or to take individual responsibility for a set of tasks. A carefully managed delegation process was seen by a member of the fledgling Liverpool Social Centre as a method to prevent the emergence of hierarchies:

At the moment what we have got is a couple of groups that are trying to set up, we've got a builder group that's involved in trying to get the place all sorted so that we can open properly and there's going to be a café group, so we can have a café in there. Anything though that people need to do, we will probably develop an entertainments group, and there will be a lot of crossover. We need to try and not have too many people involved in all of the groups, so that power is dispersed essentially. It's about recognising that some people can be more dominant than others, and having those structures there (*Interview: Carl, Liverpool Social Centre, 10 July 2007*).

As the largest group, Findhorn had greater separation of spheres of activity than the remainder of the groups, insofar as there were more different departments, and less overlap of personnel between the departments. I will quote the following passage at length, since it provides rich material for interpretation, and despite Findhorn's rather exceptional status as the (significantly) largest and

most rigidly organised of the communities, it also addresses some themes common to all communities:

Ultimately it's not so easy to have a hundred people make a decision on the budget of one and a half million pounds with zillions of detailed lines, you know a small group is going to do that, so even within the management team things might be mandated and just the bigger issues are aired in the management team, and as much as possible is delegated to the groups that are actually doing it, so the education area looks at what programmes are running and what conferences are running, and the management team doesn't do that unless there's an issue, you know a financial issue or a publicity/promotion kind of issue or an image issue or something then the management team might get involved but if it's all running smoothly then the kitchen plans their budget and education plans theirs and so on. Once their budgets are set then people are as autonomous as possible. So this is more an ideal, of course you get all sorts of whammies in the field, but that would be the model. So the bigger group makes the overall consensus or expresses concerns which should be addressed, and the smaller team is actually going to deliver, and be responsible and see it through, they're the ones who make the final decisions and then get on with it. And it's been quite liberating over the past five or six years to get the level of trust up enough to have that be functional. It just means that things can actually happen. At all. As opposed to happen never, because it all just gets so bogged down, and it's so frustrating that by the time you get anything done it feels more like a defeat than as though you've achieved your goal. So to just kind of zip it along (*Interview: Mari Hollander, 18 June 2007*)

This is a highly organised and differentiated structure, which might remind some readers of a large corporation (Baker, 2007, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/942cf75e-2a9a-11dc-9208-000b5df10621.html> accessed July 5, 2009). The foregoing interview extract without doubt parodies, reflects, or resonates somewhat with instrumental theories of authority. Consider in particular that “the bigger group makes the overall consensus or expresses concerns which should be addressed” and that “the smaller team is actually going to deliver” (extracted from the interview above). This suggests a smaller authoritative group with a transcendental rational viewpoint that enables or empowers, through the exertion of authority, the community to achieve goals or interests defined externally to subjects, as in instrumentalism. However, there is something else going on here that merits further interpretation.

7.2.3.2. What are the implications of orientation to desires for inclusion, belonging and commitment?

It is important first to emphasise that Findhorn is not a sovereign community, as are nation-states, so has no ability to enforce its decisions. The Findhorn model might be interpreted as almost artisanal, reminiscent of historical city-states, in that the lower-level groups seem to have a lot of autonomy, but autonomy which is defined by their function (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 454),

creating a series of autonomous sub-communities. It is very much arranged as segments, and is a segmentary system in the sense used by Deleuze and Guattari:

The notion of segmentarity was constructed by ethnologists to account for so-called primitive societies, which have no fixed, central State apparatus and no global power mechanisms or specialized political institutions. In these societies, the social segments have a certain leeway, between the two poles of fusion and scission, depending on the task and situation; there is also a considerable communicability between heterogeneous elements, so that one segment can fit with another in a number of different ways; and they have a local construction excluding the prior determination of a base domain (economic, political, juridical, artistic); they have extrinsic and situational properties, or relations irreducible to the intrinsic properties of a structure; activity is continuous, so segmentarity is not grasped as something separate from a segmentation-in-progress operating by outgrowths, detachments, and mergings (Ibid: 230-1).

This idea of primitive segmentarity is contrasted by Deleuze and Guattari to state segmentarity. This has already been considered in the theoretical section, but is worth returning to in more detail here due to its relevance for interpreting these interview quotes and the process of delegation more generally. State segmentarity is seen to occur when the supple and fluid segments of the ‘primitive’ society are substituted for ‘fixed or ideal essences’ (Ibid: 233) – for example, were there to be no overlap between sub-group memberships, and also when arithmetic and private property assume command functions and become space-determining (Ibid: 233). The above quote from Carl at Liverpool Social Centre mentions that segmentary structures lead to diffusion of power, which is an important point. It might be that Findhorn differs in assigning functions like management and budget allocation as if they were functional tasks. If these are actually command tasks, then we see the emergence of rule by specialists (‘managers’), but in a partial way, because the other sub-groups have a lot of autonomy and the system operates on trust rather than coercion or threat of coercion (this theme of ‘autonomy’ is mentioned explicitly by both Tim and Mari in quotes above). This is also evident in Tim’s previous quote, who mentions the example of the Café sub-collective applying to the core group for funding, implying the emergent authority of the core-group over the sub-collective. It is important to note however, that in most cases membership of the core-collective is elective, in that members can choose to be part of the core group if they want to, so that memberships in different groups at different scales reflects the ideas of supple of primitive segmentarity put forward by Deleuze and Guattari. The more stable and fixed positions of

representatives at Findhorn might reflect a slightly more rigid form of segmentarity, although not nearly as much so as in states.

An interesting issue is that there seems to be somewhat of a tension between the autonomy of those doing the work, and consensus of the whole group. This is a tension that might possibly always arise with autonomous communities. If a worker or group has no autonomy from the collective then they would be slaves to the group (somewhat akin to minorities in the analysis of Rousseau), but this seems unlikely to happen in a group with strong anti-hierarchical orientations. Similarly anti-hierarchical groups would want to avoid a dictatorship of specialists, so there is a need to find a point somewhere between the two. The ideas also link to links also to the issue of splitting or growing raised in the pamphlet *Anti-Mass*, phrased in terms of reproduction/growth or addition/multiplication in the previous chapter (The Red Sunshine Gang, 1999 [c. 1970]: 10). This pamphlet suggests that a human (small) scale is very important to non-alienated group-formation, and so advises dealing with growth by sprouting off new groups rather than the existing group growing beyond human scale – a bit like a Deleuzoguattarian rhizome sprouting another rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 233). In the pamphlet the discussion is of actually splitting into groups (for example, one housing coop into two), but it seems the communities I have studied adopt a similar but distinct strategy of splitting by functional differentiation, reflecting but transgressing Stirner's union of egoists who unite to make bread. Deleuze and Guattari's 'supple' or 'primitive' segmentarity is distinct from 'state' or 'rigid' segmentarity because there is a lot of overlap and interweaving between segments – they are localised as they do not function as discrete parts in a highly unified and centralised machine. There is some evidence that this is true of functional groupings within the communities:

Across the board participation, I mean I've run out of new things to do pretty much, I think I've done pretty much everything that you can do here, and I participate in every area, and in some ways it's still, being able to be wise and humble at the same time, I suppose is what I try to achieve here, I know a lot about a lot of things, about how things work and can be, and yet it's still important that I still work at the same level as the person who joined yesterday, and I think that's important, very, to use your experience carefully, so I do everything here, from cooking to cleaning, to childcare, gardening, forestry, maintenance, the lot (*Interview*: Patrick, Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007).

Laurieston Hall, a community of around 25 members, did have formalised sub-groups, but as was the case with most communities (including Findhorn) members could swap and change as they liked, or could change at a yearly meeting when these things were decided. In the above quote, Patrick, a very long-standing member, exemplifies the fluidity that this involves, and also the desire to avoid being seen as a specialist, or ‘an authority’ but rather to ‘work at the same level as the person who joined yesterday’. At the same time, however, one might note the frequency with which I have quoted Patrick’s interviews – partly a result of his wide knowledge and his articulacy – indicating a degree of emergent authority. Where the foregoing discussion has considered transgressions of authority related to formalised division of labour, I would now like to turn to unintended hierarchies within personal relationships and group dynamics.

7.2.4. Relationship and community dynamics

In the previous chapter I contended that canonical theories of authority rest on the underlying presumption that hierarchy is a natural or foundational part of human relationships. This presumption was often used as a justification for the ossification of authority in fixed structures. Anarchist approaches, which I considered to be ‘critical utopian’, were suspicious of authority not only at the macro-level of state-capitalism but also at the micro-level of human relationships, undermining the necessity of a foundational viewpoint by positing the desire for non-hierarchy as a creative and affirmative alternative. In what follows, I would like to consider attitudes towards relational hierarchies in the communities that I visited, with a particular focus on the following questions, drawn from the theoretical discussion:

- Do communities challenge dominant models of hierarchical authority based in social relationships, and if so, how?
- What are the implications for inclusion and autonomy?

7.2.4.1. Do communities challenge dominant models of hierarchical authority based in social relationships, and if so, how?

Most of the groups do not have formal hierarchies, indeed they tend to have core values or aims which focus on inclusiveness and egalitarianism, and have organisational and processual features

for overcoming hierarchies, such as consensus decision-making, facilitation and courses in nonviolent communication⁸³. Findhorn appears to be the exception, as it does have features of hierarchical organisation, in particular representation, as discussed. However, as with all communities and often even more so, Findhorn has set procedures for overcoming hierarchies (in particular, attunement, discussed previously). Other communities' members did profess to there sometimes being unintended hierarchies in decision-making, but this was something which groups aimed to recognise and overcome:

There are always hierarchies because of the world that we live in, but the boast that we have is that we try and overcome them and override them (*Interview*: Boyd, Kebele, 7 April 2007).

The hierarchies that were mentioned most often were age, articulacy, longevity (time spent in the community), education, gender, confidence, and experience. It is important to note, however, that most of the people interviewed did not consider hierarchy desirable, and that communities had various strategies and tactics for attempting to minimise the influence of hierarchies. This reflects a passage from Buber:

There is no form of social activity which cannot, on some side or at some moment, become political; ... But it is most essential that we recognise the structural difference between the two spheres in regard to the relationship between unity and multifirmity' (Buber, 1951: 11).

The difference between the operation of power in many of these communities, and that of the state (that is, state as stasis; the crystallisation of the political principal) is that conscious efforts and mechanisms are often put in place to prevent power from ossifying and to retain flux and contingency of power relations.

I have already discussed how the consensus process and delegation to sub-groups are conscious organisational strategies that attempt to overcome – not the emergence of hierarchy – but the ossification of hierarchy into something oppressive. When hierarchy did become oppressive, communities would often bring in external mediation, facilitation, or members would take courses

⁸³Courses in nonviolent communication are offered by an organisation *The Centre for Nonviolent Communication* or by accredited facilitators. More information can be found on their web site: <http://www.cnvc.org/> accessed 9 August 2009.

in nonviolent communication. Other particularly interesting processes for the warding-off of hierarchies occurred before discussion takes place, such as attunement at Findhorn, and the ‘heart sessions’ at Coventry Peace House. These practices illustrate ways in which some groups have attempted to acknowledge that decisions are not abstracted from the embodied subjects that are making them.

7.2.4.2. *What are the implications for inclusion and autonomy?*

The topic of fluctuating and contingent hierarchies was a recurring theme of interviews. Interestingly, hierarchies of this sort were sometimes seen to be potentially empowering, enabling autonomy without inhibiting the inclusion of others:

There are flexible and probably fluctuating hierarchies, and depending on which way you are looking at things from, there might be, if you say ‘describe the “ability to fix it” hierarchy’, and clearly I could give you names within that large ... I’m talking mechanical things or broken things... a large amount at the top of those would be male, an certain long-term males who have much more ability than others, so there is a fix-it hierarchy there, there is probably a supportive hierarchy, there’s probably a hierarchy based on weakness, which is something I’ve always been quite interested in, where people who are often less able to, or state that they are less able to do things, manage to get their way by being weak, so they use that as a tool to either avoid things happening or to get things done, because they must be supported because they are weak. Those sorts of things, they’re more interesting than the ordinary hierarchies; there’s a gossiping hierarchy, and there’s a backstabbing hierarchy, there’s probably a monetary hierarchy, how much money people have, there’s a health hierarchy. Just because you can order those things into a hierarchy doesn’t mean they operate distinctly in that way, you don’t seek to go up the illness hierarchy for example, but they are there, and all those factors are important in the way we interplay in interpersonal relationships and go about things (*Interview: Patrick, Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007*).

A very important hierarchy is longevity, obviously, I mean there’s people, for example Richard and Leslie and myself and Jude are two very long-running couples, and we’re terribly comfortable and supportive round each other and have two daughters who have grown up and been like sisters and stuff, so that’s a very, very strong core, and there are plenty of other strong cores, which are across families and across groups or across individuals, that’s just one I picked out, and they are almost latitudinal, as opposed to hierarchical, and they’re essential. You’ve got these hierarchies which may be the backbone in that way but without these other ones going across, which I would cite that as one example, then the whole thing would just topple over. So these things, those latitudinal relationships, for example in the winter we don’t all eat together, but various groupings of people eat together so many times a week in various ways, so just keeping something going as simple as that is terribly important in terms of friendship and support within a group. The worst thing that could happen here to anybody is that they feel they’re on their own, and there isn’t anybody they see, or anybody they connect with well, or anybody they can cry with or laugh with or whatever. (*Interview: Patrick, Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007*)

These quotes from Patrick illustrate how the splitting of the group into sub-groupings, this time implicit or informal, alleviates to some extent the ossification of power. Themes of informal sub-grouping, and also informal, contingent and flexible authority occurred throughout the interviews:

The organisation is based also on the power and ability of the people who live here and the strengths of them to make things happen through committees or with committees depending on what they're doing. So there are sub-organisations as well which aren't written down and aren't necessarily present and are slightly different for each person, but they're there anyway. I mean for that, if I want to get something done, say in a particular area, I don't go to the committee and say 'could you come and do this please?', I'll either go and do it myself, or I'll go and find someone who I know will help me do it to do it, but you don't go through a formal committee for everything, it's not dull and drab like that, committees are there as a backdrop (*Interview: Patrick, Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2009*)

Most of the influence you have here is verbal and by character/personality/force of will/action. I've often said and still continue to say that it's often easier to receive forgiveness than permission so a lot of people just go off and do things, and then people say 'that's interesting' and eventually say 'thank you that was a wonderful thing' (*Interview: Mari Hollander, Findhorn Foundation, 18 June 2007*).

These two quotes are interesting as they bring to light the fact that not all decisions are taken to meeting. Indeed, individuals make decisions during every minute of every that will have a greater or lesser impact on others, and upon the community. This is, of course, something that occurs within everyday life, everywhere. There was a great deal of reflexivity over these issues in communities.

Relational hierarchies in communities could also be highly problematic. I found that in Mornington Grove, perhaps more than any of the other places I visited, there was a heightened awareness of implicit hierarchies and even domination or bullying. This was mainly expressed in conversations about a previous member, or following on from this. This man, I was informed, had tended to hijack the consensus procedure, and even bullied members into agreeing to things they were not happy with, and had created fissures in the community: 'it was his way or no way, and in the end he had to leave because it wasn't working' (*Interview: Angela, Mornington Grove Community, 7 July 2007*). I was told that even after several attempts at mediation, the community was unable to solve the issues raised by this particular member, and indeed some other members left the community before he was eventually asked to leave. There was still a feeling that relationships and trust were still being rebuilt after this difficult time.

7.3. *Implications*

The foregoing section of this chapter adopted an interpretive approach, bringing practices in autonomous communities into dialogue with theoretical approaches and attempting to understand how data from interviews, observation and documents speak to both dominant and critical utopian approaches to authority. In this concluding part of the chapter I would like briefly to recapitulate some of the important themes and also take a step back, adopting a wider analytical perspective on the relevance of this dialogue for the subject of the thesis – critical utopian citizenship. Again, this section will be structured around the themes drawn out from dominant approaches, and their critical utopian creative counterparts. In each section, I will consider the relevance that the interchange between dominant theory, critical utopian theory and critical utopian practice might have for a critical utopian conception of citizenship. This will involve thinking about the implication for a critical conception of citizenship both within, but also outwith autonomous communities. What advice and ideas do these themes offer for the would-be utopian citizen who for whatever reason does not live in an autonomous community? What can the foregoing discussion offer mainstream citizenship theory? Such a discussion will raise more questions than answers, as is apt for a methodology that extols the merits of interminable critique.

7.3.1. Consent: voluntarism versus contract

The dominant theories that I considered in Chapter 6 attempted to ground authority in discourses of rationality, and were thus seen to be foundational rather than contingent. They involved the compulsory application of the outcome of public decisions to citizens. Critical utopian theories, practices and methodologies allow us to question foundational discourses by imagining and articulating an ‘other’ or ‘outside’ to that which is posited as essential. Voluntarism is a theory and a practice defies centralisation and territorialised sovereignty, through the creation of multiple overlapping small groups in unbounded space, a bit like Heater’s (1999) ‘multiple citizenship’ but without the centralised states and larger scale power structures. Unlike cultural or interest groups that petition the state for rights and representation (Young, 1989; Kymlicka, 1995; Kymlicka &

Norman, 2005) voluntaristic groups do not seek integration into a higher unity or structure, but rather to multiply and reproduce, fulfilling desires immanently. To a certain extent, this was observable in autonomous communities. This poses a question to citizens and to citizenship theory: how can we, as theorists and citizens, think about and live in groups without centralisation and alienation of selfhood to an abstracted identity?

7.3.2. Decisions: representation versus small groups and consensus

Mainstream citizenship theory usually connects citizenship to the nation-state, which is seen as the primary political unit to which individuals belong. Participation has thus generally been supposed to be oriented around and directed towards local and national governments and bureaucracies. This has taken the form of voting for representatives within these structures. In mainstream theory, such participation is seen to make the state's authority legitimate since it relies upon equal participative consent of the governed. However, it is widely accepted that citizen participation in traditional democratic political processes is declining, an issue that has been the subject of quantitative political research (Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002; Pattie, Seyd, & Whiteley, 2004). This has led many commentators to decry a widespread apathy amongst Western publics and the decline of political participation in industrialised nations: 'crisis of democracy theories have consistently predicted the weakening of representative democracies, and ultimately the role of citizens, in Western nations' (Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002: 7). However, there is widespread evidence that participation in other forms of politics, which are non-representative, are on the rise, such as signing petitions, joining lawful demonstrations and taking part in consumer boycotts (Ibid: 6-7). There is also evidence that people attempt to fulfil their interests and desires through the social, rather than political field:

People are active in trying to improve the quality of their daily lives as far as the services they receive and their own working conditions are concerned. Their actions, however, are less likely to be channelled through the orthodox, and perhaps traditional, route of contacting a politician and more likely to involve contacting the professionals, in other words, the teachers, doctors or employers, fellow parents, patients and workers and finally, others immediately around them, in other words, friends or family members. (Pattie, Seyd & Whiteley, 2004: 118-9).

Much mainstream political theory and liberal democratic practice subsumes such activities in a discourse of 'active' citizenship: 'Participation legitimates decision-making which is a key requirement of active citizenship' (Ibid: 6). The notion of 'active citizenship' arose in the 1980s with the New Right, and was heavily influenced by rational choice theory, thus encompassing the belief that individuals 'rationally calculate the costs and benefits of a given course of action before deciding what to do' (Lucey, 2004: 88). 'Active' citizenship is an individualistic discourse, emphasising 'competitive self-interest, individual rights and personal responsibilities and obligations' (Ibid: 88). The state ostensibly takes on the role of enabler and facilitator, encouraging and providing incentives for citizens to participate in their own welfare. This can often disguise structural inequalities preventing people from doing this and have oppressive or exclusive consequences. In dominant contemporary political discourse, a 'rhetoric of self realisation' (Dukelow, 2004: 25) that focuses on individual psychologies is aligned with the political project of active citizenship and its emphasis on grasping opportunities and accepting obligations (Ibid: 26). This has implications for citizenship: 'the qualities and attributes attached to being a citizen are thus less dependent on being a member of a community ... but are rather increasingly based on individual psychological characteristics such as motivation, self-esteem, confidence' (Ibid: 26). Thus setbacks and social problems are often viewed as personal inadequacies: 'Unemployment ultimately becomes the personal inability or unwillingness to take up the opportunities being offered by the state' (Ibid: 39). Active citizenship, because it is ultimately a recuperative discourse that seeks to integrate citizens into the higher unity of state-capitalism and thus alienate us from one another, relies on an abstract and mediated individualism which disguises structural inequalities such as class, race and gender that in practice inhibit individuals abilities and confidence in the public sphere. Paradoxically, 'active' citizenship in fact promotes passivity in large sections of the population: 'the individualisation of political action tends ... to reinforce the trend towards a middle-class profile' (Pattie, Seyd & Whiteley, 2004: 79).

In light of the foregoing discussion of critical utopian theories and practices, there seems to be something missing in mainstream theory – an unwillingness to think beyond representative politics,

and attempts to recuperate autonomous activity back into the realm of representation, hierarchical structures and hegemony:

Rather than witnessing an emerging literature on ‘post-representation’, we see merely the remodelling of representation in ever more baroque fashion, so that groups, minorities or diverse interests can be integrated into existing representative systems of governance’ (Tormey, 2006: 139).

I am highly alert to the danger that my conception of ‘critical utopian citizenship’ could be interpreted as yet another articulation of ‘active citizenship’. That ‘autonomous communities’ are able to flourish under neo-liberal governance might be seen as a manner of legitimising its authority; that they take steps towards self-sufficiency might be seen as a justification for further retreat of state welfare provision and social functions. Any discourse is of course subject to the potential of co-optation and recuperation. Critical utopian citizenship must stringently be distinguished from ‘active citizenship’ in that it does not seek to be integrated into a higher totality, be that state or capitalism, but rather actively and affirmatively seeks an outside to all forms of domination through the constant assertion of difference. This is something that must by definition be achieved from the ‘bottom up’ rather than imposed from the ‘top down’ through state policies as with neo-liberal ‘active citizenship’ discourse. This does not preclude using the tools of the system against itself so long as this is done consciously and with reflexivity (Robinson, 2007, *passim*). Group size is important here: individualism can only thrive as a non-abstracted mode of individuation when groups are small enough for the personal and psychological aspects of politics to be articulated and heard. This can be further revealed through a critique of instrumentalism.

7.3.3. Desires: instrumentalism versus immanence

Instrumentalism as a justification for authority focuses on outcomes rather than process. There is an assumed break or deferral between process and outcome, or means and ends. Outcomes or ends are justified and defined in naturalistic and foundational terms of ‘rationality’. There is an implicit utopianism at work here: a particular construction of economic and social good is put forward but is couched in hegemonic and truth-claiming discourse, leading to a unifying logic that denies and suppresses different desires. In order to embody rationality in relation to the posited transcendental

goal, society is segmented into a series of highly specialised and formalised roles creating a fixed and static division of labour, preventing flows of ideas, people, interests and desires between fields. This has the effect of creating a technocratic politics and society led by experts, elites and professionals who take on the task of representing others' interests and making decisions in a particular sphere, leaving few unmediated opportunities for the articulation of desires. Critical utopian theories and practices transgress the separation of spheres of activity, positing an alternative where there is no separation or contradiction between desires and the processes by which these are attained. This points towards a critical utopian citizenship of presence and activity rather than representation, absence and inactivity – simultaneously a line of flight from abstract individualism and alienated status and a reconstruction of participation in everyday life. Concrete suggestions for would-be critical utopian citizens outside the kinds of autonomous spaces considered in this study might be to recreate spaces elsewhere in life where the integration of spheres of activity can occur. A favourite example is the university: although embedded in a hierarchical institution the critical citizen might seize opportunities for interdisciplinarity and the flow of ideas between departments (see Mohanty, 2003).

7.3.4. Organisation: hierarchy versus non-hierarchy

Hierarchy is not only a feature of state-politics and representative decision-making, but also of personal relationships. Dominant theories assume that hierarchy is a necessary and foundational structuring element in the political and social fields. Often formalised, institutional authority is legitimised by the argument that hierarchies also exist in personal relationships, as though this automatically means that there is neither point nor value to continuing to desire an outside. Critical utopian approaches sometimes recognise the empowering aspects of hierarchies in knowledge – in helping, for example, Bakunin to have his boots fixed, or his canal built. Authority was still regarded with suspicion by these approaches however. There is certainly a tension between authority and autonomy. In Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche, the argument against hierarchy is not based on assumptions of natural equality but is a matter of *doing the best that we can*: 'The least strong is as strong as the strong if he goes to the limit' (Deleuze, 2006 [1983]: 56). This

involves being ‘active’ rather than ‘reactive’. Reactive force is utilitarian, limited, alienated from its own autonomous activity, and turned against itself in a neurotic moment of insecurity and submission. Active force, on the other hand, is: ‘1) plastic, dominating and subjugating force; 2) force which goes to the limit of what it can do; 3) force which affirms its difference, which makes its difference an object of enjoyment and affirmation’ (Ibid: 57). Only in the latter case is the master/slave relationship transgressed.

In the communities that I visited, there were several hierarchies. Where these differ from dominant models of authority is that relational hierarchies were not viewed as natural and essential but rather as surmountable issues to be recognised and reflected upon. The abstract identity endowed by the term ‘citizen’ in state-centred models is a status that is undermined by the very real inequalities and oppressions that underlie it, creating an informal hierarchy of, for example, active and passive citizens. This hierarchical model also extends to formal hierarchy through the exclusivity citizenship as status, with citizens being placed above non-citizens. This paradox, of citizen as equal yet unequal, underlies the ongoing tension between the idea of citizenship as a *status* (associated with the state as stasis, reification and ossification of power), and the parallel, yet contradictory, understanding of the concept as a *process* and a relationship. In Deleuze’s terminology, the former of these is ‘reactive’, in Stirner’s terminology a ‘spook’, since the approach separates the citizen from what (s)he can do: it subjugates the person to the status of ‘citizen’, limiting her or his identity and self-creativity through the constraints of the system to which it is directed. The latter, processual formation of citizenship is (potentially) active in Deleuze’s terminology and critical utopian in mine. Individual autonomy is not incompatible with relationships where neither party is separated from what (s)he can do and is able to affirm his or her difference within the relationship. The communities that I visited took some steps to ensure that this was possible – consensus, heart sessions, attunement, and a more general ethos of reflexively and consciously attending to the dynamics of personal relationships. The following two chapters, on transgressing rights in theory and practice, will further explore the issue of tension between citizenship as a status or identity, and citizenship as a process. Where the focus in this and the

previous chapter has been on methods of organising and making decisions without or beyond authority, the following two chapters will focus on models of negotiating and practicing ethical values without or beyond state-mediated institutions of 'rights'.

8. Transgressing Rights: Theory

8.1. *Introduction and working definitions*

In western democracies it is predominantly the institution of rights that defines the legal content of the status of citizenship. Preliminarily rights can be defined as ‘legal or moral recognition of choices or interests to which particular weight is attached’ (Reeve, 2003b: 468). They are entitlements or permissions, which must be granted, respected and upheld by the state and other members of society. Rights are often enshrined in law, or claims may be made in absence of legal recognition, as demands that the law be changed to accommodate the right in line with perceived demands of morality (Ibid: 468). In the classical liberal formulation, rights are applied to individuals and are used to arbitrate conflict: they would not be necessary in a situation of consensus. This implies a particular type of relationship – one that is mediated by the state, which decides the boundaries of social ties in terms of those aspects of a subject that can legitimately be interfered with, and those that are the private domain of the individual. Rights therefore also have implications for the formation of subjectivity, and imply a particular type of subject. The possession of rights designates a bounded sphere of autonomy within which the individual is free to pursue their own interests, happiness and vision of the good life free from interference from other individuals, the state and society as a whole. Thus the concept of ‘rights’ in the liberal formulation assumes tension or struggle between the individual and community, and a definitive boundary between these two clearly distinguishable entities. This is not the only way in which rights can be formulated, but clearly questions concerning rights have much to do with the institution of boundaries between public and private spheres (which aspects of life can the state and society legitimately interfere with, and which should be protected?), and self/other relations (what is it that is constitutive of the self that has moral entitlements?).

In this chapter, similarly to Chapters 4 & 6 on transgressing territory and authority in theory, I will begin by sampling dominant theorisations of the concept of right⁸⁴. The grouping of theories relies on a particular understanding of domination as alienation, which has run through this thesis. Models will be drawn from the western political canon and from contemporary citizenship theory, with an emphasis on the liberal tradition, which has arguably had the most influence on the institution of citizenship rights in western democracies (Faulks, 2000: 55). Again, these formulations are plural, overlapping and diverse, but I will argue that by assuming a state and hierarchical ordering they share certain common characteristics, which are effectively transgressed by a critical utopian critique. As in previous chapters, the processes of deconstruction and reconstruction are complimentary, since the deconstructive process which groups together the dominant notions under a common critique assumes a critical and estranged ‘outside’ from which these rights-formulations can be observed and considered. As in previous chapters, this chapter will first outline common characteristics of dominant notions: universalism and foundationalism leading to excessive overcoding; binary, oppositional thought and subjectivity formation/performance; a separation of rights and responsibilities in the context of mediated and thus alienated societal relationships; the confounding of right and privilege; and a politics of demand which assumes an unassailable state and reactive atomised subjectivities, and has the tendency to recuperate difference or render it harmless. This first section of the chapter partially addresses, through the concept of ‘rights’, the first of my disaggregated research questions in section 1.3 of the Introduction: ‘Out of what historical conditions do dominant models of citizenship arise, what do they have in common, and what are their effects?’ I will then attempt to sketch the critical utopian theoretical place(s) from which this critique is made possible – where differences are harmonised through praxis rather than overcoding, where experimentation with holistic or non-alienated ontologies vitiates the effects of dualism and where mutual and unmediated relationships resolve conflicts through contingent ethics rather than state-imposed morality. Areas of thought that I have found particularly useful in these respects are deconstruction

⁸⁴ See Chapter 3, section 3.3 for theory selection criteria.

and post-structural feminism, which criticise and undermine foundationalism and deal extensively with alternative formulations of subjectivity. I have also included critical utopian and anarchistic ethical models that effectively challenge dominant paradigms of morality. This section addresses the second of the disaggregated research questions: ‘What alternatives to these dominant models of citizenship are offered by critical utopian theory?’ As in the foregoing thesis, the chapter will form a basis for a study of critical utopian praxis in the next chapter, where I consider how unmediated societal relationships are actualised in small-scale self-purposive communities.

8.2. *Dominant approaches*

8.2.1. Foundationalism and universalism

Although criticising foundationalism has been a theme throughout the thesis, it particularly applies to dominant conceptions of rights. The very term ‘rights’ implies an opposing ‘wrong’⁸⁵, and thus a hierarchical and Manichean conceptual ordering. It is important to note that the argument in this section relates mainly to ideas about ‘human’ or ‘natural’ rights, rather than a wider concept of ‘rights’, and I begin by considering the historical process by which dominant formations have been rooted in a view of ‘correct’, ‘real’ or ‘true’ human nature posited as universal, through the deduction of rights starting from ideas of universal human attributes or natural law. I also consider other ways of deducing rights through Kantian deontological and social contract procedures, establishing certain rights that have to be recognised for people not to be treated as means, and argue that these also share foundationalising assumptions⁸⁶.

The idea of ‘rights’ as a moral claim first arose in the early thirteenth century (Benditt, 1982: 2).

By the enlightenment period the concept was well established in western political thought, and

⁸⁵ Right is originally an “epithet of the hand that is normally the stronger”, denoting that which is “just, correct, proper; real [and] true” (Onions, 1996: 767). The etymology of the term shows how right implies not only the hierarchical binary ordering of the just over the unjust, the true over the false, but also strength as opposed to weakness; cf. Stirner (1993 [1844]: 276) for the idea that ‘might is - *right*’, that is, that right is personal strength or ability which has become alienated so that it no longer belongs to one’s self or lies within one’s control.

⁸⁶ I do, however, still see a role for rights, particularly where they are conceptualised as open-ended, diffuse and tactical rather than foundational, and I consider this as it relates to the critical utopian ethics outlined later (see particularly footnote 92 and section 9.3.5).

notions of ‘natural’ rights permeate the thought of early influential liberals such as Locke (2002 [1689]), Paine (1984 [1791]) and the authors of the *Federalist Papers* (Madison, Hamilton and Jay 1987 [1787]). Locke excludes foundational rights from political analysis by use of naturalistic discourse:

The state of Nature has a law of Nature to govern it, which obliges every one: and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind who will but consult it that being equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions. (Locke, 2002 [1689]: 3)

Ostensibly, such theories arose to justify limits on the impact of political institutions upon individuals. Without the civil rights of life, liberty and property, the individual would be at the mercy of arbitrary political power. While the classical liberals believed that the sovereign state was necessary to maintain order, they did not view it as a benign or beneficent force, nor prior to morality and justice as early republicans such as Hobbes (2006 [1651]: 100) and Machiavelli (1988 [1513]: 51) would have it. Thus, a right in a state of law is simply a reflection of an *a priori* right: ‘every civil right grows out of a natural right, or in other words, is a natural right exchanged’ (Paine, (1984 [1791]): 69). Like the classical anarchists (see section 2.4.1), early liberals believed humans to be self-determining before the rise of the state, so that the state arose as a consequence of a contract between rational and autonomous actors. The nature and extent of liberty that natural right entails is somewhat disputed. For Locke interference is never justified except in defence or protection of individuals and their property (Locke, 2002 [1689]: 57), whereas Paine argues that natural right begs some intervention to redress the social and economic power which underpins the abstract equality of legal doctrine, for example in the realm of employment provision (Paine, 1984 [1791]: 246).

That natural rights were seen to be given by God and accessed through rationality and right reason proposes more of a psychological model than specific moral claims, and is clearly problematic. Later centuries saw the gradual decline of natural and religious discourse and the secularisation of rights theories. Beginning with Kant, deontological theories attempted to ground ethics in reason and laws of the mind rather than in religion and metaphysics (Kant, 1970 [1797]: 132). Deontological theories are thus often based in thought experiments which involve rational problem

solving, and are general in their application, thus: ‘Every action which by itself or by its maxim enables the freedom of each individual’s will to co-exist with the freedom of everyone else in accordance with a universal law is *right*’ (Ibid: 133, italics in the original). In contrast to consequentialist theories, deontological theories judge the morality of decisions by criteria that accord value not to the states of affairs brought about by actions based on those decisions, but rather by conformity with moral norms by individual agents. There is to be no maximization of utility as in utilitarianism and the emphasis is on the *right* rather than the *good*. Despite the fact that rights are initially formulated to protect negative liberty, or to free the individual from the interference of others, right can be consonant with the freedom to protect it when considered in the context of universal law:

If the use to which a certain freedom is put is itself a hindrance to freedom in accordance with universal laws (i.e. if it is contrary to a right), any coercion which is used against it will be a hindrance to a hindrance of freedom, and will thus be consonant with freedom in accordance with universal laws – that is, it will be right (Ibid: 134).

Kant, however, still presumes a particular formulation of negative liberty to be a self-evident right, whereas it more correctly may be considered a specific good, and thus raise questions about the distribution of all other social goods. Rawls attempts to address this in his more recent deontological theory, which again begins with a ‘thought experiment’ (Benhabib, 1986: 289). Rawls posits an ‘original position’, which corresponds to the state of nature in earlier liberal theories, yet attempts no claim to historical acuity. It is posited as a hypothetical construct, to serve as ‘a natural guide to intuition’ (Rawls, 1971: 139). In the original position, individuals are placed behind a ‘veil of ignorance’:

No one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does any one know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength, and the like. I shall even assume that the parties do not know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities (Ibid: 12).

Rawls’ argument is that the ‘rational’ choice in this situation would be a risk-minimising strategy that would maximise the position of the least well off. Economic and social distribution is described in some detail by Rawls as the provision of various ‘primary goods’ (Ibid: 90-5), which are briefly defined as ‘rights and liberties, powers and opportunities, income and wealth’ (Ibid: 62).

Unlike the classical liberals, Rawls attempts to avoid recourse to naturalistic or theological assumptions, and does not discount the social inequalities that lie behind theoretical abstractions concerning equality and justice. There are, however, several points in Rawls' theory that I would take issue with from a critical utopian position, in particular the concept of the 'veil of ignorance'. If we view an individual as being in a large part constituted by their social relationships then it becomes very difficult to imagine a subject at all in the original position. The notion of a so-called 'rational' subject under these conditions becomes even more difficult. Rawls is once more reverting to the naturalistic assumptions he was seeking to avoid; he is positing a self-evident and transcendental rationality, which exists over and above constitutive factors such as social position, embodiment and psychological propensity. This is particularly apparent in his appeal to 'intuition' (see above). Rationality is seen to lie in a desire for 'primary goods', but needs and wants themselves may be socially constructed, particularly when we are positing contested concepts such as 'liberty', 'power' and 'wealth' as primary goods. The extent to which a particular formulation of economic wealth could be considered a rational interest, and indeed what kind of wealth this might be, could be brought into question: some would argue that this is not an *ecologically* rational interest (see Schumacher, 1974, *passim*). One passage of Rawls' is particularly telling:

A group of persons must decide *once and for all* what is to count among them as just and unjust. The choice which *rational men* would make in this hypothetical situation of equal liberty (Rawls, 1971: 13, my emphasis).

We seem hardly to have progressed from Hobbes' social contract, which remains fixed and immutable for all time. This leaves a static and fixed view of right that undermines choice, agency and action in the face of changing conditions, contexts, and desires. The emphasis on rationality over desire or emotion also acts to the exclusion of certain groups and individuals as it places theoretical or juridical weight behind the *particular* desires of a dominant group, which it legitimises through the discourse of 'rationality'. This leads to a second common theme of rights-based citizenship theory, to which I shall now turn.

8.2.2. Binary, oppositional thought and abstract, atomised subjectivities

As previously argued, the liberal tradition endows rights primarily to individuals with the implication that the individual and community are in opposition (Faulks, 2000: 57; Hoffman, 2004: 29). The fact that the individual and the community are seen to be in conflict by liberal theory is indicative of many other oppositions and dualisms, leading not only to a view of the citizen as an abstract and atomised individual, but a very particular type of abstract and atomised individual. Faulks (2000: 57) sets out a table of ten dualisms of liberal citizenship. Sargisson (2004: 59) also sets out a series of binaries in liberal thought deriving from the division between the public and private spheres, which she later connects to citizenship (Ibid: 74). I have drawn on these to formulate my own table of dualisms instituted by liberal ‘rights’ discourse. This mirrors my conceptualisation of the differences between dominant and critical utopian modes of theorising put forward in Chapter 2. The emphasis here, however, is on modes of individuation and subjectivity – the formulation of ‘the citizen’ – in liberal rights-based theory.

Citizen	Non-citizen ⁸⁷
Individual	Community
Agency / ‘Active Citizens’	Structure / ‘Passive Citizens’
Morally and/or legally right	Morally and/or legally wrong or irrelevant
Public	Private
Self	Other ⁸⁸
Equality	Difference
Civil and market rights	Social and welfare rights
Rationality, reason, the mind	Emotion, desire, the body
Wage labour	Domestic and care work
Masculine virtues	Feminine virtues
Rights	Responsibilities, duties and obligations

Figure 8-1: Subjective dualisms of rights-based citizenship theory

⁸⁷ By this, I do not only mean individuals who are excluded from the legal status of citizenship, but also those aspects of citizens which are overcoded, ignored, excluded or suppressed by abstract assumptions which accompany the status. I find Giorgio Agamben’s concept of ‘Bare life’ (1998, *passim*) or Stirner’s ‘un-man’ (1993 [1844], 139 and *passim*) sufficient to describe what I am trying to reach here.

⁸⁸ ‘Other’ here is a polymorphic term used to denote human and non-human animal others and nature more generally. ‘Self’ is taken to encompass any group that one identifies as belonging to at a given moment in opposition to an ‘other’, cf. Sargisson 2000 Chapter 5 ‘Self/Other relations’: ‘the way in which we approach the Other accounts for relations of domination. This Other may be a human, a group of humans, a tree, “nature”; it can be anything external to the Self in question.’ (Sargisson, 2000: 118)

The institution of rights is central to the institution of these binaries of citizenship since they institute legally binding boundaries, which define what is included and excluded, leading to dualistic thought and the formation of a certain type of subjectivity. Citizenship, as an institution, involves both a theory and a practice, but the boundaries between these are not easily drawn. This is particularly the case when dealing with language or theory instituted in law, such as rights, which are attributed to bodies, and thus capable of defining and indeed changing, imprisoning and dominating bodies (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 95; Foucault, 1979 [1975], *passim*; Agamben, 1998, *passim*).

Endowing rights to the individual person in order to define him as a citizen has a wide range of implications for the relationship of this - now abstracted - individual with the world around him. He is now defined as an entity that is separate, and protected from, a potentially hostile community and environment. This approach privileges individual agency and universal rationality over structural factors such as class, race and gender and the material and subjective constraints that social structures can place upon individuals and groups, and their ability to participate. The reason that I speak of the abstract citizen here in the male generic pronoun is that the liberal tradition does originally conceive the abstract citizen as male, and a particular type of male at that. This has implications for further oppositions, and although I do not have space to fully deconstruct all of those drawn in the table above, they are implied by and implicated in those that I do discuss here.

The public/private divide instituted through civil and market rights protects that which is defined as 'private' from public interference and scrutiny and distinguishes what is political from what is non-political, and thus should be excluded from the political arena and from political debate. The classical liberal canon has a clear position on this:

I think it may not be amiss to set down what I take to be political power; that the power of a magistrate over a subject may be distinguished from that of a father over his children, a master over his servant, a husband over his wife and a lord over his slave. All of which distinct powers happening sometimes together in the same man ... Political power then I take to be the power of making laws ... for the regulating and preserving of property, and of employing the force of the community in the execution of such laws, and in the defence of the commonwealth from foreign injury, and all this only for the public good (Locke, 2002 [1689]: 1-2).

The rights-bearing citizen who inhabits and has interests in the ‘public’ sphere and participates in politically binding decisions, is not only limited to propertied males in this instance, but to very specific aspects of that male’s life. Whilst many relationships and powers can be perceived ‘together in the same man’ (quoted above), implying a split or fragmented persona, only those aspects directed towards existing legal institutions concerning the protection of property and country are designated ‘public’ and political. Relationships with (and between) women and children (and servants and slaves!) are designated to the domestic sphere and exempt from political analysis. Not only are particular persons excluded from the public sphere, and who these persons are has varied historically, but the constitutive effects of these relationships with others upon the citizen’s subjectivity, and the effects that this might have upon public participation are also ignored.

Liberal thought does not ostensibly set out to exclude, oppress and suppress difference and individual self-creativity. John Stuart Mill makes it especially clear that the division of the private from the public means that the state is able to protect individuality and indeed establishes a sacrosanct sphere of liberty within which difference can flourish:

He who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation. He who chooses his plan for himself employs all his faculties (Mill, 1974 [1859]: 123)

Despite the instinctive appeal of the sentiment behind Mill’s defence of the private pursuit of happiness, the agent-centred individualism which forms the basis of his view of humanity, which constructs the public individual in abstract and asocial terms, does not provide a nuanced view of the social and economic structures and relationships of the domestic sphere – which may be intensely hierarchical and even violent (MacKinnon, 1991: 179 and *passim*).

The naturalisation of atomised subjectivities and the public/private divide obscures the fact that the boundaries between these are in fact political constructs, which are prior to and set the terms of political debate. Despite the fact that political rights have now been extended to women and other previously excluded groups, the systemic persistence of a public/private divide instantiated through

the institution of rights still tends to exclude those who do not live up to the ideal of the propertied, 'rational' individual with freedom from financial, physical and social constraints sufficient for the conditions of agency of 'active' citizenship. Liberal theory views society prior to the state as simply an aggregation of individuals, in the words of Locke: 'A state of perfect freedom to order their actions and dispose of their possessions as they think fit ... without asking leave or depending upon the will of any other man' (Locke, 2002 [1689]: 2). The state, rather than relationships between humans, is seen to give consistency to society. This ignores the contradictions and inequalities within society that give rise to the state in the first place. The liberal state embodies these contradictions and yet disguises them under a barrier of equality of rights for citizens. The tendency is to privilege the relationship to state and public sphere as a singular, special, or primary affiliation. The division of life into two different spheres is problematic and exclusionary on at least two levels even for those who are accorded citizen rights. First, structural constraints in the private sphere may impact upon a citizen's *ability* to participate through lack of resources or financial independence, lack of education or political/public knowledge (Marshall & Bottomore 1992 [1949]: 22-3) and time constraints from domestic or care duties (Pateman, 1992). Second, the inclination, ability or willingness to identify or participate as a citizen may be diminished when important aspects of an individual's identity are ignored or degraded in the public sphere (Cooper, 2006; Cronin, 2004).

8.2.3. Rights disguise privileges

Modern notions of citizenship are tied up with industrialisation and the rise of early capitalism, and particularly with the institution of the nation state as the primary and sovereign political institution. As we have seen, for Locke, Paine, and the authors of *The Federalist Papers*, citizenship bestowed upon the individual certain rights, one of which was the equal right to acquire and own property. The purpose of government was to protect these rights, and otherwise to play a relatively minimal role. The equality of *opportunity* (rather than outcome) presupposed by these authors was a useful device in the development of capitalist meritocracy, encouraging competition and the accumulation of wealth. The institution of rights, then, despite overtly existing to endow citizens with equality

and participatory status, is, when viewed in the context of historical dynamics and social structures, in fact producing and legitimising privileges for certain groups.

Some theorists have attempted to view the historical variability of citizenship in a positive light, as a progressive phenomenon. Post-war political theorists and practitioners T. H. Marshall and Tom Bottomore presented a vision of citizenship in which rights accumulate in linear fashion; the establishment of civil rights was seen to be a precursor to the growth of political rights, which in turn paved the way for social rights. The latter of these is seen to lead to a more equal and inclusive citizenship by ‘altering the pattern of social inequality’ (Marshall & Bottomore 1992 [1949]: 44). Faulks argues that ‘modern citizenship is inherently egalitarian’ (Faulks, 2000: 3; see also Hoffman, 2004: 138 and section 2.2 of this thesis). Arguments such as these are based on the idea that the internal logic of the concept necessarily causes it to become ever more egalitarian, universal and inclusive over time. In some ways, historical evidence may support this to the extent that excluded groups (slaves, women, ethnic minorities...) have often struggled for formal citizenship rights and been successful (Sparks, 1997). The introduction of a social element to citizenship also may have helped to turn what was initially an abstract and legalistic equality into a more concrete redistribution of resources.

To Marx, however, the extension of rights is still only the extension of bourgeois privilege rather than the emancipation of the human, which he makes most evident in the early essay “On the Jewish Question” (1975 [1843]). Marx criticises those who petition the state or advocate particular rights for certain groups (in this instance, the desire of contemporaneous German Jews for civic and political emancipation) for failing to ‘examine *the relationship between political emancipation and human emancipation* and, [therefore, posing] conditions which can be explained only by uncritical confusion of political emancipation and universally human emancipation’ (Marx, 1975 [1843]: 216). The argument in this essay is complex and is particularly relevant to the critique of rights and therefore deserves some attention.

To Marx, the political state is an expression of what he terms ‘the *species-life* of man in *opposition* to his material life’ (Ibid: 220). Thus, through the division of politics from other areas of life; the right, or privilege, of private property especially, man [sic] alienates himself from others:

‘All the preconditions of this egoistic life continue to exist *outside* the sphere of the state in *civil* society, but as qualities of civil society. Where the political state has attained its full degree of development man leads a double life ... He lives in the *political community*, where he regards himself as a *communal being* and in *civil society*, where he is active as a *private individual*, regards other men as means, debases himself to a means, and becomes a plaything of alien powers (Ibid: 220).

Here resides the problem of the ‘Jewish Question’, or the petitioning of equal rights for Jews in the political sphere: ‘The conflict in which the individual believer in a *particular* religion finds himself with his own citizenship and with other men as members of the community is reduced to a *secular* division between the *political* state and civil society’ (Ibid: 220 italics in the original). This conflict ultimately reduces itself to the conflict between ‘the *living individual* and the *citizen*’ (Ibid: 221, italics in the original), or ‘the political state and its presuppositions’ (Ibid: 221). Marx extends his critique to encompass not only citizen rights, but ‘the rights of man’, as conceived by Paine and the authors of *The Federalist Papers*.

I find this argument persuasive, and it informs my own theorisation of domination as alienation. The social democratic solution proposed by Marshall and Bottomore, although it goes some way to alleviating inequality, still presupposes a state that grants the rights it deems necessary, therefore conflates right with privilege.

However, although Marx comes closer to a critical utopian approach than Marshall and Bottomore, by conceptualising domination as alienation, questioning the limits of the system and imagining an outside to an institution of rights which presupposes domination, he does not go so far as to

imagine an outside to all forms of alienation and therefore domination. This is reflected in his characteristically obscured (anti-)utopian solution⁸⁹; that

Only when the real, individual man resumes the abstract citizen into himself and as an individual man has become a *species being* in his empirical life, his individual work and his individual relationships, only when man has recognized and organized his [own powers] as *social forces* so that the social force is no longer separated from him in the form of *political* force, only then can human emancipation be completed (Ibid: 234).

Although I agree with the significance of everyday life as a space for criticism of the universality of citizenship, I feel that the discourse in the above passage relies on foundational, abstracted and anti-utopian concepts. Marx uncritically uses terms and concepts such as ‘species-being’ and ‘empirical life’ as pre-requisites of a universal ‘human emancipation’ that is awaiting completion. It is this abstraction and transcendental humanism which perhaps has lead to claims that this essay (and by extension Marx himself) is anti-semitic (Muravchik, 2002: 167). It is doubtful that Marx, within his own humanist and materialist epistemology, considers it oppressive to state that ‘in the final analysis, the *emancipation of the Jews* is the emancipation of mankind from *Judaism*’ (Marx, 1975 [1843]: 237), nor even ‘What is the secular basis of Judaism? *Practical* need, *self-interest*. What is the secular cult of the Jew? *Haggling*. What is his worldly God? *Money*’ (Ibid: 236). I would argue, however, that the truth-claims that underlie Marx’ analysis of a ‘mankind’ that transcends the (religious) beliefs of particular humans, and of a materialism that transcends idealism or spiritualism, have oppressive effects insofar as they block possibilities for self-creativity and becoming. Truth-claims are hegemonising and represent people to themselves. Although Marx’s criticism of rights-based citizenship theory is useful, his theorisations of domination, subjectivity and the relation of equality to difference still rely on abstractions that can potentially oppress certain groups whilst veiling privilege behind a discourse of abstract humanism.

⁸⁹ Cf. Chapter 2, “Approach” section 2.3.1, where I argue that whilst concepts and theories are always already utopian, some, within which I include Marx’s thought, attempt to obscure this dreaming and desiring aspect and therefore also exhibit an anti-utopian, or blocking function.

What Marx does effectively show, is that the extension of rights to excluded groups leaves existing structures of domination in place. Even the addition of new kinds of rights, for example the redistributive social rights advocated by Marshall and Bottomore, leaves in place a state which is definitively separated from civil society, and therefore alienates humans from their own autonomous activity and social relationships, leaving them utterly vulnerable. This can be illustrated through a consideration of Giorgio Agamben's concept of 'bare life' (Agamben, 1998: 7 & *passim*), which illuminates a volatile relationship between law and state power, upon which modern notions of sovereignty are based. The inscription of 'natural' rights into law both limits the power of the state whilst extending its influence to claustrophobic intensity by drawing the citizen-subject into an increasingly proximate symbiotic relationship. Thus the modern sovereign claims legitimacy from citizens by 'including' them through rights (Ibid: 6). The citizen, Agamben continues, can only be constituted by extending 'the state of exception' (the suspension of rights), and thus 'bare life' (that which is opposed to, or rather obscured by the political being), to 'every individual body, making it into what is at stake in political conflict' (Ibid: 124). That formal rights are thus constitutive of citizenship means that the excluded - those who have most need of rights, are the least able to draw on them. Whilst the state provides 'rights', it is also prone to taking them away (Ibid: 126), thus reducing vulnerable individuals to merely biological beings, or 'bare life'.

8.2.4. Mediated and alienated relationships

Linked to the above critique of binary and oppositional thought that universalises the abstract individual citizen is the mediation of relationships between citizens by the state. This is particularly evident in debates concerning the perceived opposition or division between rights and responsibilities. Although my emphasis thus far has been upon critique of the liberal tradition as the most influential upon the western institution of citizenship, I will now turn to a debate between liberalism and civic republicanism. In liberal theory, the emphasis is often on rights as opposed to responsibilities, which connects to many of the other binaries in the figure 8-1 (above), such as those between men/women, and wage labour/domestic work.

Early republican accounts of citizenship, such as those of Machiavelli (1988 [1513]) and Hobbes (1991 [1651]), view citizenship much less as a set of rights and mode of participation. Both appear to be ethical relativists, who are not particularly interested in claiming any kind of transcendental moral legitimacy for their sovereign: 'A ruler who wishes to maintain his power must be prepared to act immorally if necessary' (Machiavelli, 1988 [1513]: 55; see also Hobbes, 1991 [1651]: 31). Since there is no universal ethic or reason to appeal to, both Hobbes' and Machiavelli's sovereigns have an epistemic power over citizens, to determine linguistic and moral meanings. Machiavelli's sovereign is encouraged to 'force them to believe' (Machiavelli, 1988 [1513]: 21) and Hobbes' sovereign is seen to be an arbitrator of reason (Hobbes 1991 [1651]: 32). It is notable in this context that the main function of citizenship is seen to be as a mode of social control, perhaps due to the fact that both were writing in times of political and social turbulence, when the promotion of stability was seen to be paramount. Such approaches emphasise duty to the sovereign over rights of individuals, and the stability and coherence of the political community over the individual. Thus the emphasis is different, and the valorised term within some of the binaries outlined above is inverted, although there is no radical attempt to redefine or overcome these oppositions.

Although the historical emphasis of republican theory has been on social control and stability, a recent strand of citizenship theory called new (or sometimes neo-) civic republicanism attempts to appropriate the emphasis on obligation over rights, and community over individual, but with the added importance of legitimacy derived through democratic participation (for example, Pateman, 1970; Prior, Stewart & Walsh, 1995; Crick (ed.) 2001). These thinkers show how participation in the spaces of everyday life, such as the workplace, civil society groups, the media and education can foster a more participatory and cohesive community. Prior, Stewart and Walsh (1995), argue that in liberal societies, 'the rights of citizenship are being recast as rights of individual consumers, and the obligations of government being seen as tasks of management' (Prior, Stewart & Walsh, 1995: 1). Through the liberal, rights-based approach, politics is transformed into management and public responsibility to private interest and many issues which would previously have been seen as belonging to the realm of moral judgement and public negotiation become matters of technical

decision and individual consumer preference (Ibid: 2). The authors propose an alternative to the market-oriented approach which is based on the notion of community (Ibid: 3) and decry the fact that most rights in Britain are defined negatively, in terms of diminishing possible restrictions on individuals, whereas positive participatory rights, such as voting, are not compulsory (Ibid: 4).

Although I am somewhat sympathetic towards civic republican models, in particular their emphasis on the importance of participation, these models often exhibit problems of paternalism, and do not overcome the hierarchies of liberal approaches to citizenship, or state-centred models more generally. There is a move towards viewing individuals in relational, rather than atomistic terms. I would agree with Prior, Steward and Walsh that individuals are ‘engaged in a range of reciprocal relationships with others’ (Ibid: 16), and that the constitutive effects of these relationships cannot be ignored as they are in many liberal models. However, I would criticise the emphasis on the citizen’s relation with ‘society in general’ (Ibid: 16), which suggests the sacrifice of difference to abstraction once more. There is somewhat of a contradiction in approaches that aim to extend grassroots participation through reforms composed by theoreticians, to be implemented by central government. It is notable that the means of agency and realisation are in direct contrast with the perceived ends of such a project. The attempt is to impose on citizens ‘from above’ the means whereby they will be enabled to participate ‘from below’.

Derek Heater’s model of citizenship attempts to reconcile the civic-republican and liberal models of citizenship (Heater, 1999: 177). Citizenship is seen to comprise three elements: autonomy, virtue and rights. These should be not regarded as in tension but as complementary, since rights are, in reality, provided or respected through the obligations of other members of society (Ibid: 177). This model of social reciprocation is mirrored by Geraint Parry’s model of the ‘mutual society’ which starts from the normative principle ‘from each according to his or her ability, to each according to his or her need for the conditions of agency’ (Parry, 1991: 179). This is seen to resolve the liberal contradiction between the individual and the community, formalised in the legal institution of rights and the division of rights and responsibilities: ‘if the community empowers the individual –

contributes to effective agency – there is an expectation that the agent will make some return which will sustain the empowerment of others’ (Ibid: 186-7).

Although I would agree with this model that rights and responsibilities are mutually presupposing, both Heater and Parry assume an unassailable state, and thus fail to overcome the conceptual differentiation and practical alienation of rights from responsibilities. Although Heater adds that other contexts are possible and desirable, such as local initiatives, EU-wide welfare and global environmental protection, which he links to his own model of multiple citizenship (Heater, 1999: 179), he is not clear where absolute sovereignty might ultimately lie in a situation such as this. And here lies the difficulty; sovereignty is an absolute concept (Brace & Hoffman (Eds.), 1997) and dominant conceptions of rights are based upon the contradictory assumption of a legitimate form of sovereignty that is abstracted from the bearer of rights and obligations, which can enforce these when necessary. It is this mediation that informs the central tenets of dominant approaches to citizenship rights. This can lead to a loss of social support networks and alienated social life, a ‘TV nation’ where life is lived through the screen and the mediation of news reports and technology, or ‘the downloading of consciousness into the machine’ (Bey, 1994: 36). This can be criticised in terms internal to liberal democratic theory as problems of democratic legitimacy through decreased political participation, as well as with external critique of the hollowing-out of the social commons (Chatterton & Hodkinson, 2007: 204). This leads to a final common feature of dominant approaches, which concerns the method by which dominant models presuppose that citizens might have their rights-claims recognised and enforced.

8.2.5. Politics of demand

A particular politics stems from the argument above that the language of ‘rights’ is often used to disguise privilege. To those whose difference is not recognised within the public sphere, like the German Jews of whom Marx spoke, ‘right’ may very well feel as though it is simply the ‘might’ of the powerful (cf. footnote 85). Liberal democracy provides a method by which the excluded might have their identities and interests recognised within the public sphere, and be provided with

material, legal or ideological resources judged appropriate for equal presence and participation in the public sphere. Richard Day terms this ‘the politics of demand’ (Day, 2005: 80). This model of politics is evident in contemporary British citizenship discourse, and in particular ‘social capital’ debates. In a 2005 report, the National Council for Voluntary Organizations (*NCVO*)⁹⁰ (Jochum, Pratten, & Wilding, 2005) divide the ‘social capital’⁹¹ of the private sphere into three different types. The first two are ‘bonding social capital’, which relates to ‘horizontal’ relationships within groups and associations based on common identity and shared purpose; and ‘bridging social capital’ which relates to diversity, or ‘horizontal’ relationships between people and groups who are different from one another. Both of these are types of relationship that occur within civil society. The third type of social capital, ‘linking social capital’, relates to power, or ties with those in authority, ‘vertical’ participation and access to power institutions and decision-making processes (Ibid: 10-2). The theory behind social capital is that ‘social ties and shared values or norms (such as trust or reciprocity) [bind] people together [and] facilitate participation’ (Ibid: 10). Social capital is seen to be ‘autonomous and spontaneous’, and although it cannot be controlled, ‘government can influence the conditions in which it can flourish’ (ibid: 10).

Civil society represents the sphere of private interests of individuals and groups, who petition the state for rights (or privileges) and recognition in the public sphere. The state acts as a ‘neutral’ arbiter of these interests, and protects the private interests of citizens. The problems of mediation and the alienation of citizens’ represented identities and interests from their own autonomous activity have been considered in Chapter 2 (section 2.5.1). These criticisms apply particularly to the *NCVO* passage quoted above: consider the proposal that the ‘purpose’ of social ‘capital’ (also note the economic terminology) is to encourage good/active citizenship, and that government can foster the conditions in which it will flourish. The discourse undermines the intrinsic value of social

⁹⁰ As a quasi-independent organization claiming to represent the interests of civil society groups and associations both to government and the wider public, I feel that the *NCVO* has a particular relevance to this debate. Due to the intended audiences of its publications, the concepts and discourse used by the *NCVO* might be viewed as fairly representative of discourse that is accepted and understood by government, the associations that the organization represents, and the wider public. Through its research and publications, the *NCVO* also contributes to setting the terms of debate.

⁹¹ This is defined as the relational element of civil society, which operates through formal and informal associations and groups, which are seen to facilitate participation and collective action (Jochum, Pratten & Wilding 2005: 10. See also Putnam 1993, *passim*)

bonds. This can be linked to the Marxist view above, which, like theorists of group rights and social capital, ultimately seeks to incorporate social difference into a higher unity.

Day defines the politics of demand as ‘a politics oriented to improving existing institutions and everyday experiences by appealing to the benevolence of hegemonic forces and/or altering the relations between these forces’ (Day, 2005: 80). However, Day argues that campaigning for rights, privilege or recognition rarely provides the desired effects:

instead, it defers, dissuades, or provides a partial solution to one problem that exacerbates several others. In order to ‘free’ some educated upper-class First World White women to participate in the paid workforce, liberal capitalism creates new categories of indentured labour designed to import and enslave women from the global South. So that we might achieve equality in the possession of private vehicles and air conditioners, the air becomes unbreathable and the (newly privatized) power grid collapses in the heat wave associated with global warming produced by ... cars and air conditioners (Day, 2005: 83; elipsis and capitalisation in the original).

According to Day, not only does a politics of demand do nothing to change existing structures, but those who participate in it actually perpetuate these structures, ‘which exist precisely in the anticipation of demands’ (Ibid: 98).

Contemporary post-left and poststructural anarchists, who I have previously associated with a critical utopian approach, view the politics of demand and exercise of rights as complicity in one’s own domination, or as a form of recuperation of one’s radical difference by the mainstream (Bonanno, 1988: 9; Day, 2005: 83-4). These thinkers advocate, as a utopian alternative, a ‘politics of the act’ (Bonanno, 1988: 9-10; Day, 2005: 88-90). This will be discussed below, as I turn to a section on critical utopian alternatives in theory, which attempt to formulate an ‘outside’ to statist domination.

8.3. *Critical utopian approaches*

8.3.1. Experimentation, contingency, and ontological difference

Previously, I considered how dominant theories of rights use foundational assumptions as the basis for producing and assessing moral claims (section 8.2.1). These included universalising portrayals

of specific formulations of ‘human nature’ and ‘rationality’, leading to a single, universal moral code set out in the language of ‘rights’. I argued that universalising assumptions can naturalise the desires of a dominant group, and thus leads to the oppression of minorities and the suppression of creativity. Here, I am looking for a critical utopian alternative to foundational formulations of rights. It is important to note that non-foundational, diffuse and contingent ethics can be articulated in terms of rights (Bonanno, 1988; Guattari, 1996: 104; Vaneigem, 2003). The distinction between foundational and diffuse rights echoes May’s distinction between morality and ethics (May, 1994: 142-144) where moral claims are based on implicit foundations and the search for truth, whereas ‘ethics cannot be defended from the outside; it is holistic in that sense’ (Ibid, p. 144). Whilst I acknowledge that contingent ethics can be articulated in terms of rights, to avoid confusion with dominant approaches I tend not to do so here since other terms are available⁹².

The idea of non-foundational ethics is most strongly articulated by Deleuze and Guattari (1988), as well as the poststructural feminism of Rosi Braidotti (1991, 1993a, 1993b, 1994) and the poststructural anarchism of Todd May (1994) who each take Deleuze and Guattari’s conceptual framework and imbue it with a more explicitly ethical function. The politics of ontological difference and nomadic subjectivities offered by these authors provides a starting point for an infinitely critical ethics based on desire and possibility which acts as a critical utopian counterpart to the predetermination and rationality of foundational rights discourses. The following sections address, through the lens of ethical discourses that offer alternatives to universalist rights, the second of my disaggregated research questions in section 1.3 of this thesis: what alternatives to dominant models of citizenship are offered by critical utopian theory?

⁹² It is also important to note that rights can be incredibly important strategically for marginalised groups in struggles for freedom and equality, particularly in the global south (Englund & Nyamnjoh eds., 2004; Slyomovics, 2005; Sassen, 2006: 292-3). This is a separate point to the previous, and is articulated later in this thesis using Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of axioms in section 9.3.5.

Deleuze and Guattari offer a distinct and utopian⁹³ ethical ontology insofar as their work is concerned with an investigation into what categories of things there are in the world, and the relationships between them, which transgresses many of the taken-for-granted or foundational categories of liberal theorisations of rights, such as the ‘rational individual’ and ‘society’. The ontology espoused is one of univocality or immanence; everything that exists is seen to be a modification, expression or manifestation of one substance, or ‘plane’ which is always in a process of differentiating, folding and unfolding, organising, disorganising and reorganising itself:

We call this plane, which knows only longitudes and latitudes, speeds and haecceities, the plane of consistency or composition (as opposed to the plan(e) of organization or development). It is necessarily a plane of immanence and univocality. We therefore call it the plane of Nature, even though nature has nothing to do with it, since on this plane there is no distinction between the natural or the artificial. However many dimensions it may have, it never has a supplementary dimension to that which transpires upon it. That alone makes it natural and immanent (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 294).

This ontology is not foundational since it does not offer a transcendental or fixed criterion from which moral concepts might proceed: we cannot distinguish human ‘nature’ from artifice, nor rationality from desire. Difference is seen to go all the way down to a level of imperceptibility (Ibid: 280). Identity, or individuation, is seen to occur when a multiplicity acquires consistency, and different components are seen to hold together or resonate in an ‘assemblage’ (Ibid: 361). Consistency also organises assemblages into higher-level systems called strata (Ibid: 45). Organisation has to do with both territory and code; each articulation within the system of organisation has a form/content (territory) and a substance/expression (code) (Ibid: 46). Neither of these exhibits a primary causal relation over the other, the organisation itself is *a priori* and form and expression come after. This is tantamount to saying that reality does not create language or ideas from some kind of intrinsic meaning, but neither do our concepts shape (perception of) reality: there is something else which is prior. Deleuze and Guattari are thus concerned with the question of ‘what holds things together?’ (Ibid: 361), or what principles or forces lead disparate

⁹³ Deleuze and Guattari do not often use the terminology of utopia explicitly. The exception is Deleuze and Guattari 1994, pp. 99-100, where they define utopia as the becoming-political of philosophy (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, pp. 99-100). This moment of philosophy becoming political is particularly relevant for this chapter which is attempting to formulate a non-transcendental ethical discourse: ‘Utopia does not split off from infinite movement: etymologically it stands for absolute deterritorialization but always at the critical point at which it is connected with the present milieu’ (Ibid, pp. 99-100). For a selection of others who identify Deleuze as Utopian see Patton (2007) and Holland (2005).

elements to acquire consistency in territorialised, coded assemblages and higher-level systems of organisation in the particular combinations that they do? What are the effects of this? Are there other possibilities? Can we effect change?

Deleuze and Guattari suggest a different mode of individuation to the individualistic subjectification of the dominant approaches discussed above. This form of individuality is termed 'haecceity' (Ibid: 287) and is a form of individuality that is different from a thing or a subject (Ibid: 288). Haecceities 'consist entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect and be affected' (Ibid: 288). All assemblages are seen to be haecceities, including the human, or the individual subject (Ibid: 289). They are defined not by any intrinsic qualities, but by their degree of power and the extent to which this is restricted or bounded, the active or passive affects of which they are capable in the individuated assemblages in which they exist (Ibid: 283): 'We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body' (Ibid: 284). This has to do not with only power, which provides the active force through which potential assemblages ultimately come into play, but more importantly with *desire*, which imagines, or desires the modes of individuation in the first place:

Assemblages are passionate, they are components of desire. Desire has nothing to do with a natural or spontaneous determination; there is no desire but an assembling, assembled, desire. The rationality, the efficiency, of an assemblage does not exist without the passions the assemblage brings into play, without the desires that constitute it as much as it constitutes them (Ibid.: 440).

Desire is what gives consistency to multiplicity. The rational, atomised individual endowed with rights is a product not of nature, but of the desires of dominant groups with the assembled power to give their imaginings consistency.

The ethical implications of this discourse are more complicated. Deleuze and Guattari are critical of the idea of a fixed essence as the basis for either morality or resistance. Since power has a positive and creative role to play in the creation of identities as well as a negative role in oppressing or suppressing, it becomes impossible to do away with it completely. Power constitutes

not only that which should be resisted but also the forms and agents of resistance. State power works not only at the level of hierarchical governance but also at the level of the subject. Resistance must also take place at this level. For Deleuze and Guattari, resistance involves removing blockages that stem the flow of creativity and desire. This involves a kind of experimentation that the authors term 'becoming-'. This is a minoritarian phenomenon: 'All becoming is minoritarian' (Ibid: 117). As a fixed status or identity, one cannot 'become' majoritarian since one either is or is not – it is an individualistic and fixed status. It is always the minor position which allows for flux and creative identity experimentation: 'we must distinguish between: the majority as a constant and homogeneous system; minorities as subsystems; and the minoritarian as a potential, creative and created becoming' (Ibid: 117).

Rosi Braidotti and Todd May elaborate upon the ethics of this ontology, and the practices that it might involve. Braidotti borrows concepts from Deleuze and Guattari's ontological model to articulate a radical postmodern feminist ethical practice. This, she argues, requires that 'attention be paid both to identity as a set of identifications and to political subjectivity as the quest for sites of resistance' (Braidotti, 1994: 23). As a conceptual embodiment of such a practice, Braidotti posits Deleuze and Guattari's figure of the nomad as 'the kind of subject who has relinquished all idea, desire, or nostalgia for fixity' (Ibid: 22). A nomadic political ontology is somewhat akin to Deleuze and Guattari's, as outlined above, but importantly, nomadic consciousness is also an epistemological position, which is active and continuous and resists assimilation (Ibid: 25). Experimentation, and becoming-minor allow the resistance of oppressive and stagnant social forms through the education of desire. It is because of the emphasis placed on articulating difference and the process of thinking that comes with the minority position that nomadism resonates with feminism, or the figure of the woman (Braidotti, 1994: 29; see also Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 306).

Thus, contra-Marx, the critical utopian ethical standpoint involves not the assimilation of minority into a higher unity (the becoming-human of the Jew) but the disintegration of the fixed dominant

position into a series of fluid minoritarian identities; ‘A woman has to become-woman, but in a becoming-woman of all man. A Jew becomes Jewish, but in a becoming-Jewish of the non-Jew’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 321-2). The tactic is to resist closure and to remain open to otherness, through the invention of ‘new structures of thought’ (Braidotti, 1994: 180), and through ‘reformulating the bodily roots of subjectivity’ (Ibid: 184). There is an emphasis on bringing sensation, the body and experience into the political field in order to assert specificity and difference through, and apart from the universal abstract rational rights-bearing citizen.

May disaggregates the ethical principles of what he terms ‘poststructural anarchism’, under which the thinkers I have considered here are subsumed into a number of distinct themes. The first is that practices of representing others to themselves ought to be avoided (May, 1994: 130); that is, we should avoid universalising experience. This leads to the second ethical principle; that ‘alternative practices ... ought to be allowed to flourish and even to be promoted’ (Ibid: 133). Philosophy is seen as a practice, and thus is evaluated by its effects rather than its ability to attain truths (or to ascertain what is ‘right’). The ethical value of philosophy derives from the alternative ways of thinking that its creation of concepts offers. (Ibid: 134-5; see also Deleuze & Guattari, 1994: 11 and *passim*). Third, there is ‘a generally anticapitalist sentiment amongst poststructuralists that is ethically based’ (May, 1994: 136) which is based upon an ethical critique of exploitative relationships and the inhibition of critical thought (Ibid: 136).

What is interesting about poststructural ethics (as put forward by May, but also in my own interpretation) is that they do not proceed from a transcendent or meta-ethical realm of nature or reason as do the ‘rights’ of liberal theory. Indeed, the view is one of ‘ethics as a practice, with its own power relationships, and yet one that allows for the possibility of judging other practices’ (Ibid: 139). An important distinction can be made between morality and ethics. Morality tends to require a kind of blind faith, and thus requires (frequently obscured) foundational ontological assumptions, leading to a circular axiomatic: ‘To posit the truth of a moral claim is to do no more – but no less – than to posit that claim itself. At the level of recognizing which claims admit of the possibility of

truth, there is nothing to distinguish values from practical judgements' (Ibid: 143). Ethical discourse differs insofar as it does not rely on a transcendent ontological realm from which to draw its value and is non- or anti- foundational. Thus 'it entails that no values are immune from scrutiny. What that scrutiny will turn up can only be discovered when certain values or principles are played off against others' (Ibid: 144-5). Such a view of ethics relies on an immanentist, nonfoundational and holistic ontology, not because of the 'truth' of this ontology but because of the ethical effects it can produce. Thus there is a form of resistance to be found in the championing of subjugated practices through experimenting with different ways of living, perceiving, thinking and being. This has implications for epistemological concerns, and involves transgressing the linguistic and perceptual binaries of dominant models of rights.

8.3.2. Transgressing binary, oppositional thought and atomised subjectivities

In section 8.2.2 I considered how dominant models of rights presuppose conflict and opposition by endowing the abstract individual with equal rights in the public sphere and relegating difference to the private sphere, implying a particular type of self/other relation. Discourses of rationality and 'the natural' discussed above have the tendency to binarise subjectivity, placing that which is on the side of power within the accepted domain and that which escapes power in the category of the implied 'other'; the 'unnatural', or 'irrational'. This perpetuates dominating hierarchies and atomised, competitive subjectivities. Here, I would like to consider theories that posit non-hegemonic modes of thinking and being in the world that transgress these binaries and offer a critical utopian 'outside' that resists dominant models of thinking the subject. The critique of binary oppositions has formed the basis of much contemporary feminist, anarchist and ecological theory. Both poststructural anarchism and poststructural feminism have focused on bringing desire (Stirner 1993, [1844]: 50⁹⁴; Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 441; Braidotti, 1994: 182; Call, 2002: 3-4) and embodiment (Stirner 1993 [1844]: 64; Cixous, 1991 [1975]; Braidotti, 1994: 180; Agamben, 1998; Irigaray, 2004: 207) into the political sphere. An important common theme is that the images

⁹⁴ Although it may be an anachronism to term Stirner a 'poststructuralist', many of the themes in his work anticipate those of poststructuralism (for a discussion on this see particularly Newman, 2001, pp. 55-74).

of desire and the body are not hegemonic, truth-claiming or fixed. We are not provided with a single, universal model of subjectivity but rather with desires and bodies that are different, and in a constant state of flux: ‘You can’t talk about *a* female sexuality, uniform, homogeneous, classifiable into codes – any more than you can talk about one unconscious resembling another. Women’s imaginary is inexhaustible’ (Cixous, 1991 [1975]: 334; italics in the original).

To Stirner, there is always the desire to break free from subjectification: a desire that is animated in the concept of the ‘un-man’ (Stirner, 1993 [1844]: 177). For Stirner, there is no essential subject who is unpolluted by power or desire, and any attempt to construct such a subject results in oppressive exclusions: ‘To say in blunt words what an un-man is not particularly hard: it is a man who does not correspond to the *concept* man, as the inhuman is something human which is not conformed to the concept of the human’ (Ibid: 177). There can thus be no universal morality or truth⁹⁵ to which the pure subject has recourse through rationality, and reason and desire cannot be held to be separate nor in conflict:

It is only through the “flesh” that I can break the tyranny of mind; for it is only when a man hears his flesh along with the rest of him that he hears himself wholly, and it is only when he wholly hears *himself* that he is a hearing or rational being (Ibid: 64).

It has been argued that the kind of anarchism associated with Stirner as well as with those whom May identifies as poststructural anarchists is, like liberalism, a form of extreme individualism, and therefore in an irreconcilable conflict with community and the environment (Bookchin, 1995: 34 & *passim*). Bookchin argues that many anarchists today are more concerned with individual ‘lifestyle’ and hedonism than with social and ecological problems. However, this contradiction only occurs where the modernist dichotomies between the individual and the community, self and environment, the public and private, substantiated through state-mediated relationships are upheld⁹⁶. Although it would be potentially despotic to argue that individual rights should be *revoked* within the context

⁹⁵ As mentioned previously (footnote 63) this does not preclude the possibility of ethical discourse – see also Newman’s interpretation of Stirner in terms of poststructural ethics (Newman, 2001: Chapter 3).

⁹⁶ For an entire polemic that specifically point-by-point refutes Bookchin’s binary distinction between ‘lifestyle’ and ‘the social’, see Black (1997).

of the state and capitalism (I will discuss this later in sections 8.3.3 & 8.3.4), a critical utopian approach emphasises the importance of thinking and living *outside* existing hierarchies hegemonic concepts and practices:

I [don't offer] any ultimate resolution of the tension between the individual and the social. No theory will ever accomplish that a priori, although theory might inform its resolution in practice ... We need, not for people to be less selfish, but for us to be more selfish in the most effective way, together. For that, they need to understand themselves and society better – to desire better, to enlarge their perceptions of the genuinely possible, and to appreciate the real institutional (and ideological) impediments to realizing their real desires. By “real desires” I don't mean “what I want people to want,” I mean what they really want, severally and together, as arrived at ... by unconstrained, general, unhurried reflection (Black, 1997: 56).

Although poststructural and post-left anarchism, post-feminism and deep ecology use different terms such as ‘desire’, ‘the body’ (see above) and ‘flux of nature’ (Botkin, 1990: 62), there is particular manner of using these concepts that acts against representative and hegemonic assumptions. Although Bookchin seems to take the side of ecology and community against individualism, where the hegemonic or foundational assumptions are removed from both ‘sides’ there is no necessary dichotomy. Both the holism of deep ecology, and the embodied individualism of poststructural feminism and anarchism can be interpreted as methods of transgressing the dichotomy between the ‘individual’ and the ‘community’, ‘public’ and ‘private’ or ‘self’ and ‘other’. Where poststructural anarchism and feminism posit disruptive subjectivities as the ubiquitous contradictions that undermine simplistic binary subjectivities, deep ecology posits a disruptive and ungovernable nature (Fox, 1995: 50; Botkin et. al., 2000, *passim*). The method, however, is a similar blurring of the ontological distinction between thinking and being/desiring, the effect of which is a non-hegemonising utopian imagining of subjectivity, which disrupts the image of the abstract, rational, asocial individual of liberal theory by exposing its actual specificity.

Agamben (1993), I feel, is unsurpassed in his ability to use specificity as both an epistemological framework and a critical utopian method, in a manner that blends the models of poststructural theories and deep ecology. Where Stirner embodies that which escapes given concepts in the ‘un-man’, and Braidotti in the ‘nomad’, Giorgio Agamben (1993) uses the term ‘whatever singularities’ (Agamben, 1993: 1 and *passim*). Agamben's style is poetic and aesthetically beautiful, which

endows this concept of ‘whatever singularity’ with a kind of life, or a particular sense of being-in-the-world which is hard to articulate; but it is notable that the form of his writing resonates with the content, which regards the potentiality of all life. Unlike other theorists, he neither accepts nor completely rejects conceptual dichotomies of individual/community (Ibid: 17-20), particular/universal (Ibid: 9-11), self/other (Ibid: 1-2), actual/potential (Ibid: 53-6) right/wrong (Ibid: 5-8), subject/object (Ibid: 47-50), or state/non-state (Ibid: 85-7), but rather disrupts them by narrating the regions where they become indistinguishable:

One can think of the halo ... as a zone in which possibility and reality, potentiality and actuality, become indistinguishable. The being that has consumed all of its possibilities, thus receives as a gift a supplemental possibility ... This imperceptible trembling of the finite that makes its limits indeterminate and allows it to blend, to make itself whatever, is the tiny displacement that every thing must accomplish in the messianic world (Agamben, 1993: 55).

It is important to emphasise that Agamben views his concept of the singularity, like the subjectivities theorised by Braidotti and Stirner, as fundamentally disruptive:

Whatever singularity, which wants to appropriate belonging itself, its own being-in-language, and thus rejects all identity and every condition of belonging, is the principle enemy of the State. Wherever these singularities peacefully demonstrate their being in common there will be Tiananmen, and, sooner or later, the tanks will appear (Ibid: 86).

Agamben’s method has particular implications for the practice of a politics of resistance, which will be considered later (section 8.3.5). At this point, however, I would like to come back to the theme of the relationship of humanity to nature, self to other, and individual to community by considering how vulnerable others might be protected if not through a politics of rights and representation.

8.3.3. Ethics of care and infinite responsibility

In section 8.2.3 I considered how rights often disguise the political and economic privileges of a dominant group (such as citizens, or indeed, particular citizens). Here, I concentrate on critical utopian ethical models that offer alternatives to rights. Two theorists who are utopian in the critical, non-finalisable sense outlined previously (Chapter 2 *passim* and Chapter 3 section 3.3) insofar as they privilege process over closure, full presence over mediation, and present practice over future goal are Levinas and Bakhtin. For Levinas, foundationalism cannot be the basis of ethical

discourse: ‘taking principles of method for affirmations on the foundation of things ... is certainly an act of simple hasty minds’ (Levinas, 2006: 59). Levinas and Bakhtin both provide methods of engaging with ‘the other’ which do not involve representation and thus allow for the continual critical affirmation of difference. To Levinas, ethics is prior to philosophy and is derived from experience of the other. The other is not knowable, so cannot be made into an object of the self, as in dominant models of morality outlined in section 8.2.3. For Levinas, the encounter with the other, which he articulates in terms of an epiphany during the face-to-face encounter (Levinas, 2002 [1961]: 206-7) produces a form of ethics independent of the state to the point where responsibility and an ethic of care are integral to the subject:

the intersubjective relationship is a non-symmetrical relation. In this sense, I am responsible for the Other without waiting for reciprocity, were I to die for it. Reciprocity is *his* affair. It is precisely insofar as the relationship between the Other and me is not reciprocal that I am subjected to the other; and I am a “subject” essentially in this sense (Levinas, 1985: 98).

Responsibility and care therefore precede any ‘objective’ searching after truth; the other is valued precisely for its unknowability and irreducible heteronomy. Obligation to the other is what gives us life and experience, and founds our own subjective experience by giving a meaningful direction and orientation. An ethical experience thus cannot seek to *impose* identity or normative behavioural codes upon this other. The potential source of oppression, therefore, lies not (or not only) externally, but internally; it is part of ourselves that must be overcome in order to enter into the ethical relation and be open to the other’s becoming and potentiality. This process of relating ethically does not, and indeed *cannot* involve representation, mediation, or any attempt to fix the other into a single or desired mode of being. This acts as a utopian critique of dominant models of citizenship: one becomes responsible by opening oneself up to the experience of the other, rather than being protected and alienated from the other by legal rights.

Bakhtin (1984 [c. 1929]) articulates similar ideas differently, through the genre of literary criticism. I feel that his account offers a valuable addition to Levinas in the articulation of an ethics of difference which accords moral value to multiple ‘others’. Bakhtin credits Dostoevsky with the creation of a new kind of novel, which he terms ‘the polyphonic novel’ (Bakhtin, 1984 [c. 1929]: 8

& *passim*). Bakhtin views this conceptual creation as having a significance wider than the creation of a new genre, but also ‘in the development of the *artistic thinking* of humankind’ (Ibid: 270, italics in the original). This ‘artistic thinking’ creates utopian space for the articulation of a wide range of different voices and standpoints without the positing of one single voice or position, including that of the author, as truthful or objective. Thus, the thinking of the human in artistic, rather than traditional philosophical terms, allows for an understanding and a practice of individual humans, and humanity, as potentiality rather than a finished or essential product or object, or one which is moving dialectically towards a predetermined future in Hegelian fashion (Ibid: 26-27). This offers a model of ethics that might have relevance for a critical utopian citizenship that is not based on the presupposed division of rights from responsibilities.

The viewpoint has an affinity with critical utopian approaches, insofar as utopia is not something to be seen as a finalised goal which can be located somewhere in the future, but is a process which occurs at the intersection of a multitude of competing and converging viewpoints in the present:

This trait expressed itself in Dostoevsky’s eschatology, both political and religious, and in his tendency to bring the “ends” closer, to feel them out while still in the present, to guess at the future as if it were already at hand in the struggle of coexisting forces.

Dostoevsky’s extraordinary artistic capacity for seeing everything in coexistence and interaction is his greatest strength ... but none of these contradictions and bifurcations ever became dialectical, they were never set in motion along a temporal path or in an evolving sequence: they were, rather, spread out in one plane, as standing alongside or opposite one another, as consonant but not merging or as hopelessly contradictory, as an eternal harmony of unmerged voices or as their unceasing and irreconcilable quarrel. Dostoevsky’s visualizing power was locked in place at the moment diversity revealed itself – and remained there organizing and shaping this diversity in the cross-section of a given moment (Ibid: 30).

Bakhtin and Levinas suggest politics of recognising the other’s ‘rights’ or entitlements as existing not as a product of a hierarchical, alienated and stagnant political sphere which imposes these through a legal system and the *status* of citizenship, but at the immediate level of interaction with the other or others. This leads to an ethic that is internal to the subject and his or her relationships rather than imposed by external forces: an ethic of care or infinite responsibility, which is groundless and immanent rather than based on an assumed or imposed ‘essence’. This ethic might be seen as a processual, non-hegemonic, critical utopian and anarchistic ‘outside’ to the liberal and Marxist ethical theories outlined earlier. These were judged to rely on a foundational claim to

‘truth’ imposed through either legal discourse of ‘rights’ or moral discourse of ‘human nature’ and thus lead to the privileging of the desires of a particular dominant group. Levinas and Bakhtin, amongst others⁹⁷ offer an immanent critical utopian alternative that relies on unmediated experience of, and interaction with others and thus rests on responsibility, care or obligation, which is internal to the subject rather than externally and hierarchically imposed. Instead of an objective epistemology of morals and legal rights, we can imagine an intersubjective epistemology of ethics of infinite responsibility⁹⁸. I will consider what this might mean at the level of political practice in the following chapter (9) on “Transgressing rights: practice”. In the upcoming section, however, I will further consider what unmediated relationships might mean in the context of a utopian praxis of critical resistance, and how this has been theorised in alternative utopian theory.

8.3.4. Beyond and beneath mediation

Under dominant approaches, section 8.2.4, I considered how the alienation of political power from the citizenry leads to a separation of rights from responsibilities and an increasing emphasis on the former as consumer or market rights and the latter as the technical responsibilities of a small number of experts. Governing and processes needed for the sustenance of life are separated from everyday processes of living and being. This can lead to diminished participation in both social and political life, and a hollowing-out of social commons and welfare support networks. Having considered the possibility of an ethical relation within which new possibilities for subjectivity can be imagined, it becomes pertinent to think about the kind of communities that might arise from such relations (Day, 2005: 179; see also Deleuze, 1995: 115). Here, I would like to consider

⁹⁷ Other thinkers, who I have not had space to fully include, articulate similar ideas. These include Buber (2004 [1937], *passim*) whose distinction between the I-It relation and the I-Thou relation mirrors Levinas’ and Bakhtin’s distinctions between viewing the ‘other’ as an object of the self and viewing the ‘other’ as a fully autonomous subject in his or her own right. See also Irigaray (1996) who introduced the word ‘to’ into the traditional phrase ‘I love you’; thus – ‘I love to you’ - in order to ‘avoid falling back into the horizon of the reduction of the subject to the object, to an item of property’ (Irigaray, 1996: 111).

⁹⁸ Thanks are due to Paul Chatterton for raising the important issue that interpersonal relationships can also be violent and oppressive. It is important to distinguish the idea of an interpersonal ethics from interpersonal relationships without allowing one to become transcendent or fixed; it is therefore possible to posit the desirability of a utopian ethics that is contingent on listening to the position of the other – with which violence would be incompatible – whilst acknowledging that violence can emerge in practice (Heckert, 2008). I discussed processes that some of the communities I visited engage in to deal with the possibility of violence in section 7.2.4. There is no easy answer to the problem of dealing with violence, either within our outwith the state, yet thinking and desiring an ‘outside’ to violence is an ethical and political imperative.

theorists who offer an alternative to alienated politics through an emphasis on immediate experience and actions, and creating alternatives in the present.

This emphasis on practice and immediate action is something that has a long tradition from utopian socialism and classical anarchism (Day, 2005, *passim*). The importance of unmediated social relationships for forms of anarchism was considered in Chapter 2, “approach” (see particularly Buber 1996 [1950], Kropotkin 1987 [1902], Landauer, 1983 [1911]). This was usually articulated as ‘the social principle’: ‘a living togetherness’ constantly renewing itself through ‘the immediacy of relationships’ (Buber, 1996 [1949]: 135). Although I find these thinkers useful for imagining unmediated relationships, and particularly forms of life which are not separated from processes of governing, I feel that their emphasis on the village community (Buber, 1951: 6, Kropotkin, 1970 [1896]: 235), or the Kibbutz (Buber, 1996 [1949]: 147) does not provide sufficient account of how the unalienated self and unmediated, non-hierarchical relationships can exist in the context of the kind of multiple identities and communities which, we are often told, are increasingly becoming a part of ‘the postmodern condition’: ‘No self is an island; each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex than ever before’ (Lyotard, 1984 [1979]: 15). Deleuze and Guattari articulate the proliferation of multiple identities and relationships in different terms: ‘Ours is becoming the age of minorities’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 518). The globalisation of the capitalist axiomatic means that deterritorialised flows of materials, people, information and labour through territorial spatial units undermines these bases for identity and belonging (Ibid: 517). Thus, any talk of community in the singular as the basis for an emerging movement of resistance is undermined (Day, 2005: 178).

In line with my critical utopian approach, the question, then, is: what kind of communities might exist in the present that attempt to deal with difference without hierarchy and mediation presupposed by state-based approaches to rights? Or, in the words of Day, where might we find ‘non-hegemonic modes of constructing communal identifications?’ (Ibid: 80). For Day, this should be based on the desire to break free from subjectification: ‘it is what breaks us out of the societies

of discipline and control, and urges us toward creating our own autonomous spaces' (Ibid: 181). This is what Day calls *affinity*⁹⁹ (Ibid: 182).

Affinity groups are somewhat analogous to what Deleuze would call deterritorialised assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 367: 556 & *passim*) or 'active force' (Deleuze, 1983: 54: 56 & *passim*). They compose 'a body' or 'an assemblage' for as long as they have a common goal or purpose, and then they have the ability to disintegrate, split or multiply before they stagnate, reterritorialise, or become oppressive. What is significant about affinity groups is that they are not based on hegemonic or fixed identities, such as class in Marxism, or interest or ethnic groups in the identity politics of liberal multiculturalism (Day, 2005: 181; Agamben, 1993: 85; Bonanno, 1998 [1996]). Instead, they construct more fluid *identifications* (Day, 2005: 181), based upon deepened knowledge of the other, a critique of the dominant system, a shared desire for something better and an orientation towards action. This is most strongly articulated by Bonanno:

That is why we maintain there is a need for the formation of small groups based on the concept of affinity, even tiny groups made up of very few comrades who know each other and deepen this knowledge because there cannot be affinity if one does not have knowledge of the other. One can only recognise one's affinities by going into the elements that determine one's differences, by frequenting each other. This knowledge is a personal fact, but it is also a question of ideas, debate, discussions. But ... there can be no going into ideas if there is not also a practice of bringing about actions. So, there is a continual reciprocal process of going into ideas and realising actions (Bonanno, 1998 [1996], http://www.geocities.com/kk_abacus/ioaa/tension.html accessed April 8, 2009)

A person can be a member of more than one affinity group, oriented to different purposes, at one time and there is no prerequisite that affinity groups be composed solely of anarchists (Ibid.). What is essential to affinity groups, however, is that they do not become reactive¹⁰⁰ or hegemonic. What defines an affinity group is that it maintains a state of permanent conflict with the hegemonic or dominant system; that it maintains autonomy and does not form relations with political parties, trade unions, or other fixed identity-based programmes that subordinate difference, and that it does

⁹⁹ The term is not originally Day's. Although he does not provide an etymology, the term seems to originate from the *grupos de afinidad* that emerged in Spain during the 1880s (Alexander, 1999: 60). It has been used in activist circles for many years, but usually not in formal academic works. However, the term has been used in published pamphlets of anarchists and post-left anarchists prior to Day's usage; see particularly Bonanno (1998 [1996]).

¹⁰⁰ In the Deleuzian sense outlined in sections 2.5.2 and 7.3.4 of this thesis.

not itself propose ‘platforms or generic claims’ but rather faces problems ‘one by one’ (Ibid.). Thus, what defines affinity groups is that, unlike liberal and republican political models, there is no separation between governing and living, being and doing, belonging and acting, identification and participation, rights and responsibilities, or ‘active force from what it can do’ (Deleuze, 1983: 53). There is a critical and transgressive utopian orientation towards a solidarity based upon simultaneous critique and creation, and a post-left utopian orientation towards action in the present. These orientations serve as the cohesive force for communities driven by what Day (2005: 188) following Elam (1994: 105) calls ‘groundless solidarity’: an ethic of relation which reaches beyond the affinity group towards all people and groups engaged in struggle, regardless of, or rather precisely *because of*, unmediated diversity. The question remains, however, of how such groups might aim to achieve change if denied recourse to a politics of demand and representation by their own fundamental logic?

8.3.5. Active creation of alternatives

I have previously argued that dominant approaches to rights rely on a politics of demand, where competing claims and identities battle for ‘rights’ of recognition in the public sphere (section 8.2.5). This form of politics assumes the desirability of the integration and incorporation of difference into a higher unity (the state) and endows citizens with an abstracted identity that separates them from their own autonomous activity and undermines the intrinsic value of social, community and friendship bonds. Although a politics of demand often appeases discontent, I argued that it does not always produce the desired effects, and also perpetuates hegemonic and hierarchical structures by presupposing them. The question here is: How might affinity-based communities compel the realisation of their desires, and wider social change, without resort to a politics of demand?

A first step, returning to the consideration of ontological difference, is to recognise and assert the *impossibility* of integration: there will always be something that overflows or escapes

hegemonising forces and subjectification. This can be done through the celebration and enjoyment of friendship, solidarity or social bonds without the need for common identity:

Whatever singularities cannot form a *societas* because they do not possess any identity to vindicate nor any bond of belonging for which to seek recognition. In the final instance the state can recognize any claim for identity – even that of a State identity within the State (the recent history of relations between the State and terrorism is an eloquent confirmation of this fact). What the State cannot tolerate in any way, however, is that singularities form a community without affirming an identity, that humans co-belong without any representable condition of belonging (Agamben, 1993: 86).

That is, affinity groups have the intrinsic ability to undermine hegemony through their very existence. Another step is the creation of active alternatives in the present which mitigate the need for the kinds of resources that might otherwise be conceded by the state; to literally undercut the State by replacing the goods and services that it offers with active alternatives at the ‘lower’, unmediated level of the social bond or affinity group.

The theory of action-oriented affinity groups based on non-hegemonic political action resonates with the contemporary practice of direct action and ‘do-it-yourself culture’ as empirical referents. Direct action is perhaps a better-known term, but is often defined negatively, as protest or reaction against the established system. Direct action:

rejects reformist politics such as electing representatives as ineffective in bringing about change. It involves us taking responsibility for solving problems and achieving demands using strikes, occupations, blockades and other forms of public protest (The Trapeze Collective, 2007a: xii; see also McKay, 1996: 128).

Direct action can be seen as a part of the wider phenomenon of a ‘do-it-yourself culture, which embraces not only protest activities but also more creative, autonomous practices which exist ‘outside’ the traditional political framework and provide critical utopian alternatives to the dominant system (The Trapeze Collective 2007a: xii; McKay, 1996: 1-2; McKay 1998: *passim*). Direct action and do-it-yourself culture are potentially political manifestations of the critical and transformative functions of utopia, which simultaneously criticise the present, whilst pointing towards alternative futures.

Examples of direct action and do-it-yourself culture include: ‘dumpster-diving’¹⁰¹ (Black, 1997: 141) to obtain free food rather than relying upon capitalist food production; squatting to provide social housing for the homeless (Ward, 1973: 67-73 and Ward 2005 [2002], *passim*), permaculture, sustainable living and ‘appropriate technology’ (Gilroy-Scott, 2007) which attempt to provide critical alternatives to environmentally destructive industrialisation; health collectives and ‘radical medicine’ that criticise and try to overcome some of the power relations inscribed in traditional medicine and the capitalisation of the drug industry (Gordon & Griffiths, 2007); popular education that is overtly critical of the status quo (The Trapeze Collective, 2007b); growing vegetables in community gardens to provide food and demonstrate more sustainable ways of living (Bryan & Cutler, 2007); cultural activism that opens space for non-capitalistic information, alliance-building and fun (Verson, 2007); appropriating and using autonomous spaces for organising and participating in many of the aforementioned actions (Bey, 1985; Chatterton & Hodkinson, 2006; Chatterton, 2007; Chatterton & Hodkinson, 2007; Cavallo, 2007), producing independent media to disseminate radical ideas (Carey, 1998; Harding, 1998; Feeney, 2007; Fuzz, 2007), and ‘reclaiming’ unused spaces for illegal free parties or celebrations (Maylon 1998; Wright 1998; Rietveld 1998). The list is seemingly endless, and possibilities are limited only by the imagination and desires of participants. State prohibition and interference can often obstruct the realisation of desires, although the anarchistic assertion of permanent conflict and continuous critique-based practice affirms that creative alternatives will continue to surface¹⁰². Key to direct action is prefiguration – that its means are in accordance with the desired ends – which differentiates it from civil disobedience (Franks, 2003: 18). Another key feature is that ‘for it to be properly “direct”, the act intends to effect the individuals carrying it out’ (Ibid: 20), which differentiates it from consequentialist revolution (Ibid: 23). What is critical utopian about these activities is that they both criticise the status quo, but simultaneously offer something different, which has benefits for

¹⁰¹ This is the American term for the practice of obtaining food from commercial waste disposal units that might otherwise have gone to waste. In the United Kingdom the practice is more often referred to as ‘skipping’.

¹⁰² It is important to note that not all direct action is anarchist, and the tactic has also been used by groupings on the right, such as fuel tax protesters and the Countryside Alliance (Franks, 2003: 28-9). Although these groups also consider themselves to be oppressed in some manner and take direct steps to overcome this, anarchist forms of direct action can be distinguished from these forms since they promote non-hierarchical alternatives and reject vanguard actions (Ibid: 29) and *do not* rely on a universalist construction of the oppressed group (Ibid, p. 31), and yet they *do* attempt to forge links between differently oppressed groups (Ibid, p. 29).

participants and the wider community, and also an estranged or alternative perspective from which further criticism can emerge.

All this is done through immediate, and unmediated action undertaken in the present. Where groups and communities have identified a lack, a need or desire, they have taken steps to fulfil own requirements through self-management and self-organisation, rather than petitioning the state for initially abstract 'rights', which may take some time to materialise into the goods or services promised, if at all. This offers a distinct criticism of, and alternative to, conventional models of citizenship that seek integration into the state through 'rights'. This is what I am calling 'critical utopian citizenship'. Some of these actions may only serve the needs and desires of the affinity group themselves, whereas others may reach out to a wider population, providing opportunities for new links, networks and affinities to form on the basis of infinite responsibility, care, and groundless solidarity.

8.4. *Summary of chapter*

In this chapter, I have attempted to partially address, with regards to formulations of rights, two of the research questions put forward in section 1.3 of this thesis: 'out of what historical conditions do dominant models of citizenship arise, what do they have in common, and what are their effects?' and 'what alternatives are offered by critical utopian theory?' I have considered how legal rights are central to the prevailing institution of citizenship, how formulations of rights have effects upon citizens. Dominant theorisations of rights were judged to have certain features in common: They are founded on universalising myths, they assume a particular type of atomised, rational individual to which rights apply, abstract rights can disguise concrete privileges, rights are upheld by the state which mediates relationships, and finally dominant institutions of rights rely on a politics of demand. The practices associated with dominant rights formations were seen to have political and ethical effects on citizenship: they reify social structures in the state-form which undermines choice and agency, and inhibits change; they exclude non-citizens and suppress certain aspects of citizens' identities and desires leading to diminished belonging and participation, they alienate citizens from

one another and diminish personal responsibility, and they lead to a politics that is not always effective in securing belonging for certain groups and perpetuate existing inequalities. This state-centric vision of legal citizenship is exceeded and transgressed by practices and processes of everyday life. Critical utopian theories attempt to account for this complexity by offering bottom-up, active possibilities that begin from a position of critique but simultaneously offer creative alternatives. These include a politics of ontological difference that judges theory by its effects rather than its truth, disruptive subjectivities that transgress boundaries and defy fixed subjectification, an ethics of unmediated care and responsibility for the other, multiple and overlapping small communities of immanent social relations and a do-it-yourself politics of practical action. Critical utopian approaches afford primacy to practice and action in everyday life that runs in dialogue with alternative beliefs and theoretical propositions. For this reason, it is important to consider examples of critical utopian practices (as defined in the “Methods” chapter section 3.4.1) in order to address how they speak to, transgress, critique and develop critical utopian alternatives to rights-based formulations of citizenship. The upcoming chapter, “Transgressing rights: practice”, addresses in terms of rights the third and fourth research questions of section 1.3 of the “Methods” chapter: ‘What theoretical and practiced alternatives to dominant models of citizenship are offered by political agents in autonomous spaces’, and ‘what can a dialogue between theory and practice tell us about the conditions for a critical utopian citizenship’. Some, but not all of the ideas and practices considered above are engaged in by the communities that I discuss in this thesis. These communities also engage in some activities not on this list. This illustrates the potentially infinite variety of unalienated experiences, practices and actions that might be viewed as critical utopian.

9. Transgressing Rights: Practice

9.1. Typology

	Kebele	S.hill	HHP	CPH	Find.n	MGC	LSC	Corani	LH
Explicitly Spiritual (constitution)					X				
Beliefs unspecified	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Specify diversity as an ethos	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	?
Individualist ethos evident		X	X		X	X			X
Collectivist ethos evident	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Holistic Ethos evident			X		X	X			X
Income sharing								X	
Other deep sharing ethos	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Limited sharing		X	X						
Aim of self-reliance in production/consumption			X	X	X			X	X
Provision of cheap or free services to wider communities	X			X		X	X	X	
Provision of charged services or educational courses to wider communities			X		X		X		X
Attempt to avoid/bypass statist politics	X							X	
Engage in state politics	X	X	X	X	X		X		?
Acceptance of government or corporate funding	X	X	X	X	?		X		?

Figure 9-1: Typology showing ethical values and practices of autonomous communities

9.2. *Actualisations: transgressing ‘rights’ in utopian practice*

9.2.1. **Ontologies**

In section 8.2.1 I considered how dominant theorisations of rights are based on a foundational ontology of moral truth and fixity. Utopian alternatives to rights discourses rest on the idea of ontological difference, which emphasises potentiality, contingency and flux (section 8.3.1). I would now like to consider the relation of ontology to ethical relationships in utopian practice. In so doing, I will attempt to answer the following questions using evidence from interview transcripts and participant observation:

- Do autonomous communities offer a space in which dominant political ontology can be questioned?
- What kinds of alternative ontologies (if any) do communities and their members espouse?
- What are the effects of these ontologies upon everyday life and ethical praxis, and do they challenge foundational rights discourse?

9.2.1.1. Do autonomous communities offer a space in which dominant political ontology can be questioned?

Many of the communities do not explicitly engage with particular belief systems in their founding principles, aims or constitutions, but there was often an enthusiasm for discussing beliefs and values during interview, and also during everyday life within the collectives. Autonomous communities quite clearly offered environments where ideas, beliefs and values could be discussed openly, criticised and experimented with, and an atmosphere of acceptance of enthusiasm for a variety of views, as illustrated in the following quotes from interviews:

I suppose our basic shared value is that it doesn't matter what people's views are, or who or what somebody is, so long as they are respectful towards themselves and others (*Interview: Ali, Kebele, 7 April 2007*)

It doesn't matter what your reasons for wanting to live here are, I don't think they need to be absolutely shared values because then you'd just end up with a load of clones living here (*Interview: Anna [name changed to preserve anonymity], Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007*).

I think we all have our own inspiration and personal development paths and spiritual paths (*Interview: Layla, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007*)

As a person living in this house, Peace House, you have to be ready to disclose some of the prejudices that sometimes we carry round, you have to be ready to accommodate anybody, and live with anybody, and be respectful to anybody (*Interview*: Frank, Coventry Peace House, 10 May 2007)

Such views were fairly widespread, and indeed more than half of the communities *explicitly* stated diversity of backgrounds, beliefs, and/or values as a founding principle in constitutions, whilst all of the communities apparently pursued this principle without documenting it explicitly, as evidenced in interviews and observations¹⁰³. This kind of openness to ontological difference and experimentation could be seen to emulate the utopian theories that I discussed earlier. Equally, however, they could be interpreted to reflect liberal notions of multiculturalism and deontology which were considered dominant; both of which were seen to condone the maintenance of individuals' and groups' 'rights' against uniformity, yet still relied on implicit foundations. It is hard to tell, when beliefs are left to the individual, whether certain accepted foundations remain. As can be seen in the typology, the only community that espoused a community-wide belief system, specified within its constitution¹⁰⁴ was Findhorn. Findhorn is a particularly interesting case, since it is the only explicitly spiritual community, so is worth considering in more detail.

9.2.1.2. What kinds of alternative ontologies (if any) do communities and their members espouse?

Although explicitly spiritual, Findhorn community does not specify any particular spiritual path that must be followed: 'I commit myself to active spiritual practice and to align with spirit to word for the greater good' (see appendix 5). It is interesting that even in this first sentence of the constitution, ontological value is defined in terms of ethical effects rather than foundations; that is in terms of 'good' rather than 'truth'. This theme continues throughout the commonground:

I commit myself to the expansion of human consciousness, including my own, and I recognise and change any of my personal attitudes or behaviour patterns which do not serve this aim. I

¹⁰³ It is important to note that an over-reliance on explicit textual commentary can lose some of the nuances of how the place works in practice – those who do not identify with the strong political identity of a place like Kebele might feel implicitly excluded – a dynamic sometimes articulated in terms of the 'activist-ghetto' (Chatterton and Hodkinson 2007: 214; see also this thesis sections 9.2.4 and 9.3.5). It is also important to note that although these interviewees emphasise inclusiveness in these quotes, it is unlikely that they would extend this to others whose own political views were exclusive or oppressive, such as extreme right-wing racists and Nazis.

¹⁰⁴ See Appendix 5 for "The Common Ground", which is the constitutional set of aims and beliefs, as well as a code of conduct, for both Findhorn Foundation and the New Findhorn Association (see appendices 1 and 4 for diagrammatic explanations of the different agencies that make up the Findhorn Community). The document is very important for the community, was decided by consensus by members present at the time of its composition, and all new members must agree to abide by it.

take full responsibility for the spiritual, environmental and human effects of all my activities (Ibid).

Despite a commitment to spirituality, there does not seem to be the same degree of abstraction and universalism as is conventionally associated with religion. Spiritual discourse and concepts at Findhorn do not seem to disguise the desires of a dominant group, but more often seem to refer back to the self:

I recognise that anything I see outside myself—any criticisms, irritations or appreciations—may also be reflections of what is inside me. I commit to looking at these within myself before reflecting them to others (Ibid).

I commit wholeheartedly to respect other people (their differences, their views, their origins, backgrounds and issues), other people's and the community's property, and all forms of life, holding these all to be sacred and aspects of the divine (Ibid).

The discourse seems to have some commonality with poststructural anarchism, insofar as the value of ontology is based upon its effects, including a flourishing of difference, rather than upon claims to foundations and veracity (May, 1994: 116).

9.2.1.3. What are the effects of these ontologies upon everyday life and ethical praxis, and do they challenge foundational rights discourse?

The idea that belief systems were political was articulated by one interviewee at Findhorn:

I mean the term we have been playing with for the last few years is 'spiritual activist', you know it often felt like if you were politically active then you weren't on the spiritual level, and we have struggled to bring the whole meta-view of we are all spiritual, we are all one and interconnected, into some kind of arena (*Interview*: Mari, Findhorn Foundation 18 June 2007)

Spiritual beliefs play an integral part in all day-to-day activities at Findhorn, particularly in practices of 'attunement' (see section 7.2.2). The somewhat pantheistic ontology expressed through the belief in and respect for the divinity within all life and nature often leads to practices aimed at preserving nature and allowing life to flourish. During my participation in gardening work, the 'Gardening Focaliser' (somewhat akin to a 'head gardener') held that life is even within tools, and that after working in the garden with a tool, for example a trowel, must thank the tool for its use, wash and coat it with oil before replacing it. The ostensible belief-basis of the action being spiritual (respect for the 'life' or divinity within the tool), the effects would be that tools and lasted longer,

which also meant less waste (extracted and adapted from participant observation notes, 11 June 2009). This is just one example of how a belief system can provide a basis for political actions, based upon respect for and protection of the ‘other’ (in this case, the physical environment) which do not rely upon hierarchically imposed rights but rather upon something (a belief system, for example) that emanates from the self. This theme will be further elaborated upon below.

9.2.2. Subjectivity

Previously (section 8.2.2) I discussed how dominant notions of rights rest on epistemological and methodological individualism, which sets up an opposition between the individual and the community, leading to an ethical relation between self and other that presupposes dominance and hierarchy. This categorises the individual in a specific manner that fixes him (or her) into a specific role or identity, leading to the oppression of self-creativity and the oppression of difference. Critical utopian theoretical approaches, by contrast, emphasise the desire to break free from subjectification and to disrupt any attempts to represent or hegemonise identity (section 8.3.2). Here, I would like to consider how utopian practices disrupt binary thought and subjectivities through a consideration of the following questions:

- Do autonomous communities offer a space in which binary thought and atomised subjectivities can be questioned?
- In what ways do communities and/or their members disrupt or challenge the epistemological framework of subject/object?
- What are the ethical effects of any such disruption, and do they challenge conventional rights-based models?

9.2.2.1. *Do autonomous communities offer a space in which binary thought and atomised subjectivities can be questioned?*

To a greater or lesser extent, all intentional or autonomous communities have one thing in common: a belief in community as having the potential to offer something different, and the willingness to adopt this as a lifestyle. Interviewees articulated this variously:

The theoretical base was to live our politics and to live our ideas of social change and to develop those in a place where it was possible to do it. So we didn’t move to the country to get away from the city, we moved towards being a social change co-operative with a very political slant, and we were happy to be seen as part of a movement for social change revolution, and

that was what it was about that I was really keen on, and why I came here. So it was the actuality of breaking down roles in the family, of breaking down roles between adults and children so they weren't just within the family, breaking down expectations about power structures, challenging sexist norms, everything. (*Interview*: Patrick, Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007)

Communities have different aims and principles, and the desire to break down traditional roles and identities may be expressed differently, or less explicitly. All, however, are united by a willingness to live differently, in a different type of community, and to explore the implications of this in everyday life, through practice. Indeed this point is almost definitional within my case selection criteria for autonomous spaces (section 3.4.1).

9.2.2.2. *In what ways do communities and/or their members disrupt or challenge the epistemological framework of subject/object?*

Patrick's passage above shows how communities intentionally attempt to offer space where traditional binary or hierarchical roles can be transgressed by practices that offer new relationships. This was also apparent in the theoretical chapter that considered how holistic or imminent views of the self/other relation deviate from Manichean practices based upon the liberal, rights-bearing citizen (section 8.3.2). Other respondents expressed the effects of social relationships upon subjectivity:

[A good community member is] somebody who does care about the people they live with and the people that they don't live with and recognises really that we are all social beings and we can't live without each other, we are interdependent, we are not our own little island, and that what affects or hurts one hurts all of us (*Interview*: Penny, Peace House, 10 May 2007)

If you want to live in a community, all of you has to turn up and there has to be a willingness to be an integral and proactive part of the whole (*Interview*: Kay Kay, New Findhorn Association, 18 June 2007)

What is particularly worthy of note, is that although the interview quotes above, as well as the constitutions of most communities, expressed a belief in the utmost value of community (however defined), there was *simultaneously* a very noticeable emergent individualism (see Pepper, 1991: 162-72). This was, however, somewhat different to the atomised and competitive individualism of liberal 'rights' discourse and dominant approaches to citizenship outlined in the previous chapter:

Self-awareness I think, I mean that is the key, for me that comes before anything else, and being capable of recognising what goes on with myself and then if I have an issue with

someone, being able to tell them without being rude to them but also taking responsibility for myself because there are always two people involved. Self-awareness and community need to exist in a respectful way. And also wider community, because it is very easy to just project our stuff onto people but actually there are other issues. But it is really hard to get to that stage, it took me many many years of self-development work. And I still do that, I do project stuff, but I am quite aware of my patterns. Yeah and so that comes before anything. You can do community, like doing the gardening days, and coming to the meetings and doing the community jobs but then if I resent someone, that I consider not nice, in my point of view, and I carry this resentment, then what's the point? I would rather be clear with people than just *doing* the community, this is about *being* as well, and being comes through self-awareness and honest communication (*Interview*: Angela, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007)

I'm no longer going to be responsible for other people in that way and just tell the truth, and whoever gets fucked up, well I hope they can turn it around and do something about it, but if I don't tell the truth then it's almost like I'm stealing from them as well as myself (*Interview*: Kenny, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007)

I commit myself to the service of others and to our planet, recognising that I must also serve myself in order to practise this effectively (Findhorn 1996, see Appendix 5).

A theme in the foregoing quotes, and indeed throughout many more interviews that space prohibits me from citing, was the importance of looking after or caring for oneself, and clearly expressing your own needs and desires within the context of mutually developmental relationships. This is somewhat analogous to what Sargisson calls 'new individualism' (Sargisson, 2000: 145), which is 'underdeveloped in academic terms' (Ibid: 145). I shall examine the implications that this might have for a critical utopian theorisation of subjectivity in the later section on *implications* (section 9.3.2), but at this stage it is important to note that the reconciliation of individualism with community and a more holistic ethos seems to be made sense of in the unalienated, unmediated relationship. A careful reading of the quotes above reveals how the self is almost always contextualised within a relationship with another, or with the community as a whole, rather than in terms of atomised needs and desires. One does not only express what one desires in order to get it, but also in order to develop, and to offer an authentic experience to those with whom one is communicating (similarly to the ideas expressed by Levinas and Bakhtin). This is reflected in an accepted convention at Findhorn community, which I encountered during the first meeting at Experience Week, and which Sargisson (1996: 147) also cites – that people should always speak in the first person singular, using 'I statements', rather than generalising experience by saying, for instance, 'one likes', 'you would think that' or 'it feels like'. This is a surprisingly difficult task at first, and is contrary to the register in which most academic and political theory and discourse (a

notable exception would be Stirner), as well as everyday conversation, takes place. It encourages the speaker to take ownership of their own thoughts, feelings and desires, rather than projecting them onto others (see Angela's quote above for a recognition of the dangers of projection), and without abstraction and universalisation. There is an emphasis on the value of authenticity, which will be considered later.

This is also a vision of the self in process, as unfinalised and contingent; awaiting the unpredictable and disruptive experience of the other which allows both parties to the relationship to develop:

Self awareness [is an important value], and respect, honest communication, kindness ... and freedom, and freedom of change sometimes. I moved here two years ago and ... things change. I grew up in a household where ... you're not allowed to change, and that's not very nice (*Interviews: Angela, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007*)

It's a really good opportunity to hold a mirror up to the relationships in your life, and go, well this is that, and when you recognise it you can begin to change how you respond to it, and I think that's a really powerful thing about communities (*Interviews: Isabelle, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007*)

Communities offer a space for unmediated relationships, which transgress the dominant image of the atomised, rational rights-bearing citizen by bringing disruptive influences such as emotions, desire, and messy social relationships into play. This can have positive and negative implications.

9.2.2.3. *What are the ethical effects of any such disruption, and they challenge conventional rights-based models?*

Interestingly, despite the resonance with liberal individualism (Sargisson, 1996: 149), this focus on the 'I' appears to have the effect of disrupting atomised subjectivity; even with sometimes quite dramatic and worrying effects:

I think as well I think that everyone in the community just ends up being like some part of your family, and they kind of represent that person for you, so if you haven't worked out stuff with your mum or your dad or your brother then people in the community will start to actually represent those things for you, so it's actually a tremendous opportunity to deal with your shit, for example you think that 'that person I'm always railing against for telling me to do this or that, you know I'm bringing my stuff from when I was a kid in, when my mum used to tell me to do this or that'. (*Interview: Isabelle, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007*).

Also [I came here] to get over my shit, because I would rather get over my shit here, which is a family replacement in a way, and in any group one would ordinarily project their families, so I thought I'd rather fuck up here than fuck up my own family once I make one (laughs), fuck

these people up instead (laughs) (*Interview: Kenny, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007*).

Sometimes people come because they are really seeking something that will make sense to them and sometimes here where they are loved and supported and they have never felt so ok, they may flip out and can become erratic, and we just, you know, help them through, to get over that, or not (*Interview Kay Kay, New Findhorn Association, 18 June 2007*)

The final quote in particular resonates with a warning from Deleuze and Guattari, that experimenting with alternative forms of subjectivity can lead to madness through a loss of subjectification altogether (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 178). More positive viewpoints on the effects of disrupting dominant models of relationships and subjectivity (as we have seen the two are blurred in this context) often centred around children and families:

I think for children it's amazing, because one of the ways the world is going to be changed is through children, through giving them the right environment and the right education, and it's something rounded, and something very grounded, because when you live communally there's so many people around you, so many elders and so many examples, it just breaks the individual isolation. There are so many single mums, and even living in a couple it's tough, and it's tough on the child, and to have lots and lots of other adults that the child can go to and spread out that reliability, and just to reach out to (*Interview: Isabelle, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007*)

Our children¹⁰⁵ were just here last week, who have left and gone out, and what they bring into their business, their school, their charity or whatever they are involved with, and are just more centred people, and must be a useful presence in the hubbub of the day, and just letting things be ok. That's already a big piece of work (*Interview: Mari, Findhorn Foundation, 18 June 2009*).

It was interesting to meet young people who had grown up on communities, and although I did not have the opportunity to interview any, I was lucky enough to have my visit to Findhorn coincide with the annual 'youth reunion'. I also met some young people at Laurieston Hall who had returned from University for the summer. Many of these young people seemed to have a particularly outstanding emotional awareness and maturity, as well as social and political awareness and interest, which at Findhorn were commented upon extensively by some of the other guests with whom I shared the 'Experience Week'. None of the young people I spoke to had chosen to

¹⁰⁵ It is important to note that Mari is here referring to children brought up in Findhorn Foundation, rather than to her own children.

continue living in community¹⁰⁶, and had forsaken this lifestyle for more conventional arrangements. Some stated their intention to join a different community when they wanted to have children themselves. There was a feeling that living in a community was ‘boring’ for teenagers and young adults:

it can be difficult to get the stimulus you want from just living here, so you might eye-up the outside world for pursuing some aspect of your career or your personality which you can’t do all the time here (*Interviews*: Patrick, Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007).

Indeed, it would perhaps seem odd or unhealthy if many young people chose to stay at the community in which they had been born, since it would bring into question somewhat the ‘intentional’, voluntary and anti-hegemonic values of these places.

This interposition of a layer of community between the individual and the state also challenges the liberal public/private divide, or notions of space that separate a ‘private’, family or household sphere from the ‘public’ political arena. The fact that community boundaries are often very porous, with the comings and goings of several long- and short- term guests, visitors, probationary members, meeting attendees and members’ friends and family means that it is sometimes difficult to differentiate the ‘private’ space of the community from the ‘public’ space of the wider world:

It’s almost like a cross between living in a big family and in a community centre (*Interview*: Nick, Coventry Peace House, 9 May 2007).

From my experience I think that there is a feeling amongst many people that a community is a place that you can go and be safe. And you can probably go and hide a bit. And in some respects that is true, because you are part of a collective rather than just Mrs Smith in a house on a high street. But on the other hand it is like joining a bigger family and in those circumstances, nowhere to hide (*Interview*: Kay Kay, Findhorn, 18 June 2007).

I struggled quite a lot with the politics of the place when I first came here, although I initially had this kind of honeymoon period of thinking it was all fantastic, yippee, super, and then reality bit, and I really struggled for about 6 months and thought, I just don’t know if I can live here, it’s too challenging, a bit like walking round with no clothes on really, and because I’ve never lived in community before, it was suddenly like going from a very private, nuclear-family type lifestyle to being very much in the public arena, inasmuch as public of the

¹⁰⁶ Interestingly, two of the young people who I met, as well as the daughter of one of my interviewees, who I did not meet, had chosen to study intentional communities for their undergraduate or Masters’ dissertations at university. Others were making careers in alternative technologies, sustainability and in NGOs, which could quite conceivably have been inspired by the environment and values of their upbringings.

community, and I found it really difficult to cross over that thing of letting people get to know me, and get to know all of my foibles as well as the good side, and being really honest with people in a sort of very blatant way, and I struggled with that for quite a while, and also found the backbiting that goes on very difficult to deal with, because again it was this thing of people would have all this aggression and resentment and anxiety, and not actually confront the person, so it was all being talked about behind people's backs and not actually being dealt with, and I really struggled with that for months and thought that I just couldn't deal with it, it was taking up too much of my emotional energy and, how am I going to live with it and keep doing all of the things that I need to do (*Interview: Anna [name changed to preserve anonymity], Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007*).

I find this image of nakedness, and being unable to hide (articulated in the previous quote) compelling. It presents a stark contrast to traditional models of citizenship operating through mediation and representation; the screen of the universal 'citizen' whose primary public/political relation is to the abstract state, rather than with other individuals with whom he/she shares land, facilities, and resources. The latter quote shows that there are also some difficulties; that 'private' life can become 'political' in a negative sense - destructive feelings might play a part in decision-making processes or lead to exclusions, and the emotional input can be quite exhausting. It is important to note, however, that after this phase the interviewee in question, after deciding to leave the community and almost doing so, later came out feeling stronger, and now lives in the community very happily:

I feel I've come out the other side and I'm really glad I've done it, it's been a real growth process for me, really interesting getting to know myself better and also realising that it was a process that I had to go through in order to be able to settle here, and I think different people do it in different ways but I think that that was the way that I needed to do it, and even just down to the very thing of putting a note up saying I'm leaving really liberated me, because I was then able to relax and just be who I was and then realised, 'oh, it's ok, people actually don't hate me and it's ok and I can manage it,' and slowly realising that it's ok and I can do it. But I think also a lot of it had to do with that thing of feeling, because it is as I have said a very work-oriented place, I felt, because I'm quite a conscientious person I always felt like I wanted to give as much as I possibly could and I was really just doing too much physically, and so I was just burning out basically, because everyone has such different ideas of what it is to be a good member, and you just can't ever fulfil everybody's criteria. When I first came, that's what I was trying to do basically, so it had to come to an end at some point (*Interview: Anna [name changed to preserve anonymity], Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007*).

A micropolitics of disruptive subjectivity works as a critique of dominant modes of relating and as the basis for resistance. This theme was recurrent throughout interviews, and is expressed particularly clearly here:

We're still really into change the world one person at a time or change the world by looking at it differently, see it differently and the world has changed is still the motif (*Interview: Mari, Findhorn Foundation, 18 June 2007*).

The effect of disrupting traditional subjectivities through unmediated and unalienated relationships can be seen as a basis for wider social change, through experimenting with and exemplifying new types of ethical relationship, through the subtraction of power from the state and the creation and potential proliferation of self-managing communities, and through engagement with wider society and politics. The following sections will discuss these avenues, beginning with the first.

9.2.3. Privilege, equality and difference

Previously (section 8.2.3), I considered how dominant notions of ‘rights’ in fact serve to disguise and legitimise the desires and privileges of dominant groups, to the exclusion of other groups from ‘full’ or ‘active’ citizenship. This is done through a discourse and practice of ‘equal rights’, which presumes an equivalence and homogeneity of citizens that in actuality is a myth. Critical utopian alternatives valorise difference by privileging the unalienated experience of self and of other, which results in an ethics of care and infinite responsibility to the other, regardless, or rather *because of*, their difference and irreducibility. In this section on utopian practices, I would like to consider the relation of difference to equality through an examination of the following themes:

- Do autonomous communities offer a space for processes which allow for the negotiation of difference and (in)equality?
- What are these processes (if any) and how do they work?
- What are the ethical effects of such processes? Do they challenge conventional moral relationships?

9.2.3.1. *Do autonomous communities offer a space for processes which allow for the negotiation of difference and (in)equality?*

Related to the above section on subjectivity and transgressions of binaries relating to self/other and individual/community, are the ethical relations that follow from unmediated community relations. This can have implications on physical, material and ideological levels.

On the material or economic level, an extreme example of responsibility or care for the needs of the other can be found in the practice of income sharing; a practice adopted by some of the communities that I visited during their histories, but only at one – Corani – at the time of my visit.

Income sharing at Corani relates to the wider aims and principles of the community (see Appendices 8 & 9). In particular, income sharing is seen to promote equality and sustainable living and to reduce reliance on the state and external agencies. Here, the immediate, rather than state-mediated relationship, at the scale of the community where seen to be conducive to a particular type of ethical relation:

I think one way we certainly try to deal with [the state] is minimising the influence (long pause). That shows ... in the more immediate example of the income sharing group where we would seek for people to minimise or even avoid altogether, taking benefit from the state, and being dependent on the state. And instead of being dependent on the state, to actually be dependent on the group, I mean to be interdependent with the group ... there is one of our members who actually limits their income in order to avoid paying tax, because they disagree with certain things that the government does with that tax money. And the rest of us support that person in that view, by being prepared to share our income which has been taxed with them (*Interview: Guy, Corani, 7 July 2007*)

This ethical interdependence with, and respect for the other, can also operate on the level of ideas and beliefs, and interviewees stressed the importance of ‘trying to understand in terms of everyone’s realities’ (*Interview, Ingo, Kebele, 7 April 2007*). There was also an important emotional, or pastoral element of responsibility and care for the other:

I think there’s a shared value to care for each other at some level, if you accept someone to be a member, and we all have to accept someone to join, then you are accepting a level of care for that person. So whilst by no means everybody here is best friends with each other, and I know there are plenty of, well not exactly huge hostilities, but there are certainly antagonisms as in any groups, there is a shared thing that if there was a person in trouble on the edge of this clan, or tribe, we would gather round to support them (*Interview: Patrick, Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007*).

Thus, to a certain degree, communities can offer a space where responsibility and care take the place of transcendental models of value and the hierarchical mediation of conflict. The above quotes show how, in the last instance, responsibility and care for a community member are primary values, and are often viewed as more important than personal wealth and antagonisms.

9.2.3.2. *What are these processes (if any) and how do they work?*

Although care and responsibility are often seen to be primary values, many communities embed processes and practices which ensure that this can be carried through, even when communication or empathy break down. Consensus decision-making, as described in more detail in the Chapter 6 (section 6.3.2), could be seen to speak directly to Bakhtin’s notion of the polyphonic concept of

truth. Having previously considered the process of consensus, I would like to concentrate here on the ethical implications and effects upon relationships, as well as the ways in which consensus offers an alternative to state-mediated, transcendental concepts of ‘right’.

One interesting theme that ran through the interviews in this respect is that of ‘authenticity’ and genuineness, particularly in the context of consensus decision-making:

[A good member is] committed and genuine. There is no room for deception here. Everyone is completely open and honest (*Interview: Boyd, Kebele, 7 April 2007*).

[An important value is] integrity, so when you say you will do something then sticking to it. Also commitment, [indecipherable] and people who communicate openly and honestly as well, it’s all about respect for other people and being able to anticipate things that might upset other people and communicating if something has upset you (*Interview: Kate, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007*).

The idea of personal authenticity as an important value or contribution to the group links to the theme of ‘new individualism’ discussed above, and particularly the idea that suppressing personal emotions, feelings and viewpoints is akin to subtracting value or even ‘stealing’ from the group. A process for acknowledging personal baggage and biases also exists, to facilitate decision-making:

we start off with a heart session before we get on to deciding decisions, because if anybody is feeling particularly low for some reason or angry or whatever, or there is something they really need to sort out, it is much better to start off by sorting it out, and then the rest of the meeting will flow easily. If we try and do all the decision-making stuff first, we will only be acting it all out and it won’t get resolved anyway (*Interview: Penny, Coventry Peace House, 10 May 2007*).

This emphasis on authenticity and personal expression is interesting; in some ways it is extremely individualistic insofar as it focuses on expressing our own needs and desires as though they are *a priori* to any kind of community relation or relationship with the other. In other respects, however, the opposite is true, since through the process of consensus one must always enter with a willingness to negotiate, modify and transform one’s needs and desires for the good of others and the group as a whole. Like Bakhtin’s polyphonic concept of truth, this process allows for the articulation of a wide range of voices and standpoints without their incorporation into a higher unity. Although a single decision may have to be made, this is not one that is predetermined or

prior to the process of articulation. This indicates a need for a willingness to be open to the needs and desires of the other:

You can't unlearn what you know. Like I've been to India, and I have seen the poverty in India and I can't pretend I haven't. It isn't just about reading about stuff or seeing stuff on the television, you can't pretend you haven't seen it. But we do pretend we haven't seen it because we have to function, and we switch off a bit and that sort of thing, we all do that to some degree in order to survive. But being a good citizen is trying to break down some of those defences I think (*Interview*: Penny, Coventry Peace House, 10 May 2007).

Here, defences, or blocking the emotions aroused by experience of the other, are seen to come after the ethical relation, both within and outwith the community. This resonates somewhat with the thought of Levinas discussed previously. I will consider this more in the concluding section of this chapter (section 9.3), which takes a more analytical approach.

This receptiveness to the other is a necessary part of consensus decision-making, and indeed living in community. However, sometimes communication can break down, and conflicts arise which cannot be resolved through the process of consensus. In these cases, communities often will resort to some kind of mediation. Community members can take courses in 'nonviolent communication', or otherwise a facilitator can come to mediate discussions between community members who are in conflict (this was discussed in section 7.2.4). Sometimes, however, resolution of conflict is taken further, and can involve appeal to state institutions. This is even the case for Corani, which is surprising considering the fact, previously evidenced in an interview quote and also in their constitution, that Corani views autonomy from the state, including particularly financial autonomy, as a core value:

I mean we may get in mediation, that has happened, not within the context of the housing co-op, but within the income sharing group. It may become legal, that has happened within the housing co-op situation where there was a split, and to resolve a situation it was carried forward legally. I suspect in the end that it wasn't resolved legally, it was more resolved by people in the end accepting certain decisions and trying to create an elegant solution, but it certainly went, you know, went to involving legal process. It's a challenging situation if somebody won't go with a decision (*Interview*: Interview: Guy, Corani, 7 July 2007).

I mean if it is sort of violent and aggressive and all the rest then we will do our best to negotiate and da da da da but there's a point where we draw the line and call in the police (*Interview*: Mari, Findhorn Foundation 18 June 2009)

It is important to note, however, that only three interviewees from a total of 22, and from several other informal interactions, mentioned the possibility of state intervention. The remainder were split fairly equally between those who reported no experience of conflict that could not be resolved through the process of consensus, and those who said that conflict resolution would always centre around the independent mediation process.

9.2.3.3. What are the ethical implications of such processes? Do they challenge conventional moral relationships?

It is interesting that many of the above quotes illustrate that participants, like Levinas and Bakhtin¹⁰⁷, recognise the claim of the other upon the self as being prior to selfishness and competition, which are often articulated as ‘unnatural’ or as ‘defences’. Processes are in place to try to overcome these and access or reaffirm the ethical self and relation with the other. This relationship is seen to begin from an unmediated relationship or encounter, perhaps within the community. The mode of relating however, is often felt to have a wider reach:

The whole ethos of the housing co-op, of Corani, and especially its income sharing element is contrary to what the wider society is saying is the best way to go about things. We view that the wider society is unsatisfactory, it actually harms human beings, it diminishes your humanity, and we believe that sharing and only consuming what you need is a much sounder way to go about things, and inherently more humane (*Interview: Guy, Corani, 7 July 2007*).

In a manner, community relationships based on unmediated experience of difference *must* rely on a different kind of moral relationship to one that is mediated by the state through legal rights. It is important to note however, that most relationships within wider society are not mediated by the state (Graeber 2004: 76). The police are usually only called at the last instance when there is perceived to be ‘no other option’. This appears to also be the same in communities.

It is also important to point out that although in some quotes, interviewees articulate something akin to a relational construction of ethical subjectivity, this is also often mixed with a discourse of abstract humanism and common needs, desires and interests. The quote above illustrates this, and

¹⁰⁷ I am not trying to imply here that respondents are in any way influenced by these thinkers - which is possible but for which I have no evidence. Instead, I am noting that similar ideas and concepts were part of the discourse of interviewees.

there were many further examples. In terms of the critical utopian theory I considered earlier, this could be viewed as unsatisfactory, since it involves the practice of uncritically representing the other to him or herself through ideological constructions of humanity (May, 1994: 130). The strange mixture of discourses of humanism, individualism and holism again comes to the fore, and I will later argue that theorisation might benefit from an unlikely theoretical discussion between Stirner and Levinas (section 9.3.2). Presently, however, I consider the notions of belonging and identity that form, and are formed within, autonomous communities.

9.2.4. Community

In the foregoing sections, dominant rights-based approaches to citizenship were seen to rely on a notion of community which is mediated by an abstract entity; the state. This was judged to alienate citizens from one another, and the processes of governing from those who are governed. ‘Belonging’ to such a community rests upon an abstract identity that is far removed from the practices of maintaining the community. Critical utopian alternatives theorise a different kind of community, which emphasises the non-separability of the processes of community formation and the life of the community itself – through the principle and practice of affinity, the affinity group exists. The bond that sustains the affinity group is one of shared desire, critique and action, rather than a passive and imposed hegemonic (or indeed, counter-hegemonic) identity. I will seek to explore further the potential of the affinity-based community by exploring the following questions in utopian practice:

- How do autonomous communities sustain feelings of belonging in members?
- What kinds of, and whose, desires and actions sustain such communities?
- What are the political and ethical effects of these communities, and do they challenge the state as the primary arena for belonging?

9.2.4.1. How do communities sustain feelings of belonging in members?

In Chapter 7, I considered how communities intend and attempt, through organisational factors, to exist through unmediated and non-representational relationships. The focus here is on how people can exist as a ‘community’, without a hegemonic or representative identity; or without relying on

state mediation of difference. This connection was often seen to result from shared beliefs, goals and mutual activity. Internal activity to a large extent depends upon the nature of the community, its purposes and aims, and whether people live there or not. It also depends upon the environment of the space itself; the activity needed to maintain life within a rural space is very different to that within an urban space. All spaces however had some activities in common including cooking and eating, cleaning, dealing with finances, and property maintenance. Despite the different types of activity made possible by the different types of community, two important themes emerged from the interviews that seemed to be shared by all of the communities and recur throughout the interviews. First was that participating in tasks oriented to maintaining the community was often seen not only to have the intrinsic value of necessity, but also as means of strengthening relationships. Some examples of ways in which this was expressed:

It's really nice when you are all together, and you really get this real sense of community, it's not something you would get in the meetings, because the meetings are all very procedural and kind of the business-end of co-op, but it's nice at the weekends when everyone is around and we are doing stuff and hanging out together, you get that really nice sense of doing things together (*Interview: Nick, Coventry Peace House, 9 May 2007*).

I didn't just want to come to some hippy community where you just sit around and smoke pot and didn't get anything done, because I like doing things and I like seeing things reach fruition, and I love the communal tasking aspect of living here and the whole thing of sharing skills and resources makes total sense to me, and it's just a fantastic feeling when you get together with a bunch or twenty or so people and build something, or make a garden, or even just dung a garden for the winter (*Interview: Anna [name changed to preserve anonymity], Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007*).

The activity weekends are really great, ... you know that you are all going to work together on it on that weekend. It's nice for team building as well, it's just good to be doing it, it puts a bit of structure into how it works (*Interview: Penny, Coventry Peace House, 10 May 2007*).

In this respect then, the community itself can be seen as a kind of affinity group, which relies on shared goals and action as well as beliefs and goals to facilitate belonging. The second theme, paradoxically, was that activity was not only seen as a source of bonding, but also potentially divisive, in that differences in individuals' levels of participation could introduce unwanted hierarchies:

You tend to have quite a lot of kudos if you are someone who does quite a lot of work, which I don't think is necessarily a good thing, because there are people here who aren't quite so able-bodied, or who are just less into doing hard work and stuff in the garden or looking after the animals or whatever, and so they get sidelined and criticised far more often than people who

are gun-ho and just do everything (*Interview*: Anna [name changed to preserve anonymity], Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007).

The other hierarchy that is harder to get over is the sort of feeling of ownership is you feel that you do more work than everyone else, so that people can sometimes people can see you as hierarchically higher than them, because you are taking on more responsibility and that is part of the reason we brought in the minimum hours decision, so we can be sure that everyone puts the same work in (*Interview*: Boyd, Kebele, 7 April 2007).

The ‘minimum hours decision’ at Kebele was a procedure to ensure that only volunteers who spent four or more hours a week doing work for the co-op could be considered ‘core members’, and could participate in community decision-making meetings (those who spent less hours could still participate in the sub-collectives). Many other communities had similar rules and guidelines for the amount of time that members were required to participate, yet hierarchies based on differential enthusiasm and ability were still reported in around half of the interviews. One interviewee had a term for this tension, the idea of a ‘do-ocracy’:

A friend who went on anarchist websites told me about the notion of a ‘do-ocracy’ which is basically politics which revolves around people who do things, so if you never do anything then basically your opinion doesn’t mean anything, you are just talking the talk and not walking the walk. I guess to some extent there is a danger that that can happen when you live in a co-op, because obviously the people who are putting the most energy in, and are taking most responsibility, or make decisions without consultation, not out of any deliberate intention to subvert the decision-making process, but because of the position they are in, for example if no-one is around and they kind of think, oh well, and just assume that it is ok... well that can obviously degrade that sense that everyone is equal, and obviously some are more equal than others naturally I guess because of the people that they are (*Interview*: Nick, Coventry Peace House, 9 May 2007)

This is an interesting insight, and in some respects seems unavoidable. As Nick points out, not all decisions can be raised in meetings, since sometimes decisions are required to be made quickly in everyday situations, and a person who participates regularly will more often be in situations where decisions need to be made. However, most of the communities did have conscious procedures in place in the hope of attempting to prevent power hierarchies from developing and power ossifying (see also section 6.3.4).

9.2.4.2. *What kinds of, and whose, desires and actions sustain such communities?*

Although, as I have argued above, it is possible for autonomous communities to be seen as a kind of affinity group, since their notion of belonging often rests on goals, beliefs, participation and

action rather than passive identity, it is notable that they are still territorial communities. As such, they can still exhibit problems of exclusivity, which interviewees expressed the need or desire to overcome:

To me that is my ideal ambition for this kind of community, that you do take part in the wider community, rather than little communities with nothing in common (*Interview: Kate, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007*)

Theorists of affinity or other processes of non-hierarchical affiliation, such as Day, Bonanno, Bey and Deleuze and Guattari, showed how groups must continually avoid reterritorialization upon hegemonic identities (section 8.3.4). Awareness of the dangers, and indeed the actuality of stagnation seemed widespread throughout the communities that I visited, and was articulated in different terms by community members:

We're a bit monochrome, we're a bit middle class, white, predominantly English (*Interview: Patrick, Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007*).

It's all very middle class really, it's all a little bit, in places, it's quite pretend, in other places it's very real. But I haven't found many working class people in communities, apart from their own families, their own communities and you know, normal unintentional natural communities (*Interview, Kenny, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007*).

Some communities were explicitly involved in attempting to overcome this perceived exclusivity of communities, and the worry that they were catering for the desires of a fairly homogeneous group only:

Coming from a multicultural background myself, it's quite difficult as the background of many of us here, they are often, say over 70% are from a white middle class background. But over the last years I have seen people from the community, and people from different minorities taking part, for example for the bike workshop, or just coming to see what is going on, so from that point of view I think that it is getting better (*Interview: Ingo, Kebele, 7 April 2007*).

Its other main aim is to take anti-capitalist and anarchist ideals out further into the wider community and try to break out of the so-called 'activist-ghetto', which has had partial success so far (*Interview: Tim, Kebele, 7 April 2007*).

Although the predominant identity upon which concerns of restratification seemed to focus was something akin to 'white middle class', some interviewees cited other concerns:

We had a whole meeting once about the word feminist, I mean we say that the community is feminist on the website and on diggers and dreamers but because sometimes that can have a negative connotation, although the word itself, if you go and look at a dictionary, is actually really beautiful, and most people would say, yeah, actually I really agree, but it does have a

negative connotation out there. So for some people it is really important to have the actual word there, but for me it is also actually really important to make sure that also men feel welcome, so they are not scared, and I think that if I was a man I would be a bit worried (*Interview: Angela, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007*)

9.2.4.3. *What are the political and ethical effects of these communities, and do they challenge the state as the primary arena for belonging?*

Concerns about the restratification of communal belonging upon a hegemonic identity - feminism, in the case of Mornington Grove - were seen by one interviewee to play out in the daily dynamics of the community, to his disadvantage as the only male:

It's time that things changed and that it is a community and not a big bully machine. And it's not an aggressive place at all, but it's hugely passive aggressive. Generally I am very happy here, and it just works very, very well. I love the people I live with, I love my life, I love the building, I love the area, it really very, very works for me ... I know that a lot of my male friends don't really want to come and hang out here, because it has, well there's a funny thing about this community, men don't apply, and when they have it doesn't go through. But it's like there's a male curse on it, and especially masculine males. And I think there are a few girls in the community, who were betrayed in a community, so their husbands or boyfriends ran off with someone else in the community, so that's something that goes on here. I think a lot of the girls now have relationships, where for a long time they didn't, so it was man-hating, man-chasing and man-fearing, and being the only male here, I will cop it basically (*Interview: Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007*).

Some of the quotes above might seem to suggest that autonomous communities serve the desires of only, or primarily, their members. This would not necessarily be inimical to the concept of affinity; although if, as some of the quotes above suggest, the desires are reflections of a dominant or majority identity rather than common values, goals and desire for change and action, the theoretical positions would suggest a loss of radical potential. What alleviates this potential loss of radicalism is the fact that the communities and their members on the whole recognise this homogeneity or exclusivity as a problem and have the shared goal of acting upon it, *qua* affinity. This action usually takes the form of outreach activities, which will be considered further in section 9.2.5. At this point it is most important to emphasise how outreach activities or the provision of voluntary services play a huge part in the day-to-day running of many of these communities; whether these are cheap or free services provided voluntarily, or educational services that must be paid for (see typology). Contact with non-community members in such situations can also be seen as a type of affinity, and a particularly moving example comes from the work that Coventry Peace House does with refugees. Peace House gives up around a quarter of its space to a refugee shelter run by volunteers (including the housing co-op members), and not for profit, and the only remaining

founding member of the community spends nearly all of her time in social and advocacy work for refugees, for little or no payment. Despite such forfeits, community members articulated their relationships to other people or groups not in terms of aid or dependency, but rather of mutual enrichment, common goals and solidarity:

It has some interesting connections. I always feel it's an honour to have as much contact with refugees as we have, because they bring the rest of the world to us in that global sense, and we can learn about all sorts of cultures, and I'm just learning all the while, learning more about Britain's role in it all, which has been so awful, so that's good to learn about. It's fantastic to be able to make those kinds of bridges with people in other countries (*Interview*: Penny, Coventry Peace House, 10 May 2007).

[We have connections with] the Easton cowboys, which are another group from Easton surprisingly, they're not cowboys though. They're organising an international solidarity football tournament later on this year, including matches in Chiapas and Lebanon, which is great (*Interview*: Boyd, Kebele, 7 April 2007)

This notion of affinity or solidarity with other groups ran through interviews from most of the communities. The idea that people from very different backgrounds could work (or play!) together to criticise the status quo and to achieve something different was endemic, and resonates somewhat with the literature on affinity groups discussed in the previous chapter.

9.2.5. Politics

In the previous chapter (section 8.2.5) I argued that dominant notions of rights rest on a notion of political change that presupposes alienation and abstraction. Excluded or oppressed individuals and groups have recourse to changing the processes that govern their lives through a politics of representation and demand, involving appeal to the state. This was judged to perpetuate the hierarchical structures and fixed identities upon which the state depends. Alternative approaches in critical utopian theory seek to bypass hierarchical structures, by creating non-hierarchical alternatives in the present that ameliorate the need for appeal to statist structures, by reconstructing social commons at a non-abstracted level. Here, I will consider groups that are self-consciously

engaged in this kind of creation¹⁰⁸, and will consider their potential involvement in social/political change by considering the following questions:

- Do autonomous communities espouse a model of social change that bypasses state politics, which engages with them, or a combination of both?
- What is offered, and whose needs or desires are fulfilled?
- What are the implications for wider social and political change?

9.2.5.1. Do autonomous communities espouse a model of social change that bypasses state politics, which engages with it, or a combination of both?

The issue of the relation of autonomy to embeddedness within hierarchical structures is complex, and my fieldwork showed that neither can be seen as absolute in the realm of practice. Rather, each can be seen as moments and aspects. Autonomy can be conceptualised as moments of creation, inspiration and action that channel a critical utopian process of becoming. However, autonomous communities exist not only within networks and relationships with other autonomous communities and affinity groups, as discussed above, but are also embedded within formalised hierarchical structures and institutions: most notably within the neo-liberal state and capitalist economy that many of them seek to resist:

There is still the challenge that although we are involved in this organisation with values that challenge capitalism, we are having to live within a capitalist society, and hence we get you know, regulated by the Financial Services Authority, we have to do accounts, we have to deal in money, all those sorts of things are going on, which always brings in a tension, between doing what you wish to do, and what you have to do (*Interview: Guy, Corani, 7 July 2007*).

Autonomy was therefore more often expressed in terms of *desire* and aims, or ‘trying’, rather than actuality:

Kebele is a social centre that’s run autonomously, by which we mean we try to avoid assistance from the council or government or anybody (*Boyd, Kebele, 7 April 2007*).

¹⁰⁸ Although my cases are very different politically (the reasons for which were discussed in section 3.4.1) there was a recurrent theme throughout interviews and observations of the politicisation of everyday life. Sargisson (2003) notices a similar dynamic in a study on intentional communities: ‘life in these communities disrupted and challenged and (perhaps) transformed conventional interpretations of the political, politics and in particular the role and status of the private and domestic realms’. It is this politicisation of the everyday – articulated in terms of autonomy – that I concentrate on in the following sections. It is important to note, however, this operates very differently in different communities, and indeed is sometimes based upon somewhat different political imperatives. For the interested reader, further information on the differences in political aims, beliefs and imperatives underlying the communities can be found throughout, particularly in sections 5.2.2, 7.2.2, 7.2.3, and 9.2.5; the typologies in the opening sections to ‘practice’ chapters and also in Appendix 1.

Resisting capitalism and asserting autonomy involve the creation of a do-it-yourself culture, which brings power down to the level of individuals and groups. In section 8.3.5 DIY culture was seen as an alternative to both state politics and vanguardist revolutionary politics of the traditional left, which also relies on a logic of (counter-)hegemony (Day, 2005: 8). DIY culture is simultaneously an ethical stance and an alternative politics, and themes in the literature were reflected in community constitutions and interviews. For example:

Instead of waiting for that ever far away big moment of revolution, or for leaders and authorities to sort out our problems, we recognise that we can make fundamental changes here and now, in the ways we organise, communicate, interact and take action. This is the everyday revolution (Kebele, n.d., see Appendix 6).

the way that we live at the moment is wrong, it's not good for any individual it's not good for the society we live in and it's not good for the planet we live on, and it needs to change. How we do that is a process that evolves. I feel that it has to be from the bottom up, it can't be a revolution in the classic sense that is led by Lenin on his white horse or whatever, it has to come from everyone participating and everyone making their own decisions, not being carried along with things, everyone making their own mind up (*Interview: Boyd, Kebele, 7 April 2009*).

The foregoing interview and document extracts on the topic of social change mirror somewhat the discourse of theorists of affinity such as Bonanno and Day, insofar as there is a valorisation of autonomy and evidence of attempts to avoid or shun hierarchical and representative politics. However, activity directed towards social change not only involved creating workable alternatives and a do-it-yourself culture. It also sometimes involved contesting the status quo directly through protest. For example: two of the Peace House members, Nick and Penny, are among the Coventry 12 who were charged with breach of the peace when they tried to blockade Trident in February 2007, which was to be heard in court after my visit to the community on July 18th 2007¹⁰⁹. In a seemingly contradictory manner, the very same communities or even the same interviewees would extol the virtues of strategic engagement with state politics, or funding from the state or from capitalist enterprises. Despite the quote from a core member of Kebele above and the extract from

¹⁰⁹ Arrests for anti-nuclear protest are sometimes viewed as ways to influence or change the legal system. An illuminating paper on this topic, entitled 'Activism and international law: The case of Trident Ploughshares' was given by Dr Adriana Sinclair (University of Bremen, TransState Project) on 28 July 2007 at a Loughborough University *Centre for the Study of International Governance* conference, 'Civil Rights, Liberties and Disobedience'.

the constitution, which emphasise the desire to avoid state and capital completely, the website's finance page includes a 'caveat':

Recently, as part of ongoing and productive discussions about the future of Kebele, members have talked about the possibility of re-thinking the funding issue. With so many quango type pseudo community organisations squandering free money on bottomless cash pit projects (read expenses), perhaps it's time to redistribute the wealth, and put it to good use? In the context of upcoming significant building repairs and organisational changes, we agreed, at a Kebele core meeting in April [2007], to accept funding from now on for specific projects, on a case-by-case basis. We recognise the importance of not allowing funding to compromise our politics or to undermine our efforts towards autonomy, and this will be at the forefront of any decisions we make. (Kebele Community Cooperative Finance Collective, (n.d.) from http://www.kebelecoop.org/collectives_finance.html accessed May 1, 2009).

The group adds the proviso that funding would only be accepted where it was strategically useful for the cooperative, and in no way instrumental for the donors. This was reflected in the conditions of acceptance: that there would be no interference or conditions from donors, no publicity for donors and careful consideration of the ethical implications of each case (Ibid). Kebele was not the only community to accept funding from state or corporate donors. Other examples included Hockerton Housing Project's acceptance of sponsorship by Powergen for electric cars, Coventry Peace House's acceptance of local government and Home Office funding for its work with refugees, and Liverpool social centre's use of local government funding for a catering project to promote healthy eating.

As well as acceptance of state and capitalist funding for strategic reasons, some interviewees expressed a willingness to engage with local, national and international hierarchical governmental politics. These were seen as potential avenues for radical or progressive social change, and often articulated in terms of 'rights':

[The community is] a space where people are involved with different things and it is run in a non-hierarchical way, gives you a space for political activism, mainly it's a good thing, being part of the community itself trying to organise political things like rights (*Interview: Ingo, Kebele, 7 April 2007*)

[The original aims were] about a centre to use as a basis for campaigning on the Peace movement, but also tied up with that to do with environmental campaigning as well and right from the beginning about rights for refugees as well and having the shelter (*Interview: Nick, Coventry Peace House, 9 May 2007*)

We are also on the world map thanks to the CIFAL organisation, which is an organisation created by the United Nations, and it has ten training centres in the world and we are one of the ten. Amazingly they came here and decided to choose us as a training centre for local people, local councillors, local authority, local government, so we train them in sustainable environmental development and so forth (*Interview: Fabien, New Findhorn Association, 11 June 2007*).

This willingness to engage in the discourse and practices of state-centric institutions of ‘rights’ at a strategic level for achieving radical goals, or for limiting state intrusions whilst engaging in more radical tactics elsewhere, is under-theorised in academia and has particular relevance for critical utopian citizenship. The implications will be further considered in section 9.3.5.

9.2.5.2. *What is offered, and whose needs or desires are fulfilled?*

I considered above how groups and communities are seen by members to offer a space wherein activities and practices oriented to autonomy and a do-it-yourself ethos can be engaged. Following is a list in table form activities and practices based on this ethos, with the information obtained from interviews and notes taken during informal conversations and observation. The activities at the top of the table are oriented to self-sufficiency and autonomy, and those in the lower part towards outreach and providing wider services. These are not easily separable, however, and often overlap, with the same activities simultaneously benefiting members and wider communities.

Activity	Where practiced	Intended users	Rationale
Income sharing	Corani	Members	Self-sufficiency; to reduce reliance upon the state and capitalism. The intrinsic enjoyment of sharing.
Consensus-based decision-making (see also Chapters 6 & 7)	All communities to some extent	Members	The intrinsic value of the practice, as well as its ability to critique the status quo and exemplify something other.
Gardening, farming and food production	Findhorn Hockerton Housing Project Corani Laurieston Hall	Members	Help the community to be self-sufficient; to reduce outside reliance. Cut the environmental impact of food from further afield. Provide members with top-quality organic and ethical produce.
Entertainment events; e.g. street parties, benefit gigs, concerts	Kebele Springhill Coventry Peace House Findhorn Mornington Grove Community Liverpool Social Centre	Sometimes members only, but more often open to local and wider community	Strengthening relationships between members, or members and wider community. Raise money for causes. Intrinsic value of enjoyment. Promoting ideas or causes.
Bicycle workshops	Kebele Coventry Peace House	Community members and local community	Promote the use and maintenance of bicycles, and recycling of old bicycles, for environmental reasons
Cafés and catering services	Kebele Coventry Peace House Findhorn Liverpool Social Centre (planned)	Members and local community	Provide cheap or free food Foster a sociable environment Promote a healthy, often vegetarian or vegan, diet

Activity	Where practiced	Intended users	Rationale
Radical libraries and infoshops	Kebele	Members and other activists	Provide cheap or free books, pamphlets and music. To contribute towards the spreading of radical ideas
Promoting community land trusts	Springhill	Any interested party	Allow people who might not otherwise be able to afford to live in sustainable housing to do so; also to encourage communities to get together and grow on pieces of communally owned land.
Education, promotion and expertise	Findhorn Hockerton Housing Project Coventry Peace House Laurieston Hall	Often charged services, for interested parties	Educate others in skills that have been learnt through community living.
Providing a refugee shelter	Coventry Peace House	Destitute refugees	Directly benefit people left destitute by the asylum system. Provide a space for advice and advocacy

Figure 9-2: Autonomous/Do-It-Yourself politics

What is interesting about the table above is that most of the actions have two distinct but related kinds of rationale. The first is oriented towards the intrinsic value of the activity for the intended users; usually articulated in terms of enjoyment or usefulness. A second purpose is directed towards wider social change - through setting an example or through directly reaching out to wider communities or audiences. These are often complimentary rather than contradictory. It is also notable that most of these activities and practices have quite clearly identifiable intended users, which is not always the case for activities that involve engaging with power. One way of engaging with power, which does not fit neatly into the active creation of alternatives, since it occurs at the nexus between utopia and the state, is protest:

Figure 9-3: Politics of resistance

Activity	Where practiced	Who undertakes the activity	For what or whose benefit?	Rationale
Protest	Some communities as a whole encouraged this through e.g. travel grants; particularly Corani and Coventry Peace House. Kebele offered space and events for activists to plan activities	This was usually the remit of individual members and other interested parties.	Depends on purpose of protest, which varied greatly. Examples include campaigning for nuclear disarmament, government action on climate change, animal welfare and refugee rights.	To contest undesirable policies or corporate practices through raising awareness or using direct action to attempt to prevent practices from taking place.

Organising for protest often involves many of the same modes of organisation that occur within communities (non-hierarchy and consensus decision-making, for example). Richard Day argues that the ‘newest social movements’ (Day, 2005: 8) often organise using many of the same tactics

and non-hegemonic (dis-)organisational structures that they might seek to promote in any alternative social model. Even though it is often limited to a single issue rather than the creation of a way of living, protest can involve the same do-it-yourself ethos and utopian outlook as the active creation of alternatives. This cannot be said, however, for engagement within the state, which by definition involves representative, hegemonic strategies and a politics of demand. Interestingly, however, community members engaged in a wide range of such politics. Often the same members who engaged in protest activities, including those previously mentioned who had been arrested for protesting, also engaged in actions within state structures and the more traditionally conceived political arena. Below is a table listing some of the activities that involve taking part in ‘representative’ politics.

Figure 9-4: Politics of demand and representation

Activity	Where practiced	Who decides or undertakes these activities	For whose benefit?	Rationale
Engaging with local and national governments through lobbying and having members stand in elections	Springhill Coventry Peace House Findhorn Community	Often the remit of individual members, but communities as a whole often had a culture that would encourage or discourage conventional political participation	Depends on policy. Examples include: standing as a green party representative in local elections, lobbying for refugee rights	To influence government policies through the established system.
Engaging with schools through national curriculum ‘citizenship’ classes.	Coventry Peace House	Individual members of community	School Children Others at an indirect level	To raise awareness of global inequality
Acceptance of funding from the state or from capitalist enterprises	Kebele Social Centre Hockerton Housing Project	Where an offer is made, its acceptance is usually dependent on a consensus decision by the whole community	Examples include accepting funding for environmental technologies or funding for resources for refugees	To provide benefits (environmental, or for other people) that the community might not have been able to afford otherwise.

The intended ‘users’ of these activities are not so clear, since the potential beneficiaries of such actions are alienated through the political process from those undertaking the actions. I have thus identified those who take part in these actions and the potential beneficiaries as separate categories in the table above.

9.2.5.3. *What are the implications for wider social and political change?*

The types of politics I discussed in the foregoing section can be interpreted through three different models of social change. The most interesting point to keep in mind is that none of these are seen to be mutually exclusive: community members' discourses and practices embraced all three as viable strategies, usually justifying them strategically in terms of social change.

'Do-It-Yourself' politics tends to benefit someone very directly; this might be the person undertaking the politics or it might be a specific individual or group who is engaged with directly. In many cases, both of these apply. I find it useful to term this kind of process 'active' politics, for two reasons. First, it usually involves immediate action, in a very hands-on, participatory way. Secondly, it corresponds to Deleuze's definition of an 'active force', as a process whose capability is not mediated by or integrated into another force or process (Deleuze 2006 [1983]: 57). The impact of direct benefit on wider social change is not always obvious. Interviewees sometimes expressed pessimistic views about wider relevance, particularly where predominant community activities are oriented more towards self-sufficiency than outreach:

I sometimes think that it would be great to do something in a community kind of way that is helping other people as well as just ourselves, because it sometimes seems slightly insular and selfish to be just doing this self-sufficiently, because you could do that and also do, kind of, say, like L'Arche communities¹¹⁰ having people who are mentally or physically disabled, and helping them do the same (*Interview*: Anna [name changed to preserve anonymity], Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007).

However, just having a space and a community perceived to be different state or capitalist space was seen as both intrinsically and instrumentally valuable by many members for a variety of reasons:

So [an aim is] to practice living together and certainly to encourage co-ops, because they are a good way of being, and to provide housing for people and a space for people to live together and the energy created in that kind of a space can do lots of other things (*Interview*: Penny, Coventry Peace House, 10 May 2007).

If I'm being idealistic about it then I would think that what I'm doing [by living in community] is making an impression on the world as a whole because I am trying to be as environmentally

¹¹⁰ An international network of communities where people with learning disabilities and their assistants all live together in community.

conscious as I can be (*Interview*: Anna [name changed to preserve anonymity], Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2007).

The more communities the better, I think it's just such a natural way of being. I think the best way to change the world is by living it, not just talking about doing it academically (*Interview*: Isabelle, Mornington Grove Community, 8 July 2007).

From the above passages, at least four ways in which the 'Do-It-Yourself' model of social change functions can be ascertained: setting an example, helping to house people, providing an space and social interactions that can inspire people to do other things, and living environmentally. These activities provide examples of critical utopian citizenship: they are simultaneously critical of the *status quo* and creating something different. They offer alternatives to the politics of demand assumed by dominant models of citizenship, that is unmediated, does not blueprint and allows for contingency, process and continual critique.

A second model of social change, which might be termed 'resistance' (Katz, 2004: 251), was evident in the form of protest and direct action. This can be seen as an overlap between active and reactive (in Deleuze's terminology) or autonomous and embedded politics. It is reactive insofar as protest is usually a reaction to something - an undesirable government policy for example. It can also have visionary and utopian aspects, however, insofar as many contemporary protest movements attempt to avoid hierarchical organisation and hegemonic strategies in favour of experimenting with forms of association that activists would like to see in the future; akin to the affinity group theorised previously.

The third model of social change is gradualist and operates through the representative democratic system and a politics of demand. This is reactive since it operates within the established system and takes for granted, or even perpetuates, existing structures. What is particularly interesting, is that whilst theorists of affinity such as Day and Bonanno suggest that engagement in hegemonic politics through campaigning for citizenship rights is incompatible with a 'politics of the act' (Day, 2005: 88; Bonanno, 1988: 9), members of communities tended not to view this as a contradiction.

The following interview extract articulates particularly clearly what was a fairly general tendency in communities' discourse and practices:

And that's also what attracted me to stay was ... to be constructively engaged in making our little corner of it as fruitful as possible, it just felt like much more fun. And within the whole social change movement you need the protesters, which is people under 25, and you also need people willing to educate themselves, and work with the system and you know, step by step make the little changes that make things a little bit better. And you need the idealists, the utopians, the communitarians who go and try something that may not catch on, you know we are doing something that people were doing a hundred or three hundred years ago, you know it may not catch on right away but it shows that it can be done and that leaves an imprint somewhere in the psychic field and enables the next group to flourish more easily ... So being a piece of that puzzle just seems like good work, and more enjoyable (*Interview: Mari, Findhorn, 18 June 2007*).

In this passage, Mari indicates that all three forms of social change are simultaneously important, but that different people might undertake them. It was also common, however, for a person to take on all three roles at once. This echoes Katz' theory of 'reworking' and 'resistance', which are viewed as potentially complementary rather than contradictory. 'Reworking' is defined as those practices that 'alter the conditions of people's existence to enable more workable lives' but are 'enfolded into hegemonic social relations because rather than attempt to ... call them into question, they attempt to recalibrate power relations and/or redistribute resources' (Katz, 2004: 247). Where reworking can help to 'create viable terrains of practice, resistance takes up that terrain with the invocation of a critical consciousness' (Ibid: 251). Some interviewees, however, expressed concerns about de-radicalisation due to the influence of wider politics upon the community and members:

I'd say [the community's wider role] has become much less, much, much less, in that we used to be part of a revolutionary social web, which was connected, connected through radical magazines, through the feminist movement, through the men against sexism movement, through movements for social change, all sorts, the anti-nuclear movement, lots of stuff that we were part of that was all messing around together, even whole-food shops, even that sort of stuff, whole-foods and health foods and cafes, and a kind of information service that was going on, just anything that was going on that was *of us*, it felt like and was to a certain degree an alternative social network, probably running within the state, rather like fungus running through the ground, certainly with a strong amount of inter-linking, so lots of us would always be going off to see other places, other communities, we were doing lots of swaps with communities, lots of swaps with friends working in radical theatre, I don't know, anything, and that would be going on a lot, so our links there would be strong because the movement was strong, but rather like the rest of society, the onset of Thatcherism and the decline of positive views of the 60s and 70s towards the more socially self-centred views of the 80s, they were more able to figure here, people also began to draw influence, people came and didn't tend to see themselves in that place and began to look at themselves more, people tended to think of Laurieston Hall in relation to other things (*Interview: Patrick, Laurieston Hall, 22 September 2009*).

Such worries about de-radicalisation were articulated in many communities. Strategies for

avoidance of this were rarely articulated. This is perhaps one point amongst many where a dialogue with radical theory might be useful. It is to the implications of the study of practice for theory, and of theory for practice, and the dialogue between theory and practice for critical utopian citizenship that I will now turn.

9.3. *Implications*

The purpose here is to consider the potential of dialogue between dominant and critical utopian theories with utopian practices, in order to address the final of the disaggregated research questions in section 1.3 of the Introduction: What can a dialogue between theory and practice tell us about the conditions for a critical utopian citizenship? The links between utopian theory and utopian practice are important, but there is a further bridge to be built between utopianism and everyday life. ‘Everyday life’ is not something that is separate from utopianism, indeed the way in which I have been theorising critical utopianism suggests that it permeates, and is permeated by, everyday life. Everyday life is something that occurs within, as well as outside, utopian communities. We have seen that utopian communities in particular offer a space where alternative ethical models transgress traditional concepts of rights. The following section adopts a wider analytical perspective on the relevance of this dialogue for the subject of the thesis – critical utopian citizenship, both within, but also outside autonomous communities.

9.3.1. *Ontology: moral truth versus ethical effects*

In the theoretical discussion I argued that dominant models of rights espouse a secular attitude towards ontology, which ostensibly relegates ontological difference to the private sphere but relies on an implicit foundational morality. Alternative approaches extol a politics of ontological difference, where ethical value resides in the proliferation and flourishing of difference; the worth of a belief system consists in its ability to enable or encourage this. Ethical discourse thus does not rely on a transcendent signifier (May, 1994: 127). In section 9.2.1 of this chapter, I identified two attitudes towards community belief systems. At Findhorn, the approach was to constitutionalise

spirituality, although in a manner that allowed for many different belief systems. The other communities had no specified model.

There are two important questions to consider when thinking how best to interpret these models. First, could communities that do not espouse a set belief system be termed ‘secular’, in the conventional sense? Second, how does the idea of a community-wide belief system such as that of Findhorn, whose value is judged by its effects rather than truth, differ from the civic religions of early republicans such as Hobbes (2006 [1651]), Machiavelli (1988 [1583]) and Plato (1992 [c. 380 BC])?

In response to the first issue, it is useful to refer to my previous observations of how communities tend to offer a space where open discussion upon belief systems and the ways in which these affect members’ actions and decisions can take place. Secularism has been defined as ‘the detachment of a state or other body from religious foundations’ (Byrd, 2003: 481). The term usually has statist connotations, such as the relegation of religion (and other difference) to the private sphere, which do not seem to apply here (see Connolly, 1999: *passim*). As was evident in the foregoing discussions, the unmediated relationships within communities mean that there is no unambiguous division between the public and the private. Nor is discussion of belief systems silenced by such a division. Indeed, discussion of differing belief systems seemed to be positively encouraged within communities, and diversity was often articulated as a value rather than as a fact or predicament. This could be theorised in terms of the critical utopian function of experimentation and contingency.

In the case of Findhorn, there is a clear difference from civic republican models of civil religion, insofar as all kinds of different belief systems were articulated, as well as an attentiveness to the psychological and social effects of these belief systems within unmediated relations with others. This did not rely upon assimilation into a higher unity, but rather was played out in day-to-day interactions and practices. The value of specific belief systems were orientated towards the good of

the flourishing of diversity within all of life rather than the desires of a specific dominant group. This is somewhat akin to a critical politicisation of the spiritual within everyday life. It is this politicisation of the spiritual that dominant approaches to ontology, whether based upon secularism or civic religion, tend to eschew.

The unspecified belief systems of most communities, and the spiritual heterodoxy of Findhorn can be each theorised as a 'positive ethos of engagement between multiple faiths' (Connolly, 2005: 7). This is what Connolly calls 'multidimensional pluralism' (Ibid: 6)¹¹¹. He posits strategies for a wider engagement with existing structures and through horizontal relationships. If these are used in a strategic manner, they might have a wider relevance for critical engagement with different ontologies both within and outside autonomous communities. These strategies do seem somewhat abstract, however, and might benefit from dialogue with practical experiences in communities. The first of these strategies is micropolitical and psychological; 'agonistic respect'. This is a 'relation between interdependent partisans' (Ibid: 123), and unlike liberal multiculturalism, which assumes an authoritative majority, there is a mutual recognition and respect amongst coexisting minorities who may fundamentally disagree (Ibid: 123). The second strategy, somewhat analogous to the first, is 'critical responsiveness', which is 'appropriate to the politics of becoming *while it is still underway*' (Ibid: 126, emphasis in the original). This is seen to involve careful listening to 'constituencies struggling to move from an obscure or degraded subsistence below the field of recognition' (Ibid: 126). Whilst I would argue that the politics of becoming is always-already underway, Connolly does have an interesting point that some voices do remain unrecognised, even within the creative space of communities. It is notable that the prevailing ontologies were atheism, agnosticism and New-Ageism, and there were few alternatives. A wider movement of ontological difference (I prefer this term of Braidotti (1994) to Connolly's 'pluralism'), in solidarity with others from different faiths, might begin from something akin to Connolly's critical

¹¹¹ Where Connolly's theorisation appears contradictory from the standpoint of a critical utopian approach, is that although he claims to avoid 'faith in the powers of transcendence' (Connolly, 2005: 7) he ultimately views the purpose of multifaith negotiation as the 'shaping of that ethos' that he calls 'democratic pluralism', (Ibid: 7). 'Democratic pluralism' sometimes appears to be a transcendental principle that is recuperated into the state domain (Ibid: 155-6). This undermines somewhat the intrinsic and ethical value of unmediated ontological diversity in the daily lives of community members.

responsiveness. This could lead to a channelling of energy for wider social change: ‘Citizens must address plural sites of action, depending on the scope of the issue, including local action, associational organization, state pressure, and cross-state citizen networks’ (Ibid: 155). I will discuss the debates surrounding engagement with the state in section 9.3.5. Here, I would like to note that the idea of critical responsiveness might offer a critical utopian strategy from the standpoint of belief systems that could have wider relevance for social change if considered as a strategy by those both within, and outwith, autonomous communities.

It is interesting that Connolly articulates movement for change in terms of ‘citizenship’. Although he does not define the term explicitly, it appears that he is at least partially referring to something that exceeds state citizenship, since he refers to ‘citizen activists’ existing outside specified territories, and to ‘cross-state citizen movements’ (Ibid: 156). Although Connolly also frequently advocates appeals to the state through citizenship (Ibid: 7: 156 & pp. 134-5) at least part of his understanding of citizenship seems to be imbued with the critical utopian function. Critical responsiveness as a civic virtue thus seems to be a method of bringing others (perspectives, beliefs, people) into the space of the political that might have a wider relevance for a critical utopian citizenship. Autonomous communities offer an example of how the negotiation and celebration of ontological difference can work in practice. Connolly offers some ideas on how this could be widened to encompass more or different belief systems in more and different spaces.

9.3.2. Subjectivity: atomised versus situated self

In the theoretical discussion I considered how the liberal tradition bestows rights primarily upon the individual, assuming a static and unchanging abstract person who is in some degree of conflict, opposition or competition with those around him or her. This also assumes various other boundaries between differing areas of existence, such as public/private, self/other, humanity/nature, rationality/emotion. Alternative approaches transgress these binaries and the abstract subjectification of the atomised, rational individual, either through positing disruptive forces at the individual level such as desires and emotions or through a holistic conception of a complex and

ungovernable environment, or, in the case of Agamben, highlighting the zone of indistinguishability between these fields of existence. All of these approaches were seen to lead to a critical utopian imagining of the subject.

Practices within autonomous communities were seen almost by definition to desire if not actualise a transgression of liberal individualism through the value placed on communal existence as a way of life. Interview extracts illustrated how community members viewed this lifestyle as a way of breaking down traditional roles, and disrupting individualistic and competitive structures and providing something new. This did not involve, however, undermining the individual as an epistemological category. This is what Sargisson (2000) calls the ‘new individualism’ of ‘new age conceptions of self and other’ (Sargisson, 2000: 145-151), and was most evident at Findhorn but also widespread amongst most other communities. As something which is under-theorised in academic terms (Ibid: 145), this imagining of the subject perhaps has a lot to offer scholastic theory as well as a practice of critical citizenship in everyday life (within and outwith the autonomous community).

Particularly relevant in this respect, I would argue, is practice at Findhorn of taking ownership of one’s own views. Day highlights this, stating that ‘those who enjoy a structural privilege must strive to identify and work against this privilege if they hope to establish relations of solidarity with those who do not share it’ (Day, 2005: 11). As such, he uncovers his own voice as ‘a White male university professor living and working in the relative ease and comfort of a G8 country’ (Ibid: 11). Stirner articulates almost every statement in terms of the embodied and desiring ‘I’. There is a danger however, both in theory and practice, that an emphasis on individualism could ‘equally be described in terms of Self-centred individualism’ (Sargisson, 2000: 149, capitalisation in the original). This is seen to sit somewhat curiously with the holism of deep ecology (Ibid: 151).

Reconciliation between these seemingly contradictory views (individualism, collectivism, holism) does seem possible. In my interviews this came through in the critical utopian theme of the self-in-

process. Interestingly, this is also a theme within theory, and allows a partial reconciliation of theorists who might otherwise be seen as incongruous bedfellows. Take, for instance, Stirner, who is frequently read as the individualist *par excellence*, whose ‘egoism is ultimately too limited to embrace the whole of human experience’ and ‘could lead to violence and the oppression of the weak’ (Marshall, 2008 [1992]: 233), and Levinas’ ‘unremitting critique of all the more or less subtle circuits of self-love, self-satisfaction, and self-relation’ (Cohen, 2003: xxvii). Although typical readings of these thinkers tend to view them as having little or nothing in common, both emphasise the importance of unmediated experience of the other, and of an unfinalisable self which is always in process. This reflects the self-developmental views of members of Findhorn and other communities. Consider the following:

In the measure that the face of the Other relates us with a third party, the metaphysical relation of the I with the Other moves into the form of the We, aspires to a State, institutions, laws, which are the source of universality. But politics left to itself bears a tyranny within itself; it deforms the I and the other who has given rise to it, for it judges them according to universal laws, and thus in absentia (Levinas 2002 [1961]: 300).

I love men too – not merely individuals, but every one. But I love them with the consciousness of egoism; I love them because love makes *me* happy, I love because loving is natural to me, because it pleases me. I know no “commandment of love.” I have a *fellow-feeling* with every feeling being, and their torment torments, their refreshment refreshes me too (Stirner, 1993 [1844]: 291, emphasis in the original).

Never does a State aim to bring in the free activity of individuals, but always that which is bound to the *purpose of the State*. Through the State nothing *in common* comes to pass either, as little as one can call a piece of cloth the common work of all the individual parts of a machine (Stirner, 1993 [1844]: 227, emphasis in the original).

Each of the statements could conceivably have been written by the other author. What I am not trying to do here is to generalise the thought of infinitely complex theorists whom I much admire. Nor am I trying to reduce the outlooks of my interviewees, who I also much admire, to any political theory. What I am trying to do is illustrate something that I have found lacking in reductive political theory and academic discourse, and that came through strongly as a theme during fieldwork. This resides in the epistemological anarchism and an anarchy of the subject that I have identified as a key theme of the critical utopian approach: ‘What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal’ (Nietzsche, 1997 [c.1891]: 8). Here, the self, and the relations with others

that the self encounters, are seen as sites for resistance, which can be found to unite theorists as seemingly diverse as Stirner and Levinas. It is perhaps Bahktin's polyphonic concept of truth that best articulates the importance of maintaining criticality in everyday life. Indeed, the 'other' is essential for this, in that unmediated experience of the other introduces the element of the unexpected that is necessary to enable us to question elements of our own subjectivity that may have become fixed or oppressive; the 'state within'. Thus, critical utopian theory and practice offers us a mode of resistance that originates within the subject. The relation of this to hegemonic identities is important: can 'the citizen', 'the human' or 'the woman' become a critically resistant, rather than an oppressive identity?

There does seem to be a manner in which identities can be used strategically without being recuperated, although there is a delicate boundary. Braidotti explains how hegemonising, dominant philosophy and high theory aim to 'cannibalize' and assimilate 'new discourses' such as 'women, postcolonial subjects, the audiovisual media, other new technologies, and so on' (Braidotti, 1994: 33). She argues, however, that 'nomads ... cannot be assimilated easily' (Ibid: 33). Whilst the nomad 'makes those necessary situated connections that can help her/him to survive ... s/he never takes on fully the limits of one national, fixed identity' (Ibid: 33). Within the strategic field, Braidotti uses the example of the project of Women's studies existing within the mainstream academic arena, whose sustenance requires 'a pragmatic mixture of autonomous structures and integrated practices' (Ibid: 34). This framework could be seen equally to apply to utopian communities, as well as to the critical citizen. Operating strategically can lead to very clear pragmatic advantages and privileges, such as generous state grants (Ibid: 34), but should not be seen as a way of avoiding confrontation with 'the very real ideological and structural constraints under which one has to operate' (Ibid: 34). Resistance can originate from this strategic straddling of hegemonic identity and integration with unrecuperated difference and autonomy: 'political agency has to do with the capacity to expose the illusion of ontological foundations' (Ibid: 35). Insofar as identities can be used strategically to facilitate this capacity, they are valuable: 'Nomadic politics is a matter of bonding, of coalitions, of interconnections' (Ibid: 35).

Thus, state citizenship could potentially be used as one medium (amongst many) for *critical* citizenship. This strategic use of identities and the funding or ideological resources that can come with them was certainly a practice that was evidenced within communities: ‘In the talk on Global Citizenship we also do things where kids are taught in schools about Third World development, and how to live harmoniously as friends’ (*Interview*: Frank, Coventry Peace House, 10 May 2007).

9.3.3. Ethics: privilege versus responsibility

In section 8.2.3 I considered how modern rights theory is tied in with the historical processes of capitalism, leading to the prioritisation of rights concerned with the protection of private property of dominant groups. The depoliticisation of difference leads to a *de facto* exclusion of underprivileged and minority groups from full civic and political rights due to domination within the private sphere, or total exclusion from the public sphere. There is a separation of the abstract, rights-bearing citizen from the embodied, biological being which both legitimises the sovereignty of the state and renders ‘bare life’ vulnerable to its whims. Critical utopian ethical theories attempt to negotiate difference without reliance upon transcendental models of value and the hierarchical mediation of conflict through an intersubjective ethical epistemology of responsibility or care, the creative thinking of humans and society as potentiality and an emphasis on the intrinsic value of difference.

Practices in autonomous utopian communities had to negotiate difference at both material and ideological levels. More frequently than reliance on set procedures or mediation was discourse and practice of arbitration in everyday life, running through many of the day-to-day activities that took place in communities. There was a particular emphasis on personal authenticity and being genuine in communication, backed up with the idea that to suppress or lie about one’s own feelings would be to deprive the group of something important. This was seen to tie in particularly with Bakhtin’s polyphonic concept of truth and is most evidently actualised through the practice of consensus decision-making. However, I also noted that communities had also resorted to mediation. Often, this was some kind of independent mediation or facilitation, involving an individual or agency who

was experienced and involved in communal or co-operative living. This kind of mediation did not assume authority or transcendental truth but was a process to enable members to resolve conflicts. Such processes again do not assume an *a priori* or transcendental morality into which differences must be incorporated in order to be resolved, and thus can still be seen to reflect a processual openness to the other and contingency that is valued by the critical utopian approach.

Some interviewees, however, did articulate experiences of having to call in authoritative agencies, such as police or the legal system. This would happen when resolution procedures and negotiation broke down, and perhaps involved cases of violence. Resort to an external hierarchical procedure of mediation presumes a pre-existent and transcendental model of moral value and falls back on the dominant model of ‘right’ as presupposing an opposing ‘wrong’. This is where the symmetry with critical utopian theorists breaks down. It is important to note that the divergence from radical theory occurs not at the moment that the outside agencies arrive, but at the point where negotiation breaks down – for example, if violence is involved, it is the violence itself might be seen as the point where utopian relations break down. Statist, dominant, or anti-utopian relations can thus be conceptualised as occurring *within* the autonomous community at the moment where ongoing criticality is blocked, rather than at the point where the police or external agencies arrive. This constant potentiality of the re-emergence of the state, or violent dominating relations is well theorised (Clastres, 1977 [1974], *passim*; Bey, 1985: 97; Levinas, 1985: 98; Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 47) and indeed this constant possibility of the state, and the necessity of warding it off, is a necessary condition for the possibility of the other to the state (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 474 and *passim*, Bey, 1995: 3). This is what I have been conceptualizing as critical utopianism. Bey (1993) offers some potential strategies for avoiding the re-emergence of domination in non-temporary communities, including avoidance of media attention, selective membership, and maintaining spontaneity and intensity through holding festival-type activities as often as possible. Clastres (1977 [1974]) also considers through ethnographic studies the several ways in which ‘primitive’ societies have warded off the emergence of hierarchy. However, practical strategies for dealing with dominatory conflict within the utopian space, and within everyday life in other spaces, are

somewhat under-theorised. Practice might have a question to pose to theory here: Can utopian relations be restored at the point where dominating attitudes or behaviour come to the fore without the need or resorting to still further dominance or hierarchy? Are there any strategies to enable this? In the terms of my project, this might be articulated as, how might the critical utopian citizen, when involuntarily entered into a relationship of domination, reinstate nonviolent criticality without resort to an external hierarchy? One answer appears to lie in the practices of ‘nonviolent communication’ advocated by some community members, which parallels the theories of Levinas. Although there is always the danger that such communication might be broken down through unassailable violence, the method constitutes a utopian possibility that might be of use to the critical citizen.

9.3.4. Community: identity versus affinity

In theorising dominant approaches to citizenship, I considered how the assumption of an unassailable state leads to the alienation of citizens from the processes that govern their lives, as well as from one another. Critical utopian theory offers possibilities for a praxis that unites living and governing, bringing power down to the level of the community that engages in action, in the simultaneous move that forms that body of people into a community. Such communities are not based upon fixed identities, but rather upon mutual goals and shared action, and thus are active rather than passive.

In the communities I visited, there was a definite orientation towards mutual activity, and a belonging based on shared goals and action rather than dominant identities. This was actualised through an unfinalised drive for autonomy. In some senses then, it is appropriate to conceptualise the communities as particular kinds of affinity groups. There were problems of exclusivity, however, and worries of restratification upon homogeneous identities were articulated. Partial resolution was attained through involvement in wider affinity groups or solidarity networks and through outreach activities. It is through the encouragement of flows through the territorial community that stagnation can be resisted: ‘Territorialities, then, are shot through with lines of

flight testifying to the presence within them of movements of deterritorialization and reterritorialization' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 62).

This has implications for, and indeed attributes an essential role to, the critical utopian citizen. Just as resistance cannot solely be performed within the structures and limits of the neo-liberal state, nor can it reside in a retreat to a static and fixed utopia. It is, perhaps, at the nexus of utopianism and citizenship that the most critical and radical site of resistance lies. What might this mean in concrete terms? Perhaps recognising that as political agents, we are constituted by and have relations and obligations within a number of overlapping and intersecting communities, not solely the abstracted, public and political arena of the state, and our private, social households. Then, by maintaining an attitude of constant criticality towards all ontological or hegemonic formations as and when they arise. This presupposes a radical politicisation of all spheres of life and interaction: the university, the hospital ward, schools, the voting booth, the affinity group, and the utopian community.

9.3.5. Politics: demand versus self-activity

In the theoretical section 8.2.5, I considered how dominant liberal approaches to rights provide a method by which excluded difference might come to be recognized in the public sphere, and thus appropriate material, legal or ideological resources deemed requisite for equal presence and participation. This method has been termed 'the politics of demand', which is ultimately recuperative since it defines identities in the terms of the state, unites difference into a higher unity, and assumes the benevolence and necessity of hegemonic forces, thus perpetuating these structures.

Poststructural and post-left anarchist theorists such as Day (2005) and Bonanno (1988) criticise this form of politics on both a pragmatic level (it does not produce the desired effects) and at the level of principle (it involves complicity in one's own domination and in the domination of others). Contemporary forms of anarchism offer a critical utopian alternative: a 'politics of the act'. This

form of politics takes as its point of departure the affinity group, through the expression of friendship and solidarity without the need for common identity. The affinity group enables (and is enabled by, or exists through) the creation of active alternatives in the present that bypass the state, rebuild social commons, and mitigate the need for resources provided by hierarchical organisations. Such alternatives are both pragmatic and utopian: they engage in a critique of the *status quo* by demonstrating its superfluity as well as engaging with the future by positing desirable alternatives.

When I considered practices, I found that although various activities could be categorised using Deleuze's distinction between active and reactive politics, or the politics of demand in opposition to the politics of the act, the actual relation of both entire communities and individual members¹¹² towards these variations was more complex. Often, different members within the community undertook the differing tactics simultaneously, or indeed it was fairly typical to observe a solitary individual engaging in both the politics of demand (for example voting or lobbying) outside the community and in the utopian politics of creative alternatives within the community. Community constitutions based on consensual decisions also displayed a willingness to tactically engage with the politics of demand (I used the example of Kebele), and some communities provided community space and resources for hegemonic politics, such as lobbying, meetings with capitalist or government agencies, or hustings for local politicians (in particular, Coventry Peace House, Findhorn, Hockerton Housing Project and Springhill). No interviewees expressed the opinion that the two methods were fundamentally incompatible and that a comprehensive approach to social change should necessarily or always exclude engagement with the state or capital. This indicates a complex interplay of forces that requires further theorisation.

¹¹² As always, it is methodologically important to distinguish between the attitudes of individual members and the collective intentions of entire communities. Unless otherwise stated, the former are drawn from interviews and personal interactions, whereas the latter are drawn from outcomes of consensus, reflected in written constitutions, or where interviewees have explicitly referenced a consensual attitude distinct from their own.

Despite the fact that the utopian alternatives to a politics of demand posited by Day (2005) and Bonanno (1988) are those to which I am more sympathetic, their outright opposition to a politics of demand does not reflect the willingness of radical practitioners to engage in considered use of the system. Clearly, ‘the system’ has some resources at its disposal that are either impossible or strategically inexpedient to refuse. In this context, it is important to consider the relation of state politics to capitalism, which is convincingly and appropriately put forward in Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of axiomatics. This is important because it helps to elucidate the relationship between rights, the state, and capitalism. This draws the state and capitalism into a comprehensive theory of multiple dominations which proceeds through abstraction and alienation that are legitimised by the addition of ‘axioms’ (rights). The state is seen to be a territorial entity, insofar as it deterritorialises the earth and makes it ‘an object of its higher unity’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 501). Capitalism is not at all territorial, since:

Its power of deterritorialization consists in taking as its object, not the earth, but “materialized labour”, the commodity. And private property is no longer ownership of the land or the soil, nor even of the means of production as such, but of convertible abstract rights (Ibid: 501).

Deleuze and Guattari show how capitalism always proceeds through the state-form, and it is at this level that the regulations required by capitalism are put in place (Ibid: 502). Such regulations or ‘axioms’, often articulated in the language of ‘rights’ at state-level, are ‘primary statements which do not derive form or depend on another statement’ (ibid: 510), and include the social and welfare rights, such as those advocated by Marshall and Bottomore (1992 [1949]) after the Second World War. They proliferate at times when the domestic market is being organised to meet outside demands. Such axioms can often seem advantageous for previously excluded groups; ‘axioms for the young, for the old, for women, etc.’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 510). Whilst appearing to provide new freedoms, additional axioms are in fact a way in which new market flows are regulated and mastered. The tendency to withdraw or subtract axioms is also a tendency of capitalism, and is associated with the totalitarian state at times of appeal to foreign sources of capital and an export-based market (Ibid: 510). Due to the relevance of the following passage to the practices I have discussed, I will quote it at length:

It is sometimes thought that every axiom, in capitalism or in one of its States, constitutes a “recuperation”. But this disenchanted concept is not a good one. The constant readjustments of the capitalist axiomatic, in other words, the additions (the enunciation of new axioms) and the withdrawals (the creation of exclusive axioms), are an object of struggles in no way confined to the technocracy. Everywhere, the workers’ struggles overspill the framework of the capitalist enterprises, which imply for the most part derivative propositions ... There is always a fundamental difference between living flows and the axioms that subordinate them to centers of control and decision making, that make a given segment correspond to them, which measure their quanta. But the pressure of living flows, and the problems they pose and impose, must be exerted inside the axiomatic, as much in order to fight the totalitarian reductions as to anticipate and precipitate the additions, to orient them and prevent their technocratic perversion (Ibid: 512).

Or, in the more polemical language of the Anarchist Federation:

Obviously we shouldn’t give up what practical rights the bosses have conceded to us in the present. In fact they should get a hearty kicking for even thinking about taking away our rights to pensions, striking, free abortion etc. Unfortunately they’ve already done most of that if we ever had it anyway. We need to gain power for ourselves that they can’t take away (Anarchist Federation, 1997).

To the extent that the politics, practice and language of citizenship rights were endemic to many of the communities that I visited, a multifaceted theorisation is necessary here. The tactical relation of rights to domination in the context of pursuing change both within and outside existing structures is well articulated by Robinson and Tormey:

It is indeed the case that a right is necessarily a recognition of a demand, that it makes sense only in relation to an other, and that it usually expresses the way in which a social system recognises the limits of its power or claims on others. Hence, an ultimate insurrection against the system as such cannot claim rights from it, because it does not recognise the other who recognises rights. In a mobile strategic field, however, the winning of rights can serve to consolidate or defend autonomy by placing limits on the system’s intrusions in a context where it continues to exist. The language of rights can also express autonomy and freedom in an emancipated or autonomous space, ensuring for instance the construction of a space where dialogue is possible, or where one project is not imposed as total; it could thus be enabling of difference (Robinson & Tormey, 2009: 167).

Thus, I would argue, contra Day and Bonanno, that despite the fact that rights, and ‘citizenship’ in its hegemonic formulation as a status, are indeed expressions and acknowledgements of domination, they can form useful and even necessary strategic supplements to critical utopian alternatives.

Straddling the bridge between these two identities – the hegemonic citizen and the critical utopian citizen - or existing as both at once, constitutes a line of flight or active force that is able to appropriate strategic forces as they become available. Rather than positing these terms as

individuals or identities, they constitute potentials. They have to coexist in order to maintain criticality, to resist recuperation into the state, but also retreat to a static utopia. This is what Deleuze and Guattari call 'double articulation' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 46: 45-82 & *passim*). This is not only a linguistic formation, as traditionally conceived in semiotics (Hjelmslev, 1961), but rather applies to all assemblages: 'the assemblage is between two layers, between two strata; on one side it faces the strata ... but on the other side faces something else, the body without organs' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 45).

One aspect of an assemblage may be organised, coded, and exist within a hierarchical system, whilst the other side escapes categorisation, or in the case of the conscious agent, resists subjectification. 'Assemblages' here accounts simultaneously for individual community members, and entire communities. Double articulation can occur simultaneously within and outwith autonomous communities. What is important is not to attempt to avoid or do away with hierarchical structures once and for all, or completely, but rather to maintain a state criticality and resistance to closure, fixity, or positing a new hegemony: 'exterior and interior are relative; they exist only through their exchanges and therefore only by virtue of the stratum responsible for the relation between them' (Ibid: 55). It may be that in many situations, and potentially in the future, the hegemonic 'citizen' status becomes irrelevant; in which case criticality becomes a movement between different strata. The notion of immanent critique must remain. It is here that theory has something to offer the critical utopian citizen in terms of continuing strategies for the avoidance of recuperation.

The maintenance of criticality in movements for social change is central to the philosophical project of Deleuze and Guattari, as articulated in Foucault's preface to *Anti-Oedipus*:

Informed by the seemingly abstract notions of multiplicities, flows, arrangements, and connections, the analysis of the relationship of desire to reality and to the capitalist "machines" yields answers to concrete questions. Questions are less concerned with *why* this or that than with *how* to proceed. How does one introduce desire into thought, into discourse, into action? (Foucault, 2004 [1984]: xiv).

For many, as Foucault hints in the above passage, their intensely philosophical discourse can seem ‘abstract’ or alienating. For others, however, it can be inspiring. It is important to consider that the relationship between theory and practice itself is a double articulation, that can be bridged, until something escapes it. The process of immanent critique is ongoing. Robinson (2007) provides one such bridge or movement between theory and practice in an article published in an activist journal; *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* (see Chapter 2 footnote 17). This article speaks to many of the concerns of the practitioners in the communities I visited, such as worries about de-radicalisation in the context of contemporary society; or inversely, worries about retreat into a static, isolated utopian identity. The idea of double articulation is re-articulated in terms accessible to a different audience:

From a Stirnerian position, or that of a *bricoleur*, looking for tools, there is nothing wrong with using the system against itself, with using the master’s tools so to speak. If something serves one’s purpose, it is the gesture of Stirnerian egoism to pick it up and use it. A problem arises, however, because in using the system’s tools, one may be strengthening it in some way – reinforcing its claim to be the only game in town, giving it the appearance of legitimacy, contributing in some way to its apparatuses (Robinson, 2007: 37)

The article is concerned with ways in which to use the system’s tools without contributing to its legitimacy. This speaks to some of my interviewee’s worries about de-radicalisation. Recuperation, a form of de-radicalisation, is defined as:

The turning-against-itself of desire, the conversion of an active force, which uses the external world as a series of tools or partners in dialogue, with a reactive force, which comes to value the fixed forms of the external world as goods in themselves (Ibid: 37)

This article also speaks to my interviewees’ worries about ghettoisation, or becoming exclusionary due to the stagnation of communal identity (in my examples, this included ‘white middle class activist’ and ‘feminist’): ‘The purist drive is itself reactive, expressing subordination to a spook – the spook of the category of *activist* or *anarchist*, constructed in the same way as any other identity: a social role based on exclusion’ (Ibid: 42). Strategies for the maintenance of immanent critique are offered in the mode of a personal interrogation:

Structures and tools have their own personalities which can influence the user. An informed tool-user is thus faced with a dilemma over whether, in using this tool at this moment, s/he is really serving her or his purpose or the purpose embodied in the tool? (Ibid: 37).

An ethics of ontological difference, disruptive subjectivities and alternative relations and communities offer alternatives to dominant models of ‘rights’ as well as means to institute social change. However, ‘rights’ can also be an important strategic tool. I would like to suggest that critical utopian citizenship occurs at the nexus between these different models. The following chapter, which is the concluding chapter, will bring together the different aspects of critical utopian citizenship outlined in the preceding chapters on transgressing territory, authority and rights in theory and in practice, in the hope of moving towards an answer to the primary research question: How else could we live as politically active, participatory people, or, what other kinds of citizen could we be?

10. Towards a conclusion: new openings

Does “one divide into two” or “two fuse into one” ... This debate is a struggle between two conceptions of the world. One believes in struggle, the other in unity. The two sides have drawn a line between them and their arguments are diametrically opposed. Thus, you can see why one divides into two (The Red Sunshine Gang 1999, [c. 1970] p. 10)¹¹³.

Any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 7).

10.1. *This is not a conclusion*

The idea of a conclusion is theoretically and methodologically inimical to what I have been trying to do in this thesis and in my wider research activities. The critical utopian methodology that I have been using resists the closure that is implied by the term ‘conclusion’. Critical utopian methodology rests on an ethos of epistemological anarchism and attempts to open new avenues for thought by disrupting taken-for-granted foundations, transgressing set thought patterns and destabilising routine practice. I cannot, therefore, offer a summary of a single model of citizenship that has emerged from this research and a definite path for reaching this: ‘the book is not an image of the world. It forms a rhizome with the world’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 12). Where the first three chapters of this thesis drew on pre-existent rhizomes from theory and practice, this chapter exposes the trailing ends that emerge from the project, and point to the potential for a politics and a praxis that might disrupt taken for granted foundations in new ways that offer multiple further possibilities.

10.2. *Potential citizenships and potential politics*

The question motivating this research was:

How else could we live as politically active, participatory people, or, what other types of citizen could we be?

¹¹³ The authors of *Anti-Mass* cite the origin of this quote as a ‘debate in China’ as a ‘free translation from the Red Flag Peking September 21, 1964’ which I have been unable to source, but have included it due to its striking articulation of the epistemological approach that I have taken in this project.

This question was motivated by a political assumption that there is something wrong with the way things stand. Citizenship, which once served as a basis for socially progressive politics (for example, in Marshall & Bottomore 1992 [1949]) now appears increasingly to be a basis for reactionary discourse and policies. States often treat citizenship as a fixed attribute, category or ‘data’ that can be applied or withheld and whose content can be chosen, modified and defined as an exercise in power and control. In the introduction to this thesis, I mentioned how a proposed points-system might exclude migrants from citizenship for ‘active disregard for UK values’. The extent to which this might include even legal forms of dissent, such as anti-war protest, is as yet unclear (Ford, *The Times*, 4 August 2009).

The argument of this thesis has been that citizenship is a constructed practice that is created through social processes. It is not something that you are, but something that you become – through coming together with desiring others and constructing something different. Dominant political institutions tend to obscure this utopian element through a programmatic and legislative discourse. This resonates with Todd May’s project of poststructural anarchism: ‘Practices, both oppressive and liberating, are creations, not mere expressions of a human nature or derivations from a fundamental or transcendental principle of exploitation’ (May 1994: 117). This also resonates with themes in contemporary citizenship literature. Sassen distinguishes between two different, yet not mutually exclusive, potential trajectories for the institution of citizenship, these being denationalised and non-national or post-national citizenships (Sassen, 2006: 305). The former of these is potentially radical - it represents ‘the transformation of the national, specifically through global and denationalizing dynamics that tend to instantiate inside the national’ (Ibid: 305), and provides the ‘strategic terrain’ for ‘the production of “presence” of those without power and a politics’ (Ibid: 90), thus allowing for ‘a partial reinvention of citizenship as a practice and as project’ (Ibid: 281). The actors with whom Sassen identifies this new citizenship formation are not always formal/legal citizens; indeed ‘citizenship is partly produced by the practices of the

excluded' (Sassen, 2005: 84), and the practices which can be encompassed by such a conceptualisation include 'the enactment of a large array of particular interests, from protests against police brutality and globalization to sexual preference politics and house squatting by anarchists' (Sassen, 2006: 281). Such practices are interpreted as rights-claiming activities of political actors that although sometimes excluded signify the possibility of new sites for politics and emergent formulations of citizenship. Isin (2008) also argues that various contemporary processes have combined to produce new subjects, sites and scales of struggle, so that citizenship is 'increasingly defined as practices of becoming claim-making subjects in and through various sites and scales' (Isin, 2008: 16).

This idea of 'becoming' is important, and I believe signifies an important and under-theorised function of citizenship: the articulation of desire for autonomy. This resonates with the work of Deleuze. In particular, I would like to draw again on his distinction between active and reactive forces, based on Nietzsche's (1996 [1887]) account of the differential modes of interpretation and evaluation characteristic of the master and of the slave. Deleuze aligns the denial of difference with reactive forces and the affirmation of difference with active forces: 'only active force asserts itself, it affirms its difference and makes its difference an object of enjoyment and affirmation' (Deleuze, 2006 [1983]: 52). The affirmation of difference constitutes a becoming, which occurs when an entity affirms its difference in relation to its habitus: 'only a minority is capable of serving as the active medium of becoming' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 321). Deleuze's conceptualisations of active forces and becoming- are congruent with my conceptualisation of 'critical utopianism', since they privilege process over closure and opposition to the status quo as a creative and affirmative act. In terms of the research question, this presupposes always-already existent other citizenships that exist in a tension with state citizenship as a unified and imposed identity.

I would therefore like to borrow creatively from Deleuze's active/reactive distinction and from the conceptions of citizenship put forward in this thesis in order to formulate my own model of potential citizenships, which distinguishes between dominant and critical utopian approaches:

Figure 10-1: Dominant and critical utopian models of citizenship

Dominant / reactive	Territory , clearly bounded political entities (nation-states), centralisation, clearly bounded public/private spheres	Authority , hierarchy, subjection, passivity, abstracted claim-making through structures of mediation	Rights , division between rights and obligations, formal status including rights that clearly delineate public morality and private choice and private property
Critical utopian / active	Belonging without territory, de-territorialisation, open space of opposition	Participation , decision-making and claim-making without hierarchy and authority	Ethics of infinite responsibility without fixed rights, relationships without abstract mediation, subjectivity without hegemonic identity

The dominant, reactive formulation of citizenship has been articulated in various terms throughout this thesis, and reflects what May (quoted above) calls oppressive practices, the classical and evolutionary anarchists would call expressions of the political principle (see sections 2.4.1 & 2.4.2), and Day (2005) following Gramsci (1971) calls expression of a logic of hegemony. It rests on truth-claiming, obscured utopias and is more a form of subjection than citizenship. The latter form of citizenship put forward in the table resonates with the critical utopian approach and the project of poststructural anarchism (May 1994). In concrete terms, their co-existence leads to a paradoxical situation where someone could be a citizen at the level of practice, but not of the state. A person might belong to a community, participate in that community, and have ethical values that support and are supported by that community yet might be plucked from their social network and deported through lack of legal citizenship (see for example Curtis & Lipsett, *The Guardian*, 31 May 2008: 6).

The aim of this project is not to posit a transcendental or fixed blueprint for a new model of citizenship nor a single path by which it might be achieved, and indeed the table above presents dangers of oversimplification:

I do not think it is possible to say that one thing is of the order of “liberation” and another is of the order of “oppression” ... no matter how terrifying a given system may be, there always remain possibilities of resistance, disobedience, and oppositional groupings. On the other hand, I do not think that there is anything that is functionally – by its very nature – absolutely liberating. Liberty is a practice. So there may, in fact, always be a certain number of projects whose aim is to modify some constraints, to loosen, or even break them, but none of these projects can, simply by its nature, assure that people will have liberty automatically, that it will be established by the project itself. The liberty of men [sic] is never assured by the institutions and laws that are intended to guarantee them’ (Foucault, 1986: 245).

Poststructural anarchism does however suggest a possible ethical model: that ‘the project of measuring life against external standards constitutes a betrayal rather than an affirmation of life’ (May, 1994: 127). The critical utopian method put forward in this project suggests a potential politics of experimentation that operates in line with this ethical model – one that values contingency:

Experimentation is the activity of trying out something else, something that may get one free of the feeling of necessity and ineluctability that attaches to practices one has been brought up on. It is crucial to understand, however, that experimentation is distinct from simply transgressing the boundaries of practice that are put before one ... Experimentation, unlike transgression, seeks positive alternatives rather than revolt. Such an activity is more in keeping with a perspective that defines power not as a repressive force exercised from above, but as a feature of all social relationships. The task of a poststructuralist politics is to attempt to construct power relationships that can be lived with, not to overthrow power altogether. As such, experimentation is a sober and often tentative activity. One experiments by constructing practices that one is prepared to abandon if their effects are intolerable ... There is no blueprint for practice. The ethical principles that help one to judge practice remain, but one can only experiment in their realisation’ (May, 1994: 114).

Both Foucault and May emphasise the importance of practice. An ethics of poststructural anarchism also involves the valorisation of alternative practices as an ethical principle (May, 1994: 133). Despite this emphasis on alternative practices in critical utopian spaces as a political method and form of citizenship, there is still a significant political role for normative theory:

In essence, our claim is that a guide for action cannot be derived entirely from an “is”; but neither can it be derived from an “ought”. It is, in fact, the interaction of the two in ethical discourse that provides the grounds for action. We must note that, although in some sense ethical claims are distinct from factual ones, in ethical discourse taken as a practice, ethical claims and factual ones are both necessary (Ibid: 149).

This suggests a dialogue between theory and practice similar to that which I have been attempting in this thesis. By bringing practices into dialogue with the academic theory that often ignores them, one hope of this project has been to offer ‘a way of grappling with those real, immediate questions that emerge from a transformative project’ (Graeber, 2004: 9). My hope in this project then, has been a mode of social theorising advocated by Graeber that operates somewhat in the fashion of the participatory processes that it works with: ‘such a project would actually have two aspects, or two moments if you like: one ethnographic, one utopian, suspended in a constant dialogue’ (Ibid: 12). Critical utopian citizenship does not hope to posit a vanguardist vision or mode of action, but rather some potential strategies for dealing simultaneously with, outside and against hierarchical and hegemonic structures:

One obvious role for a radical intellectual is to ... look at those who are creating viable alternatives, try to figure out what might be larger implications of what they are (already) doing, and then offer those ideas back, not as prescriptions, but as contributions, possibilities – as gifts (Graeber, 2004: 11-2).

It is with this ethos that I would like to offer a range of suggested imperatives for multiple and diverse, overlapping and intersecting bodies of theory and groups of people, in particular: citizenship studies, utopian studies, anarchist studies and a wider movement for autonomy, and would-be critical utopian citizens within and outwith these groups. Following on from the theme of the rhizome, each of these heterogeneous bodies offered me starting points from which I drew my disaggregated research questions in section 1.3 of this thesis. Throughout the thesis I have developed these questions by intersecting different bodies of thought and practice through dialogue with each other in ways that I hope have opened up new possibilities, which in the spirit of Graeber’s words above, I would like to offer back in a spirit of mutual aid and solidarity rather than of vanguardist prescription.

10.3. Contributions

10.3.1. Contribution to citizenship studies

Citizenship studies inspired the first of my disaggregated research questions: out of what historical conditions do dominant models of citizenship arise, what do they have in common, and what are

the effects of dominant modes of theorising citizenship. By bringing a critical utopian approach to bear upon dominant canonical and contemporary theory I argued throughout the thesis that citizenship studies too often remains trapped within a modernist truth-claiming mode of theorising that results in a statist, programmatic and legislative institution of citizenship at the level of practice. This was seen to be partially a result of an historical tendency of focusing on theory at the expense of practice. Taking account of my research outcomes, potential directions for citizenship studies might include concentrating on revitalising what classical and evolutionary anarchists call the ‘social principle’ (see sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2) - that is, forms of unalienated and unmediated belonging and face-to-face interaction rather than abstract belonging to state categories. We might seek to understand and motivate participation through a conception of human agency based on desire, rather than self-deadening transcendental moral principles and to study multiple overlapping participatory networks rather than singular belongings. In particular, I would like to emphasise the importance of including, or even starting from the voice of the other - in my case research participants - rather than from abstract theoretical goals.

I began the introduction to thesis with a quote from Foucault, who differentiates between the role of the intellectual, which is to disrupt fixed modes of thought and institutional practice, and the role of the citizen, which is to participate in the development of political transformation. My project resonates with but transgresses this distinction. Critical utopian citizenship disrupts the boundary between the intellectual and the citizen, and brings voices of those outside academia into a dialogue with academic theory in order that they can participate in critique (this however raises some issues of representation that will be discussed below). This in itself is a political imperative. The emphasis on the importance of critical questioning from multiple perspectives as a form of knowledge raises some interesting questions and speaks to important debates in contemporary citizenship theory:

- Can citizenship exist without the state? Is anarchist citizenship possible? (Hoffman, 2004; Graeber 2004)
- Can dissidence be considered a citizenly practice? (Sparks, 1997)
- What is the relationship between autonomy and sovereignty? (Brace & Hoffman (eds), 1997; Agamben, 1998)

- Can we be citizens of more than one entity at once, at different spatial scales? (Heater, 1999; 2004)

Statist approaches associate citizenship with an external or transcendental, territorially sovereign power. This makes the idea of autonomy, dissident citizenship, or multiple citizenships conceptually difficult – sovereignty is jealous, and does not like to share. It is this tension between the sovereignty of the autonomous citizen and the sovereignty of the state that lies at the heart of many citizenship debates. It is perhaps for this reason that anarchistic approaches tend to reject or avoid the term ‘citizenship’ altogether, in favour of terms such as ‘nomad’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988; Braidotti, 1994). This avoidance is in part necessary and important for constructing the estranged viewpoint and reversal of perspective that is so compelling in (what I am terming) critical utopian theory. However, practices show that engagement with power dynamics also plays an important role in a critically resistant praxis, and can form part of a linguistic, pragmatic and substantive intervention (this will be discussed further in section 10.3.3).

10.3.2. Contribution to utopian studies

Utopian studies inspired my methodology as well as the second of my disaggregated research questions: What alternatives to dominant models of citizenship are offered by critical utopian theory? The critical utopian approach has been used as a methodology elsewhere: by Moylan it has been applied to science fiction, literary and cultural criticism and processes of social and political change (Moylan, 1986). By Sargisson, it has been applied to feminist literary utopias (Sargisson, 1996), and to the concept of the body, brought into dialogue with bodies of thought, bodies of people, and the collective bodies of intentional communities (Sargisson, 2000). In this project, I broadened the methodology by applying it to the concept of citizenship, which I brought into dialogue with various bodies of anarchistic thought and practices in autonomous communities. Anarchistic theories and practices were judged to be ‘critical utopian’ insofar as they offer estranged viewpoints that are oppositional to the status quo, and simultaneously offer creative and experimental alternatives. Contemporary anarchistic thought and practice were deemed particularly

suitable in the context of a critical utopian approach since they begin from a similar ethos of epistemological anarchism, rejection of vanguardism and valorisation of difference and experimentation. This conversation between citizenship and anarchism brings the methodology into a more self-consciously political arena. The arguments of both Moylan and Sargisson are that the utopian method is always-already political, insofar as it articulates non-hegemonic alternatives to dominant models of political organisation (Moylan, 1986: 208; Sargisson, 2000: 154). This is also my argument. However, considering the critical utopian potential of the concept of citizenship, which mainly exists within the dominant register of political thought, has brought a new perspective to critical utopianism which considers not only the always-already political nature of utopian alternatives, but also the tensions that exist at the nexus between utopian autonomy and embeddedness within hegemonic structures in a mobile strategic field. This could be taken elsewhere and further. For example, in the field of the physical sciences a critical utopian approach might begin from the epistemological anarchist position that: ‘science knows no “bare facts” at all but that the “facts” that enter our knowledge are already viewed in a certain way and are, therefore, essentially ideational’ (Feyerabend, 1974: 19). Furthering the possibilities of this theoretical position would involve seeking out spaces where estranged ontological positions regarding the physical environment were played out in practice, for example ‘primitive’ cultures (Lévi-Strauss 1966 [1962]) or radical health collectives experimenting with traditional and holistic medicine (Gordon & Griffiths 2007), and starting from the voices of the ‘others’ within these spaces to transgress and open up further possibilities for politics and citizenship in both dominant and alternative fields. This is just one example of multiple possibilities for similar methodologies to be used elsewhere.

10.3.3. Contribution to anarchist studies and wider movements for autonomy

Anarchist theory inspired the third of my disaggregated research questions in section 1.3 of this thesis: What theoretical and practiced alternatives to dominant models of citizenship do political agents in autonomous spaces offer? Anarchist theory throughout history has placed significant emphasis on the importance of opening up space for non-hierarchical, non-alienated relationships

and practices (see section 2.4), and therefore inspired my urge to study these (see section 3.4). It is interesting that despite the ethical emphasis anarchist theory places on everyday life and practice, relatively few political works study anarchistic practices directly¹¹⁴. Practices can highlight gaps and weaknesses in theory, and thus act as a catalyst for further theorising.

My research and case studies showed that theories of anarchism and alternative practices highlight the importance of continuing to desire an outside to state structures, the ‘political principle’ and hegemony, but that the boundaries between the included and excluded, and the social and political principles are somewhat more porous than anarchists sometimes allow: that there are certain features in common and intersections between state and non-state citizenships, and that movements for autonomy would benefit from further theorising along at least two axes of this relationship:

- A more complex theorisation of the ways in which hierarchies continue to emerge in intentionally non-hierarchical, autonomous spaces and potential strategies for warding off or overcoming emergent hierarchies including within communities (see particularly sections 6.3, 7.2 & 7.3 of this thesis) as well as the possibility of recuperation in market practices or through representation in the spectacle (Žižek, 2004).
- A recognition of the ways in which experiments in autonomy can use the system’s tools, such as citizenship, as a basis for strategic engagement with power structures for the achievement of radical goals. Such recognition could act as a prompt for theories offering tactical tools for practice, such as the avoidance of co-optation, de-radicalisation and recuperation during engagements with power (see sections 9.2.5; 9.3.5; Robinson, 2007; Robinson & Tormey, 2009).

Robinson and Tormey argue that ‘in a mobile strategic field ... the winning of rights can serve to consolidate or defend autonomy by placing limits on the system’s intrusions where it continues to exist’ (Ibid: 167). The authors follow Marcuse¹¹⁵ by suggesting that ‘any ethical concept (such as freedom, rights, justice, equality) can function in either a utopian or a non-utopian way, depending on its degree of distance from the existing system’ (Ibid: 167-8). In this project I have partially argued for the strategic and utopian potential of citizenship. What I have hoped to offer here is

¹¹⁴ Notable exceptions are Day (2005) and Graeber (2009), although Day relies primarily on secondary sources.

¹¹⁵ See particularly Marcuse (1991 [1964]), Ch. 4, “The Closing Universe of Discourse” pp. 85-120

neither a blueprint for a perfect society nor an image of the perfect citizen, but rather a strategic method for engaging simultaneously with power and with the multiple futures that we desire. This must be an ongoing project whereby emergent hierarchies and transcendental theories are continually critiqued and transgressed.

10.3.4. Contribution to would-be critical citizens

The fourth of my disaggregated research questions was: what can a dialogue between theory and practices tell us about the conditions for critical utopian citizenship? This question was inspired by the idea that in a reversal of much theoretical and popular opinion, not only is the state partially a utopian project, but anarchism is also a pragmatic project:

The moment we stop insisting on viewing all forms of action only by their functions in reproducing larger, total, forms of inequality and power, we will also be able to see that anarchist social relations and non-alienated forms of action are all around us (Graeber, 2004: 76).

This project therefore also hopes to have something to offer others, perhaps leading more conventional lives, who are not members of autonomous communities, and perhaps do not consider themselves anarchists, but who seek to resist certain elements of existing structures or citizenship discourse. In this thesis, I have argued for the importance of the practice of creating spaces with desiring others in which critical, transgressive and experimental forms of belonging, participation and ethics can occur as a method of resistance to dominant, hegemonic forms of citizenship: ‘structural renewal based on the logic of affinity is less Utopian than either reform or revolution in its orientation to the realization of desired forms here and now. It is about building spaces, places or *topias* in the most literal sense of the term’ (Day, 2005: 216). A potential imperative for would-be critical citizens in everyday life, and also an avenue for further academic study, would be a consideration of the ways in which experimental spaces can be opened up in more conventional institutional settings, for example the university (Mohanty, 2003) or the mental health service (Campling, Davies & Farquharson (Eds.), 2004).

10.4. *Limitations*

10.4.1. **Situatedness**

The main limit of this project is that it has been restricted to a relatively small sample of particular communities, all within the United Kingdom. The approach has been exploratory rather than confirmatory (see Gerring, 2004: 349-50). I did not wish to ‘prove’ or even suggest that the practices I study might be subsumed under or adequately explained by some abstract category of citizenship but rather to disrupt taken-for-granted categories through an exploration of alternative practices and to explore what conditions for a critical utopian citizenship might look like, and what the strategic, ethical and political value of such a concept might be. In some respects, situatedness is a strength, and also an ethical imperative:

The role of the intellectual consists in a participation in theoretical struggles that are local and regional rather than universal. The intellectual offers analyses to those alongside whom he or she struggles, rather than sacred truths on tablets passed down to the oppressed (May 1994: 118).

Situatedness also has drawbacks. Even isolated communities (which my cases are usually not) are part of a global web of connected practices and networks, so the limit would be that my methodology is focused on the local scale and on one national context, whereas its theoretical implications extend to the global, and to a wide range of contexts – a fuller understanding of the intersection of citizenship, anarchism and utopianism would also have to deal with other contexts, both in the sense of studying global connections (citizenship in online communities, diaspora networks where the community has two or more ‘places’ and in resistant movements advocating solidarity without borders) and in the sense of studying places which are local but are situated differently in the world-system (for example, in the global South).

There is also the constraint that my critical utopian approach, by emphasising the ‘best’ kind of case, leaves open the question of the intersection of emancipatory logics with insidious logics. Examples here might include the different issues that would arise in studying certain religious intentional communities, criminal networks or American militia groups. In terms of some of the categories drawn from poststructural anarchistic theories in this thesis, there is little space in the

approaches that I have taken for an analysis of ‘reactive’ networks. The methodology does allow for a detailed analysis of affinity groups and networks, and the intersection of these with capital, the state, and the included, but there may be another set of issues around reactive networks and the passages and intersections between non-hierarchical affinity and reactive networks based around, for example, human trafficking or illegal arms trade (see Karatzogianni & Robinson, 2010).

What is good about these limits is that they are matters of perspectival multiplicity. It is not necessarily a failure of analytic categories or empirical neglect, but rather an ethical commitment to focusing on one thing that might otherwise have been neglected, the limit being that this intersects with other things, which might be worth focusing on at other times or places, or by someone else. This is part, but perhaps only the very beginning, of the development of a critical utopian perspective, or a Bakhtinian polyphonic dialogue upon the concept of citizenship. My hope when I began the project was that these diverse voices would speak to each other and resonate in some ways. I feel that they did, and hope that is apparent. It is also my hope that additional research – my own and others’ - will find resonances and transgressions that multiply perspectives yet further.

10.4.2. Possibility of recuperation

In Chapter 7, section 7.3.2, I raised the important issue that critical utopian citizenship might be recuperated, co-opted or absorbed into individualistic new-right discourses of ‘active citizenship’, or a liberal ideology that posits the necessity of the ‘minimal’ state to protect minorities and the flourishing of difference. I argued that critical utopian citizenship is different, because it does not seek the integration of difference into a higher totality. Critical utopian citizenship is also distinguished from ‘active citizenship’ as it does not take the norms, limits or goals of the state-capitalist, or indeed *any* system as given.

I am also alert to the danger that the method could be recuperated or co-opted into solely the realms of academia. In particular, due to constraints of time and the thesis format I am worried that I have not offered enough back to the communities that I studied as do some solidarity action research

projects that I much admire (for example, Day et. al. (Eds.): 2002; Chatterton, 2007). It is also important to note, however, that critical utopian citizenship is something that I hope does also have something to offer practices within academia as well as within other spaces. William T. Armaline offers some pointers for an ‘anarchist pedagogy’ (Armaline, 2009: 136) that connects in rhizomatic fashion with the critical utopian project:

- (1) a humble, postmodern/poststructural approach to ‘Truth,’ (2) a central concern with creating pedagogical space free from tyranny, coercion and hierarchical domination, such that horizontal freely associated democracy might take shape in and outside of the “classroom”, and (3) an epistemological approach where all people are capable subjects and creators of knowledge and history (Ibid, p. 142).

Such an approach resonates with, could be inspired by, but would certainly continue to critique and overflow, some of the practices considered in the autonomous communities in this thesis.

10.4.3. Problems of representation

I am acutely aware that despite my best intentions the project may be somewhat vanguardist, or worse, misrepresentative of the voices I am trying to bring into this project. Despite my own ethical and political objections to alienation, mediation, and absence, I am re-presenting practitioners by bringing their voices into my project, and possibly articulating their views through (and with) concepts that they might not have chosen themselves. There is also a worry that interviewees might be taken as representatives of their communities or of other radical practitioners. This is, of course, a difficulty of all qualitative research, but is more poignant in the context of my own which seeks to propagate a non-hegemonic ethos and politics. My hope is that the degree of representation that does occur is taken by both contributors and readers in the spirit that it is meant – as a non-hierarchical act of solidarity with resistant others aimed at ‘breaking the unanimity which is the greater part of the symbolic force of the dominant discourse’ (Bourdieu, 1998: vii-viii). Again, it is important to note that the people and places represented in this project overflow and exceed the representations given herein.

10.5. Tensions and Potentialities

Through the critical utopian methodology developed in chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis, I have been able to create connections, encounters and interchanges between bodies of theory, concepts, ideas, voices and practices that are often kept separate. A multiplicity of perspectives have been brought into play from canonical and contemporary political theory, including citizenship studies, utopian studies, variations on anarchism, feminism, ecology and post-structuralism as well as from activist voices and practices, individual and collective. These perspectives have been brought to bear upon a variety of different concepts that simultaneously speak to and are in excess of the concept and institution of citizenship. Through the prisms of territory, authority and rights a broad spectrum of citizenship formations that speak to, and exceed these concepts has shone forth: themes of autonomy, desire, belonging, participation and ethics in particular have branched out in rhizomic fashion, highlighting new possibilities for citizenship without, beyond and underneath the hegemonic formulations assumed by hierarchical and centralised models.

The process of bringing these different bodies of thought into dialogue with each other, as well as particularly tricky task of bringing abstract theory into a conversation with the ideas and practices of political agents outside the academy has highlighted tensions between practices and theory – such as hierarchies of participation discussed in chapter 7, and emergent individualism and complex overlapping models of subjectivity and community, and strategic, doubly-articulated orientations towards social change discussed in chapter 9. The process, however, has hopefully not been discordant or jarring. Tensions, contradictions and paradoxes are essential to the ethos of perspectival multiplicity and ongoing critique assumed by the critical utopian methodology. This offers a logic and practice of citizenship that is at once utopian and autonomous, embedded and strategic.

The implications of the (sometimes tense) dialogue between theory and practice are critical, utopian, disruptive and open up new possibilities. This open-ended approach creates many avenues for studying practices that would not normally be considered in terms of citizenship, and might

disrupt and transgress set institutions and conceptions of the political yet further, such as relationships and networks that are not so easily identifiable within space; that are more akin to Deleuze and Guattari's deterritorialised assemblages, or perhaps have less explicitly political agendas – for example travelling communities, counter-cultural movements and indigenous land-rights movements. What this research hopefully shows is the need to be less rigid about what counts as citizenship practices or desirable political action, and that attempts by the state and by dominant discourse to capture and control such practices are not so much about creating citizenship as cutting it off.

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12. Appendices

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Appendix 1: Brief descriptions of communities

Kebele

Dates of visit: 6th-7th of April 2007

Geographic location: Easton, an inner city area of Bristol.

History of ownership: Previously squatted, now owned outright after having been bought from the previous owners with a mortgage from an ethical bank.

Number of members: Membership varies from those who enter, use and/or help out in the space occasionally, to those who are considered 'core members'. Thus it is not possible to precisely numerate membership, if membership is taken to mean all those who are involved in Kebele in some way or other. At the time of my visit, there were reportedly around ten core members, although this number fluctuates, and the group were trying to recruit several more. Core members are those who spend four or more hours a week helping out with essential activities.

Ideological focus: Collective decision-making and organisation, co-operation and mutual aid, direct action and taking power back, equality and non-hierarchy, not for profit, openness and inclusion, permaculture, resistance and solidarity, vegan, voluntary participation and shared responsibility.

Legal structure and/or intended organisational features: Community co-operative (previously a housing co-operative, but in the process of converting due to no longer providing residential space).

Facilities and spaces: Café and adjoining kitchen, which regularly serves vegan food, a radical library, an infoshop (small stall for leaflets), social space with comfortable seating, small back yard, which at the time of my visit was used to store parts for the bicycle workshop, but was being converted into a permaculture garden. The upstairs space was previously used as bedrooms for residents of the housing co-op, although was unused at the time of my visit.

Important notes: Organised around a series of 'sub-collectives', which are responsible for various different aspects of what goes on at Kebele. The more established sub-collectives at the time of my visit were the café, infoshop, bike workshop, finance, IT and library sub-collectives. There were also sub-collectives that were still in their infancy, but were aiming to become permanent, such as the art, maintenance and permaculture collectives.

Springhill



Appendix 1 Figure 2: The Common House at Springhill

Where abbreviated: S.Hill

Dates of visit: 21st April 2007

Geographic location: Stroud, Gloucestershire; suburban.

History of ownership: Land bought in 2000 by David Michael, for £550,000. Ten households who joined him during that year each purchased 5000 £1 shares. After this, a system of plot purchase was configured and each household paid according to the size of their dwelling. Building was completed in 2003. Houses and flats are now owned by individual households on a leasehold basis.

Number of members: Approximately 80 residents, 50 of whom were adults and the remainder children under 18

Ideological focus: Co-housing, consensus, environmental living.

Legal structure and/or intended organisational features: Company limited by shares: members own their own houses and also a share in the community. Self-describes as an intentional community.

Facilities and spaces: The principles of co-housing attempt to find a balance between individual private space and activity and shared community space and activity. Therefore, all members live either alone or with their families, partners or housemates in a self-contained flat or house. There is also a large amount of shared space in a 'Common House' with cooking, dining and leisure facilities. The site is built on a very steep, South-facing slope. It is composed of 34 units, ranging from one-bedroom flats, to five bedroom houses

Hockerton Housing Project



Appendix 1 Figure 3: Hockerton eco-houses

Where abbreviated: HHP

Dates of visit: 26th April 2007

Geographic location: Southwell, Nottinghamshire; rural.

History of ownership: The project was conceived in the early 1990s and took around 4 years to complete. Each of the households was responsible for raising the capital for their own home. For some, this meant selling their houses and living in caravan on site while construction took place. Members own their own homes on leasehold, but with specific conditions, such as restrictions on the use of fossil-fuelled cars and an obligation to contribute a minimum number of hours to the co-operative.

Number of members: Five households comprising 11 adults and 9 children.

Ideological focus: Environmentalism, sustainability and self-sufficiency.

Legal structure and/or intended organisational features: Company limited by guarantee. Project members own their own homes and live in them as separate families, but have as a condition of their lease to contribute a minimum of 300 hours per year towards communal activities such as gardening on the allotment and maintenance.

Facilities and spaces: Five earth-sheltered homes on a 25-acre site. The houses are built into a hill, so that from one side an observer can only see a grass bank, whereas viewing from the other one sees modern, stylish eco-houses with glass conservatories reaching out from the front. The land is used to generate clean energy through various means, harvest and clarify water through a reed-bed sewage system, grow organic vegetables, encourage biodiversity through planting native trees and there is a community building used for tours, courses, events and local community activities.

Important notes: UK's first earth-sheltered, self-sufficient housing development. The group also runs a worker's co-operative that employs some of the members, called 'HHP Trading Ltd.', which manages all the community's income generating activities, such as education, promotion and expertise.

Coventry Peace House**Appendix 1 Figure 4: The six adjoined houses of Coventry Peace House****Where abbreviated:** CPH**Dates of visit:** 9th-10th May 2007**Geographic location:** Coventry; multi-cultural inner-city area.

History of ownership: Set up by three founding members between the summers of 1997-8, who had been staying at a peace camp outside the *Alvis* tank factory in Coventry. They set up the housing co-op to establish a more permanent community based on non-violence. The houses were bought with a mortgage from an ethical bank. The houses have gradually been renovated over several years with help from volunteers.

Number of members: Six out of a maximum potential of eight at the time of my visit. Four were full-time members and two long-term guests. Full-time members are required to commit to stay for at least two years.

Ideological focus: Non-violence and simple green lifestyle.

Legal structure and/or intended organisational features: Fully mutual housing co-operative. There is a preference for members to work part-time to earn a living, so that the remainder of their time can be dedicated to working for the co-operative.

Facilities and spaces: Six adjoined terraced houses. Five of the houses have been connected as one, and the sixth remains separate. These encompass living space, bedrooms for residents of the housing co-operative, a cycle workshop, which is open to the public, and a large community space. The large space is used by the co-op and by the local community for meetings and various projects in during the day. At night it is used as a shelter for destitute and refused asylum seekers. The buildings also house offices and space for an affiliated 'global citizenship' project called *WorldWise* and a vegetarian catering project called *Delicious and Nutritious*. The once small

backyards of the six houses have also been adjoined to create a large communal garden used for socialising and growing vegetables in a small patch.

Findhorn Community



Appendix 1 Figure 5: Cluny Hotel (Findhorn Foundation)



Appendix 1 Figure 6: Whisky-barrel house at The Park (Findhorn Foundation)



Appendix 1 Figure 7: The 'Nature Sanctuary' at The Park (Findhorn Foundation)



Appendix 1 Figure 8: Eco-houses in 'The Field of Dreams' (New Findhorn Association)

Where abbreviated: Find.n

Dates of visit: 8th - 20th of June 2007

Geographic location: The physical space of Findhorn Community¹¹⁶ is situated in West Moray, in the Northeast of Scotland, on two locations that are separated by a distance of approximately six miles, with regular minibuses transporting staff and guests between the two. The two locations have incredibly different atmospheres and serve different purposes. I have included a map in appendix 3.

History of ownership: Peter and Eileen Caddy and Dorothy MacLean began the community in 1962. They first moved to Scotland in 1957 to manage Cluny Hill Hotel. After their employment was terminated, they moved to a caravan park near the bay at the nearby village of Findhorn. Due to their spiritual leanings and remarkable success growing vegetables in an unfavourable environment, horticultural experts and people with spiritual interests started to move to the caravan park to join the group. In 1972 the community was formally registered as a Scottish Charity under the name of ‘The Findhorn Foundation’. During the 1970s and 80s the community grew to approximately 300 members. In 1975 the Foundation purchased Cluny Hill Hotel, from which the three founding members had originally been dismissed as employees. In 1982, the Foundation bought its home, the Findhorn Bay Caravan Park. In the 1990s, the number of people attached to the community began to outgrow the Foundation, with people buying private homes and businesses in the vicinity and associating themselves with the Foundation, which led to the formation of the wider community now known as the New Findhorn Association (NFA).

Number of members: Approximately 150 members of the Foundation, and around 400 members of the NFA.

Ideological focus: Spiritual. At the outset, the community functioned almost as a theocracy through the spiritual guidance of the founding members. Through its history it has developed through consensus to a mixture of representative and consensus decision-making structures, and the belief system has simultaneously diversified encompassing many aspects of New-Age spirituality. All members adhere to the ‘Common Ground’ (Appendix 5).

Legal structure and/or intended organisational features: Registered charity. See also appendix 4.

Facilities and spaces: These are described in more detail in section 5.2.1.2 of the thesis. See also map in Appendix 3.

Important notes: It is important to note that there is some complexity regarding the name of Findhorn Community. Often, it is simply referred to as ‘Findhorn’, or ‘Findhorn Community’ and this is how it is known worldwide. However, Findhorn is in fact a small fishing village, itself with rich history and traditions and a degree of local pride. In the past, residents of this village

¹¹⁶ It is important to note that members often view the community as part of a much wider, spiritual network, and not just a community of place.

community have been antipathetic towards being confused or conflated with the nearby New Age community. For this reason, the New Age community is generally referred to locally as ‘Findhorn Foundation’, or ‘the Foundation’. However, this can also be somewhat misleading, since the Foundation, a legally recognised charitable organisation, only really encompasses those members who both live and work in the community, and not members of the NFA. In this thesis, I differentiate where appropriate between ‘the Foundation’ and ‘the NFA’, but when intending to include both I refer to the ‘Findhorn Community’. When referring to residents of the village, I use ‘Findhorn village community’, or ‘the local community’.

Mornington Grove Community

Where abbreviated: MGC

Dates of visit: 5th - 8th of July 2007

Geographic location: Bow, East London.

History of ownership: A Quaker community, who bought several houses on the street, started the group in the 1980s. Some of the community left, and in the 1990s there was an amicable divorce from the Quaker roots,

Number of members: 7 during my visit, of an optimum number of 14.

Ideological focus: No defined ideological focus, but loosely describes as ‘greenish, leftish and feminist’. Decisions are made by consensus.

Legal structure and/or intended organisational features: Fully mutual housing co-operative.

Facilities and spaces: Two large, beautiful, semi-detached houses that are over 150 years old and Grade II listed. The two houses are separated inside, each with their own kitchens, bathrooms and living rooms, but are joined by a large conservatory at the back. The gardens of the two houses are also joined, making one large garden, which is beautifully kept. Although these are both part of the same community they also function with a degree of autonomy from one another. Shared community matters, which are discussed at community meetings, include business issues (such as finance and maintenance) and wider concerns relating to the social and relationship aspects of community life. House-specific issues include household issues such as cooking, cleaning and use of shared space. One of the households eats together regularly, and the other does not.

Liverpool Social Centre

Where abbreviated: LSC

Dates of visit: 10th July 2007

Geographic location: Central Liverpool

History of ownership: At the time of my visit the centre was still under construction, and had not publicly or officially ‘opened’. This was an interesting case study, as it allowed me to observe a community in its embryonic stages, and again illustrates that all of my observations during visits are only ‘snapshots’ of ongoing processes rather than finalised and complete descriptions of communities as static entities. At the time of writing the final draft of this thesis (summer 2009), Liverpool Social Centre is a firmly established radical community space and social centre that has changed its name to *Next to Nowhere*¹¹⁷. The social centre is situated in ‘The Basement’; a space underneath a radical bookshop in Liverpool called *News from Nowhere*. It rents the space from this bookshop, which is run as a workers’ co-operative.

Number of members: The *Social Centre Collective*, who met once a month, was in charge of every aspect of running the centre. The collective was formed in January 2006, when an open meeting was called to discuss the possibility of opening a social centre. The organisers of the meeting expected only a small group of ten to twelve people, who regularly attended a local social forum, to turn up, but instead found that over forty enthusiastic people turned up. Since then, numbers have dwindled but there is still a stable collective of up to twenty people, with some fluidity in membership.

Ideological focus: At the time of my visit there was no agreed constitutional set of values. Members came from a range of backgrounds in community activism, disillusionment with leftist politics, the anti-war movement, environmentalism and animal rights amongst others.

Legal structure and/or intended organisational features: No set legal structure at the time of my visit. The Social Centre Collective was run by consensus, and tasks were delegated to sub-groups.

Facilities and spaces: At the time of my visit, the space was still under construction, but I was informed of what various spaces were to become. There was a separating counter that was going to become the café counter, with a kitchen behind. There was an area in front of this, which was to become an area for seating for the café, which could be removed to create floor-space for gigs. There was a large area with a raised area in front, which would be used for events, with the raised area potentially becoming a stage for bands or speakers, and also housing a projector and screen for film nights. There was a cupboard room, which was planned to become an office with a computer. There was some talk of removing one of the walls, in order to make the floor space in the event area larger.

Corani Housing and Land Co-operative

Where abbreviated: Corani

Dates of visit: Two separate visits on 30th June and 17th July 2007.

¹¹⁷ More information on the current state of the centre can be found on its website at <http://www.liverpoolsocialcentre.org>, (n.d.) Accessed 5 August 2009

Geographic location: A multi-cultural area near the centre of Leicester.

History of ownership: Corani was formed in 1978 and has been owned for many years. The two Corani houses used to be on separate streets, but one of the houses was swapped with a house belonging to a workers' co-op behind one of the Corani houses on a street running parallel, so that now the two houses are adjoined through the back yards.

Number of members: At the time of my visit, Corani had six members. Two of these did not live at the housing, and one who was the daughter of one of the founding members was at University so only lived in Corani housing during vacation times. There was also one long-term guest, who did not want to commit to full-time membership since he did not want to income-share, which is a requirement of membership. At the time of my visit there were four people living in the house out of an optimum number of eight.

Ideological focus: Co-operative and sharing.

Legal structure and/or intended organisational features: Fully mutual housing co-operative.

Facilities and spaces: Corani housing comprises two houses that are joined at the back. Part of one of the houses used to be a workers' co-op but is now used as an office for one of the members who is self-employed, and also as space for political campaigns. This house has a small kitchen and some bedrooms. The other house has a much larger kitchen, which forms the social-hub of the co-op, and shared meals are eaten at the large table. Other rooms are either living space or bedrooms, although a lot of the bedrooms were empty due to the shortage of members. Corani also owns an allotment where vegetables were grown elsewhere in Leicester, within walking distance.

Important notes: Members of the co-op are obliged to income share. This is further discussed in Chapter 9 (see also Appendix 9).

Laurieston Hall



Appendix 1 Figure 9: Laurieston Hall

Where abbreviated: LH

Dates of visit: 19th – 24th September 2007

Geographic location: Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland; rural.

History of ownership: In 1972, approximately four families sold their houses to pay £25,000 for 12 acres of land and a 73-roomed mansion. A mortgage was then taken out by remaining members to pay these members off. The building is now owned outright, and more of the surrounding land has been gradually bought over the years, so that the community also owns 150 acres of land, including two lochs.

Number of members: At the time I visited, there were approximately 22 adults and 8 children.

Ideological focus: There were no set constitutional values at the time of my visit and diversity of values as a key value was often cited during interviews. The aims and purposes of the community are co-operation, self-sufficiency and living together harmoniously.

Legal structure and/or intended organisational features: Fully mutual housing cooperative. Decisions are made by consensus. Tasks are delegated to sub-groups, membership of which is rotated yearly, including maintenance, finance, gardening and dairy.

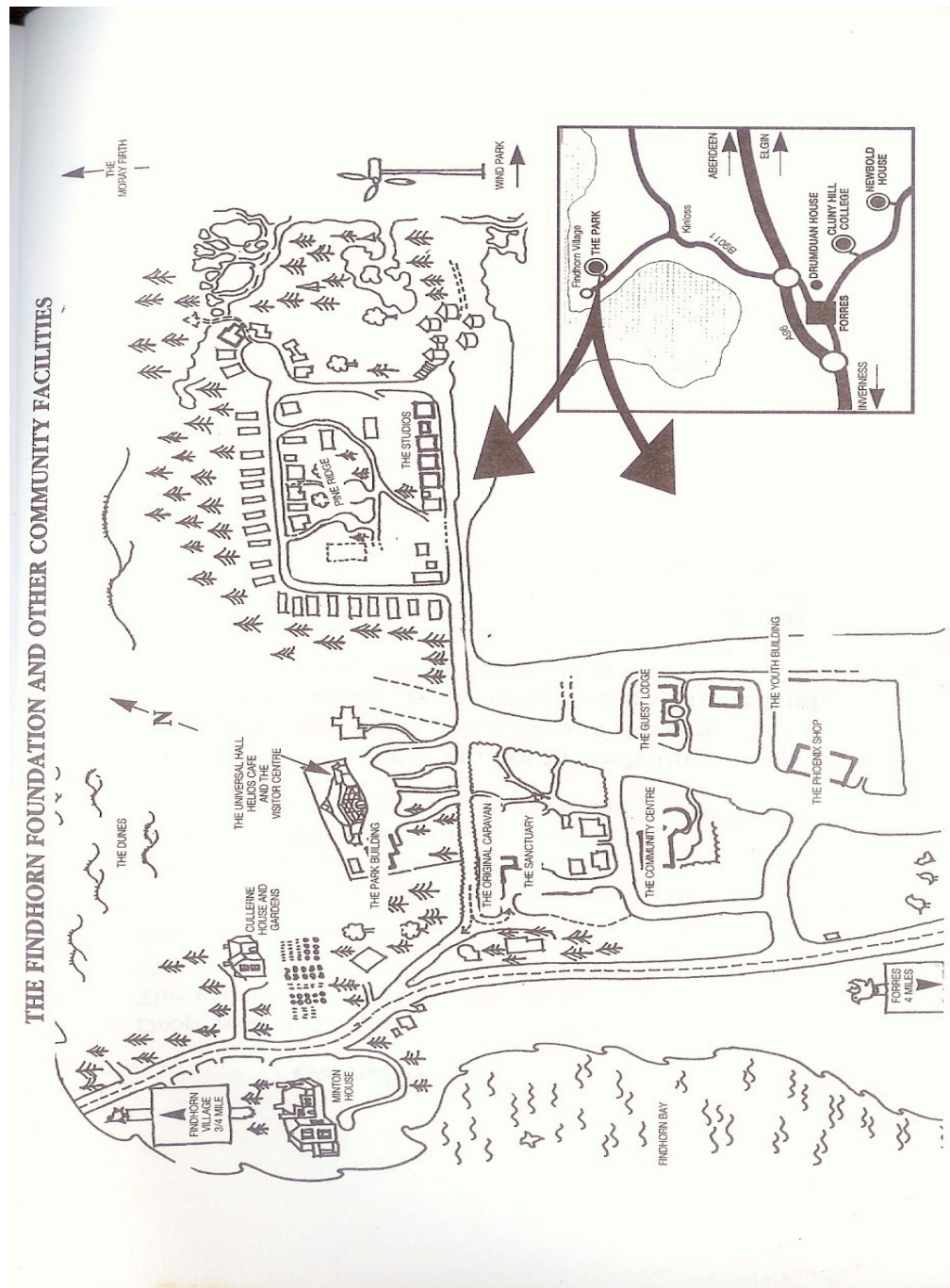
Facilities and spaces: The community owns a 72-roomed mansion, with bedrooms for some members, guest rooms for guests on many of the educational courses that the community runs, a huge kitchen, a crèche, a dining room, a very large living/socialising space with a small side kitchen for making tea and coffee. The Hall is heated entirely by wood-burners, some wood is taken from the community's own coppice woodland and some from nearby sustainable Forestry Commission plantations. Electricity is provided by a hydro-generator. Grassland supports dairy cows and male calves used for meat. There are pigs, which are also reared for meat, fed by waste scrap-food from the residents and guests. Chickens are reared for both eggs and meat. There is a large walled vegetable garden, a sauna built by members of the community and two lochs in which members regularly swim. Although some members live in the large Hall, most live in caravans and small buildings elsewhere around the site, and the large Hall is mainly reserved for guest accommodation.

Important notes: The main economic income of the community comes from visitors on courses arranged by the community, or by others wishing to use the community space. The community has an associated workers' co-operative, which deals with the business aspects of the community.

Appendix 2: Semi-structured interview schedule

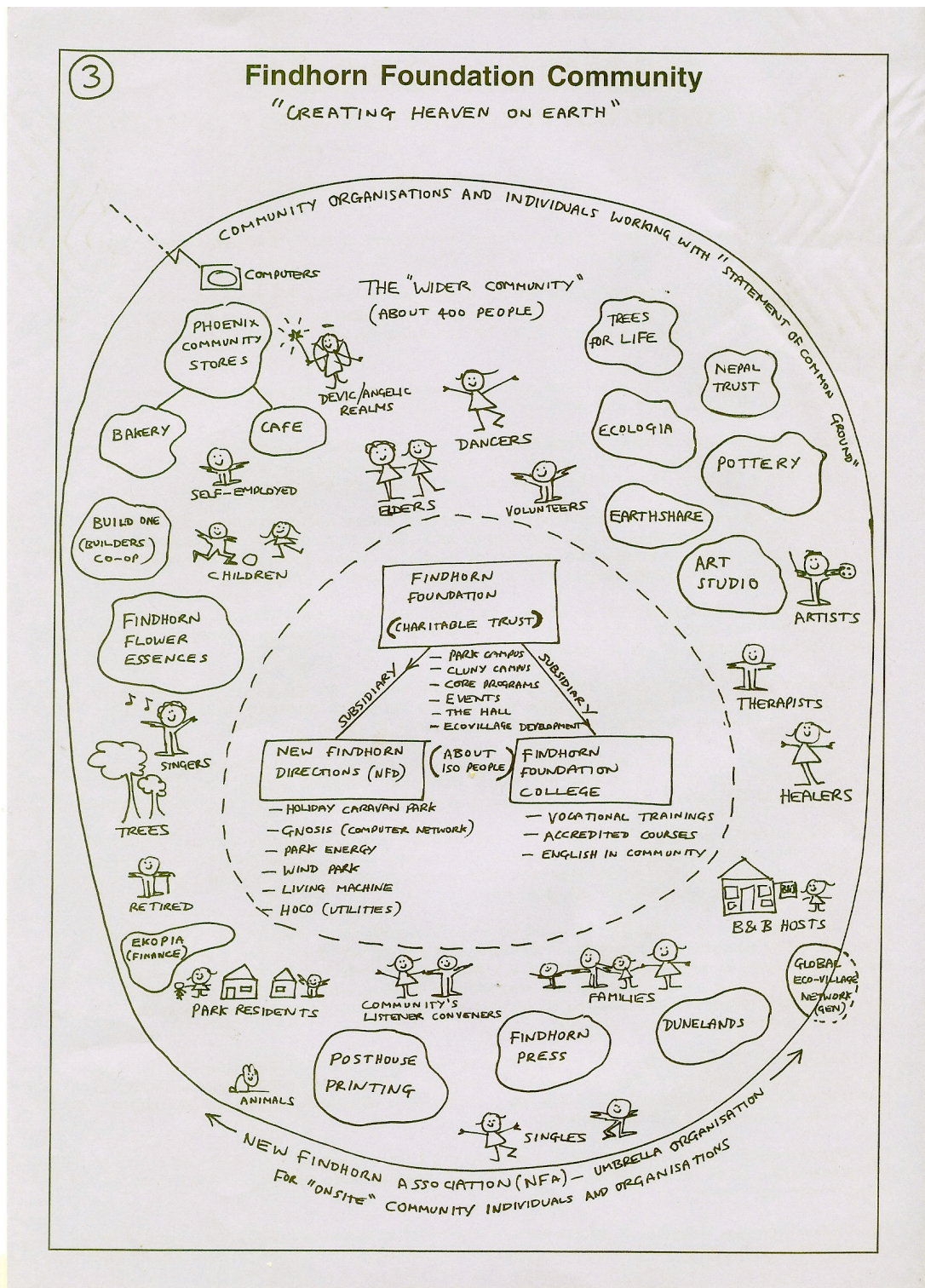
- Could you describe your community for me?
- What are the main purposes or aims of this community?
- Are there any shared values in the group?
-Can you describe them to me?
- How would you describe the relationship between this group and the wider community?
(e.g. locality, nation, world, environment)
- What makes a 'good' member of this group?
(e.g. Are there certain ways a good member might behave, or certain beliefs they might hold?)
- How is the community organised?
(Is there any sort of hierarchy?)
- How are resources or money shared or allocated?
- How would you describe your relationship with other members of this community?
- How does the group make decisions?
- What happens if somebody disagrees, or refuses to abide by a decision?
- Do you think that this group has a role to play in wider social change?
(that is, do you see this group as part of a wider transformative process?)
- Is the group inspired by any particular thinkers or examples from the past?
- How did you become a member of this community?
- What beliefs or values are most important to you?
- How do you, personally, participate in this group? (What is your role as an individual?)
- What does the term 'citizenship' mean to you?
- What do you think makes a good citizen?
- Do you feel that your membership and participation in this group makes you a good citizen?

Appendix 3: Map of Findhorn Foundation



Scanned from a document received during "Experience Week".

Appendix 4: People, relationships and organisation at Findhorn



Scanned from a document received during "Experience Week".

Appendix 5: Findhorn common ground

Findhorn Community. (1996). “Common Ground” from *Findhorn Foundation*:
<http://www.findhorn.org/whatwedo/community/commonground.php> Accessed April 24, 2009.

COMMON GROUND

Of the Findhorn Foundation and Community

The Common Ground is a statement of the common values of this international and widely diversified community. It is a living document, a code of conduct, and something we use as a tool for the transformation of ourselves, the way we relate to each other and the environment and, therefore, the world.

(If the word “commit” is too strong for you, then you can choose to use the word “aspire”).

1. Spiritual Practice

I commit myself to active spiritual practice and to align with spirit to work for the greatest good.

2. Service

I commit myself to the service of others and to our planet, recognising that I must also serve myself in order to practise this effectively.

3. Personal Growth

I commit myself to the expansion of human consciousness, including my own, and I recognise and change any of my personal attitudes or behaviour patterns which do not serve this aim. I take full responsibility for the spiritual, environmental and human effects of all my activities.

4. Personal Integrity

I commit to maintain high standards of personal integrity, embodying congruence of thought, word and action.

5. Respecting Others

I commit wholeheartedly to respect other people (their differences, their views, their origins, backgrounds and issues), other people's and the community's property, and all forms of life, holding these all to be sacred and aspects of the divine.

6. Direct Communication

I commit to using clear and honest communication with open-listening, heart-felt responses, loving acceptance and straightforwardness. In public and in private I will not speak in a way that maligns or demeans others. I will talk to people rather than about them. I may seek helpful advice, but will not seek to collude.

7. Reflection

I recognise that anything I see outside myself—any criticisms, irritations or appreciations—may also be reflections of what is inside me. I commit to looking at these within myself before reflecting them to others.

8. Responsibility

I take responsibility for my actions and for my mistakes. I am willing to listen to constructive criticism and to offer constructive feed-back to others in a caring and appropriate fashion, to challenge and support each other to grow .

9. Non-violence

I agree not to inflict my attitudes or desires (including sexual) on others. I agree to step in and stop, or at least say that I would like stopped, actions (including manipulation or intimidation) that I feel may be abusive to myself or others in the community.

10. Perspective

I take responsibility to work through and put aside my personal issues for the benefit of the whole community. I will resolve all personal and business conflicts as soon as possible. I acknowledge that there may be wider perspectives than my own and deeper issues than those that may immediately concern me.

11. Co-operation

I recognise that I live in a spiritual community and that it functions only through my co-operation and my good communication. I agree to communicate clearly my decisions. I agree to communicate with others who may be affected by my actions and decisions and to consider their views carefully and respectfully. I recognise that others may make decisions which affect me and I agree to respect the care, integrity and wisdom that they have put into their decision-making process.

12. Resolution

I commit to make every effort to resolve disputes. At any time in a dispute I may call for an advocate, friend, independent observer or mediator to be present. In the event of a dispute continuing unresolved, I will have access to a Grievance Procedure. I commit to following this procedure [to be decided by the community].

13. Agreements

I commit to keeping agreements I have made and not to break or try to evade any laws, rules, or guidelines; to have honest dealings with all bodies and to pay all charges and dues owing.

14. Commitment

I commit to exercising the spirit of this statement of Common Ground in all my dealings.

Appendix 6: Kebele principles

Kebele Community Cooperative. (n.d.). "Principles". from *Kebele Community Co-operative website*: <http://www.kebelecoop.org/Principles.html> Accessed May 01, 2009

Introduction

Kebele is run on a number of core principles, which reflect the sort of world Kebele members want to see, and help bring into reality. It is these principles which make Kebele a radical social centre. Instead of waiting for that ever far away big moment of revolution, or for leaders and authorities to sort out our problems, we recognise that we can make fundamental changes here and now, in the ways we organise, communicate, interact and take action. This is the everyday revolution. Kebele aims to be a living example, albeit on a small scale, of other possibilities, based on the principles below.

Caveat to Kebele Principles

Kebele Community Co-op is committed to its principles and actively uses them as guidelines to inform ethical decision-making in both policy and practice on all levels. While Kebele strives to uphold its principles it recognises that there may be times when it falls short of an ideal.

There is no hierarchy of principles wherein one principle is considered more important than another. There may be situations when two or more of its principles are in conflict with regard to the best course of action. Such ethical dilemmas require further discussion and consultation. In that event co-op members, sub-collective members and volunteers are encouraged to raise the matter with the co-op as a whole for discussion at a co-op meeting.

We are conscious that rather than being viewed as problems, such occasions can be opportunities for mutual education about the issues involved, raising awareness and information sharing. They also provide useful 'real life' practice of problem-solving in a non-hierarchical and consensus-seeking way.

A compromise between principles may be required. However, reasons for that compromise will be clearly articulated and the outcome of the decision reviewed by the co-op members.

The Principles (arranged alphabetically)

Collective decision making and organisation

We try and reach decisions by consensus, where everyone agrees. Sometimes it takes a long time and can be frustrating, but direct democracy takes hard work and practice. The process is as important as the results or goals. When it works well, working together as a collective is inspiring, and can really get stuff done!

Co-operation and mutual aid

In a world dominated by competition and conflict, we believe that working together, sharing knowledge and resources, and helping each other out builds strong communities and networks of support and friendship.

Direct action and taking power back

Direct action means refusing to be a spectator, or waiting for someone else to do it for us. It is about taking power back and realising our potential to bring about change.

Equality and non-hierarchy

Kebele sees the importance of organising without leaders or bosses, and everyone having equal say. When power is shared equally in a group, it can be more effective and sustainable - as well as empowering - for all involved.

Not for profit

In a time where everything has a price and the cost of living makes people poor, Kebele has always avoided the profit motive, and getting rich! Fixed bikes, food and drinks, free information, books, Internet access and

meeting space are available either for free, in return for donations or for next to nothing. We believe in making everything genuinely affordable - and accessible - to all.

Openness and inclusion

Kebele seeks to be as open and inclusive as possible, providing a space that is equally welcoming to everyone (except cops, fascists etc) irrespective of age, race, gender, class, sexuality and (dis)ability & and we encourage - and aim to provide equal access to - participation in the collective.

Permaculture

Kebele realises that sustainability is at the core of the better world we are aiming to create. By following permaculture's fundamental principles (earth care, people care, fair share) we strive to have a positive impact on our entire diverse human and ecological environment.

We aim to choose the most sustainable path in all our activities, providing a clear link between action, consequence and solution.

Resistance and solidarity

Kebele is anti-authoritarian, opposing both government and capitalism, and supporting people in resistance everywhere. Kebele is part of a worldwide movement for revolutionary change.

Vegan

Kebele's Cafe and kitchen are vegan. Kebele aims to avoid - as far as is possible and practical - all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose and, by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of humans, animals, and the environment.

Voluntary participation and shared responsibility

All that happens at Kebele is made possible by volunteers freely giving their time and sharing the endless tasks and hard work of organising a social centre. With no wages or bosses involved, it's a different kind of work. People contribute what and when they can. Working for ourselves, for our own goals, on our own terms is what we call a proper job!

Appendix 7: Hockerton Housing Project constitutional values

This document was scanned from a copy given to me during my visit on 26 April 2007.

Constitutional Values

List compiled in about 1998

Value	Score out of 18
Recycle/minimise waste/pollution	18
Respect for others and differences between individuals	17
Respect for communal land	17
Create /preserve the community / a dynamic community	17
Listen to every one in group, including children	17
Find the time "to be" (have a beer) as apposed "to do"	16
Support for others / provide help	16
Balance work vs play/community privacy/not 24hour commitment to each other	16
Tolerance	16
Don't rest on laurels once houses built/extend our vision/reassess	16
Appreciate natural environment	16
Appreciate the social environment	16
Respect other peoples property as though it where your own	16
Democracy/equity	16
Consideration for neighbour's privacy	15
Visitors to abide by rules - we are responsible	15
Make reparation for damage	15
Involve children in key group activities	15
Have fun	14
Take responsibility for decisions without imposing on others	14
Preserve internal structure	14
Take issue to source where possible	14
Welcome / include each others friends / family as appropriate	13
Children welcome at any ones house	13
Community space/ differentiate from private space/ communal tub in barn	13
Provide employment (self sufficiency)	13
Duty of care e.g. bringing dissenters to attention of group	13
Make differences explicit	12
Courage	11
Appreciate the view	11
Disputes resolved by ruffling feathers	9

The list of values was compiled by all the adults in the project.

The score was obtained by marking each value out of three.

Six people completed the scoring activity, so the score shown is out of 18.

Appendix 8: Corani aims and principles

Corani. (n.d.). “Aims and Principles” from *Corani Housing Co-Op Website*: <http://www.corani.org/policy.html> Accessed June 15, 2009

Our vision is one of human societies based on:

- co-operation and sharing;
- commitment to stewardship of resources;
- an inclusive society. We have established Corani Housing and Land Co-operative to help work towards this. Friendship and respect are needed to keep Corani working well.

AIMS [immediate intentions, what we are going to do]	Practice [objectives, measurable, how we are going to do it]
Taking control of our lives	Fully mutual housing co-op structure and non-equity sharing. Members decide cost share level.
Democracy	General meetings involve all members. Consensus decision-making. Working groups to work on certain things between general meetings.
Living down [low consumption of resources, energy]	Modest, efficient housing. Income sharing. Maximum of three cost shares per person.
Equality	Income sharing. No capital requirement.
Open to new people	Joining procedure on separate page.
Open to different needs	Variety of housing types. Disabled access. Communal or not. Urban or rural. [Subject to resources.]
Self reliant co-operative	No dependence on benefit and grants. No claiming housing benefit without the agreement of the Co-operative.
Involvement with land and in food production	Manage allotments.
Involvement in the wider co-operative scene	Associate Member of Radical Routes Secondary Co-operative. In contact with the Confederation of Co-operative Housing and others.
Maintaining biodiversity	Sharing provides the most efficient use of existing housing and reduces the need to build on greenfield sites. Eat organically grown produce.
Strengthening the local community	Involvement in the local residents association

Notes:

- Sharing needs to find expression in as many ways as possible.
- There needs to be no going back on certain aspects that are part of that sharing, i.e. fully mutual, no capital requirement, non-equity distributing, income sharing.
- Plans to implement this policy are to be made once a year at a general meeting

Appendix 9: Snowball income sharing group procedures

Corani. (n.d.). "Snowball Income Sharing Group" from *Corani Housing Co-Op Website*:
<http://www.corani.org/income.html> Accessed June 15, 2009

We have an open income-sharing pool. You can live anywhere and don't have to be involved with other members outside of the income-sharing pool. Personal circumstances are less important than being in the spirit of income sharing [Also see Other Points below].

We meet regularly [usually fortnightly]. We sit round a table for convenience.

People take on the different tasks of calling, recording, adding up, etc.

Anyone who cannot attend will have sent their details by phone, letter or fax beforehand. Someone attending the pool will stand in for them and present their information at the relevant moment.

CHECKING THE CASH

The cash [if any] left over from the previous meeting is counted and checked with the figure in the record book. It is then placed in the centre of the table.

Caller

Information is gathered category by category in the sequence given below. A caller asks each of us in turn to give our information for the particular category. The caller records the information on a Caller's Sheet and totals the columns when each category is completed. After calling all categories, the totals are used to complete the Balance - see below.

'Ins'

We say in turn how much we are putting in. We 'pool' our contributions in the centre of the table. All income goes in: wages, dole, child benefit, pension. Interest on capital is optional, see note on capital below.

'Outs': Basic

Housing costs [rent + bills] (amounts vary from person to person)

Food money (Household £1 per week to cover consumable items in the home)

Bicycle 50p per week or £1 for heavy users to cover puncture repair kits, oil, tyres, etc.

'Outs': PERSONAL, SAVINGS AND LOAN REPAYMENTS

Up to £25 total per week [guideline for younger person, say under 18, is £1 per year old up to and including ten plus £2 for each year after that] for paying off a loan from the pool [see LOANS below], and/or saving with the pool, and/or spending on whatever we like that is not covered by one of the categories. Through use of a saving and loan facility, it is expected to cover larger occasional spending such as on gifts [for birthdays, national/religious celebrations, weddings, etc.], holidays and special events. Any saving or loan reduction amount is recorded in the Savings and Loans section on the member's Record Card - an example of what is printed on card to create the Record Card is given below

'Outs': PRIORITY SPECIALS

-Medical needs. Some members are in a health care scheme which gives refunds on NHS treatment and some 'complementary' health services.

-Travel to work. If you use your bike to get to work, this category covers major repairs.

-National Insurance if self-employed.

-Trade Union subs.

-Childcare expenses.

Priority Specials are usually agreed without question

'Outs': TRAVEL ALLOWANCE [including Holiday Accommodation Allowance]

Up to £250 total per year for 'social', non-'political' travel, e.g. visiting relations, friends and going on holiday. This is recorded in the Travel Allowance section on the member's Record Card. Also this and other travel spending is recorded by type of transport used [bicycle, rail, bus/coach, car/van] on a Transport Analysis form to check how the pool is doing in using more sustainable forms of transport. Up to £50 of the £250 may alternatively be used for holiday accommodation expenses. This is recorded in the Travel Allowance section on the member's Record Card, but not added to the Travel Analysis form.

'Outs': SUBSCRIPTIONS ALLOWANCE

Up to £50 total per year. Some subscriptions are paid for by the pool, if all members agree.

'Outs': END OF MONTH

Pre-determined monthly payments, which currently include:

- Contribution to phone bills for 'political' calls.
- Corani Housing & Land Co-op member subscriptions.
- Rusty Car Pool subscription and payment for 'political' mileage.
- Bank Standing Orders for two charities, an 'alternative' bookshop, and someone's Trade Union subscription.

'Outs': LOANS

The income-sharing pool acts as a savings and loans club. Loans can be taken out for spending we do not feel able to ask for as a special, or where the special has not been granted or only partly granted. Any loan is recorded in the Savings and Loan section on the member's Record Card. We repay as possible, often a small amount at each meeting.

BALANCE

When we have been through each category, we add up all the 'Outs' and check they do not exceed the available money. If they do, we may need to cut back or delay some items until next time. When we are happy with this, the record book is up-dated. It shows the amount of money put in, the amount taken out, and the amount left as cash, in the bank, or invested elsewhere.

WITHDRAWAL

We take out of the pool on the table our individual amount and keep it on the table in front of us. Mistakes can be made at this stage, so the money has to stay where it can be checked. We may ask the person on our left to count it. Member's can use the Record Card to record their individual amounts, which someone may cross-check using the Each Person's 'Outs' Checklist.

The remaining amount in the pool is counted to check it agrees with the amount recorded in the record book. When it does, it is bagged up. Then we can each 'pocket' our amount

Gifts

For example from relatives. Provided these are occasional, cash gifts up to £50.00 may be declared as income and taken out again as an ordinary special if finances allow. More than £50.00 may be treated as capital and not put in.

There is a Children's Fund into which money gifts to our young members are placed. The Children's Fund is used by them for special events or requirements, e.g. attending a Woodcraft Folk camp. Details of the Children's Fund and its transactions are recorded at the back of the record book.

Capital

This is considered 'frozen' while a person is a member of the pool, so it cannot be used to supplement income. It may be used for capital transactions but not spent as income. Most of us do not view the interest on capital as income to go in the income pool, but choose to accumulate it as new capital. When joining you are asked to allocate your capital in the categories - 'personal', 'social', 'housing' and 'trustee' - as applicable:

- *Personal capital* is allocated to be spent on oneself in exceptional circumstances, e.g. a 'trip of a lifetime', a visit to a relation overseas, paying for a course not related to your work or political/social/charitable/spiritual activism. On these occasions you are encouraged to pay into the Capital Fund a similar amount to that being spent on yourself. The Capital Fund provides personal capital for special events for those members with no capital or those with little capital needing a 'top up'. Details of the Capital Fund and its transactions are recorded at the back of the record book.

- *Social capital* is reserved for supporting political/social*/charitable/spiritual activity, e.g. large donations/ guarantees/ benefactor loans to charities, political and religious organisations and supporting the development of others. It is not generally used for your own activist expenses. *Social defined as 'concerned about society and its organisation', not as 'sociable'.

- *Housing capital* is used to provide your home.

- *Trustee capital* is held under the legal definition of Trust and, if it can be withdrawn, there are conditional terms for its withdrawal, which generally make it very inaccessible. Exceptionally, there could be other categories. Two existing members each have an additional category, each particular to them.

To ensure we keep thinking about capital and the effect it has on the pool and our lifestyles, we have a 'Capital' Policy, which is given below.

There is a separate capital-sharing pool.

Benefits

A brilliant aspect of an Income Sharing Group is that it can support members without finance from the State. It is the policy of this pool to minimise dependence on the State. Any member considering applying for benefits needs to get the agreement of the pool first. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. Although a flexible attitude applies, there is an expectation that any member receiving benefits [except a pension] will stop doing so as soon as possible.

Joining and Leaving

You are welcome to come and watch an Income Sharing meeting. You can come to further meetings if you are still interested and you can participate on behalf of a member who is absent [when the money is withdrawn from the pool, it is

to be given to a member at the meeting who will check it and pass it on to the absent member]. If you wish to join it is important to get to know and be known by members of Snowball.

When you have decided to join and the Group is still open to that happening, you need to prepare and discuss with the Group:

- a statement forecasting your annual Ins and Outs in as much detail as possible;
- a statement of any anticipated changes;
- a statement of anyone else who is or could be dependent on the Outs;
- a 'Capital' statement [see 'Capital' Policy].

These will be discussed with you at a pool meeting, only with existing members present, and treated as confidential. If it is agreed that you can join, a date will be agreed with you to be the start for all income received by you to be paid into the pool and the date of the first pool meeting when you can start taking out. Although you can then participate fully, your involvement will be provisional for the first six months. If this period is successful, you will be invited to become a member.

If anyone decides to leave the pool, it is expected that they will pay off any loan first.

Other Points

We try not to make too many hard and fast rules, but rather rely on people's consciences, their consideration of the financial situation and the needs of others, and the general principle to live as lightly/modestly as we feel able to.

As well as giving us an opportunity to handle large amounts of money, attending an income-sharing pool meeting gives us time to be together [we usually eat together first] and to share financial and other issues affecting our lives. New ideas and changes are always being considered.

Other groups that income share do it differently to us.