Conceptualising Horizontal Politics

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Abstract

This project investigates the likelihood of a distinctive ideology emerging from what are known as 'horizontal' political movements – those which, in brief, aim to operate non-hierarchically guided by principles such as affinity – and furthermore to identify the potential components of such an ideology. The methodology is broadly based on that developed by Freeden, namely an analysis of the conceptual morphology of the ideas put out by horizontal movements. The sources used derive largely from the output of the movements themselves in various forms. I conclude that horizontal politics does have a recognisable ideological configuration, and that this is distinctive from other related ideologies such as anarchism.

Contents

Introduction

Aims, objectives and questions

In general terms, this project aims to identify and examine the central ideas of the variety of political movement generally termed 'horizontal', and establish whether this political outlook constitutes a distinctive ideology. The question under discussion here is how such movements attempt to distinguish themselves. This investigation begins with the output of various elements of the horizontal 'movement of movements'. The distinguishing features of such movements will be discussed in terms firstly of ethos and tactics and secondly of more theory-based reflections: both elements feed in to an overall investigation based on Freeden's conceptualisation of an ideology as containing elements of both theory and practice.

Horizontal politics, broadly conceived, has played a role in the global justice movement since its early days. While the term 'horizontal' did not achieve widespread use until the early 2000s, the political principles and tactics it denotes were among the mainstays of mobilisations from the late 1990s onwards. The contribution of horizontal movements later became more explicit, as demonstrated by the existence of a convergence site named the 'Hori-Zone' during the 2005 mobilisation against the G8 summit. The Hori-Zone was the largest of the convergence sites, and was organised using horizontal principles. This level of influence, coupled with the explicit prefiguration of alternatives not only to capitalism but also to hierarchical power and political leadership, imply some level of significance on the overall political landscape. Furthermore, the previous decade saw a decline in traditional forms of political participation such as voting[1]. Protest and other non-state based forms of participation went some way towards filling in the gap left by this decline.[2] It is interesting to note here the increasing prominence of movements which explicitly reject and propose alternatives to representative politics.

The two preliminary chapters provide some background to the overall project. The first deals with ideology: how it has been conceptualised and its relevance today. The second outlines the literature which forms a backdrop to a study of horizontal politics. The four substantive chapters are arranged thematically, each dealing with a concept which helps to define the overall nature of horizontal politics. These concepts are hierarchy, organisation, power and culture: the reasons for this selection from a wider range will be discussed in general terms in this chapter and in more

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[1] The most recent general election being an exception

[2] Idea advanced most strongly by Norris, P. (2002) 'Democratic Phoenix: Agencies, Repertoires and Targets of Political Activism' online at
http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Acrobat/APSA%202002%20Democratic%20Phoenix.pdf
accessed 06/12/11

specific terms in the relevant substantive chapters. Each chapter is focused on answering the question of how horizontal political movements aim to distinguish their political outlook. This will include some assessment of what is new to these movements, either intrinsically or regarding the ways in which certain elements are used. Each chapter follows a similar structure, focussing on key areas of proclaimed distinctiveness. The introduction will outline the background of the relevant concept and the reasons for its importance in distinguishing horizontal politics. The first section, based on the horizontal ethos which gives the concept its importance and the tactics which arise from this, will posit the idea of distinctiveness in practical terms, while the second will identify the main theoretical undercurrents. A third section will explore how horizontal movements respond to potential criticisms, which in itself can be a distinctive current.

This chapter begins by outlining the contextual aspects of the project: introducing the main protagonists and the case studies around which this project is to a great extent based, providing some immediate history, naming some of the main tactics used and outlining the general ethos from which the themes discussed in later chapters are drawn. The themes themselves are then introduced, with some explanation of why they were selected for future examination. A general outline is then given of the challenges faced by and critiques levelled at horizontal movements.

Summit mobilisations and process

Broadly speaking, the term 'horizontal politics' refers to a political outlook which rejects hierarchical practices and questions the power relations both in society and in the internal practices of horizontal movements. The term – along with its opposite, 'vertical', usually deployed as a pejorative – came into widespread use in the context of the 2004 European Social Forum in London, but has since then been adopted more generally and absorbed into the wider activist lexicon.

The focus of this project is largely on one major aspect of 'horizontal' political practice and its interaction with political theory. At certain points this covers a fairly wide remit: for the most part, however, the focus shifts between the more open surface manifestations and the behind-the-scenes process by which these are organised. The summit mobilisation can be taken as an example of horizontal protest in action – both in terms of the tactics used and the means of organising – but it is also worth noting the relevance of 'process'. The first piece of evidence for describing summit mobilisations as 'horizontal' comes from the self-definition of those involved, encapsulated by the name 'Hori-zone' which was attached to the protest camp near the Gleneagles hotel. However, I would also argue that the evidence goes beyond this factor, as should become apparent throughout the remainder of this project. Within this remit, I have selected the mobilisation against the 2005

G8 at Gleneagles for particular focus. At the most pragmatic level, this is due firstly to the predominance of English as the language for relevant documents – naturally not the case for mobilisations in non-Anglophone countries – and secondly to having done previous academic work on and participated in the mobilisation. However, there are some less prosaic reasons for selecting this case, which will be discussed in more detail shortly. It is worth remembering at this point that such manifestations of horizontal politics did not spring ready-formed from thin air: as such, there will also be some discussion of the immediate history of the movement, in order to place the more recent actions and debates in context.

Gleneagles and other stories

  While the tactic broadly known as the summit mobilisation (but applied in practical terms to occasions other than major summits, and not always in the same geographical location as the summit it is focused on) has been criticised, there is much to be learned from accounts of both the actions themselves and the motivations behind them. In particular, the coming together of a diverse range of individuals and groups with some measure of common purpose has theoretical implications for the functional potential for non-hierarchical organising. There will be a particular focus here on the mobilisation against the 2005 G8 summit at Gleneagles; partly for the reasons given above, but also due to the significance of the mobilisation in terms of resurrecting a tactic whose future had been in doubt at the time it was mooted. The attitude prior to the planning of the mobilisation is summed up by Trocchi, Redwolf and Alamire (participants from the earliest stages) thus: 'As Britain's turn came to host the G8 in 2005, things looked grim'[3] as there 'had not been a "Global Day of Action" in Britain in six years, and many anarchists in Britain were simply not interested, as they were convinced that mass mobilisations were no longer an effective means of resistance.'[4] For the most part, they regard the Gleneagles mobilisation as having changed this perception, as it 'turned a scattered and divided activist scene into a well-organised network of resistance, capable not only of hosting an explicitly anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian mobilisation, but also of continuing beyond the G8.'[5] However, the tactic itself is of wider interest. The history of this variety of protest is often traced to the actions against the World Trade Organisation summit in Seattle in November 1999[6], but the events of June 18 1999[7] – where

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[3] Trocchi, A., Redwolf, G. and Alamire, P. 'Reinventing Dissent! An Unabridged Story of Resistance' in D. Harvie, K. Milburn, B. Trott and D. Watts (eds) *Shut Them Down! The G8, Gleneagles 2005 and the movement of movements* Leeds: Dissent! Pp.61-100 (quote from p.63)
[4] *Ibid*.
[5] *Ibid*. p.61
[6] For analysis of this event, see Whitney, J. (2004) 'Shattering the myths of Seattle: It's time to break more than windows' online at http://www.daysofdissent.org.uk/seattle.htm last accessed 10/11/2008 Part of Dissent! (eds) *Days of Dissent* available at http://www.daysofdissent.org.uk/.
[7] For much discussion of this mobilisation, see 'Reflections on June 18' online at http://www.afed.org.uk/online/j18/index.html last accessed 10/11/2008.

London's major financial district was forced to cease trading for the best part of a day – can also be credited as an immediate forerunner. The distinguishing factor, as indicated above, is that J18[8] did not take place in the immediate vicinity of the G8 summit in Cologne, Germany, but was instead targeted at what something of a third party. Certain characteristics mark it out as a precedent for Gleneagles, however, and these will be detailed shortly. At any rate, material relating to these and other large-scale mobilisations will also be drawn upon here.

In further explaining the relevance of the Gleneagles mobilisation, it is worth referring back to the question of how such movements distinguish themselves. In practical terms, the 'horizontal' contingent distinguished itself from other sections of the mobilisation in a number of ways. Firstly, there was an explicit emphasis on consensus and autonomy from the outset. The Hori-zone in particular operated along horizontal, anarchistic[9] lines in terms of organisational structure. It was divided into neighbourhoods or barrios, largely autonomous spaces in which protests and direct actions could be planned. The consensus model of decision making was used on site at every level, from action planning to site management issues. As an object of opposition, meanwhile, the G8 is symbolic of larger areas of contention: the objections are often to capitalism as a whole, to politicians and political leadership and power in general; and indeed to the whole world order in existence today. The actions and interactions described here can therefore be regarded as symbolic of the changed world those who participate in them wish to create. As regards autonomy, the opposition to the G8 was manifested through a variety of different and autonomous actions. Of these, the blockades[10] of the roads surrounding the Gleneagles hotel went the furthest to encapsulating the spirit that the Hori-zone wished to promote[11]. Actions were not organised centrally: even the mass motorway blockade consisted of myriad autonomous affinity groups, each contributing to the action in their own way. The only centralised element concerned the logistics of this mass blockade: consensus was used to decide on this method, for reasons relating to security. Affinity groups were free to block smaller roads instead; a tactic later judged to have increased the overall effectiveness of the action by creating a cordon around the Gleneagles complex and spreading police resources thinly.

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[8] Activist shorthand for the events in London on June 18 1999.
[9] 'Horizontal' and 'anarchistic' are not synonymous: this question will be dealt with at various points over the following four chapters.
[10] Plural used advisedly: the blockades were far from a single entity, as there was no central organising committee or overarching set of rules regarding how they should be conducted.
[11] Logistical detail from http://www.g8blockades.org.uk/, accessible in July 2005 and somewhat after but now removed. (11/11/08)

Horizontal activists distinguished themselves during this mobilisation with the prefigurative element[12] in the reasoning behind the establishment of the convergence spaces: something which might also go some way towards answering the second question posed at the start of this chapter. 'Prefigurative politics', according to Nunes, is 'summarised in the motto "be the change you want to see".'[13] In practice, this means creating spaces in which horizontal principles can be explored and demonstrated in terms of their impact on the living of life. This, Trocchi *et al* argue, was one of the positive ideas which can be taken from the Hori-zone: the idea that 'the best means of promoting anarchy is not abstract analysis or propaganda, but by helping people live it'[14]. They describe how 'In the eco-village, we came to understand that another world is not only possible, it can exist right now: thousands of people can organise their own lives, cook food for each other and quite literally handle their own shit without a single boss or policeman.'[15] This idea takes horizontal politics as manifested by the Gleneagles mobilisation and similar actions beyond the realm of pure political protest against defined targets and into the creation of alternative, relatively large-scale ways of being capable of levelling a concrete challenge at the order they oppose. If horizontal movements generate a distinctive variety of political theory, then this is one of the key elements, particularly combined with the practical aspects of horizontal protest organisation outlined above.

Immediate origins

While the ideas involved in horizontal politics have a long and varied history, the configuration in which they appear today is the product largely of developments from the 1990s onwards. As such, it is worth at this stage briefly describing some of the immediately relevant movements and events. The focus here is largely on UK-based movements and actions, as to give a worldwide round-up would require more than the available space and furthermore I am culturally better-equipped to accurately depict an activist 'scene' with which I have had at least peripheral involvement. As the field of activism in which horizontal politics has its roots is fairly wide, it is difficult to identify a 'representative' sample: however, I have attempted to draw out some of the

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[12] 'Prefiguration' can be regarded as a somewhat problematic concept: how, for example, can it avoid imposing on those who disagree with what is being prefigured? Questions beyond the scope of this project are also raised regarding how effective it can be, or whether it is distinct from more conventionally revolutionary ideas. However, it is an essential element of how horizontal activists define their actions, meaning that it must be included in any coherent account of what distinguishes horizontal political movements.

[13] Nunes, R. (2007) 'Networks, Open Spaces, Horizontality: Instantiations' in *Ephemera* volume 5(2) pp.297-318 online at http://www.ephemeraweb.org/journal/5-2/5-2nunes2.pdf last accessed 11/11/08

[14] Trocchi *et al*, p.96

[15] *Ibid*. p.99

more prominent examples in terms of their effect on the public imagination, tempered somewhat by what is now available online.

   The late 1990s saw the convergence of many ideas and tactics used today, drawn from protest movements of the time and combined in the course of larger mobilisations. The term 'convergence' is an appropriate one as the key factor was the coming together of previously isolated 'single issue' campaigns (or their more radical elements) onto tentative common ground. Links developed between movements on the grounds that genetic modification of food crops causes risks to the environment, to humans who ingest the modified crops and to animals used to test their safety (or otherwise); car culture pollutes the environment and overwhelms public spaces[16]; McDonalds[17] commits a wide range of perceived atrocities. Capitalism, meanwhile, came to be regarded as the overall enemy behind these and other concerns.

   It is useful here to examine what each 'single' issue brought to the overall culture of protest, before discussing the points where issues ceased to be 'single'. To begin with, the movement against nuclear weapons has a long history in which the tactics of non-violent direct action (NVDA) have been formulated and refined[18]. In particular, the affinity group became widely known as an anti-nuclear tactic[19]. Although it has been used in other contexts, the tactic was popularised by the movement against genetically modified (GM) crops in the late 1990s[20], when activists uprooted fields of such crops dressed in clearly-labelled biohazard suits. In the intervening period, issues relating to transport were high on the protest agenda, with direct action protest camps resisting the building of new roads and Reclaim The Streets organising festivals against what they term 'car culture'. Here the issue goes beyond air pollution and into pollution of the mental environment. RTS' website argues against the 'car system'[21] which 'steals'[22] and commercialises public space, creating an 'obsession'[23] with speed and money. The agitprop material produced by RTS shows an emphasis on cultural forms of protest, while the tactic of combining carnivalesque mobilisations with the occupying of roads and other contentious spaces has some obvious descendents. The mid-1990s, meanwhile, played host to a large-scale

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[16] Reclaim the Streets: http://rts.gn.apc.org/ last accessed 11/11/08

[17] a popular folk devil of the period due to some infamous legal action: the full story can be found at http://www.mcspotlight.org/case/index.html last accessed 11/11/08

[18] A Trident Ploughshares NVDA training handout can be found at http://www.tridentploughshares.org/IMG/pdf/NVDA_training_handout.pdf last accessed 11/11/08

[19] The affinity group will be discussed in more detail later: however, for the time being, the handout referred to previously contains information about uses of the tactic.

[20] Groups which still have a presence today are GenetiX Snowball (http://www.fraw.org.uk/gs/campaign.htm) and the Genetic Engineering Network (http://www.geneticsaction.org.uk/) Both sites last accessed 11/11/08

[21] http://rts.gn.apc.org/prop04.htm last accessed 11/11/08

[22] *Ibid*.

[23] *Ibid*.

government road building program: the subject of protest on an equally wide scale, taking the term 'direct action' to its literal roots by directly blocking the road-building process from the initial clearing of ground to the laying of the tarmac[24]. The significance of these protests for the wider movement lies in the emergence of the eco-village as a protest tactic. Not only were the protest camps physically obstructing environmental destruction, but a prefigurative element also emerged as these camps demonstrated possibilities for living outside the system. In theoretical terms, this relates to the concept of the Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ) outlined by Bey[25]: claiming a space of resistance within the existing order, with no pretension to permanence or respectability and able to resist more effectively for that. While protest camps have been used before, the road protesters are distinguished by their explicit emphasis on forging different ways of living whilst making their protest. While the tactic faded into the background for several years, at least in the UK, it set the groundwork for the Hori-zone to succeed.

The reaction to the Criminal Justice Bill (later Criminal Justice Act) was an early example of how a range of movements can be brought together by a common cause. A member of the Do or Die collective, reflecting on the CJB protests in the light of terrorism legislation introduced in 2000, describes how 'The CJA was easy to mobilise against in some respects because it was so obviously a simple rag-bag of Tory prejudices - one Bill to simultaneously hit football fans, new age travellers, squatters, hunt sabs, road protesters and ravers.'[26] While there was some crossover between these groups of people beyond the effects of the CJA on their activities, there was also an element of co-operation between diverse movements which by no means shared all their members, laying the ground for further joint ventures somewhat later. One such venture was London's contribution to the Global Day of Action on June 18 1999 (J18): a 'Carnival Against Capital' targeted at the City's financial centre. J18 is notable as a large-scale mobilisation covering a range of issues: Reclaim The Streets were key organisers, but the participants were unprecedentedly varied. These included general anti-capitalist and environmental protesters, campaigners for human and animal rights, opponents of GM crops and the road-building program, and myriad related groups. The initial plan was to have a large number of small actions (some, like the anti-McDonalds protest near Liverpool Street, focused on points of entry into London) converging in a mass action later in the day. 'Amusing Pseudonym' describes how 'The planning and organisation of the day's events was incredible. I have never known such networking, and all done autonomously, with groups and individuals in charge of themselves and their own actions. In my

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[24] Some history of individual road protests can be found at http://www.dragonnetwork.org/campaigns/past.htm last accessed 11/11/08
[25] Bey, H. (1991) 'The Temporary Autonomous Zone' online at http://www.hermetic.com/bey/taz3.html#labelTAZ last accessed 11/11/08
[26] Anon. (2000) 'State of Terror' online at http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no9/terrorism_bill.htm last accessed 11/11/08

opinion, the whole day stands as a tribute to anarchist methods of organisation…'[27] Although events did not pan out exactly as planned, the autonomous tactic planted some seeds for later mobilisations. Lydia Molyneaux, a participant in both the J18 and Gleneagles mobilisations, is clear that 'we weren't just trying for a rerun of J18.'[28] She elaborates: 'The 1999 "Carnival Against Capital" in the City of London (marking a G8 summit in Cologne, Germany) was a watershed action and many of us have fond memories of the day. However, J18 was very much focused on finance capital – which was a good place to start. But six years later, it was time to move on and think of how we can subvert and attack the actual *social relations* of capital.'[29] In other words, while there are elements of J18 which remain relevant and useful, there is also a need to move beyond the focus on finance capital; to stop, as many of the contributors to 'Reflections on June 18' note, treating it as just another 'single issue'.

  In addition to the factors above, J18 – which was, although this aspect is often overshadowed by the events in London, part of a global day of action – also marks a point at which 'globalisation' began to be the enemy of choice. In the following months, the focus for protest movements also became more global, with mobilisations in the US and Europe entering activists' consciousness to a greater extent than before. It is noted above that the mobilisation against the World Trade Organisation in Seattle on November 30, 1999 has been regarded as the start of a 'new' type of movement: while this is something of a short-sighted view, Seattle can almost certainly be regarded as the first action to closely resemble the summit mobilisations familiar to today's activists. Jennifer Whitney, a local activist, relates how she and other protest organisers were 'hugely inspired by the London J18 actions, which added to our confidence and our audacity.'[30] As such, 'The notion of carnival ran deep in our plans – carnival as the irresistible blend of party and protest, of revelry and revolution, of reclaiming public space and creating something memorable. Our objective of shutting down the Summit was inextricably linked to our vision of a massive street festival which would create an alternative vision of the world we wanted.'[31] It was in this scenario that the anti-hierarchical modes of organisation outlined above in the discussion of the Gleneagles mobilisation began to come together explicitly and attempt adapt to the large number and diverse range of participants. The organising strategy was similar to J18, with the addition of a convergence centre and plans for several days of action. Whitney describes how most of the groups involved were aiming for 'a ten day convergence, with trainings, workshops,

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[27] 'Amusing Pseudonym' (1999) 'Keep it up, don't let violence divide us' in 'Reflections on June 18' online at http://www.afed.org.uk/online/j18/reflec3.html last accessed 7/11/08
[28] Molyneaux, L. (2005) 'The Carnival Continues' in Harvie *et al* (eds) *Shut Them Down* pp.109-118 (quote from p.111)
[29] *Ibid*.
[30] Whitney (2004)
[31] *Ibid*.

performances, art-making and endless meetings to hone and refine the actions themselves.'[32] The autonomous affinity group was crucial here. Whitney highlights its importance: 'by organising this way, power remained decentralised, no single person knew the entire plan (or even half of it).'[33] The result was that 'thousands of people in hundreds of affinity groups filled in our giant map on the wall, until we had commitments from everyone to completely blockade the site of the opening ceremonies.'[34] The usefulness of the affinity group 'structure' is both practical and ideological. Practically, a mobilisation is not dependent on any central grouping, creating less potential for the authorities to prevent action taking place. There is no central plan for police to uncover. Furthermore, there is no need for a central leadership to attempt to 'organise' thousands of people, a task which could become unmanageable. However, the reasons for operating in this way go beyond practicality and into the realm of 'horizontal' ideals. The decentralising of power is a key factor here: each affinity group is responsible for their own small part of the action, and largely not accountable to others. In terms of horizontal political ideals, the first point of interest is the active resistance to a hierarchical structure. The other point to note is the emphasis on protesters as active participants rather than spectators or consumers: this can be regarded as a direct subversion of the role ordinary citizens are expected to take, as regards becoming 'as senseless and easily handled as a brick[35]'.

From these movements, actions and mobilisations and the principles on which they operate, it is then possible to establish a general ethos for the horizontal 'movement of movements, from which some key themes can then be drawn.

The 'movement of movements'

Naming enemies – and friends[36]

The term 'movement of movements' is generally used as shorthand for the diverse, autonomy-focused global justice movement, and can be regarded as a horizontal principle in itself in that it rejects the imposition of a single overarching agenda. It also, however, denotes a level of coherence and the potential for mutual co-operation, without the need for the various components to crystallise into a single monolithic entity. This designation is one which has been consistently

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[32] *Ibid*.

[33] *Ibid*.

[34] *Ibid*.

[35] Vaneigem, R. (1967) 'The Revolution of Everyday Life' online at http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/pub_contents/5 (last accessed 03/03/10)

[36] The subheading is a reference to Starr, A. (2000) *Naming the Enemy: Anti-Corporate Movements Confront Globalisation* London: Zed, which remains one of the more useful typologies of what was then known as the anti-globalisation movement.

applied since the early 2000s: less consistent is the name used to express the shared aims and beliefs involved. From the late 1990s, when the movement was in its early days, the tag 'anti-globalisation' was applied to denote the resistance to neo-liberal globalisation. This was a problematic description, however, for two main reasons. Firstly, it was argued that the global networks of activist and resistance movements also constituted a form of 'globalisation', and that use of the term should not be restricted to multinational corporations and their activities. Secondly, the resistance to 'globalisation' can take a number of forms, including the strengthening of the nation state and a resurgence of 'localism' in incarnations which could be regarded as reactionary[37]: ideas which are not necessarily appealing to 'horizontal', often anarchist-influenced activists who do not see the state as particularly liberating. The term 'alternative globalisation movement'[38] grew out of this debate, encapsulating the desire to forge networks between people to resist the shared aspects of oppression and co-operate in creating a 'better' world. The current popular terms are 'global justice movement' and 'global anti-capitalist movement'. Neither is beyond criticism: 'justice' can become a vague catch-all term while opposing capital is not the sole point. Nonetheless, the name issue shows evolution taking place, with an element of reflexivity regarding the focus of the struggle. It also demonstrates changes in the nature of the 'enemy', and growing awareness that 'globalisation' and similar expressions are not catch-all terms for what those involved oppose. There is also some level of 'hijacking' of certain names and phrases by particular factions[39] with which horizontal activists are not keen to be associated. At any rate, having explored the name issue, it is now time to discuss the underlying ethos. While this is not identical to the tactics used, the two elements naturally reflect one another to an extent that they can be discussed together. This is in the first instance a brief outline of the concepts involved, to be elaborated on in the relevant thematic chapters.

Ethos and tactics

  Given the popularity of the term 'movement of movements', it is unsurprising that a key principle is diversity. 'Diversity' in this context refers both to the ideological factor of not imposing a monolithic agenda and to the 'diversity of tactics' which forms part of every large-scale mobilisation. The two are generally linked. This can in the first instance be credited to the linking of certain tactics with particular viewpoints; particularly regarding the use of violence as part of a protest. Strategically, diversity allows for a wide scale of participation, since those involved in an action do not have to sign up to a full charter. However, as shown by the empirical

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[37] See Starr, A. (2000) *Naming The Enemy: Anti-Corporate Movements Confront Globalisation* London: Zed for a typology of anti-globalisation struggles
[38] Sometimes shortened to alter-globalisation
[39] The Socialist Workers' Party under the guise of Globalise Resistance is often regarded in this light

cases above, there is also an explicit resistance to hierarchy in the refusal to prioritise one set of beliefs, tactics or struggles over others. This rejection of hierarchy forms part of almost every aspect of a horizontal movement, covering ideas such as consensus, autonomy and affinity which translate directly into tactics and modes of action.

Consensus – in practical terms, consensus decision-making – is the most common means of making decisions without resorting to hierarchy. Autonomy as a tactical device refers to the freedom participants have to organise elements of an action independently from the main mobilisation. The theoretical reasoning, however, goes beyond strategy: a factor alluded to in the section on summit mobilisations. Affinity is generally demonstrated in practice by the predominance of the 'affinity group', which has already been discussed in a movement-based context. However, as with many of these tactics, the strategic value is the tip of the iceberg: in the most general terms, the affinity group model of organising is one which depends on connections between individuals who have a greater level of agreement among themselves than can be said of the wider or more diverse movement; these individuals have the autonomy to move between affinity groups at will or form new ones, while remaining part of the mobilisation. Affinity groups are also autonomous: they can join together or separate as circumstances require it. The key to these elements is what has become known as the 'D.I.Y.' approach: the politics of grassroots action, as opposed to waiting to be mobilised by a leadership. A recent activist skills guide summarises 'Do it yourself culture' as 'A broad term referring to a range of grassroots political activism with a commitment to an economy of mutual aid, co-operation, non-commodification of art, appropriation of digital and communication technologies, and alternative technologies.[40] They continue: 'DIY culture became a recognised movement in the 1990s in the UK, made famous by direct action and free party culture.'[41] The emphasis is on creating a psychological and practical infrastructure for genuine freedom.

The element of cultural resistance which forms one of the thematic chapters here is based in this approach, focussing as it does on tactics such as *détournement* and carnival which, not requiring special resources or knowledge, are often regarded as anti-hierarchical by their very nature. D.I.Y. cultural resistance exemplifies prefigurative politics in action: working for change in the here and now, demonstrating alternatives and methods of change. Prefigurative politics is in itself a key element of the theory generated by horizontal movements, regarding how such movements conceive revolutionary or insurrectionary change. As suggested by the link to culture, the tactics involved emphasise creating spaces of resistance to bring about gradual (but still revolutionary) change while demonstrating potential outcomes. This also relates to direct action, a key element of

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[40] Trapese Collective (2007a) 'Glossary' in Trapese Collective (eds) (2007) *Do It Yourself: A handbook for changing our world* London: Pluto ppxi-xiv
[41] *Ibid.*

the movements discussed here. The theoretical aspect of direct action is of interest here. It focuses on grassroots, DIY actions, involving individuals and groups taking their struggles into their own hands and generally resisting rather than relying on outside authorities. Such tactics represent a perceived need to go outside of the existing political framework in order to bring about the necessary change. While direct action *can* be organised hierarchically, the tactic is generally associated with affinity groups and related ways of mobilising.

Methodology

Overview of the approach

The methodology used in this project is largely grounded in an approach broadly defined in terms of conceptual morphology. This approach was developed by Freeden[42] and aims to examine political phenomena through examination of the internal landscapes of ideologies. It should be noted that 'ideology' is not being deployed here as a pejorative term, but rather a descriptor for a coherent set of political ideas with a clearly evident set of core, adjacent and peripheral concepts[43]. My aim in deploying this methodology is twofold. Firstly, by examining horizontal politics *as if* it is a political ideology in the sense meant by Freeden I anticipate getting a fuller picture of how horizontal movements operate in terms of theory, practice and the intersection between the two. Secondly I aim to demonstrate that horizontal politics *can*, subject maybe to certain conditions, be viably regarded as an ideology in this sense. The purpose of this section is firstly to give some necessary detail on the conceptual method, and secondly to outline its relevance to the study of horizontal politics. I will begin by outlining the methodological details and rationale, then discuss the approach in terms of the substantive content of this project.

Why ideology?

My rationale for using Freeden's methodology is dealt with more extensively later: here, however, is a brief outline of the main reasons.

Firstly, it is useful to examine politics more generally in terms of concepts and ideologies. The main point here is the tendency of this approach to look at political phenomena *as they are*, rather than as they should be: an empirical approach to normative material. On this subject, Freeden argues that 'In the final count, it is vital to recognise that in studying ideologies we are directing

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[42] Freeden, M. (1996) *Ideologies and Political Theory* Oxford: Clarendon
[43] For more on the conceptualisation of ideology see ch.1.

our analyses at actual arrangements of political thinking.'[44] Furthermore, he regards the study of ideology to be an essential part of the study of politics, as 'ideologies are not optional extras or "externalities" but rather the codes that organise all political practices – the DNA of praxis.'[45] It is an interpretive method, dealing largely with internal logic and thought processes: Freeden is keen to point out that the focus is *not* on truth, ethical rightness or logical clarity.[46] Although these factors have some place in the study of political phenomena, they can cloud an initial investigation by adding extra variables. Even allowing for them it is necessary to understand the morphological groundwork first. This is particularly important for newer ideologies such as the one at hand, for the sake of establishing the concepts from which it is composed and the level of internal consistency. Furthermore, Freeden's approach neither imposes a generic purpose on ideology nor insists on a fixed final point of development: both positive factors when dealing with a developing political outlook. Rather, the purpose of an ideology derives from that ascribed to it by those involved in its construction, and the content does not become reified. Since horizontal movements display a high level of reflexivity, it is appropriate to examine them using a method which allows for adjustment and change.

The second reason for taking this approach relates to the intersection it highlights between the theory and practice of politics: ideas provide the basis for examination of an ideology, but their application in practice is crucial in distinguishing an ideology from a body of pure political theory. Here again ideology is understood as the 'DNA of praxis', as Freeden describes it above: however, this is not a one-way process. Rather, 'ideological morphology dictates the existence of multiple routes from a given theory to a range of given practices and from a given practice to a range of possible theories.'[47] Following from this, Freeden argues that 'The metaphor of an open grid rather than a one-way channel seems more apt.'[48] It is worth noting that the relationship between theory and practice is a factor which can vary from one ideology to another, and is a distinctive feature of each ideology[49]: however, it is invariably there. One function of an ideology, then, is to constitute 'mapping frameworks through which we can imbue any particular action with political meaning.'[50] The significance of any given practice, therefore, is filtered by a specific set of concepts according to which ideological lens it is examined through.

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[44] Freeden (1996) p.23
[45] Freeden, M. (2005) 'Confronting the Chimera of a "Post-ideological" Age' in *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2005 pp.247-262 (quote from p.262)
[46] Freeden (1996) pp.4-5
[47] Freeden, M. (2000) 'Practicing Ideology and Ideological Practices' in *Political Studies*: 2000 vol. 48, pp.302-322 (quote from p.320)
[48] *Ibid*.
[49] *Ibid*. p.304
[50] *Ibid*. p.308

Regarding using this method in the study of horizontal politics, the intersection between the ideas and concrete practices of a political grouping is vital in understanding what makes this particular one distinctive. While the practices deployed have a sound theoretical grounding, it can also be argued that the theories of horizontal politics are to an extent developed through its political practices. The precise nature of these interactions is investigated in more detail in the substantive thematic chapters. In brief, this process is particularly interesting to watch when the ideology in question is still emerging. It is also worth noting this as a reason for dividing chapters between theory and practice and investigating the distinctiveness of horizontal politics with regard to each of these elements. The allowance Freeden makes for blurring of boundaries between neighbouring ideologies is also of relevance.

The question of how – and from what sources – ideologies emerge and develop is also relevant here. Whatever the circumstances of any given ideology – and this is a variable we will return to shortly – Freeden is clear that ideologies are the product of groups rather than individuals. To be more specific, they are 'communal artefacts'[51] which come into existence when 'mutual understandings arise among individuals, both consciously and unconsciously, within which political discourse takes place.'[52] The production of ideology through discourse among the members of a political grouping is one reason for my choice of source material which for the most part revolves around accounts from those directly involved and includes some discussion of 'policy' decisions and how these are reached. Freeden explores various means by which ideologies can come into being, focussing on the type of group from which they emerge. Firstly, he asks

'Are the producers of ideologies really outstanding individuals, informed by their social contexts but nevertheless intentionally and personally creating an opus of action-orientated political thinking? Are we not then continuing to debate in the mould of traditional political thought, if on a somewhat broader base, observing talented and exceptional élites in thought for the edification of the masses?'[53]

This is the case for many ideologies, particularly those in which deference to such élites can be considered a core or adjacent concept. However, it is of less relevance here. Of greater relevance is a second question posed by Freeden: 'is the production of ideologies elitist in another sense, namely the product of cliques in positions of socio-political influence who desire to manipulate weaker groups and so further their interests?'[54] This is worth bearing in mind in the case of

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[51] Freeden, M. (1999) 'Ideologies as communal resources' in *Journal of Political Ideologies* (1999), 4(3), pp.411-417 (quote from p.413)
[52] *Ibid*.
[53] Freeden (1996) p.105
[54] *Ibid*.

horizontal politics, as a scenario which those involved aim explicitly to avoid: their attempts to tackle this problem as the potential arises for it to occur are discussed in the chapters on hierarchy and power. The production of ideology is, however, far from necessarily elitist: as such, I regard third alternative as the most useful in this context. In discussing this alternative, Freeden refers to the potential 'to regard ideologies as forms of grass-roots political culture, focused on the political issues of the day, reflecting the widely prevalent through processes that a specific society evolves over time, as well as those ideas that smaller groups within it generate differentially'.[55] This, particularly with regard to horizontal politics and the emergence of its morphological landscape, is the line I will be taking throughout this project; indeed, it can be regarded as the viewpoint that makes this sort of study of horizontal politics possible.

Defining an ideology

Before going any further, it is necessary to attempt to define an ideology. Here, Freeden advances four criteria which he regards as important to this end, arguing that

'A political ideology is a set of ideas, beliefs, opinions and values that (1) exhibit a recurring pattern; (2) are held by significant groups; (3) compete over providing and controlling plans for public policy; (4) do so with the aim of justifying, contesting or changing the social and political arrangements and processes of a political community.'[56]

His definition of an ideology is also based on the idea that it is composed of a complex arrangement of concepts, and this aspect will be returned to shortly: expanding, on the first point regarding a recurring pattern, for internal consistency is – as seen previously – a vital factor in the 'success' of an ideology. In addition to being internally consistent, both in a snapshot view and over time, the ideas it encompasses must emanate from and be held by a group which is 'significant': when an ideology is attached to a political party, this is easy to measure; it is less so when the origins are in a protest movement, and this point will be returned to. The last two points, broadly speaking, indicate that an ideology must contain some practical, normative ideas regarding how a society operates and, if different, how it *should* operate. Furthermore, any normative ideas must be held with the explicit idea of putting them into practice at some point in time, however distant this may appear in some cases.

How does this relate to the specific case of horizontal politics? Since my overall objective here is to establish whether it does in fact constitute an ideology, its adherence to the above criteria

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[55] *Ibid*.
[56] Freeden, M. (2003) *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction* Oxford University Press p.32

warrants a mention. The most definite argument I am prepared to make at this stage is that the first criterion, the presence of a recurring pattern, can be applied without controversy to the 'ideas, beliefs, opinions and values' of horizontal politics. The other points, however, yield somewhat more controversy, and whether they can be applied here is largely a matter of definitions. 'Significance' is relatively easy to measure for an ideology such as liberalism or conservatism, attached to a major political party, but more difficult when the practical application of its ideas involves the explicit rejection of electoral politics. However, while voter statistics and the like are a convenient measure, they are not the only one, and it is also worth noting the impact on the public imagination (and police deployment) of the more open manifestations of horizontal politics in recent years. On the fourth point, although the methods are somewhat unfamiliar, horizontal politics undeniably aims to change and contest the existing arrangements. The specifics of how this can be done and what will be put there instead will be dealt with in the four thematic chapters to follow. The third point is somewhat more controversial, as horizontal movements do not 'compete' in the traditional arenas or aim to 'control' 'public policy' in the sense that a political party might. However, as these movements contest the existing social and political arrangements, they also present alternatives for how society might be organised; something which could be seen as equivalent, within the parameters of the ideas which feed into these movements.

It is also worth dealing briefly with the question of 'thin' ideologies, and more specifically whether horizontal politics can be regarded as such. 'Thin' ideologies have traditionally grown out of social movements: they can be regarded as having conceptual cores, but these are relatively limited in scope. Of these, Freeden asks 'Do they have cores and, if they do, are those cores sufficient to bear the weight of adjacent and peripheral concepts, or do they need to graft on to them the self-contained morphologies of other ideologies?'[57] A thin ideology does not contain the same range of concepts, either in terms of breadth or depth, and does not pass comment on such a range of aspects of social and political life or require the same level of change. I do not place horizontal politics in this category: although its morphological landscape is still emerging and it does not cover the same ground as, say, liberalism, this is more a matter of time than of incompleteness. It is already clear that horizontal ideas generate scope for change in many areas, and I predict that this can go further if given time to emerge.

The functions of an ideology

Freeden has argued that ideologies perform a number of roles and functions which cement their importance in political life. Firstly, 'ideologies perform a range of services, such as legitimation, integration, socialisation, ordering, simplification, and action-orientation, without which societies

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[57] *Ibid*. p.486

could not function adequately.'[58] They justify the importance of certain ideas; posit them as part of political and social life; pare down the number of potential meanings; organise them in terms of their relationships to one another and indicate paths of action that can or should be followed as a result of adhering to these beliefs. The configurations of ideas are operationalised: moved out of the realm of the abstract and put to practical use. Regarding the individual concepts, each of these could have multiple meanings and that, as such, an ideology performs the further vital role of *decontesting* these concepts. Meanings inconsistent with the surrounding morphological landscape are ruled out, while the meaning that remains and is put to use is one which is shaped by, among other factors, its proximity to the surrounding concepts.

Components, concepts and the formation of an ideology

The construction of an ideology can appear somewhat complicated: however, the most basic point is summarised by Freeden in the following terms: 'The analysis of ideologies may now be advanced by utilising a three-tier formation: the components of a concept, a concept, and a system of concepts.'[59]

As regards the components of concepts, it is worth referring to Connolly's use of the term 'cluster concept'[60] to designate those political concepts which themselves have complex internal morphologies. Using the concept of politics as his example, he argues that 'The internal complexity of the concept, combined with the relative openness of each of its unit criteria, provides the space within which these disputes take place, and because of these very features, operational tests and formal modes of analysis do not provide sufficient leverage to settle such disputes.'[61] The 'disputes' in question relate in particular to the meaning of a concept, partially defined by its internal morphological configuration. In the case of horizontal politics, for example, a number of the core and adjacent concepts contain the components affinity, consensus, autonomy and diversity: a concept of organisation based on these components is going to be very different from one based on respect for authority and majoritarian voting structures. However, these should also be freed as far as possible from ambiguities, in order that the concept and subsequently the wider ideology should not be accused of being internally inconsistent. It is also worth noting that these components can also be concepts in their own right; something which makes it harder to disentangle concepts from one another.[62]

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[58] Freeden (1996) p.22
[59] *Ibid*. p.75
[60] Connolly, W. (1983) *The Terms of Political Discourse* Oxford: Martin Robertson
[61] *Ibid*. p.20
[62] Freeden (2003) p.64

Within the ideological system envisioned by Freeden, concepts are the main units of analysis: 'the basic units of thinking about politics are the concepts that constitute its main foci, just as words are the basic units of language'.[63] The concepts in question can be considered the building blocks of an ideology, and the formations in which they are arranged are integral to its structure. These concepts are divided into three main types: core, adjacent and peripheral. Peripheral concepts can be further subdivided into marginal and perimeter concepts, the latter being of greater significance to the overall shape of an ideology.[64] An overview of the layout of concepts within the landscape of horizontal politics will be given shortly. Core concepts are those which are ineliminable if the ideology is to retain its integrity; a political argument must contain or respect these if it is to be incorporated into any given ideology. The first half of this project, namely the chapters on hierarchy and organisation, focuses on two of the core concepts of horizontal politics. Adjacent concepts are equally important, for although they do not define the ideology as such they do play a vital role in the decontestation of those that do: the meanings of the core concepts are to a great extent filled out by their proximity to adjacent concepts. Power and culture, the subjects of the final two chapters, can be considered adjacent concepts for reasons which are discussed in the relevant chapters. Perimeter concepts are generally of greater importance than marginal ones to the formation of the wider landscape.

A single political concept cannot tell us very much on its own, particularly when at a stage in which its meaning remains essentially contested. It is therefore necessary to organise and decontest a group of concepts and examine the patterns which are formed. Such patterns 'are most conveniently known as ideologies, those systems of political thinking, loose or rigid, deliberate or unintended, through which individuals and groups construct an understanding of the political world they, or those who preoccupy their thoughts, inhabit, and then act on that understanding.'[65] These ideologies 'are distinctive configurations of political concepts'[66] which 'create specific conceptual patterns from a pool of indeterminate and unlimited combinations.'[67] The distinguishing features of each ideology, therefore, lie in the specific decontested meanings given to its concepts, and the distinctive patterns into which these concepts form.

Crucially, the study of ideologies locates political concepts 'within the patterns in which they actually appear'[68], the reason being that 'ideologies are *groupings* of decontested political concepts. The mutual influence of these concepts is paramountly affected by the specific morphological arrangements that place them in relation to each other; they constitute systems of

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[63] Freeden (1996) p.2
[64] Freeden (2003) pp.64-65
[65] Freeden (1996) p.3
[66] *Ibid*, p.4
[67] *Ibid*.
[68] *Ibid*. p.3

internal relations, albeit open-bordered and in constant mutation.'[69] These patterns are influenced by '4 Ps': proportionality, priority, permeability and proximity, all of which affect how the concepts connect to one another. With the exception of permeability, these are for the most part straightforward. Proportionality relates to the concepts which are most likely to be at the forefront of a political party or movement's public output, which in general refers to documents such as manifestos and press statements.[70] These are the concepts (and conceptions of concepts) for which an ideology is known. An opposition to hierarchy has a high level of proportionality within horizontal politics, and is manifested in its public face by objections to traditional political structures, to policing, to hierarchically-organised protest and to wider inequalities at a local and global level. In other words, specific *types* of hierarchies tend to be identified. Priority, meanwhile, relates to the concepts which are allocated core significance in practice, meaning for example that such concepts are never sacrificed for the sake of expediency.[71] Again, the anti-hierarchical tendencies of horizontal politics are relevant here, although in practice they are manifested by a focus on organisational process and resisting hierarchies of value. Proximity refers to the way in which concepts – or rather the *conceptions* of those concepts in use in the ideology in question – are shaped by their near neighbours. For example, the concept of 'resistance' as deployed here is part of a core that also contains an explicit resistance to hierarchy and a focus on organisational process. This core is surrounded by adjacent concepts such as prefiguration (bringing about change in the world as it is), direct action (in the literal sense rather than that which is synonymous with civil disobedience) and an anti-hegemonic conception of power. This is the context in which the horizontal conception of resistance develops, and it is liable to produce a somewhat different conception from one which emerges in conjunction with a deterministic theory of history and the view that real change can only be brought about after the revolution.[72] Finally, 'The feature of *permeability* indicates that ideologies are not mutually exclusive in their ideas, concepts, and conceptions. Rather they intersect with one another at multiple points of contact.'[73]

  This is a more complex feature than the other three, referring to the external relations between ideologies as well as the internal configuration of concepts. Internally, it covers the possibility for components of one or more concepts to also be concepts in their own right, as well as the potential for concepts to share many of the same components. Both of these aspects, but particularly the latter, are relevant to the study of horizontal politics. I have classified ideas such as consensus, affinity and autonomy as perimeter concepts, occupying 'the point where concepts lose their

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[69] *Ibid*. p.82
[70] Freeden (2003) p.61
[71] *Ibid*.
[72] This is admittedly a somewhat simplified version of Marxism, as the subtleties of how Marx's ideas have been used and/or misused are outside the remit of this project.
[73] Freeden (2003) p.63

abstraction and are interwoven with the concrete practices sanctioned or condemned by an ideology'.[74] However, they are dealt with here for the most part as components of other, more centrally-located concepts, in particular of (anti-)hierarchy and organisation. They are also part of a range of components which are shared between these and other concepts, albeit examined from slightly different angles. A further point of specific relevance to this project is the level of permeability between different ideologies. It cannot be denied that horizontal politics contains a level of crossover with other ideologies, in particular anarchism but also socialism and to some extent Marxism (assuming the latter two are to be considered separately). The feature of permeability, however, makes this permissible and not intrinsically an obstacle to the formation of a distinctive horizontal ideology.

   Although each ideology can produce a decontested conception of any given concept, those concepts which have been around for longer can be significantly more difficult to apply newer meanings to. Freeden, for example, describes how 'political concepts bear the accumulated burdens of the past in a manner rare among economic or sociological concepts. Democracy is a term heavily packed with past associations, debates, and prejudices stretching back to antiquity. Its present coating peels off only to reveal further layers without which the outer membrane would collapse.'[75] I would suggest, albeit with little tangible evidence, that this might explain the absence of focus on certain more established political concepts such as 'liberty', 'equality' and 'justice' in the literature of horizontal political movements. This is not to say that such concepts are not alluded to, but they are not subject to the same level of detailed analysis as, for example, power or organisation. The rationale for this is not explicitly discussed, but I consider it at the very least an informed guess to put it down to the fact that, were these concepts to be used in any depth, they would need to be *re*contested before a decontested 'horizontal' meaning could be attached.

The sources

   This project draws from a variety of sources. The background material includes 'conventional' literature on each conceptual theme, the pre-existing theoretical works of anarchist, autonomous Marxists and other relevant fields, and works of 'militant' or 'activist' ethnography which help to bridge the gap between 'insider'/'activist' and 'outsider'/'academic' literature. The focus, however, is on the material directly generated by individuals and groups who position themselves explicitly within horizontal movements. My main sources have been the edited volumes which arise from reflection on larger mobilisations such as those focused on G8 or WTO summits. These include *Shut them Down!* and *Reflections on June 18*. I have made a conscious decision to focus

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[74] *Ibid*. p.62
[75] Freeden (1996) p.98

on such volumes as they manage to combine detailed practical descriptions with more or less thorough analysis of events and decisions: as such, they give a clear picture of the distinctive ways that the groups involved combine theory and practice. This is what I regard as 'polished' activist material: it is put together with the aim of being read by a wider audience, and written after the event – with enough time having passed to consider and reflect – rather than in the heat of the moment. Polished material also includes several 'how and why' type guides, both in print and online; particular examples here relate to consensus decision-making and affinity groups. This includes *Recipes for Disaster* and *Do It Yourself*. Again, such guides demonstrate the efforts made by horizontal movements to develop a distinctive, coherent outlook.

I also, however, make some use of 'rougher' material: leaflets, agitprop material, blog posts, and at times Twitter. For example, some of the information on consensus decision-making is derived from a leaflet handed out at the Hori-Zone. These are useful because, while they do not involve any level of critical reflection, they instead supply a measure of insight into the thought processes behind certain actions, being more immune to self-censorship than anything written after having had time to think. In addition, they are often activists' first point of contact with the relevant ideas. Less use has been made of this category of material, however, due to difficulties in making a systematic selection.

I have also used, to a limited extent, my own notes made while participating in the Hori-Zone convergence site. As regards the ethics, I should mention that these notes were all taken during open meetings to which all site participants and any visitors were invited, or refer to general points of organisation which were not confidential. In particular, I refrained from directly quoting individual participants, from identifying individuals, and from documenting any illegal activity in any but the most general sense. For example, the fact that a number of blockades took place is common knowledge, as was the destruction of the Springkerse Burger King: however, had I been made aware of the identities of the individuals responsible for the latter action, I would have regarded this as confidential and off-the-record information.

As regards selection of the more polished grassroots material from the wide range of potential sources, a number of factors influenced this choice. The process hinged to an extent on the snowball method, meaning in many cases one source referred me to another. This method does, however, necessitate having some original sources to begin with, meaning that other criteria became necessary. The first of these is the level of influence certain groups can be seen to have, at least within their relatively local contexts. My reasons for focussing in the first instance on the Gleneagles mobilisation are given above: during this mobilisation, the Dissent! network provided

an umbrella for the horizontal groupings involved, while the TRAPESE[76] Popular Education Collective was responsible for much of the outreach regarding why the protests were regarded as necessary and what the wider aims behind them were. These dis-organisations can be regarded as the roots of what transpired, including many of the smaller groupings which will be mentioned throughout this project but also the Hori-Zone eco-village itself and much of the subsequent reinvigoration of this form of politics. As such, the material they generate has been given a central role in this project, in particular that pertaining to the actions of Dissent! during the mobilisation itself and to the ongoing work of TRAPESE. A similar point can be made regarding CrimethInc in the United States, given their popularity among younger activists which has in turn popularised the ethos and tactics of horizontal politics among those who are disillusioned with more traditional political repertoires. The controversy of groups such as CrimethInc is in itself a good measure, as it implies that such groups are of enough importance to provoke frequent debate. Finally, the groups whose output is examined here can to a great extent be regarded as exemplars of a wider movement of movements: although the emphasis on diversity makes me wary of declaring any group a 'standard' example, there are a number of characteristics which can be extrapolated, including the rejection of hierarchy and some form of critique of power relations. My interest is in ideological distinctiveness rather than functional efficacy on the part of horizontal politics: as such, I have not gone into detail on the practicalities of how a prefigurative approach may potentially generate changes in society as a whole. In addition to this being something of a tangent, it is also in short supply in the literature.

The morphological landscape

  Much of the specific detail on the subject of the morphology of horizontal politics can be found elsewhere in this introduction: however, it is worth a brief overview of the landscape and an explanation of why certain concepts have been given more attention than others in this project. I have identified three core concepts: hierarchy (or more accurately anti-hierarchy, as it is the resistance to all forms of hierarchy which is relevant here), organisation and resistance. Hierarchy and organisation have been given chapters here, and will be discussed shortly in the chapter summary. The anti-hierarchical tendencies of horizontal politics shape every other aspect of this political outlook, making it an essential topic for further discussion. Organisation was chosen as it picks up on some of the loose ends from the preceding chapter, dealing with some practical aspects of anti-hierarchal politics where the chapter on hierarchy is more theoretical. Resistance does *not* have its own chapter, as it is already discussed from any number of different angles in the

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[76] Taking Radical Action through Popular Education and Sustainable Everything
(http://trapese.clearerchannel.org/about_us.php last accessed 19/12/2010)

chapters which are there. The movements organise for resistance; express resistance to dominant power structures by creating a new analysis of power; and resist using cultural tactics.

Power, although an adjacent rather than a core concept, has been allocated a separate chapter: the reason being that, although not a core concept, it does play a vital role in understanding the general worldview of horizontal politics. As regards culture, the second adjacent concept to be discussed in a dedicated chapter, its major influence is a practical one on the tactics used by horizontal movements. However, its inclusion also helps to tighten up certain other ideas, for example the grassroots element of horizontal politics that is alluded to in the other three chapters but not explored in as much detail. Furthermore, culture as a concept provides information as to the terrain on which grassroots resistance takes place. Two further adjacent concepts – which do not have dedicated chapters but nonetheless warrant a mention here – are prefiguration/prefigurative politics and direct action. Prefiguration is the idea of bringing about change in the world as it is, rather than waiting for a revolution; direct action is somewhat connected to this, as the name refers to taking action directly to bring about some sort of chance, rather than delegating it to others. In practical terms 'direct action' is used to designate actions which aim for some specific effect, for example a blockade which actually shuts down the target for a length of time, rather than being purely symbolic. Both of these play a role in shaping the wider landscape of horizontal politics: both are also alluded to on many occasions in the four chapters which deal with other concepts, hence it not being necessary to allocate them separate space.

Consensus, affinity, autonomy, diversity and everyday life are perimeter concepts: they are positioned on the line where abstract ideas become concrete and where the many potential meanings are narrowed down to produce a decontested conception. In their concrete forms, they also take the form of components of some of the more central concepts, and it is in this role that they will largely be analysed here. Unlike the more central concepts, these do not have detailed internal morphologies of their own: they do, however, play a role in influencing the decontested meanings which are applied to the other concepts; and this is down to proximity as much as to their role as components.

The conceptual landscape advanced here is one of an ideology in development: as such, I can only capture the essence of a certain stage of the process. I constructed the basic framework on the basis of how the concepts in question are generally used in the movement literature discussed above: the level of attention they are given, the depth of discussion surrounding them and the emphasis placed on them. Frequency of reference is a factor, as is the type of reference: the key is whether they appear to be designated as significant over a range of the literature. As regards the

decision to make certain concepts the subject of specific chapters, this is largely due to the extent to which they complement one another without repeating the same material. An analysis of power, for example, demonstrates some of the complexities behind the stated need to resist hierarchy. Culture, meanwhile, covers a range of tactics: but also emphasises the grassroots nature of the movement with practical examples.

The themes

In examining the more general ethos of horizontal politics, a number of principles emerge which can be seen as core to any theory generated by horizontal movements. These can be grouped under the themes of hierarchy; organisation; power and finally culture. Given the importance of these themes to the overall project, it may appear that they are being identified at a rather late stage. However, as the previous sections of this chapter provide the context and some explanation of where the themes are drawn from, it is more logical to discuss the results at this stage rather than before. This section outlines the chapters which follow and the rationale for the various thematic groupings. There is inevitably some level of crossover in terms of concepts, with some being examined from a number of angles.

The first thematic chapter examines the role of hierarchy and the rejection of hierarchy in horizontal politics, in the context of the examples given above and with reference to relevant history. Beginning with the arguments made against hierarchy by those involved in horizontal movements and spaces, the chapter examines the key ideas contained within these arguments and, subsequently, their role in generating a distinctive theory of horizontal politics. The focus is on the reasons given for certain practices and on principles such as autonomy and diversity which, adopted as core values, impact upon attitudes to hierarchy. Hierarchy can be regarded as a core concept in the morphology of horizontal politics: in particular, it scores highly both on proportionality – relating to the importance it is afforded in internal discourses – and on priority, in being a key part in the image horizontal movements aim to project to the outside. This impact on outward self-definition is a significant reason why a chapter is devoted to the concept of hierarchy. In addition, the rejection of hierarchy impacts on the meaning applied to other concepts and the approach taken to any number of theoretical and practical questions by horizontal movements.

The second thematic chapter deals with the question of organisation, which – being to a great extent the practical manifestation of the rejection of hierarchy – follows on from the previous discussion. Again, the focus is on the attitudes to organisation found in the empirical literature, and in the first instance particularly on closer examination of the tactics previously highlighted and

the perceived benefits of what is often called 'dis-organisation'. Inherent in such tactics is an attempt to demonstrate that horizontal – meaning non-hierarchical and egalitarian – organisation is not just desirable but also practical and possible: a prefigurative approach of the sort described above. Organisational (or rather dis-organisational) strategies are central to how horizontal movements distinguish themselves: those involved highlight the idea that they can organise, and posit dis-organisation as an alternative to merely being unorganised; meanwhile attempting to distance themselves from the more hierarchical connotations of being an organisation or indeed of being organised. A very specific conception of organisation is used here, which implies a rejection of alternative conceptions: here, the decontestation of meaning involved goes a long way to distinguish the political outlook at hand.

The third thematic chapter deals with questions of power: how 'horizontal' activists and movements engage with these questions is an important factor in distinguishing them from those they critique. The general idea, expressed most famously by Holloway[77], is the rejection of the 'taking' of power by revolutionary movements and the proposed alternative of breaking up and redistributing power to genuinely 'empower' the oppressed. There is an emphasis in the literature on encouraging activists and the wider population to take control of their own liberation rather than delegating it to others: hence the attempts to generate a 'DIY' culture. This idea can be traced back to the council communists: however, the Situationists played a major role in promoting it. The affinity group structure in evidence at Gleneagles (and used in smaller, less well-known actions) encourages this shattering of power. The need to reconceptualise power and the ways in which it is dealt with runs as a thread through the literature, colouring many of the other conceptions in use here. This places it in the category of adjacent concept: however, I regard it as influential enough on the wider discourse to place it in a separate chapter from the related questions of hierarchy and organisation.

The fourth and final thematic chapter focuses on culture as a terrain for horizontal resistance. 'Cultural resistance' encompasses many areas which are key to identifying a distinct horizontal politics, in particular those which other movements might consider frivolous or less worthy of attention. Cultural resistance involves such tactics as *détournement* (in the form of subvertising and 'adbusting') and carnivals of resistance. The chapter will draw in the first instance on the empirical accounts of those involved in actions of this nature, to identify and explain the key ideas. Links will also be drawn with earlier movements, such as the Situationists, who advocated and explored the tactics of resistance at a cultural level. I have selected culture for examination in a dedicated chapter due partly to its interrelatedness with the previous three concepts: however, it does appear as something of an odd concept out. This is to a great extent the point: to regard it as

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[77] Holloway, J. (2005) *Change the World Without Taking Power* London: Pluto

less relevant would be to misunderstand the nature of horizontal politics and the importance of a full spectrum of resistance to those involved as argued for in the literature.

Critiques and challenges

One of the ways in which horizontal movements aim to distinguish themselves is their methods of dealing with the challenges that emerge, and this is a theme that will be referred to throughout the relevant thematic chapters. Here, then, is a brief overview of the general types of challenge that are faced.

Functional challenges can be regarded as those which affect the day-to-day function of a movement in terms of achieving immediate goals such as the disruption of a summit. The most commonly-raised question in this context is that of whether the absence of formal leadership constitutes a barrier to actually carrying out effective action. While on the subject of effectiveness, the question can also be asked of whether the necessity of maintaining a wide remit and focussing on the horizontal process might detract in some cases from the challenge levelled at opponents. In particular, it could be argued that the wide range of issues involved has the potential to dilute the message.

Challenges to ideals are in general those which highlight perceived inconsistencies between horizontal political theory and practice. The first two challenges relate to the ideal of diversity. A question often raised in the empirical literature is that of whether the global justice movement – or, more specifically, its manifestations in the form of (for example) summit protests – is too diverse to be coherent. This follows on from the functional challenge regarding the dilution of the overall message by the inclusion of a wide range of issues. Conversely, however, it has also been argued that the movement is not diverse enough to claim diversity as a central characteristic: in particular, questions have been raised about diversity of race and class among participants in UK protests. The third, related challenge is to the principle of inclusiveness: specifically, is this genuinely possible, or does it fall victim to practical factors such as an 'activist mindset'[78]? In recent years, questions have been raised regarding the privileging of more exclusive but visible tactics (for example 'summit-hopping', which requires the time, energy and resources for travel and to deal with potential arrest if participating in actions) over those which are less visible such as organising in one's own community. The subtext here is that, to be effective, participants must become 'activists' above all else. Taken to its extreme, this can be regarded as unintentional vanguardism, although it is dubious whether such an extreme would emerge. Finally, there is the question of

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[78] See for example 'Andrew X' (1999) 'Give up activism' in Anarchist Federation (eds) *Reflections on June 18* online at http://www.afed.org.uk/online/j18/reflec1.html last accessed 18/11/08

whether – despite all overt efforts to avoid this – unintentional hierarchies can still form, and whether these less formal hierarchies might be 'worse' in some ways than those which are immediately visible and subject to procedure. This is the 'tyranny of structurelessness'[79] argument first put forward by Jo Freeman (Joreen) in the context of the American feminist movement. Freeman argues that 'Contrary to what we would like to believe, there is no such thing as a structureless group. Any group of people of whatever nature that comes together for any length of time for any purpose will inevitably structure itself in some fashion. The structure may be flexible; it may vary over time; it may evenly or unevenly distribute tasks, power and resources over the members of the group. But it will be formed regardless of the abilities, personalities, or intentions of the people involved.'[80] If this is the case then it is a problem which the global justice movement needs to get past in order to live up to its ideals.

Finally, there are the challenges to the overall success of a movement. These challenges have potential to stop the progress of horizontal politics at any given point. The first such challenge is reification: the crystallisation of the ideas and practices involved into an ideology in the pejorative sense of the word, something fixed, unchanging and unable to adapt to circumstances. The second is recuperation: the risk of becoming, to borrow a Situationist term, part of the spectacle, and losing radical potential as a result. At a more practical level there is the very real threat posed by a loss of energy within the movement leading to its decline. Related to this, finally, is a potential inability to break into the public mindset and out of the activist mindset described above.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the main themes to be dealt with in the project as a whole, the methods used in this process and a number of other elements. The next chapter goes into depth on questions relating to ideology.

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[79] Freeman, Jo/Joreen (1972) 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness' online at http://www.jofreeman.com/joreen/tyranny.htm last accessed 18/11/08
[80] *Ibid*.

Ideology: a thematic history

Introduction

Since the methodology used in this project is focused on the concept of ideology, this chapter examines the uses and meanings of the term and justifies the sense in which it is used here. This chapter begins with a brief conceptual history of ideology and an initial outline of the questions raised by the various conceptions, then explores the questions with the greatest significance in the context of this project. The first question is whether ideology is necessarily 'false' or misleading; or a legitimate descriptive term for a coherent political outlook. The second deals with the relationship between ideology and power: whether there is one, and whether it intrinsically flows in one direction by legitimating the already dominant power. The third question is whether ideology is 'dead' (and thus irrelevant in today's world) or whether it remains a useful concept. The chapter offers a justification of the use of Freeden's conception of ideology throughout the rest of this project and concludes with an analysis of the porous boundaries between horizontal politics and its near ideological neighbour, anarchism.

The concept of ideology

As this is a conceptual project, it is necessary to start with an outline of the history of ideology as a concept. It is worth noting that the significant gap between the two main conceptions of ideology has prompted the question of whether they can be contained within the same (contested) concept, or whether they are dealing with two different concepts bearing the same name.[81] A judgement on this question is beyond the remit of this project: however, it should be borne in mind when the nature of the aforementioned gap is discussed.

Since the first deployment of the term 'ideology', there have been three significant interpretations of its meaning, each subject to some internal conceptual disagreement. This can be regarded in terms of three conceptions of one concept, or alternatively of three concepts to which the same name has been attached. It is not my intention at this stage to conclude on this debate: however, it will be referred back to when relevant. On this point, I agree with Eagleton's claim that 'The word "ideology", one might say, is a *text*, woven of a whole tissue of different conceptual strands; it is traced through by divergent histories, and it is probably more important to assess what is valuable

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[81] Humphrey, M. (2006) '(De)Contesting Ideology' in Talshir, G., Humphrey, M. and Freeden, M. (2006) *Taking Ideology Seriously: 21st Century Reconfigurations* London: Routledge pp.119-140

or can be discarded in each of these lineages than to merge them forcibly into some Grand Global Theory.'[82]

The starting point for this history is Destutt de Tracy, credited by Eagleton as 'the inventor of the term ideology.'[83] Destutt de Tracy fought in the French Revolution and formulated his conception of ideology as an antidote to the Terror.[84] His conception of ideology stands in opposition to some more familiar uses of the term: he depicts a 'science of ideas',[85] which 'belonged to a rational politics, in contrast to the irrationalist barbarism of the Terror.'[86] Ideology in his view was based on science, evidence and reason, and stands in direct opposition to the false and irrational ideas which promoted the authoritarianism of Napoleon. Napoleon responded with the first recorded case of pejorative accusation of ideology against an opponent: he 'claimed to have invented the derogatory term "ideologue" himself, as a way of demoting the men of the Institute from scientists and *savants* to sectarians and subversives.'[87] The meanings attached to 'ideology' by Destutt de Tracy and subsequently Napoleon, in which ideology is promoted as scientific truth cutting through the lies of the ruling class and derided as a dangerous subversion against the rulers in question, is a relief image of the second use of the term. In more recent times, the suggestion that ideology could be a solution to political hidden agendas has largely been supplanted with a view which regards it at worst as a means of reinforcing such agendas. At best, it is regarded as something which can be opposed to reality. As Mannheim points out, when a 'depreciative attitude'[88] is taken to ideology, 'What is depreciated is the validity of the adversary's thought because it is regarded as unrealistic.'[89] This view of ideology explicitly distances it from practical political activity, and hence from reality.

Such a 'depreciative' view is generally associated with what Humphrey calls 'restrictive'[90] conceptions of ideology. A restrictive conception defines ideology in terms of a specific – and in normal circumstances negative – facet such as 'ideology as beliefs (or reasons for holding beliefs) that are, in some sense, illusory or false'[91] or 'ideas that serve the interests of a dominant and

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[82] Eagleton, T. (1991) *Ideology: an introduction* London: Verso p.1
[83] *Ibid*. p.66
[84] *Ibid*.
[85] *Ibid*.
[86] *Ibid*.
[87] *Ibid*., p.67
[88] Mannheim, K. (1936) *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul p.64
[89] *Ibid*.
[90] Humphrey (2006) Throughout.
[91] *Ibid*. p.125

oppressive power, or which cause injustice'[92]. A restrictive conception can involve any such idea separately or in combination, but is limited to a specific remit.

The earliest significant usage of these ideas was made by Marx, Engels and comrades of theirs. Although there is much variation in the Marxist canon – and even between the younger and older Marx – it can be safely argued that the Marxist conception of ideology hinges for the most part on perceiving it as an illusion which serves the interests of the bourgeoisie and clouds workers' awareness of their plight. The subtleties of and distinctions between various Marxist viewpoints will be discussed in more depth in the context of the points relating to falsity and power.

However, it is not accurate to define the restrictive conception of ideology as a purely Marxist phenomenon, particularly with regard to the facets listed above. As Mannheim points out, 'Nowadays groups of every standpoint use this weapon against all the rest':[93] if an outlook can be identified as having 'ideological foundations',[94] it can by this token be discredited. The functionalist tradition is notable for applying such an approach: in Durkheim's science of social life, ideology was the enemy, 'opposed to science and therefore to sociology.'[95] However, although Durkheim regarded ideology as an illusion, Malešević points out that he also saw it as a functional necessity if humans are to 'adjust their actions to the environment in which they live.[96] A general functionalist perspective, as cited by Malešević, indicates that the purpose of ideology is the 'legitimisation of social arrangements',[97] be this a positive or a negative trait. Parsons brings about a disjuncture in functionalist thought on ideology, using the term to discredit certain theoretical opponents who question the legitimacy of the existing order: 'He discerns ideological purposes behind their highly critical studies of US society, and regards them as partial insights that pretend to be detailed and complete analyses of that society.'[98] Shils also takes a restrictive positivist view of ideology, but one which hinges on rigidity and inflexibility rather than falsehood: to him, 'Ideologies are perceived primarily as normative belief systems that are founded on "systematic intellectual constructs" that demand total commitment of their followers.'[99] Other defining features are 'the distinctive dogmatic, sometimes fanatical, nature of their principles'[100] and 'their strong opposition to other belief systems'.[101] Sartori adds a new

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[92] *Ibid*.
[93] Mannheim (1936) p.67
[94] *Ibid*.
[95] Malešević, S. (2002) *Ideology, Legitimacy and the New State: Yugoslavia, Serbia and Croatia* London: Frank Cass p.19
[96] *Ibid*. Durkheim regarded religion in a similar light.
[97] *Ibid*. p.20
[98] *Ibid*.
[99] *Ibid*. p.21
[100] *Ibid*.
[101] *Ibid*.

dimension, 'emotional appeal'[102], to the conception of ideology as rigid and dogmatic: however, he further narrows the conception by attributing ideology not to an entire belief system but only to "a political part"[103] thereof. Functionalism, then, produces the following (often overlapping) restrictive conceptions of ideology: ideology as an illusion; ideology as a means to legitimise an (acceptable or unacceptable) existing order; ideology as a criticism of an acceptable existing order; and ideology as a rigid and dogmatic set of beliefs, which for some functionalists are purely political and/or have emotional appeal.

The Paretian tradition, Malešević observes, avoids the term 'ideology' due to Marxist connotations: however, Pareto's concept of a 'derivation' mirrors the Marxist conception of ideology.[104] Pareto regards these derivations as 'non-logical', a term encapsulating irrationality and the impossibility of verification: derivations are based on a range of factors, none in Pareto's view necessarily involving the truth. In particular, they can be based on assertions – 'general statements that are presented in absolute, dogmatic and axiomatic ways'[105] – or on the authority of one or more people or a tradition, even when the evidence those in authority present is misleading or invented. Malešević defines Paretianism as an inclusive approach to ideology, as it covers all aspects of human life rather than being confined to the political sphere. However, it can also be argued that the definition is a restrictive one, as derivations are clearly defined in terms of their irrationality and likely falsity rather than any wider factors.

The binary between inclusive and restrictive conceptions is, as Humphrey acknowledges, problematic. However, in general inclusive conceptions aim to delink ideology from concepts such as falsity and class domination, and to widen its scope. The epistemological argument for an inclusive conception aims to remove the 'privileged place, somehow exempted from the turmoils of social life'[106] which the critique of ideology has hitherto occupied. Critical perspectives (Marxism being a particular target of such argument) are in this light stripped of their immunity from their own critique. Mannheim initiated this process, applying a 'general form of the total conception of ideology'[107] which is 'used by the analyst when he has the courage to subject not just the adversary's point of view but all points of view, including his own, to the ideological analysis.'[108] His key claim is that Marxism is an ideology as much as those it criticises; 'as much a

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[102] *Ibid.*
[103] Sartori, G. (1969) 'Politics, Ideology and Belief Systems' *American Political Science Review* 63, p.405 cited Malešević (2002) p.21
[104] Malešević (2002) p.23
[105] *Ibid.*, p.24
[106] Zizek, S. (1994) *Mapping Ideology* London: Verso p3 cited Humphrey (2006) p.122
[107] Mannheim (1936) pp.68-69
[108] *Ibid.* p.69

function of the world in which it emanates as any other body of social thought.'[109] The epistemological argument sets the foundations for neutral conceptions of ideology to emerge: ones which are based on an investigation of content rather than a critique. The second argument for an inclusive conception of ideology levels a direct criticism at the restrictive conception based on class domination: the claim that ideology's sole purpose is to explain how 'meaning serves, in particular circumstances, to establish and maintain relations of power which are systematically asymmetrical i.e. relations of domination.'[110] Here, an inclusive conception of ideology aims to recontest the bases of such a critique, particularly concepts such as 'domination' and 'injustice', which as Humphrey points out are themselves 'categories open to ideological contestation.'[111]

Finally, inclusive conceptions of ideology aim to extend the scope of the concept. The purpose of ideology analysis, by this conception, is to investigate the meanings used by political thinkers, the significance of their interpretation of contested concepts and the relationship between political thought and political action. In this context, ideology can be regarded as 'a synonym for "political thought", viewed from a particular perspective.'[112] An inclusive conception, in general terms, regards the content and internal structure of an ideology as going beyond particular attributes – such as legitimising a group's exercise of power – and encompassing the many myriad facets of a collective political outlook. This rules out neither the role of oppressive factors in a political outlook nor the deployment of oppressive tactics by a group's leadership: however, it opens up the concept of ideology to being more than the sum of these parts. The ideological analysis developed by Freeden is an example of an inclusive conception of ideology. His approach, conceptual morphology, is based on investigation of the internal configurations of ideologies, and the role and relative importance of specific political concepts. Of particular relevance is the way in which concepts become 'decontested' in order to fulfil their role in a given political outlook. The idea is categorically not to expose falsehoods and malevolent hidden agendas, and neither does the approach start from the assumption that these will be found. Instead, the aim is 'to examine the structure of *beliefs* about such matters as justice, oppression and domination, rather than to make evaluative judgements about them.'[113]

The rest of this chapter focuses on the wider questions which are posed regarding the nature of ideology: whether it is intrinsically 'false'; its relationship to power; and its potential continuing relevance.

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[109] Humphrey (2006) p.122
[110] Thompson, J. B. (1990) *Ideology and the Modern Culture: Critical Social Theory in the Era of Mass Communication* Cambridge: Polity Press cited Humphrey (2006) p.123
[111] Humphrey (2006) p.124
[112] *Ibid.*
[113] *Ibid.*, p.132

Ideology and falsehood

The restrictive conception regarding ideology as falsehood is far from monolithic: accounts differ of who is perpetrating the falsehood, how and where it comes into being and for what reasons. However, the basic idea that there is some form of falsity or deception involved is a significant part of the depiction of ideology in pejorative terms. As previously stated, the earliest origins of this use of the term appear to lie with Napoleon's responses to his critics. At that stage the 'ideologues' were those resistant to the dominant power, and the insult came from above. For the most part, however, the connection between ideology and deception has been considered the territory of Marxists, who have levelled their critique from the viewpoint of the working class deceived by those in power. Even within the category 'Marxist' there is no monolithic conception of ideology: the usage even changes within Marx's own works. However, the idea that a deception is an essential part of ideology is a consistent strand of Marxist discussion on the topic.

A starting-point is the view of the 'young Marx', represented in Marx's earlier works. In *The German Ideology*, Malešević describes, 'Ideologies were treated as illusory world-views, as camera obscura: to criticise them meant to "unmask" a position that emphasised ideas and spirit as the driving force of history.'[114] Here, Marx starts from the position that 'The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life',[115] and subsequently makes the point that an inversion takes place in which ideas appear to govern human activity. His critique aims at the German idealism of his day, seen in the following terms:

'Once upon a time a valiant fellow had the idea that men were drowned in water only because they were possessed with the idea of gravity. If they were to knock this notion out of their heads, say by stating it to be a superstition, a religious concept, they would be sublimely proof against any danger from water. His whole life long he fought against the illusion of gravity, of whose harmful results all statistics brought him new and manifold evidence. This valiant fellow was the type of the new revolutionary philosophers in Germany.'[116]

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[114] Malešević, S. (2002) *Ideology, Legitimacy and the New State: Yugoslavia, Serbia and Croatia* London: Frank Cass p.12

[115] Marx, K. (1845a) 'The German Ideology' in McLellan, D. (ed.) (2002) *Karl Marx: selected writings* Oxford: Oxford University Press pp.175-208 (quote from p.180)

[116] Marx, K. (1845b) 'The German Ideology' Preface online at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/preface.htm accessed 05/12/11

Idealism, he argues, regards ideas as the main oppressive force, ignoring the human actions and interactions from which these are produced: ideology, furthermore, is the product of the same inversion in which ideas are seen as the ruling force of the age.

The perspective of the young Marx can be summarised in terms of the processes of reification (when social phenomena come to be regarded as material things rather than human output, and their existence becomes accepted as 'inevitable'[117]) and alienation (when 'human powers, products and processes'[118] 'come to assume an apparently autonomous existence'[119] outside of human control) with relation to consciousness. For the young Marx, the concept of ideology was rooted in the naturalisation and dehistoricisation of ideas: 'the phenomenon that increasingly abstract ideas hold sway, i.e. ideas which increasingly take on the form of universality.'[120] Furthermore, these ideas develop the appearance of an autonomous existence, which in turn confers dominant status. Their origins as human constructs are subsequently forgotten. Here, Marx argues that 'Individuals always proceeded, and always proceed, from themselves. Their relations are the relations of their real life-process. How does it happen that their relations assume an independent existence over against them? and that the forces of their own life become superior to them? In short: division of labour, the level of which depends on the development of the productive power at any particular time.'[121] The root of the idealist view on consciousness can be found in this separation from social practices: consciousness becomes 'fetishised'[122] and regarded as the basis rather than the product of historical life. This fetishised, dissociated consciousness is regarded as false consciousness.

Here, Eagleton identifies a 'sharp duality between "consciousness" and "practical activity"'[123], albeit one which inverts the causal relations put forward by the idealists Marx and Engels criticise. This, he argues, diminishes the 'purposive'[124] element of human life, risking reducing it to 'mere physical motion'.[125] The problem, Eagleton suggests, could hinge on a lack of clarity in the definition of consciousness. He finds the inversion described by Marx and Engels more plausible when 'consciousness' is taken to refer to 'well-articulated structures of doctrine'[126] which become

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[117] Eagleton (1991) p.70
[118] *Ibid.*
[119] *Ibid.*
[120] Marx, K. (1845c) 'The German Ideology' Part 1b online at
http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01b.htm accessed 06/12/11
[121] Marx, K. (1854d) 'The German Ideology' part 1c online at
http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01c.htm accessed 06/12/11
(Punctuation unaltered)
[122] Eagleton (1991) pp.70-71
[123] *Ibid.* p.71
[124] *Ibid.*
[125] *Ibid.*
[126] *Ibid.*

'estranged from their practical, productive "base"'[127]. However, even the most alienated ideological discourses 'still powerfully condition our real-life practices.'[128] Hence, an 'estrangement' appears less feasible. A more general interpretation of the term 'consciousness' – referring, to the general field of mental life – would invoke less debate, but also detracts from Marx's theory by suggesting that practical activity would either not exist or not be distinctively human 'without certain embodied intentions, meanings, interpretations.'[129] A contradiction arises between consciousness as necessarily 'practical' and consciousness as somehow lesser than the material world. I agree with Eagleton that the unclear definition creates problems, but do not agree that reducing the dominance of ideas and consciousness need render them unimportant in relation to practical activity. Eagleton is right, however, to argue that practical activity can never be completely distinguished from interpretation and meaning: the idea that in the 'real life-process'[130] the role of interpretation mirrors that of blood circulation in the human body, making independence from one another appear neither possible nor desirable. It is not, therefore, constructive to make 'thought a function of reality rather than vice versa'[131] by 'upending idealism into mechanical materialism'.[132]

Divorced from the realm of practical activity, the Camera Obscura model struggles to accommodate the dynamic, active nature of human consciousness: in turn, this limits the potential of ideology to be active or dynamic. This, Eagleton suggests, limits its capacity for organising the experience of human subjects in accordance with the requirements of a specific social order'[133] and reduces it to a mere distraction from the iniquities of capitalist society. If this is the case, I agree with Eagleton's assessment of the implications: however, I am not convinced that Marx is forcing such a definitive separation. In particular, Marx and Engels link the ruling consciousness of the day to the ruling mode of production, and appear to argue that each element is necessary in order to maintain the other.

The above discussion suggests that a reconnection of ideas and lived experience would solve the problem. However, this is not considered by Marx and Engels to be sufficient. Overcoming false consciousness requires overcoming the social contradictions which generate it.[134] Because '[t]he ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas'[135], it follows that '[t]he class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of

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[127] *Ibid.*
[128] *Ibid.*
[129] *Ibid.*
[130] *Ibid.*
[131] *Ibid.* p.76
[132] *Ibid.*
[133] *Ibid.* p.77
[134] *Ibid.* p.79
[135] Marx (1845a) p.192

mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it.'[136] In the process leading up to Communist revolution, the proletariat become more aware of the oppressive nature of their circumstances; and indeed of the power they have, and their connection to the product of their labour. Here, Marx argues that 'Communism differs from all previous movements in that it overturns the basis of all earlier relations of production and intercourse, and for the first time consciously treats all natural premisses as the creatures of hitherto existing men, strips them of their natural character and subjects them to the power of the united individuals.'[137] Ideology, in the form of ruling class ideas, will be overthrown when the ruling class itself is. However, Eagleton points out, 'this *political* model of ideology does not entirely square with the more epistemological conception of it as thought oblivious to its social origin'[138]: is ideology 'oblivious' to its origin in the activity and interaction of a group of people, or is it firmly moored as the political thought of a dominant group?

   Interestingly, by the time *Critique of Political Economy* was published, Marx has largely dispensed with terminology such as 'illusory' and with the idea that ideology is purely a ruling-class phenomenon. By this account, 'relations of production'[139] create the economic foundation of society: 'the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness.'[140] In these 'definite forms of social consciousness', Eagleton sees an equivalence with ideology, although he does not regard this assumption as unproblematic. He argues that 'There could be certain forms of social consciousness which were non-ideological, either in the sense of not helping to legitimate class-based rule, or in the sense that they were not particularly central to any form of power struggle.'[141] Marx is not, by this reading, referring to 'historical belief-systems and world-views'[142] in general, but rather to a specific set of these. However, this idea can be disputed by Marx's next two sentences: 'The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life process in general. *It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.*'[143] Here, Eagleton suggests, ideology (as he locates it in the text) is universal, part of 'the way the human animal is constituted'[144] and hence 'true of all men and women in all historical epochs'[145].

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[136] *Ibid.*
[137] *Ibid.* p.196
[138] Eagleton (1991) p.79
[139] Marx, K. (1859) 'Preface to *A Critique of Political Economy*' in McLellan, D. (ed.) (2002) *Karl Marx: selected writings* Oxford: Oxford University Press pp.424-428 (quote from p.425)
[140] *Ibid.*
[141] Eagleton (1991) p.81
[142] *Ibid.*
[143] Marx (1859) p.425 emphasis added
[144] Eagleton (1991) p.81

The 'later', economics-focused Marx, however, relocates falsehood at the centre of his conception of ideology. The definition used here is given in the context of commodity fetishism and alienation, and refers to a 'veiling of the real workings of society.'[146] Society has become fragmented, impossible to grasp as a totality, and is dominated by inanimate entities (commodities) which have gained a 'spurious air of naturalness and inevitability.'[147] The commodity, in other words, occupies a higher position than the worker who created it, and humans lack the power to alter the situation. In this conception of ideology, however, these factors are 'inherent in social reality itself':[148] commodities actually 'exercise a tyrannical sway over social relations'[149] rather than merely appearing to do so. Here, Marx references a genuine inversion rather than one which takes place in humans' perception of social relations; ideology thus becomes less a matter of consciousness – false or otherwise – and instead enters the economic realm. Eagleton argues that while *The German Ideology* takes ideology too far from reality, *Capital* runs the risk of bringing it too close.[150] Nonetheless, he regards the later theory as having some advantages over earlier ones. The idea of falsity remains, but is given a 'secure grounding'[151] in 'the structural effects of capitalism'[152] rather than being reduced to an error in perception. However, he also sees this definition as involving unnecessary reduction of ideology to the economic operations of capital, arguing that 'A certain essentialism of ideology would seem at play here, reducing the variety of ideological mechanisms and effects to a homogenous cause.'[153] On this point I agree with Eagleton's assessment: if we accept for the moment that ideology is based on some form of deception, either with or without the power-legitimating angle, this does not necessitate accepting that ideology is a purely economic phenomenon. Regardless of its bases, ideology by any Marxist conception affects to a greater or lesser extent every aspect of life in a capitalist society: how far can this be reduced to economic activity? In addition, the conception advanced in *Capital* regards ideology as universal, leading Eagleton to highlight the absence of explicit reference to class struggle and ask whether all social classes are 'indifferently in the grip of commodity fetishism'.[154] Certainly they are all in its 'grip': however, the experience is not the same. Marx notes that 'everything which appears in the worker as an *activity of alienation*, *of*

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[145] *Ibid.*
[146] *Ibid.* p.85
[147] *Ibid.*
[148] *Ibid.*
[149] *Ibid.*
[150] *Ibid.* p.87
[151] *Ibid.*
[152] *Ibid.*
[153] *Ibid.*
[154] *Ibid.* p.88

estrangement, appears in the non-worker as a *state of alienation*, *of estrangement*'[155] and furthermore that 'the non-worker does everything against the worker which the worker does against himself; but he does not do against himself what he does against the worker.'[156] Hence, all social classes are alienated and deceived: however, they are not affected to the same extent and they certainly do not suffer equally as a result. This conception of ideology is a purely negative one, where the sole purpose is to conceal the truth of the relations of production in capitalist society.

  The term false consciousness is often associated with Marx: however, its origins can be found in the works of Engels, who argues that 'Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, indeed, but with a false consciousness. The real motives impelling him remain unknown to him, otherwise it would not be an ideological process at all.'[157] Here ideology can be seen in terms of rationalisation: what Eagleton calls a 'double motivation in which the surface meaning serves to block from consciousness the subject's true purpose.'[158] This in itself neither necessitates 'empirical falsity,'[159] nor negates it. It does however mask the oppressive nature of capitalist relations of production and the power each worker has over their product.

  Elements of the Second International, however, developed neutral conceptions depicting ideology as 'the mental forms within which men and women fight out their social conflicts.'[160] In this context, 'socialist ideology' became a term that could feasibly be used by socialists to describe their own political thought. Lukács, for example, regarded Marxism as 'the ideological expression of the proletariat.'[161] This is not to say that Lukács is uncritical of the concept: however, neither is he purely pejorative. In his view, ideology is opposed to totality, and thus a form of partial knowledge based on a group's particular interest. However, he argues against the existence of any fully disinterested social class in the current order. He envisions revolution coming when the proletariat achieve a consciousness that is able to 'totalise'[162] the social order and therefore 'understand and transform its own conditions.'[163] This involves the proletariat fully

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[155] Marx, K. (1844) 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844' online at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/labour.htm accessed 06/12/11
[156] *Ibid*.
[157] Engels, F. (1893) 'Letter to Franz Mehring' online at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1893/letters/93_07_14.htm accessed 06/12/11
[158] Eagleton (1991) p.89
[159] *Ibid*.
[160] *Ibid*. p90
[161] *Ibid*. p.94
[162] *Ibid*. p.95
[163] *Ibid*.

recognising its condition, and as such gaining 'an insight into the social whole within which it is oppressively positioned'.[164]

The suggestion that ideology consists of partial, mediated knowledge – rather than an outright deception or false impression – has parallels in conceptions of ideology which do not rely on the falsehood argument. It is worth noting that, while inclusive conceptions of ideology deploy the term neutrally, they are not arguing that any given ideology is neutral. This is the perspective from which Mannheim derived the arguments cited previously, which hold in common with much Marxist thought the strategy of 'linking ideology with its social genesis.'[165] Mannheim's theory of ideology, however, 'detached it from a particular social and historical group',[166] generalising it as 'an omnipresent social phenomenon as well as a group product'[167] to the extent that Marxism was included in the concept as surely as were the bourgeoisie of any generation. Freeden emphasises this point, arguing that 'Epistemologically, the Marxist conception emerged out of a particular set of conditions under which human consciousness reflected the dehumanised and alienated existence of human beings.'[168] The reflection from which this conception was derived became somewhat distorted in itself, Freeden continues, and 'Consequently, ideology came to be seen as inextricably connected to issues of truth and falsehood or distortion, to misperceptions and dissimulations with respect to an objective reality.'[169] This is, however, regarded by Freeden as a result of the social conditions under which Marxist thought developed: it is shaped by a particular perspective which filters how those who adopt it see the world. I find this perspective more convincing, as it irons out many of the contradictions raised in connection to the various developments in Marxist theory. Lukács, for example, accepts the idea of ideology as relational knowledge: nonetheless, he is criticised by Eagleton for regarding Marxist ideology as in some way compatible with grasping the totality of history.[170] The knowledge encapsulated by an ideology may be partial and filtered, as evidenced by the process of 'decontesting'[171] concepts which could have a range of meanings: however, this should not inevitably lead to the conclusion that such knowledge is false, much less that it is based on deliberate deception by the group concerned.

Ideology, power and legitimation

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[164] *Ibid.*
[165] Mannheim (1936) paraphrased Freeden (1996) p26
[166] *Ibid.*
[167] *Ibid.*
[168] Freeden (1996) p.25
[169] *Ibid.*
[170] Eagleton (1991) p.98
[171] Freeden (1996) throughout

One reason proposed for the perceived deceptive nature of ideology is the need to maintain the legitimacy of a dominant power by means of perpetuating false ideas. The two conceptions are often found together, but are not intrinsically linked.

Many of the critiques of ideology discussed above raise the question of *why* such processes are necessary. For what purpose is the true significance of human action and interaction hidden and the commodity fetishised? The short answer is to perpetuate the existing order, and particularly to reinforce the power of the dominant social class. The questions of whether the deception is deliberate and which classes are deceived are less relevant here than the purpose to which ideology is apparently put: the logic behind the earlier statement that the ideas of the ruling class are the ruling ideas.

The most explicit critique on these grounds is made by Gramsci, who categorises ideology under the conceptual umbrella of hegemony.[172] Eagleton makes a partial distinction between the two concepts, pointing out that Gramsci saw hegemony as premised on rulers winning the consent of subjugated people in order to perpetuate their rule over them, whereas ideology could in some circumstances be forcibly imposed. Ideology is not the sum total of hegemony, but rather one of many means of maintaining it.[173] In this context, 'Ideology refers specifically to the way power-struggles are fought out at the level of signification; and though such signification is involved in all hegemonic processes, it is not in all cases the *dominant* level by which rule is sustained.'[174] In other words, a significant part of the ideological aspect of hegemony hinges on the perception of the subjugated that they are ruling themselves. As such, ideology becomes the 'common sense'[175] of the social order, and far harder to subvert or challenge than a purely economic structure. For Eagleton, it is in Gramsci's arguments that 'the crucial transition is effected from ideology as "systems of ideas" to ideology as lived habitual social practice.'[176] The purpose of ideology on this reading is as hinted at by Marx when he refers to the supremacy of ruling class ideas: namely, the diffusion of such ideas 'throughout the fabric of society'[177]. In short, the ideas of the ruling class become the ideas of every member of society, while the impression is given that these ideas are willingly adopted rather than imposed from above. Ideology serves a particularly insidious purpose as an alternative to violence in maintaining social control. The use of direct physical violence diminishes the credibility of a dominant group, whereas ideological control through civil society maintains the impression that the group in question is ruling by consent. Hidden power, the argument goes, is harder to contest than that which is clearly on display. In Eagleton's words, 'It is

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[172] The concept of hegemony itself will be discussed more in chapter 5, 'Power'
[173] Eagleton (1991) p.112
[174] *Ibid*. p.113
[175] *Ibid*. p.114
[176] *Ibid*. p.115
[177] *Ibid*. p.116

preferable on the whole for power to remain conveniently invisible, disseminated throughout the "texture" of social life and thus "naturalised" as custom, habit, spontaneous practice.'[178]

  Gramsci's conception of ideology is criticised from within Marxism, specifically by those in the structuralist Marxist tradition, for focussing heavily on ideology as collective subjectivity or consciousness and neglecting the role of 'the finally determining constraints of a mode of production.'[179] In Poulantzas' view, ideology is 'a complex material structure'[180] based on the relations between the different classes in society. The task of ideology by this reading is 'to recreate, at an "imaginary" level, the unity of the entire social formation'[181] rather than consolidating ruling-class consciousness as a world-view. This structure mediates the relationship between the hegemonic class and the dominant ideology, making it less direct than Gramsci portrays it. Furthermore, the dominant ideology reflects the unity that is already present in society, rather than generating that unity.

  Althusser's structuralist theory, meanwhile, links ideology firmly to the maintenance of state power: in this, it echoes Gramsci's conception of an alternative to violent repression. The state, rather than a ruling class as such, is 'the principal agent of action'[182] and as such ideology is diffused via 'Ideological State Apparatuses' (the counterpart of Repressive State Apparatuses) such as education and the media.[183] The emphasis, in his view, is on maintaining the perceived legitimacy of the state and its actions.

  However, the argument for ideology as a legitimising device is not solely a Marxist phenomenon: it is also put forward by functionalist thinkers. The difference is largely that while Marxism in general takes a pejorative approach to the legitimation of a power of which its adherents disapprove, functionalist views at times accept the necessity of falsehood for maintaining an order which should continue to be maintained. For Durkheim, ideology served a similar function to religion in guiding human action. Ideology provides the 'main cohesive force'[184] and the 'principal element of group solidarity'[185] in society, which Durkheim regards as a moral community. Although ideology is still depicted as an illusion, it is one which serves a vital purpose, and Durkheim does not share the enthusiasm for unmasking it.

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[178] *Ibid.*
[179] *Ibid.* p.122
[180] *Ibid.*
[181] *Ibid.*
[182] Malešević (2002) p.15
[183] *Ibid.*
[184] *Ibid.* p.20
[185] *Ibid.*

Eagleton identifies a number of possible definitions of ideology that could be derived from the various stages of Marx's work. The only one not yet discussed here is 'all of the conceptual forms in which the class struggle as a whole is fought at, which would presumably include the valid consciousness of politically revolutionary forces.'[186] This strand is also picked up on at later stages in the development of Marxist thought: it is of interest in this context because it raises the idea that ideology is not the sole preserve of the ruling class; which by extension raises questions of whether ideology is by definition bound to preserve the hegemony of the said ruling class. If 'true' class consciousness is as ideological as the false variety, and revolutionaries are in possession of an ideology, this suggests a role for ideology in *undermining* a dominant order. Meanwhile, if such groups are excluded from the definition of ideology, this raises the question (posed by Eagleton) of whether groups are somehow non-ideological when in opposition and ideological when in power: given that many revolutionary groups often aim initially to take power,[187] this assumption appears flimsy. Furthermore, the opposite proposition should also be considered. Minogue argues that 'ruling practical wisdom'[188] is non-ideological whereas ideas that dispute this 'wisdom' are ideological. There are echoes here of Napoleon's definition, with 'ideologue' describing enemies of the ruler. On this evidence, Eagleton suggests a broader definition, based on the intersection of belief systems and political power, which is 'neutral on the question of whether this intersection challenged or confirmed a particular social order.'[189] While I do not necessarily agree with the definition he proposes, this element of neutrality is a possible solution to some of the more clearly evident contradictions.

Balkin raises further concerns about the restriction of the concept of ideology to the class domination issue. His principal concern is the risk of 'sentimentalising'[190] the consciousness of subjugated groups and regarding it as an intrinsically constructive force, while overlooking injustices perpetuated by one subordinated group on another. Where, for example, is white working-class racism in this conception? This leads Balkin to a partial rejection of domination-based conceptions of ideology, on the grounds that 'unjust social relations are not *necessarily* relations of domination.'[191] Humphrey takes this a step further, arguing for ideological recontestation of concepts such as 'injustice' or indeed 'domination' itself. Here, the assumptions on which the 'domination' conception is based are questioned: the decontested meanings which have been applied can no longer be taken as read.

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[186] Eagleton (1991) p.84

[187] This is somewhat problematic in the overall context of this project: a critique can be found in chapter 5, 'Power'.

[188] Minogue, K. (1985) *Alien Powers: The Pure Theory of Ideology* London: Palgrave Macmillan p4 cited Eagleton (1991) p6

[189] Eagleton (1991) p.6

[190] Balkin, J. M. (1998) *Cultural Software: a Theory of Ideology* New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press cited Humphrey (2006) p.123

[191] Humphrey (2006) p.123

Ideology: dead or alive?

The final debate concerns whether ideology is still a relevant concept, or one which has outlived its usefulness in a 'post-ideological' era. 'Post-ideological' and similar phrases have emerged at various points in history, particularly with reference to the respective demises of fascism and communism as world powers. Each perceived death of ideology has been met with some form of resurgence, suggesting the proverbial rumours are exaggerated.

The end of the Cold War – widely perceived to have been 'won' by the liberal capitalist 'side' – provided a catalyst for wide-scale debate regarding the obsolescence of ideology. This is at least in part a question of how ideology has been conceptualised. For Fukuyama, the main contention is that by 1992 a situation had emerged where 'there is now no ideology with pretensions to universality that is in a position to challenge liberal democracy'.[192] The first element of his conception of ideology is that significance requires ideology to have potential to be universal. On this basis Fukuyama dismisses Islam for having 'no appeal outside those areas that were culturally Islamic to begin with.'[193] He depicts a world in which 'we cannot picture to ourselves a world that is *essentially* different from the present one, and at the same time better. Other, less reflective ages also thought of themselves as the best, but we arrive at this conclusion exhausted, as it were, from the pursuit of alternatives we felt *had* to be better than liberal democracy.'[194] I see two implications here. The first is that, to gain significance in Fukuyama's world view, ideologies must be competitive in the literal sense of competing with one another. That is plausible and compatible with many more neutral analyses of the subject. The second and more controversial implication is that an ideology can be disregarded if it is not competitive in the sense of standing a viable chance of replacing the liberal democratic system outright. I find this viewpoint somewhat narrow, as it disregards the usefulness of a range of ideologies on the grounds that they are not currently contenders to usurp an entire system.

Eagleton, writing at a similar time, refers to a 'paradox' in discussions of the perceived demise of ideology. While authors such as Fukuyama were issuing more or less triumphal obituaries, he argues, the world was seeing a widespread 'resurgence of ideological movements',[195] including religious fundamentalism of both the Islamic and Christian varieties, neo-Stalinism in the former Soviet Union and Thatcherism in the UK. On the latter case he describes how 'Throughout this period, Britain has suffered the most ideologically aggressive and explicit regime of living

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[192] Fukuyama, F. (1992) *The End of History and the Last Man* Harmondsworth: Penguin p.45
[193] *Ibid*. p.46
[194] *Ibid*.
[195] Eagleton (1991) p.xi

memory, in a society which traditionally prefers its ruling values to remain implicit and oblique.'[196]

It could be argued in this context that ideology is obsolete *if* we accept that it must firstly be a contender on the world stage in order to have any validity, and secondly be glossed over with relation to the dominant order. Neither statement, however, need be accepted.

In challenging 'post-ideological' ideas, Freeden explicitly rejects arguments such as Fukuyama's relating to the absence of viable alternatives to liberal democracy. Instead, he argues, 'ideologies are not visions of alternative worlds, be they alluring or terrifying, but conceptualisations of the political worlds we already inhabit, even when critical of those worlds'.[197] Instead of ceasing to exist, ideology has to an extent changed form: it is formulated and disseminated by different (and more democratised) sources, and manifests itself in different forms – including activist movements – and through different modes of communication.[198] The shift from elite to mass political culture is one source of such changes. Freeden also identifies a rise in 'thin' ideologies, with much of the conceptual structure he attributes to ideologies more widely but without 'a comprehensive set of plans for political action.'[199] The more conventionally recognisable ideologies, meanwhile, 'have been casualties of dilution, confusion and misappropriation'[200] to the extent that an ideological core is harder to find than in previous eras. In the light of such changes, the suggestion that we inhabit a 'post-ideological' age is a 'masking device'[201] put into place by a variety of groupings with disparate reasons for constructing such a screen. Among these groupings, Freeden identifies the following: 'those who are intent on waving goodbye to macro-ideologies that might attain a life of their own and thus threaten agency-rich conceptions of human initiative and control'[202]; 'those who wish stealthily to move into that ostensible vacuum in order to set up their own anti-utopian – yet at the same time unattainable – vision of hegemony;'[203] and 'those who still adhere to a strong anti-intellectualism in which ideas are marginal epiphenomena.'[204] It is worth noting that such reasoning can itself be rooted in specific conceptions of ideology: conceptions which separate ideas from action, which oppose ideology to human agency, and which apply the term

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[196] *Ibid*. p.xi
[197] Freeden, M. (2006) 'The Chimera of a "Post-ideological" Age' in Talshir, G. *et. al.* (eds.) (2006) *Taking Ideology Seriously* London and New York: Routledge pp.141-156 (quote from pp.141-142)
[198] *Ibid*. p.148
[199] *Ibid*. p.149
[200] *Ibid*. p.152
[201] *Ibid*. p.149
[202] *Ibid*.
[203] *Ibid*.
[204] *Ibid*.

'ideology' to their rivals' ideas and not their own. Unless these conceptions are taken as read, it is again unnecessary to accept the 'post-ideological' conclusions that result from them.

Why Freeden?

It is now worth a brief note justifying firstly the use of Freeden's conception of ideology and secondly the use of the conceptual method as opposed to any other.

It is not my intention to devalue any other potential approach to the study of horizontal politics. However, the conceptual approach developed by Freeden has an edge in terms of examining what distinguishes this particular configuration of political concepts from its near ideological neighbours; and also where there are penumbrae and blurred boundaries between them. As an ideology, horizontal politics is at a relatively liminal stage, meaning that the conceptual building blocks are to an extent still coming together. Having said that, it is clear that these blocks exist and that established meanings are developing within the configuration. Social movements theory has a tendency to focus on cycles of mobilisation and repertoires of action, which are certainly of relevance here but do not in themselves pinpoint the basic concepts from which these repertoires emerge. This approach allows for the same level of grassroots-based investigation as would the more bottom-up social movements theories: however, the focus is on the ideas behind the actions as much as the repertoires of action. An additional advantage of social movement approaches such as Melucci's is the importance allocated to the 'latent' period in which action is not taking place: however, that is also allowed for here, as such periods are where ideas are generated, identities formed, 'policy' decisions made, literature produced; in short, where many of the conceptual building blocks of a distinctive political outlook come into being.

In the light of this, a conception of ideology which hinges on deception or legitimating relations of domination can be deemed inappropriate. A neutral conception of ideology, focussing on identifying the core components of a group's perception of and interaction with the world around it, does not suffer from the deficiencies of the aforementioned restrictive conceptions, and hence provides a more useful and appropriate means of investigating the ideas behind a political movement. In particular, Freeden's conception of ideology does not hinge on assigning a specific purpose to the ideology in question. The only assumption involved is that an ideology has an identifiable conceptual structure: factors such as concealing or revealing the truth and maintaining or undermining the existing order can only be ascribed after investigating the content of this conceptual structure. What matters most for the purpose of this investigation is the stated purpose which is put forward by the group concerned.

The absence of an assumed end point makes this a useful approach for the study of a movement which is constantly evolving and assuming new forms: while it becomes evident that resisting unequal power relations while prefiguring and constructing alternatives is a consistent strategy, the specific manifestations of these values have been subject to change even during the past two years. It is also worth noting that the conceptual approach does not necessarily tie a political outlook to any specific issue, although the type of issue a movement or party focuses on is a clear sign of at least part of its conceptual landscape. This factor is particularly important for the movements discussed here: they are not issue-focused, in the sense that they cover a wide variety of concerns. The tensions between specific issues can at times be interesting to examine more closely but in general they do not undermine the wider movement. Rather, the focus on diversity in the conceptual landscape of horizontal politics has the practical effect of being able to work on a range of issue-based campaigns using horizontal organisational and prefigurative tactics: suggesting that the tactics and 'process' are the key to defining what is distinctive about the movements concerned.

The anarchism question

A key concern when determining whether horizontal political movements can be said to have a distinct ideology is whether such movements are ideologically separable from other political outlooks with which they share a family resemblance. Often there are clear differences: anarchism, however, is not such a case, for the resemblance is stronger than most.

In methodological terms, the presence of blurred boundaries between neighbouring ideologies poses little problem. Freeden describes 'the absence of absolute boundaries which separate the features of ideological systems'[205] as 'perhaps the most important facet of ideological morphology'[206]. The question, therefore, is of distinctiveness of the configurations of concepts, rather than an absence of shared concepts or potential for a clear and unambiguous dividing line. Indeed, Freeden argues that the convention for drawing such lines has often 'caused great misunderstandings'[207] and 'frequently vitiated the subtlety requisite for the serious investigation of ideologies.'[208] Of interest here are the areas where the boundaries are at their most fluid and least absolute, between ideologies of which the same could be said.

Cases have been made by anarchist authors involved in horizontal activism to the effect that such movements are to a great extent a continuation of anarchism. Graeber, for example, argues that

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[205] Freeden (1996) p.87
[206] *Ibid*.
[207] *Ibid*. p.88
[208] *Ibid*.

'Anarchism is the heart of the movement, its soul; the source of most of what's new and hopeful about it.'[209] He is largely unconcerned with the proportion of activists in the alternative globalisation movement who regard themselves as anarchists, arguing instead that the importance of direct action as both a tactic and an ideological rallying point indicate the centrality of anarchism to the overall political outlook.[210] In the context in which Graeber was writing, such assertions make sense: he is arguing against a refusal on the part of many commentators to take the anarchist influences on the movement seriously, as 'even many of those who would like to see revolutionary change might not feel entirely happy about having to accept that most of the creative energy for radical politics is now coming from anarchism.'[211] It is possible, however, to be completely unsqueamish about deploying the word anarchism as a description; to accept fully the importance of anarchism in the conceptual makeup of these movements' outlook; yet to argue that this is not necessarily the full story.

More recently, Gordon has argued strongly that horizontal movements are in effect anarchist movements. He is clear, it should be noted, that such movements are not merely a continuation of classical strands of anarchism (of the totalising variety criticised by Day[212]), but rather a reinvigorated anarchism adapted to a different era. The organisational forms are different,[213] the agenda broader[214] and the natural constituency changed. More significantly – particularly in terms of a definitive shift away from the outlook of early anarchist thinkers such as Bakunin[215] – Gordon argues that 'A stronger emphasis is given to prefigurative direct action and cultural experimentation.'[216] In addition, the truism that there are as many anarchisms as there are anarchists has gained more ground: areas such as 'the commitment to modernity and social progress'[217] are subject to debate rather than widespread acceptance. Overall, Gordon concludes that 'These qualitative changes add up to something of a paradigm shift in anarchism, which is today thoroughly heterodox and grounded in action and an intention to win.'[218]

While Gordon does not fully enter into debate regarding whether such movements should in fact be considered anarchist, he does discuss some of the reasons why individuals and groups might

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[209] Graeber, D. (2002) 'The New Anarchists' in *New Left Review* 13 January-February 2002 pp.61-73 (quote from p.62)
[210] *Ibid.*
[211] *Ibid.* pp.61-62
[212] Day, R. (2005) *Gramsci Is Dead* London: Pluto ch.4
[213] Gordon, U. (2008) *Anarchy Alive! Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory* London: Pluto p.5
[214] *Ibid.*
[215] Day (2005) p.113
[216] Gordon (2008) p.5
[217] *Ibid.*
[218] *Ibid.* p.6

refrain from adopting the description. He refers to the invention of 'euphemisms'[219] – alternative descriptions presumably including 'horizontal' and 'libertarian' – which are in his view 'invented for the sole purpose of not saying "anarchism".'[220] He suggests some reasons for this reluctance, including the negative image of anarchism[221] and the unpopularity of labels among anarchists. Here, he describes how 'People identify with many political and cultural strands, and believe that circumscribing their beliefs under any one "ism" is unnecessarily constricting and implies (however unjustly) that they have a fixed and dogmatic set of beliefs.'[222]

I fully agree with Gordon regarding the unjustness of assuming anarchists – or indeed any participants in horizontal movements – are 'fixed and dogmatic' in their outlook. The disagreement arises when it is assumed that reluctance to self-define as 'anarchist' is solely down to the factors Gordon lists. In becoming heterodox, the morphology of anarchism changes: it is not compromised, but rather adjusts to an expanded core and a changing set of adjacent and peripheral concepts, in addition to the likely movement of some concepts within the overall framework. In this context, I suggest that the borders of anarchism as an ideology – which were neither rigid nor impermeable to begin with, having since the earliest days contained a wide range of conceptions[223] – have become more permeable still, and hence potentially prone to spilling over and intermingling with other nearby ideologies.

Gordon is unimpressed by implications that a movement is '"broadly" anarchist or "inspired by" anarchism'[224], arguing that any such description 'reifies anarchism and expects "really" anarchist movements to conform to some pre-conceived ideal type.'[225] Here, again, I disagree and argue that the opposite possibility should be allowed for. Could it not be the case that interacting with and feeding into – and from – other movements with which it shares conceptual borders demonstrates that anarchism is neither reified nor restricted to an ideal type?

I am not, let it be clear, arguing here for a definitive break from anarchism. The links between the sets of ideas concerned are too clearly evident for that to be feasible. Neither would it be entirely plausible to define individual facets of horizontal politics as derived from 'outside' of anarchism, as anarchism is far from a monolithic entity and does itself encompass a wide range of ideas and concepts which there is sadly little space to investigate here. Anarchism can also be said to cross

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[219] *Ibid*. p.12

[220] *Ibid*.

[221] *Ibid*. p.13

[222] *Ibid*.

[223] The most definitive guide I have found to the numerous variations on anarchism is Marshall, P. (1993) *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* London: Fontana

[224] Gordon (2008) p.13

[225] *Ibid*.

over with other ideologies or, more specifically, subsets within other ideologies – council communism being a key example. What I am advancing here, however, is the suggestion that horizontal politics has developed in the 'messy' areas in which certain varieties of anarchism have crossed over and interacted with one another and with other ideologies, and that furthermore it has sometimes bled out of these penumbrae and formed something distinctive. My argument is to an extent in line with that of Day, who sees anarchist 'currents' in the politics of horizontal movements, without necessarily defining them as anarchist movements.

  It would not be difficult to argue for a clear distinction between the bulk of classical anarchist thought and today's horizontal politics. It should be acknowledged here that classical anarchist thought is far from monolithic, and itself encompasses a range of views on topics such as revolution (Bakunin versus Proudhon) and the status of the individual (Stirner versus Bakunin). Certainly there is a shared basis of resistance to power held by one individual or group over others. However, much of the classical canon is anti-prefigurative in nature. Few at the horizontal end of the spectrum would disagree with Bakunin's criticism of certain of Marx's concepts; such as his assertion that under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the masses would be enslaved rather than liberated.[226] equally, however, few such activists would disagree with Day's assessment that statements such as 'I mean liberty which will shatter all the idols in heaven and on earth and will then build a new world of mankind in solidarity, upon the ruins of all the churches and all the states'[227] implies the necessity for a full revolution rather than the creation of insurrectionary spaces.[228] In the work of Kropotkin, meanwhile, Day discerns a partial acceptance of what would now be called prefiguration: the idea that 'it was possible and desirable to create the relationships we desire immediately, in the world in which we find ourselves actually living'.[229] Day also observes, however, that Kropotkin 'was not by any means ready to give up on the idea of a totalising instantaneous transformation occurring at *some point* in the future.'[230]

  However, it is necessary to acknowledge that this part of the anarchist canon is neither the end point nor the sum total of anarchist thought. Anarchism is by its nature diverse, and the expression of any given sentiment (apart from a rejection of the state and government) by Bakunin, Proudhon or Kropotkin does not make it intrinsic to the entire body of thought. However, as argued above,

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[226] Bakunin, M. (2002) *Statism and Anarchy* Cambridge University Press Trans., ed., and intro. M. Shatz

[227] Bakunin, M. (1871/1971) 'The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State' trans. S. Dolgoff online at http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bakunin/works/1871/paris-commune.htm accessed 23/11/11

[228] Day (2005) p.113

[229] *Ibid*. p.120

[230] *Ibid*.

the heterogeneous nature of anarchism has the potential to make some blurring of boundaries with adjoining ideologies more – rather than less – likely.

In brief, anarchism does not have clear and rigid conceptual boundaries: it is debatable whether any ideology can be definitively said to possess such a thing, but in the case of anarchism it is unlikely that such lines could be drawn should those concerned wish them to be. Neither, for the record, am I arguing here for such clear conceptual boundaries to be drawn around horizontal politics. Indeed, if the latter has somewhat messy and blurred boundaries because it is at an early stage of development, the latter is subject to a similar level of blurring because it has been growing and diversifying for several centuries and is still doing so. Where these boundaries are shared, therefore, family resemblances – be they parental, grandparental or fraternal – and co-operation are inevitable.

Furthermore, it is evident that anarchism is not the only ideology with which horizontal politics shares one or more blurred boundaries. In particular, the penumbrae mentioned above also occur over the conceptual boundaries with a number of Marxist movements at the more autonomous, heterodox end of the spectrum. These influences will be discussed in more detail in the chapters dealing with specific concepts. As regards organisational strategies[231], for example, there is at times a closer resemblance to council communism than to anarchism *per se*: both can be seen to have an influence, but neither is definitive. In many instances – particularly with regard to the tactics of resistance which have been deployed in recent years[232] – a direct path can be traced back to the Situationists, a self-defined Marxist group who resisted the orthodoxy of the day and hence themselves occupied a somewhat permeable boundary between Marxism and anarchism. Concepts such as direct democracy and consensus, meanwhile, would be difficult to pin to any specific ideology, although clearly they manifest themselves in a variety of permutations.

Of the various influences cited in the early literature, Zapatismo is one of the clearest examples of a movement with heterogeneous origins. The political thought which emanates from the Zapatistas, in particular Subcomandante Marcos, displays a blend of one or more permutations of Marxism, indigenous Mayan traditions and anarchism. The EZLN have been described by others as 'anarchists, communists, reactionaries, fools, poets, warriors.'[233] There are elements which could be claimed by anarchism (as well as by autonomous Marxism): for example, the taking of power is resisted in favour of a desire to 'dissolve power down to the level of communities – to take back what they claimed had been rightly theirs, before governments and private economic

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[231] See chapter 4
[232] See chapter 6
[233] Kingsnorth, P. (2003) *One No, Many Yeses: A Journey to the Heart of the Global Resistance Movement* London: The Free Press pp.7-8

interests stole it from them.'[234] However, their key characteristic is not any particular ideological influence, but their outright refusal of labels. Subcomandante Marcos has proclaimed this with some measure of pride: 'Intellectuals and political leadership, of all sizes, of the ultraright, of the right, the centre, of the left and the ultraleft, national and international criticize our proposal. We are so radical that we do not fit in the parameters of "modern political science". We are not bragging madam: we are pointing out the facts. Is there anything more radical than to propose to change the world?'[235] His concern does not appear to be a fear of appearing restricted, but rather an acceptance that their outlook cannot be defined in pre-existing terms.

  While not universally or uncritically admired, the Zapatistas have provided a rich source of inspiration for the alternative globalisation movement as a whole and for the horizontal elements within it in particular.[236] Tenets such as autonomy, direct democracy, respect for human dignity and solidarity between diverse groups and causes are the source of its appeal. However, it is not necessary to resort as some have to damning critiques of the internal organisation of the EZLN in order to accept that it is not an anarchist group.[237] The reasons for refusing this description are not purely down to the aforementioned internal organisation: although this is a factor, it is the less relevant one in this specific context. More significant here is the impossibility of ruling out the other strands of belief which have formed the political thought of Zapatismo. In addition, there is an explicit refusal on the part of Marcos and other participants to be pigeonholed in terms of existing political ideologies: an element which is also to an extent adopted by horizontal movements in the West.

  Does this in itself create a block against such movements being in possession of their own distinctive ideology? I argue not: merely that it is in the early stages of development. The thematic chapters advance some suggestions of what form this ideology is likely to take.

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[234] *Ibid*. p.6
[235] Marcos, Subcomandante (1996a) 'Marcos to Civil Society: What Makes Us Different is Our Proposal' online at http://www.struggle.ws/mexico/ezln/marc_to_cs_se96.html accessed 08/11/11
[236] An early activist anthology in which Zapatista ideas are clearly evident is Notes from Nowhere (eds.) (2003) *We Are Everywhere: the irresistible rise of global capitalism* London: Verso
[237] For example Deneuve, S. and Reeve, C. (1995) 'Behind the Balaclavas of South-East Mexico' online at http://struggle.ws/mexico/comment/balaclava.html accessed 08/11/11

The background literature

This chapter's purpose is to ground the project in pre-existing literature, some of which is directly connected to horizontal political theory and practice, and all of which adds to the context in which horizontal movements emerge and operate.

Until recently little has been written explicitly dealing with the composition of horizontal politics. However, some literature on social movements – including some predating the explicit 'horizontals' – is of relevance. The late 1990s and early 2000s, meanwhile, saw a proliferation of literature on the 'new' phenomenon of the alternative globalisation movement[238], albeit without distinguishing along such lines as organisational process or other factors which would identify the horizontal elements clearly. Nonetheless they fill in the background detail on what initially fuelled the wider movement, which also helps explain how the segments of this movement discussed here came into being. More recent works have dealt more explicitly with the specific horizontal element, examined from a variety of angles. This chapter draws some historical detail from the works in question, details the perspectives offered on the origins of the movement and of certain horizontal principles, and discusses the ways in which the various authors have categorised the movements they study.

While the bulk of this project directly concerns movements and mobilisations located in the UK, solidarity beyond national borders has always been part of such movements' aims. As such, although much of the literature discussed in this chapter is written from a US perspective and yet more deals with movements across the world, and although this may indicate some cultural differences, it is nonetheless relevant.

Traditional social movement theories have varying amounts to offer the study of horizontal movements. This is not the place to examine negative elements. On the positive side, there are areas where the theories generated in the final decades of the twentieth century are, with hindsight, highly relevant. In particular, the work of the Italian social movement theorist Melucci highlights growing rifts between social movements and more traditional political structures: disillusionment with the latter can fertilise participation in alternative forms of action, including horizontal political activism. Although the movements studied by Melucci appear for the most part to have leaders and hierarchies, their repertoires of conflict and action appear close to those of today's horizontals. Melucci argues that 'new conflicts develop in those areas of the system where both symbolic investments and pressures to conform are heaviest. These conflicts act increasingly at a

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[238] As noted elsewhere in this project, the nomenclature of this wider movement is somewhat problematic. In this chapter I will use the names applied by each author where relevant.

distance from political organisations. They are interwoven with the fabric of everyday life and individual experience.'[239] These are grassroots conflicts, and as such resolutions are sought within the realm of the everyday. It is also pertinent that Melucci does not judge the success or otherwise of social movements in terms of the common dichotomy in which they must end up 'either taking state power or failing completely'.[240] Although this is not an overall critique of power – for these are after all social movements rather than political ones – it provides the beginnings of a critique of the idea that gaining state power or influence over those who hold it is a necessary prerequisite to effecting change.

Melucci makes explicit reference to the 'latent' periods of a movement: those in which the intensity is lowered and overt action is not taking place. This concept is particularly useful in examining reactions to the alleged tactic of 'summit-hopping': is it necessarily the case that the large mobilisations provoked by the G8, World Bank and similar organisations are the only manifestations of the movements discussed here, or is what happens away from the barricades in fact just as significant? In Melucci's view, 'Paradoxically, the latency of a movement is its effective strength.'[241] In the latent period, when to a casual observer very appears to be happening, discussion and negotiation take place behind the scenes regarding tactics, organisational strategies and the formation of a movement's collective identity. In the case of horizontal movements, this includes reflection on the core principles of an emerging political outlook. For example, each heterogeneous mobilisation has generated discussion regarding whether the inclusiveness is genuine, whether it has limits, and whether participants' perceptions of what constitutes an 'activist' are affecting how far those who do not fit this perception are welcomed. As we shall see over the next few chapters, the issues of resistance to hierarchy and distribution of power are frequent topics for discussion. These periods can be ignored in favour of analysis of the actions which takes place at major summit mobilisations: however, I agree with Melucci that they are in fact crucial for understanding the movements in question.

In the mid-1990s, when the forerunners to today's horizontal movements were beginning to grow, Maffesoli identified a growing 'tribalism'[242] in mass society, corresponding with a decline in the individualism of the 1980s. This tribalism appears in forms such as the emotional community and *puissance*, which are to a great extent relevant to the study of horizontal politics. Maffesoli's focus is on 'the social configurations that seem to go beyond individualism'.[243] He regards 'the shared lives and experience as the purifying fires of the alchemical process in which

[239] Melucci, A. (1989) *Nomads of the Present* London: Hutchinson Radius p.12
[240] *Ibid*. p.79
[241] *Ibid*. p.71
[242] Maffesoli, M. (1996) *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society* London: Sage p.7
[243] *Ibid*. p.9

the transmutation takes place'[244] from atomistic individualism to tribalism. It is through these everyday connections that affinities are formed: 'The miniscule rituals are inverted until they become the basis of sociality.'[245] The connections around which a tribe is formed can appear minor – allotment holders, for example, or a local campaign against a new Tesco – but can nonetheless become the basis for a stronger group identity. However, such shared experiences only 'indicate the "form"'[246] of the tribe: the shared ethic is in Maffesoli's view what strengthens the connections sufficiently to create a cohesive group. The ethic is to some extent a theoretical entity, but 'one which on a daily basis serves as a vessel for the collectivity's emotions and feelings.'[247] The ethic is the factor which helps individuals to 'adjust to one another and to the natural environment.'[248]

Like Melucci, Maffesoli ascribes a reduced importance to traditional political forms, referring to a 'decline in the great institutional and activist structures – from political parties as required mediator to the proletariat as historical subject':[249] however, this is mirrored by 'the development of what might be termed very generally the basic communities.'[250] These communities are based on an increased 'density of sociality'[251] which can no longer be expressed through the increasingly rigid traditional channels, and must as such 'be exiled to another space while waiting for new forms in which to develop.'[252] In these spaces a collective *puissance* – defined by Maffesoli as a will to live – emerges. This *puissance* can be found in 'the various networks, affinity and interest groups, or neighbourhood ties that structure our megalopolises.'[253] Separated from the traditional structures, *puissance* becomes a force for resistance, be it overt or covert: 'Whatever the case, *puissance* is set against power, even if *puissance* can only advance in disguise, to avoid being crushed by power.'[254]

Tribalism, in Maffesoli's view, is far from an isolating process in which the groups concerned withdraw from the rest of society. Rather, it is a sign that society is being reinvigorated after a dormant phase: 'the effervescence flowing from this polytheism is on the whole the surest sign of a renewed dynamism in all aspects of social life.'[255] Furthermore, he argues, 'the withdrawal from

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[244] *Ibid*. p.20
[245] *Ibid*.
[246] *Ibid*.
[247] *Ibid*.
[248] *Ibid*.
[249] *Ibid*. p.35
[250] *Ibid*.
[251] *Ibid*. p.36
[252] *Ibid*.
[253] *Ibid*. p.47
[254] *Ibid*.
[255] *Ibid*. p.48

the political sphere seems to shed light on the aforementioned dynamism.'[256] This view directly counters the various arguments which have arisen regarding the 'apathy' which is allegedly inherent in non-participation in traditional political forms, for example declining voter turnout and a lack of interest in political parties on the part of the younger generation. Far from being a sign of resignation, 'This withdrawal is in fact the reactivation of the vital instinct of preservation, of conservation in oneself.'[257] A withdrawal from the arena of mainstream politics opens up other avenues, including new repertoires with which to confront power: Maffesoli lists as examples humour, mockery and irony, recognisable today in the cultural tactics used by the likes of the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA) and the Pink and Silver Bloc. Maffesoli defines such tactics in terms of independence and autonomy, and deems them to be 'particularly annoying for those in power'[258] whose mastery over the masses can be successful only if 'accompanied by the control of men's minds.'[259]

Maffesoli does not for the most part discuss the internal organisation of these tribes, or indeed the principles on which they operate. With that in mind, he nonetheless makes a significant contribution to the study of grassroots resistance – particularly that of a covert, subversive nature, as opposed to a major mobilisation – by examining how the necessary affinity-based connections come into being and become a form of resistance. Like Melucci, he builds on the idea of resistance in a sphere outside of conventional politics: however, while he does not examine internal hierarchies, this can be seen as an advantage in some ways for by the same token he does not discuss the 'tribes' in terms of leaders and followers.

The next three authors, Starr, Klein and Kingsnorth, all published significant works on the alternative globalisation movement at the start of the twenty-first century. There follows a general summary of their works and a discussion of where they situate the origins of the movement.

Starr's overall project is a typology of what she calls the global anti-corporate movement. The specifics of how she categorises the various movements will be discussed shortly. *Naming the Enemy* is notable as the first systematic academic study of the emerging global movement, marking the point at which it had developed sufficiently for such an endeavour to take place. Starr does not pass comment on the origins of the movement, preferring to focus on the tactics used and – as the title suggests – the nature of what the movement as a whole and each sector within it opposes. The 'enemy' is posited for the most part as 'globalisation', although it is clear that Starr is focussing specifically on the variety of globalisation initiated by multinational corporations.

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[256] *Ibid.*
[257] *Ibid.*
[258] *Ibid.* p.50
[259] *Ibid.* p.51

Starr makes it clear that the wider movement of movements is not overarchingly 'horizontal'[260], either in internally- or externally-directed practice. There are, as we will see shortly, movements involved which do not organise themselves horizontally, and which engage with and attempt to change existing democratic structures rather than seeking a replacement. There are none the less elements in play which would be familiar to today's horizontals. In particular, Starr refers to the (albeit unacknowledged by many)[261] use of anarchist principles in the organisation of major mobilisations. In the light of this, she argues that 'non-anarchist participants'[262] (of which she considers herself to be one[263]) should 'acknowledge that groups with different messages, tactics and skills coexisted without attempting centralised organising.'[264] This element of diversity can also be seen as a precursor to later horizontal movements, based as it apparently was on affinity and solidarity rather than central control. Here, Starr suggests that 'Knowledge of the multiple oppressions effected by globalisation is not disempowering: movements are inspired by the belief that so many people are being screwed in so many ways that the global plebiscite will refuse this system.'[265] It is unnecessary, in this context, for a movement to have a single focus – to end, for example, a specific oppression against a specific group – nor to eliminate differences in the name of co-operation. Rather, solidarity can occur between diverse groups of people and the common elements of their struggle can be acknowledged and acted upon, without any given group losing their identity. Identity has the potential to become a divisive issue, creating situations in which 'Groups are fragmented because their unique identity experiences make it hard to relate to and trust one another.'[266] However, the anti-corporate globalisation movement can provide a way around this problem, as 'In becoming anti-corporate, identity-based movements neither abandon their identity nor adopt a new one; they oppose corporations from their identity-based stance, while also making connections outside of an identity-politics mode.'[267] In other words, movements gain a wider focus without losing their more specific one: co-operation and the development of affinity do not require subsuming groups into a larger entity, but rather building on the areas of commonality.

Starr's typology divides the wider movement into three broad categories: contestation and reform[268]; globalisation from below (also known as people's globalisation)[269]; and delinking,

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[260] Used somewhat anachronistically since the term 'horizontal' was not in use at that point in time
[261] Starr, A. (2000) *Naming The Enemy: Anti-Corporate Movements Confront Globalisation* London: Zed p.115
[262] *Ibid*. p.116
[263] *Ibid*. p.115
[264] *Ibid*. p.116
[265] *Ibid*. p.151
[266] *Ibid*. p.166
[267] *Ibid*. p.167
[268] *Ibid*. ch.2
[269] *Ibid*. ch.3

relocalisation and sovereignty[270]. These categories are largely defined by the nature of the groups' engagement with power and with globalisation. While all contain ideas and groups which are familiar in horizontal terms, the second and third categories are the most relevant.

  Movements in the contestation and reform category focus for the most part on calling for enforced regulation of corporate activity. Starr argues that 'These movements contest the legitimacy of neoliberal reformulations of the role of the state and the necessity of subordinating social priorities to "international competitiveness".'[271] Their focus is on using existing channels: for example strengthening national governments against transnational corporations, and they prefer legislation and boycotts to militant or direct action. These movements hold some elements in common with those on the horizontal end of the spectrum; in particular, the critique of the power of transnational corporations. Where horizontal activists part company with this viewpoint is regarding whether this power should be held by the state. Starr places Reclaim The Streets – forerunner of much horizontal activism in the UK – in this category, as an example of an 'explicit anti-corporate movement'.[272] A militant direct action dis-organisation, RTS is grouped here on the basis of its sustained critique both of the government road-building scheme and of the road and construction industries. If today's horizontal movements draw on any characteristics relating to contestation and reform, then this critique of corporate power is one such characteristic.

  The second category, globalisation from below, is grouped around the principle that 'people all over the world commonly threatened by environmental degradation, abuse of human rights and unenforcement of labour standards, and that powerful global alliances can be formed to make corporations and governments accountable to people instead of elites.'[273] Here we see an alternative form of globalisation, echoed by many of the authors discussed in this chapter: connections between people, based on shared experience of oppression and resistance, transcending national boundaries. Starr uses the Zapatistas as an example in this context, arguing that Zapatismo is at heart an indigenous sovereignty movement whose core aim is 'self-determination rights for the indigenous peoples and peasants of the Lacandon forest region of Chiapas.'[274] However, the scope is wider than that of traditional nationalist movements, and hence Zapatismo 'calls out to all Mexicans and all people of the world to express Zapatismo in resistance to oppression and as expression of self-determination and dignity.'[275] This is not a call for the adoption of a concrete set of principles or mode of resistance: rather, it calls for the co-operation of groups engaged in their own local struggles.

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[270] *Ibid*. ch.4
[271] *Ibid*. p.45
[272] *Ibid*. p.67
[273] *Ibid*. p.83
[274] *Ibid*. p.103
[275] *Ibid*.

The third category, delinking, relocalisation and sovereignty, 'articulates the pleasures, productivities and rights of localities.'[276] Of particular relevance in the horizontal context is Starr's placing of anarchism in this category, and citing it as an influence on other de-linked movements. This is not unproblematic – an idea reiterated by Klein and Graeber – as at times there is a reluctance to acknowledge the anarchist influence due to what are perceived as unacceptable displays of behaviour by those who fit the popular perception of anarchists. However, Starr is clear that the anarchist vision of 'local autonomy of worker-collectives and no state'[277] has had a significant impact on movements in this category. Problems arise with the outward acknowledgement of anarchist principles due to a reluctance on some activists' part to be associated with 'anarchists who engaged in property crime'[278] in the course of a mobilisation. At the mobilisation in Seattle, therefore, Starr states that 'In that context, no one wanted to draw attention to the fact that the entire event was organised according to anarchist principles.'[279] This theme arises consistently when evaluating the extent to which we are dealing with an 'anarchist' movement: the question of whether participants or groups self-define as other than anarchist out of a fear for their image, a rejection of what they see as destructive tactics, or for more significant reasons relating to their political outlook. Despite this reluctance to deploy the word, however, the view from inside the movement was that the use of anarchist principles was 'so explicit and so obvious'[280] in terms of internal organisation.

Although each category contains movements which can be seen in more-or-less horizontal terms, no category is completely horizontal. For example, in addition to anarchism, the third category also encompasses small businesses and religious nationalisms. However, a typology of organisational strategies and internal power relations was not Starr's intention: rather, her focus is on the externally-directed strategies of the movements concerned as regards neoliberal globalisation and modes of resistance to it. The typology she constructs on these grounds provides a useful initial framework for evaluating a large and diverse global movement.

Klein's first book, *No Logo*[281], provided an early critique of corporate globalisation with a specific focus on branding. As regards concrete analysis of the alternative globalisation movement, however, her more influential work was *Fences and Windows*, published in 2002. In Klein's own words, while *No Logo* dealt with 'largely subterranean movements',[282] *Fences and*

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[276] *Ibid*. p.111
[277] *Ibid*. p.113
[278] *Ibid*. p.115
[279] *Ibid*.
[280] *Ibid*.
[281] Of which we will hear more in Ch.6, 'Culture'
[282] Klein, N. (2002) *Fences and Windows* London: Flamingo p.xiii

Windows chronicles what happened after those movements 'entered into mainstream consciousness in the industrialised world'.[283] Klein's contribution to the discussion is an analysis of major mobilisations, such as summit protests: in other words, of the relevant movements in their visible, active phases. This is not without its flaws, as we shall see shortly, but it nonetheless provides some interesting and useful insights into movement practices.

Klein argues that the entry into mainstream consciousness of the movements in question was 'mostly as a result of the November 1999 World Trade Organisation protests in Seattle.'[284] It is not uncommon to situate the origins of the movement here, despite the existence of precedents around the world, and neither is it inaccurate given that Seattle was where the movement became visible on a global scale. That I do not entirely agree with Klein's assessment, due to the existence of the said precedents, is discussed elsewhere in the introduction. However, the starting-point for the movement is not the main focus of her analysis: instead, she focuses for the most part on the practical and theoretical elements which make these movements distinct. She describes how 'These protests – which are actually week-long marathons of intense education on global politics, late-night strategy sessions in six-way simultaneous translation, festivals of music and street theatre – are like stepping into a parallel universe.'[285] Here, she charts the emergence of the dual-purpose convergence space: a base for protest and a hub for organising actions, such a site also serves a prefigurative purpose; demonstrating alternative modes of doing and being. As Klein observes, 'Overnight, the site is transformed into a kind of alternative global city where urgency replaces resignation, corporate logos need armed guards, people usurp cars, art is everywhere, strangers talk to each other, and the prospect of a radical change in political course does not seem like an odd and anachronistic idea but the most logical thought in the world.'[286] Within this space, meanwhile, the internal organisation runs along what would now be seen as horizontal lines: 'Within its ranks, there is no top-down hierarchy ready to explain the master plan, no universally recognised leaders giving easy sound bites, and nobody knows what is going to happen next.'[287] The ancestry of spaces such as the Hori-Zone, the Camp for Climate Action and the inner-city encampments of the Occupy movement is evident in this description.

The major strength of the movement, from Klein's perspective, is its diverse nature: something which has generally continued to be the case. Klein writes critically about attending a conference which aimed 'to whip that chaos on the streets into some kind of structured, media-friendly

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[283] *Ibid.*

[284] *Ibid.*

[285] *Ibid.* p.xxv

[286] *Ibid.*

[287] *Ibid.* pp.3-4

shape'[288] by imposing an overarching structure and focus; creating in the process the complete opposite of the situation described by Starr in which local identities coexisted with global action. Klein suggests that such an exercise would be somewhat pointless, in addition to being counterproductive: 'Even if we did manage to come up with a ten-point plan – brilliant in its clarity, elegant in its coherence, unified in its outlook – to whom, exactly, would we hand down these commandments?'[289] That such a proposal was made in the first place is an early indication of a major challenge which heterogeneous movements have had to engage with over the years. Klein, in response, is an early defender of the heterogeneous approach, arguing that 'The fact that these campaigns are so decentralised does not mean that they are incoherent. Rather, decentralisation is a reasonable, even ingenious adaptation both to pre-existing fragmentation within progressive networks and to changes in the broader culture.'[290] As previously suggested by Starr, there is no need to combat the fragmented nature of the groups concerned, but rather to build affinity between them and enable co-operation: a strategy which is more in keeping with the general outlook than subsuming the diverse groups into a single entity. Furthermore, as a response to the totalising logic of the opposition, Klein regards the diverse approach as tactically sound: this style of organising 'responds to corporate concentration with fragmentation, to globalisation with its own kind of localisation, to power consolidation with radical power dispersal.'[291] Klein concludes that the solution to the problems thrown up by the heterogeneous nature of what was then an emerging movement should be solved not by reducing this characteristic but by making the greatest possible use of traits such as diversity and decenteredness: 'Perhaps what is needed is not a single political party but better links among the affinity groups; perhaps rather than moving toward more centralisation, what is needed is further radical decentralisation.'[292] For this approach has generally been taken in the intervening period, although not without controversy.

  If Klein has any criticism of the global anti-capitalist movement, it is of the tactic of 'summit-hopping', sometimes known more pejoratively as 'summit tourism'. This has in the intervening years generated critique: as a tactic, it risks excluding those who lack resources to travel or have a particularly compelling reason to avoid arrest. Klein's critique, made at an earlier point in the movement's history, focuses more on the tactical error of becoming 'a movement of meeting stalkers, following the trade bureaucrats as if they were the Grateful Dead'[293] On a later mobilisation in London, she points out that 'The problem was that by yesterday afternoon London didn't look like an ingenious mix of popular education and street theatre. It looked pretty much

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[288] *Ibid*. p.14
[289] *Ibid*. p.15
[290] *Ibid*. p.20
[291] *Ibid*. p.21
[292] *Ibid*. p.26
[293] *Ibid*. p.24

like every other mass protest these days'.[294] A tactic which was original at the time of Seattle was becoming hackneyed: protest tourism rather than effective action; and was losing its impact. I agree partially with Klein on this point: however, this agreement is tempered, having explored other material demonstrating that the large-scale summit protest is one of a wide repertoire of tactics of resistance rather than the sole purpose of the movement. I argue that the prefigurative role previously highlighted is still relevant, and that it is unnecessary to scale back on visible displays of resistance to larger manifestations of what activists believe to be unjust concentrations of power. To focus on and criticise the summit-hopping element is to overlook a wider repertoire of resistance: the discussions and decisions made in latent periods, the actions taken by the groups concerned in their local areas and the outreach projects in which they become involved.

Kingsnorth's book is entitled *One No, Many Yeses*: a Zapatista slogan encapsulating a movement *against* corporate globalisation but less homogenous in what it was *for*. Kingsnorth traces the history of the movement further back than Klein, discussing the emergence of the Zapatistas in Mexico – who he, again, regards as a major influence – and the point at which 'Up trees, down tunnels, in squatted factories, padlocked to bridges and balanced on top of digger arms I, like thousands of others, was politicised by the road protests, and began to make the links between what was happening in Newbury, Winchester, Bath and Leytonstone and what was happening to the wider world.'[295] He then argues that 'if this movement was born in Chiapas on that January day in 1994, it was baptised, with tear gas and pepper spray, on the streets of the American city of Seattle on 30 November 1999.'[296] While Seattle was not in his view the main birthplace of the movement, then, it was nonetheless the place where a 'movement' as such became clearly visible at an international level. The many local struggles from which it was formed came together, be it geographically in Seattle or temporally in other cities on November 30, and demonstrated with a collective purpose which went beyond the boundaries of tribal identity. Kingsnorth argues that 'Seattle crystallised something that hadn't been in evidence before; something newly, and self-consciously, global. On the day that the protests there began, hundreds of thousands took to the streets in dozens of countries around the world, in solidarity.'[297] By this reading, Seattle is less of a starting-point, but remains a vital stage in the development of a movement.

Kingsnorth takes an international perspective to a greater extent than Starr or Klein: his focus for the main part is on local movements in a variety of countries and the development of solidarity on a global scale. The Zapatistas demonstrate an initially local struggle which gained (and expressed)

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[294] *Ibid*. p.157
[295] Kingsnorth, P. (2003) *One No, Many Yeses: A Journey to the Heart of the Global Resistance Movement* London: The Free Press p.7
[296] *Ibid*. p.61
[297] *Ibid*. p.62

transnational solidarity and clearly influenced the wider movement. Kingsnorth dates this influence to the first 'Intercontinental *Encuentro* (Encounter) for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism', held in Chiapas in the summer of 1996. The opening remarks made by Zapatista leader Subcomandante Marcos at the *Encuentro* demonstrate the concern for global solidarity, drawing on themes of commonality between a diverse range of individuals and groups.

Behind this, we are the same simple and ordinary men and women that are repeated in all races,

painted in all colours, speak in all languages and live in all places.

The same forgotten men and women.

The same excluded.

The same untolerated.

The same persecuted.

The same as you.

Behind this, we are you[298]

Kingsnorth examines the influence of the Zapatistas in terms which will recur throughout this project: their emphasis on autonomy, affinity, diversity and many tenets of dis-organisation. As a regional independence movement, the Zapatistas naturally speak of autonomy: however, the way they conceptualise it focuses not on nationalist aims but on self-government outside the boundaries of state power. As Kingsnorth points out, 'Every Zapatista you talk to will tell you that autonomy – real, local control of their community, economically and politically – is a hard-fought-for principle, rather than an expedient move.'[299] Furthermore, ''Linked to that is the commitment to community democracy – real control, by all, at community level, however difficult it might be to implement.'[300] The conjunction of autonomy and solidarity – as opposed, for example, to that of autonomy and isolationism or selfishness – is central to understanding the Zapatistas and the movements they have influenced. Co-operation here does not require surrendering autonomy; and autonomy is not opposed to co-operation. This is the benefit of a de-centred movement from the perspective of diverse local struggles: there is no need for a group to surrender control of their destiny or follow another entity's rules in order to connect to a larger struggle. The choice between complete autonomy in isolation or a loss of autonomy through homogenisation is moot.

Unsurprisingly, the Zapatistas' viewpoint on autonomy leads them to resist taking up a 'leadership' role of the Soviet variety in the global movement which has at times looked to them

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[298] Marcos, Subcomandante (1996b) 'Opening Remarks at the First Intercontinental *Encuentro* for Humanity and against Neoliberalism' in Marcos, Subcomandante, Ponce de Leon, J. and Saramago, J. (eds.) (2002) *Our Word is Our Weapon* New York: Seven Stories Press p.103
[299] Kingsnorth (2003) p.31
[300] *Ibid*.

for inspiration. The argument that all people are to an extent the same is intended to recognise that all face similar oppressions and call for solidarity in resisting oppression, not as the basis for a master plan imposed from the centre. This was underlined, Kingsnorth argues, by the response to questions asked at the first *Encuentro*. 'They refused, despite requests, to provide any of their visitors with a blueprint for change or a plan for a global utopia, and when asked by people from other nations what they should do about the problems they faced, they told them to work it out for themselves.'[301] Far from implying callousness about the situations faced by other groups, this can be seen as an expression of respect for the autonomy of the groups in question; and as a recognition that a solution which is successful in one case would not be applicable in another due to the variety of issues and struggles faced by those at the *Encuentro*.

Kingsnorth regards this *Encuentro* as a significant juncture in the emergence of a global anti-corporate movement: 'From it, more than any other single event before or since, would grow the "anti-globalisation" movement as it exists today.'[302] People's Global Action, whose hallmarks are cited in the introduction, has its origins in the first two *Encuentros*. Kingsnorth regards PGA as a further major influence on the anti-corporate globalisation movement. His description of their principles makes an early reference to the term 'horizontal', which was not at that point in regular use. As such, he begins to characterise the variety of movement examined here. He argues that, 'Like the rest of the movement it helped spawn, PGA has an almost fanatical devotion to the concept of 'horizontal organising' – working in networks, not hierarchies, with no appointed leaders.'[303] The principles expounded or implied by the Zapatistas are elaborated with organisational formations which, for movements operating in climates of relative peace, are to a great extent practical as well as consistent with the beliefs of the groups concerned. Diversity, again, is a major factor: 'What characterises PGA, I am to discover, is what characterises the global movement: diversity. Diversity of aims, of tactics, of race, of language, of nationality, of ideas. There is no manifesto, no line to follow, no leader to rally behind.'[304] All the PGA requires is adherence to the list of hallmarks: these are not focused on following a party line, but rather on resisting hierarchical practices.

In 2002, Graeber attempted to clarify and explain the growing movement from the perspective of an anarchist anthropologist actively involved in 'the more radical, direct-action end of the movement.'[305] Graeber perceived a 'hesitation'[306] in reception of the movement in general and the

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[301] *Ibid*. p.37

[302] *Ibid*.

[303] *Ibid*. p.74

[304] *Ibid*. p.75

[305] Graeber, D. (2002) 'The New Anarchists' in *New Left Review* 13 January-February 2002 pp.61-73 (quote from p.61)

[306] *Ibid*.

anarchist, direct action elements in particular. Graeber sees the movement in anarchist terms, arguing that 'counting how many people involved in the movement actually call themselves "anarchists", and in what contexts, is a bit beside the point.'[307] I agree with this to an extent, but have already suggested a closer examination of which participants do not self-define as anarchists and for what reasons. At any rate, in Graeber's view, 'most of the creative energy for radical politics is now coming from anarchism',[308] a tradition which must be fully and respectfully engaged with if the movement is to be taken seriously. Furthermore, the movement takes many of its core values from anarchism, in particular the concept of direct action which rejects engagement with state power in favour of physical intervention against it 'in a form that itself prefigures an alternative'.[309] Interestingly, he describes this idea as coming from 'the libertarian tradition',[310] raising questions as to whether he sees this as interchangeable with anarchism.

 Graeber then dissects the nomenclature of the movement, particularly the term 'anti-globalisation movement'. He regards many of the movement's tendencies as pro-globalisation, assuming 'one takes globalisation to mean the effacement of borders and the free movement of people, possessions and ideas'.[311] Here, Graeber cites Subcomandante Marcos' call for 'A network that covers the five continents and helps to resist the death that Power promises us.'[312] Graeber concurs with Kingsnorth on the key role of Peoples' Global Action in forming such a network, listing the wide range of participants and the extent of co-operation between these. What the movement is against, by this reading, is the neoliberal interpretation of globalisation, which Graeber argues 'is pretty much limited to the movement of capital and commodities, and actually increases barriers against the free flow of people, information and ideas.'[313]

 In Graeber's terms, the movement is internationalist, but not in the manner of earlier internationalisms which 'usually ended up exporting Western organisational models to the rest of the world; in this, the flow has if anything been the other way around.'[314] Instead, the flows of influence are multi-directional and strategies either emerge from or adapt to local contexts. Furthermore, the movement resists the paradigm which sees no middle ground between 'Gandhian non-violent civil disobedience or outright insurrection',[315] developing new strategies which, for example, remove the passive element from civil disobedience and the physical violence from insurrectionary tactics.

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[307] *Ibid*. p.62
[308] *Ibid*. pp.61-62
[309] *Ibid*. p.62
[310] *Ibid*.
[311] *Ibid*. p.63
[312] Cited *Ibid*.
[313] *Ibid*. pp.64-65
[314] *Ibid*. p.65
[315] *Ibid*. p.66

Graeber's next key point regards the use of direct consensus-based democracy: he regards this as the cornerstone of both the practical aspect of the movement and its ideology. He is one of the few authors writing from a movement perspective who deploys this term in a non-pejorative way. Although I do not agree fully with his assessment that 'These new forms of organisation *are* its ideology', I do agree that it lays the groundwork for understanding the various elements involved. Furthermore, Graeber's article is an early instance of the use of the term 'prefigurative politics' to describe the movement's approach to change. He argues that 'It's one thing to say, "Another world is possible". It's another to experience it, however momentarily.'[316] Creating spaces in which other worlds are to an extent actual is part of making them possible. Finally, Graeber argues that 'Their ideology, then, is immanent in the anti-authoritarian principles that underlie their practice, and one of their more explicit principles is that things should stay this way.'[317] This is not a movement which deals in abstract ideals, but rather in applying its ideals to day-to-day practice and reconstructing them where necessary.

The rest of this chapter deals with authors discussed in more depth in the following four chapters, and is as such less detailed. The next two authors, Holloway and Day, were both writing in the mid-2000s: a time when the alternative globalisation movement and the horizontal movements within it had developed to such a stage that a coherent line of thought could be determined, and in which internal critique was beginning to be taken as the norm. Both make detailed critiques of ideas regarding the 'revolutionary' uses of power: Holloway does so from an autonomous Marxist perspective, heavily influenced by the Zapatistas, while Day is more rooted in the post-anarchist tradition. Both posit the concept of 'anti-power' in opposition to the more well-known 'counter-power' or 'counter-hegemony'.

Holloway makes two key points. The first relates to the counterproductive elements of a revolutionary movement taking state power, and the second to the notion of small cracks in the existing order: in other words, revolution from the grass roots. This second point offers a possible alternative paradigm to the taking of state power.

A detailed discussion of Holloway's critique of power takes place in the relevant chapter. Here, then, is a brief introduction to his arguments. Holloway is scathing about the use of the state and its apparatus of power to produce revolutionary change. He observes that 'The state paradigm, that is, the assumption that the winning of state power is central to radical change, dominated not just

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[316] *Ibid*. p.72
[317] *Ibid*. p.72

theory but also the revolutionary experience throughout most of the twentieth century',[318] and argues that this paradigm caused the eventual failure of every revolutionary movement using state-based tactics. He regards the emergence of an authoritarian regime as 'failure' as surely as the loss of a regime. The state paradigm, he argues, stems from an instrumentalist view of the state: the idea that state power can be 'wielded'[319] by and in the interests of whichever class holds it. Such viewpoints privilege the taking of state power as a goal[320], the result being that the 'logic of power'[321] undermines the struggle. Holloway rejects the often-heard complaints of 'betrayal'[322] by revolutionary leadership, and instead regards this as an inevitable result of the privileging of the state as a site of power. Holloway's own argument counters the state paradigm, calling instead for the destruction of state power and of unequal power relations more widely. He derives the beginnings of a new paradigm from already-existing struggles which take an anti-power rather than a counter-power or power-seeking perspective, and which do not focus their energy on the state, arguing that 'There is a vast area of activity directed towards changing the world in a way that does not have the state as its focus, and that does not aim at gaining positions of power.'[323] He draws particular inspiration from the Zapatistas' stated intention 'to create a world of dignity, a world of humanity, but without taking power'.[324] Furthermore, 'The challenge posed by the Zapatistas is the challenge of salvaging revolution from the collapse of the state illusion and from the collapse of the power illusion.'[325] While the Zapatistas are Holloway's main case study, he applies the 'anti-power', non-state focused analysis more widely, depicting small 'fissures'[326] which appear in global power structures. These fissures are 'the cracks in capitalist domination, the start from the No's, the refusals, the insubordinations, the projections against-and-beyond that exist all over the place.'[327] He then argues that

'Sometimes these fissures are so tiny that not even the rebels perceive their own rebelliousness, sometimes they are groups of people involved in projects of resistance, sometimes they are as big as the Lacandon Jungle – but the more we focus on them, the more we see the world not (just) as an all-pervading system of capitalist domination but as a world riven by fissures, by refusals, by resistances and struggles.'[328]

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[318] Holloway, J. (2005) *Change the World Without Taking Power* London: Pluto p.12
[319] *Ibid*. p.13
[320] *Ibid*. p.15
[321] *Ibid*. p.17
[322] *Ibid*.
[323] *Ibid*. p.21
[324] *Ibid*. p.20
[325] *Ibid*. p.21
[326] *Ibid*. p.219
[327] *Ibid*.
[328] *Ibid*. p.220

Holloway's account of the forces behind these fissures is evocative of Maffesoli's depiction of *puissance* as a force for resistance: it operates at a low level, often under the radar of more established political frameworks, and from this it derives the ability to resist effectively.

Day's contribution to the debate is a genealogy of what he calls the 'newest social movements' and their forerunners, focused especially on anarchist tendencies. Day frames his analysis in terms of resistance to hegemony and domination, concepts which will be discussed further in chapter 3. In particular, he levels criticism at the 'hegemony of hegemony':[329] the idea that, as with the state paradigm targeted by Holloway, hegemonic power is necessary in order to bring about any real change. He regards 'political revolutions'[330] of the classical Marxist variety as 'totalising in their intent',[331] focused on gaining hegemony; and also regards the 'necessity of hegemony'[332] as a fault of modern marxism, modern liberalism and post-Marxist viewpoints. His genealogy of resistance to hegemony begins with early utopian socialism and classical anarchism, each of which suffered to an extent from the effects of totalising logic, but have also been subject to a measure of internal deconstruction, leading to 'moments of awareness of the tensions and contradictions'[333] involved. In the case of Utopian Socialists such as Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen, 'both the logic of hegemony *and* the logic of affinity are at work in their texts'[334] and it is thus necessary to understand the interaction between the two logics. As regards classical anarchism, the totalising logic is once again at play in the work of Proudhon and Bakunin, for all that their ideas show promise of liberation from hegemony.[335] Of the classical anarchists, Day credits Kropotkin with developing a 'non-hegemonic anarchist ethic'[336] which was 'incompatible with a world-encompassing ideology.'[337]

Day highlights two key theoretical strands in today's anti-hegemonic social movements: postanarchism and autonomist Marxism. The latter, he suggests, is partially a hybrid of Marxist and anarchist ideas: while acknowledging the non-anarchist self-definition of its adherents, he calls them 'marxists who are quietly importing anarchist analyses and strategies, hoping to gain a certain theoretical and political purchase while avoiding censure for partaking of forbidden fruit.'[338] As with earlier strands of Marxism and anarchism, Day regards these theories as containing elements of hegemonic totalising logic in addition to their liberatory potential. He tends

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[329] Day, R. (2005) *Gramsci is Dead* London: Pluto p.8
[330] *Ibid*. p.65
[331] *Ibid*.
[332] *Ibid*.
[333] *Ibid*. p.95
[334] *Ibid*. p.104
[335] *Ibid*. ch.4
[336] *Ibid*. p.122
[337] *Ibid*. p.122
[338] *Ibid*. p.150

towards postanarchism – also known as post-structural or postmodern anarchism – as the most viable solution, while admitting this is not without problems. In particular, he questions whether the Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ) is able to 'prefigure broader and deeper social change'[339], rather than merely offering 'temporary respite to a small number of individuals.'[340] However, he argues that this dichotomy may be a false one: that modes of organisation can exist which are 'neither utterly fleeting nor totally enslaving.'[341] Here, he highlights Bey's claim that temporary and permanent autonomous zones are not mutually exclusive, but must rather 'feed off one another'.[342] The permanent zones, however, must maintain the intensity of their temporary counterparts, rather than falling victim to complacency or institutionalisation.

Day's arguments highlight the heterogeneous nature of the movement, which cannot be firmly attached to any specific theoretical outlook. There are anarchist and Marxist currents feeding in to it from a number of stages of the evolution of the ideologies in question, and it also contains postmodernist and poststructuralist elements. From the conjunction of these strands, it could also be possible to determine the existence of something original.

Day also provides a typology of direct action, one which is more specific to the horizontal segments of the movement than that devised by Starr. The categories, it should be noted, are not mutually exclusive: individuals and groups can and do participate in different combinations of the following types of action. His first category is 'zero-participation',[343] colloquially known as 'dropping out'. Activists in this category refuse to participate in employment or the 'system' as far as possible: squatting and a 'freegan'[344] approach to food can be seen in these terms. These tactics have been criticised as 'lifestyle anarchism', a concept which will be discussed further in chapter 4: however, Day argues that they show promise, demonstrating that 'living an alternative lifestyle can be combined with other tactics that are more obviously "political" in nature.'[345] The second category is the 'subversion of existing institutions',[346] a repertoire of tactics based on the Situationist concept of *détournement*. The third category is 'impeding existing forms':[347] in other words, making it more difficult for the dominant groups to perform their daily functions. Mild examples include Reclaim The Streets; blockading the roads leading to a summit venue is a

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[339] *Ibid*. p.163

[340] *Ibid*.

[341] *Ibid*.

[342] *Ibid*.

[343] *Ibid*. p.21

[344] Derived from a play on the term 'vegan', refers to a preference for obtaining food for free. The main tactic here is 'skipping', known in the US as 'dumpster diving': the practice of taking food that has been thrown away by retailers.

[345] Day (2005) p.21

[346] *Ibid*. p.20

[347] *Ibid*. p.25

moderate form of impediment; and the less moderate end of the scale features economic sabotage in the form of property damage. The fourth category, the one which will be drawn from the most elsewhere in this project, is the prefiguration of alternatives. The affinity group and the TAZ, in this context, have a deeper meaning than 'mere' ideological consistency: part of their purpose is to demonstrate that such modes of doing and being are possible. The TAZ, however, also contains the potential to construct alternatives: to become the nucleus for a community in which the appropriate political principles are put into practice day-to-day.

The final two authors, Juris and Gordon, write at later stages in the development of the movements concerned. Both come from positions of sympathy with horizontal ideas: Juris has been part of the horizontal section at various social forums, while Gordon self-defines as an anarchist.

Juris' project takes the form of a 'militant ethnography'[348] of 'networked movements', with a specific focus on a selection of movements in Barcelona and their interactions with wider activist networks at international events. The detail of what is meant by a networked movement can be found in chapter 3: in brief, it involves a logic which builds horizontal connections between a diverse range of autonomous groups, circulates information freely and organises through decentralised channels.[349] The network, Juris argues, generates 'a guiding logic that provides a model of, and model for, emerging forms of directly democratic politics.'[350] Juris regards the World and regional Social Forums and People's Global Action as networks of this variety. The internet is vital to networked movements. In ideological terms, Juris argues that 'the dominant spirit behind this emerging political praxis can broadly be defined as anarchist, or what activists in Barcelona refer to as libertarian.'[351] However, in practice groups with less identifiably anarchist tendencies become involved: as noted above, diversity is a key feature of the networked movement.

Juris constructs a genealogy of networked movements and their origins: his interpretation differs somewhat from Day's, and is based on 20th and 21st century political phenomena. He identifies 'Grassroots urban, peasant and indigenous movements in the Global South'[352] – active from the 1970s – as among the 'first to challenge corporate globalisation'[353], the 'front line of global

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[348] Juris , J. (2008) *Networking Futures: The Movements Against Corporate Globalisation* Durham and London: Duke University Press pp.19-24

[349] Juris (2008) p.11

[350] *Ibid*. p.11

[351] *Ibid*. p.15

[352] *Ibid*. p.39

[353] *Ibid*.

struggles'[354], and a 'grassroots base for transnational campaigns.'[355] In the same time period, 'anarchist-inspired direct action'[356] contributed 'Visibility, tactical and strategic innovation, confrontational spirit, networking logics, creative use of media and new technologies'.[357] From the 1980s, NGOs, transnational advocacy networks and Northern civil society campaigns provided a 'discursive critique of globalisation',[358] advocated on behalf of grassroots groups and against free trade and levelled an early challenge at multilateral summits. In the 1990s, anticorporate activism put the focus on corporations as a target, creating an 'increased awareness of global division of labour and sweatshops'.[359] From 1994, meanwhile, the Zapatistas have provided 'inspiration'[360], a 'vision of global solidarity'[361], a 'language and model of organising'[362], 'global networking and gatherings'[363]. Juris takes a shorter view than Day, paying less attention to the influence of classical Marxism or anarchism in tracing the origins of the movements he studies: it is also possible that some of the differences may be down to culture, since Day focuses largely on US and Canada movements while Juris' case study is the protest networks of Barcelona. Additionally, while Day focuses on theoretical currents, Juris pays more attention to practical modes of action. I argue that these are equally valid and useful approaches, and can be used in conjunction to get close to the full range of influences at play in horizontal movements.

  Juris also provides a typology of movements within the wider anti-corporate globalisation field. The first category he refers to consists of 'institutional movements'[364] which 'operate within formal democratic structures, aiming to establish social democracy or socialism at the national or global level.'[365] The second category, 'critical sectors'[366], is largely built from movements on the far left: such movements are 'populist in tone, internationalist in scope, and radical in orientation'[367], and their aim is to 'build a global civil society.'[368] The third category, and the one into which the majority of horizontal movements fit, consists of 'radical network-based movements'[369] which 'emphasise autonomy, direct democracy, and horizontal co-ordination.'[370]

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[354] *Ibid.*
[355] *Ibid.*
[356] *Ibid.*
[357] *Ibid.*
[358] *Ibid.*
[359] *Ibid.*
[360] *Ibid.*
[361] *Ibid.*
[362] *Ibid.*
[363] *Ibid.*
[364] *Ibid.* p.59
[365] *Ibid.*
[366] *Ibid.*
[367] *Ibid.*
[368] *Ibid.*
[369] *Ibid.*
[370] *Ibid.*

Movements in this category 'have generated new visions of political and social interaction based on global coordination among diverse local struggles'.[371] Such movements are critical of those in the first two categories.[372] While critical sectors favour open assemblies, radical network-based movements aim to go beyond this, emphasising 'decentralised coordination and flexible, diffuse structures.'[373] Juris argues that the Zapatistas had a significant influence in this sector. In the interests of diversity, movements in this category are generally prepared to form 'temporary ad hoc coalitions'[374] with groups from other sectors, focused on 'coordination around concrete projects rather than unified political identities.'[375] Finally, Juris describes 'autonomous movements',[376] which may also be of relevance in the horizontal context. These movements include 'militant squatters and certain indigenous and poor people's movements'[377], and focus on direct confrontations with power. Juris' typology is largely based on how movements engage with power, but also measures the extent to which they make connections with one another.

Finally, Gordon approaches conceptual analysis of anti-authoritarian movements from an anarchist standpoint. His approach to power is discussed in the relevant chapter, while at other points I engage with his classification of such movements as intrinsically 'anarchist'. Gordon argues that 'The past decade or so has seen the full revival of a global anarchist movement on a scale and levels of diversity unseen since the 1930s.'[378] Gordon's standpoint is clear: he is writing 'an anarchist book about anarchism. It explores the development of anarchist groups, actions and ideas in recent years, and aims to demonstrate what a theory based on practice can achieve when applied to central debates and dilemmas on the movement today.'[379] His key themes are the relationship between anarchism and power, and in particular the power relations and distribution of different types of power within anarchist movements[380]; the relationship between anarchism and violence[381], which confronts the public perception of anarchism; and the politics of technology as applied to anarchism[382]. He is clear that the movements he defines as 'anarchist' today are not identical or purely a continuation of classical anarchism: rather, 'While often drawing directly on the anarchist tradition for inspiration and ideas, the re-emergent anarchist movement is also in

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[371] *Ibid*. p.60
[372] *Ibid*. p.79
[373] *Ibid*.
[374] *Ibid*.p.83
[375] *Ibid*.
[376] *Ibid*. p.60
[377] *Ibid*.
[378] Gordon, U. (2008) *Anarchy Alive! Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory* London: Pluto p.2
[379] *Ibid*. p.3
[380] *Ibid*. ch.3
[381] *Ibid*. ch.4
[382] *Ibid*. ch.5

many ways different from the left-libertarian politics of 100, and even 60, years ago.'[383] In addition, he states that his 'substantive goal'[384] is 'to genuinely reflect and respond to activists' dilemmas, using a theory built on first-hand experience, on discussions with fellow activists, on a critical reading of anarchist and non-anarchist texts, and on tendentious arguments of my own.'[385]

Gordon makes a number of significant contributions to the debates regarding horizontal political movements. He is among the first to raise the somewhat thorny issue of internal power relations, and in particular makes the point that an unequal distribution and oppressive use of power can occur in situations where everybody is ostensibly equal and in which no individual or group holds hegemonic power over another. His arguments emphasise the need for further discussion on this topic, and for analysis of power in movement circles to go beyond the power wielded by governments, corporations and ruling classes. He also provides an up-to-date analysis of the violence question: like Graeber, he regards the dichotomy between pacifism and violence as redundant, and attempts to reframe the debate in a form more appropriate to the movements in question. I would argue, however, that one debate he opens and does not fully investigate is that regarding whether such movements can be unequivocally considered anarchist, and in particular whether those participants who do not self-define as anarchist do indeed do so for the sake of 'euphemism'[386] or out of a general resistance to labelling[387] rather than out of a genuine belief that their politics cannot be summed up by that term.

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[383] *Ibid*. p.5
[384] *Ibid*. p.7
[385] *Ibid*.
[386] *Ibid*. p.12
[387] *Ibid*. p.13

Hierarchy

Introduction

  Beginning with the arguments made against hierarchy by those involved in horizontal movements and spaces, this chapter examines the key ideas contained within these arguments and their role in generating a distinctive theory of horizontal politics. The horizontal attitude to hierarchy amounts to outright rejection: a distinguishing factor of horizontal political movements. The reasoning behind this stance forms the ideological basis for the core argument. The main factors are firstly the idea that people are equal and should neither be ruled by one another nor their struggles be ascribed unequal importance; and secondly, the argument that a revolution organised along hierarchical lines lacks emancipatory potential. This has generated multiple strategies for actively resisting the emergence of hierarchy. These are themselves of theoretical interest, embodying horizontal key principles. The process of resisting hierarchy is not without problems, however: for example, there is a tendency for informal hierarchies to emerge if left unchecked. The potential solutions to this and other challenges play a role in the formulation of a distinctive theory of horizontal politics.

  This chapter is structured around three elements of the self-definition of horizontal activists, groups and movements. The first section deals with ethos and tactics, the second with theoretical reflection and the third with some responses to challenges. These challenges concern for the most part internal consistency and ideological coherence rather than practical or normative questions. This structure is standard for the concept-based chapters. Reference is made to the conventional literature on each concept, and where relevant to sources named in the literature section. The focus, however, is on the grassroots material: the edited volumes from past mobilisations, and the online presence of more recent incarnations of horizontal politics. Before tackling the main questions, however, a general overview is needed on the theme of hierarchy.

Overview

  Hierarchy as a concept is diametrically opposed to horizontal politics, and is for this reason the first theme to be examined here. This determined opposition – hierarchy being rejected outright and actively resisted in horizontal movements – singles it out from the themes around which later chapters are structured. The other three themes contain horizontal conceptions encompassing a level of redefinition, re-contesting or co-opting, rather than being straightforwardly regarded as anathema. The discussion surrounding hierarchy, however, focuses explicitly on how to resist its emergence in organisation, to challenge its existence on a wider scale in society and finally to

develop alternatives to it based on horizontal principles. Although hierarchy is singled out as a specific theme, this issues discussed in this chapter form a consistent thread running through the subsequent three. The focus here, however, is on the critiques directly levelled at hierarchy, and on the alternatives which horizontal movements are developing.

In morphological terms, the rejection of hierarchy is a core concept of horizontal politics: it has an influence on each of the various theories and practices which have emerged in the course of these movements' development. Hierarchy (or more accurately anti-hierarchy) as a concept contains a number of components[388] influencing both the critique of hierarchy and the proposed alternatives. These function both as organisational and ideological principles in terms of their impact on horizontal politics in practice. Diversity refers to the range of beliefs and tactics encompassed in the category of horizontal movements, and is both a principle and a strategy. With reference to hierarchy, the focus is on resisting the imposition of a single agenda and acknowledging the validity of multiple viewpoints. Autonomy is the principle which to some extent makes this possible: because there is no central structure, individuals and affinity groups can work together or separately as circumstances demand without answering to any external entity. Affinity is the key to understanding how such groups operate, and specifically what holds mobilisations together in the absence of a traditional hierarchical structure. Consensus is the means of ensuring that the previous principles are acted upon: in organisational terms, it is essential to ensure that the maximum number of people participate, contribute and express opinions, and that the agreement which is reached encompasses the range of views which have been expressed. Here again is a concerted resistance to the imposition of an overarching agenda.

Ethos and tactics

The first defining feature of a horizontal political movement is the inherent, openly-stated rejection of hierarchy; and, furthermore, of the need for hierarchy. Such a rejection contains an intrinsic critique of the traditional pragmatic argument, advanced since Marx's time, that a hierarchical structure can be regarded as a necessary if undesirable evil. In particular, horizontal politics prioritises rejecting and actively resisting hierarchy over maximising efficiency and cohesiveness in a mobilisation. These priorities distance such movements from those which justify the aforementioned necessary evil by alluding to these factors. The key distinction, however lies in the methods used to resist the formation of hierarchy; and, more significantly, in the reasoning given by activists for using these. A starting-point for outlining these is the hallmarks of People's

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[388] Outlined in the introduction

Global Action, as these have been utilised by activists as founding principles for a number of mobilisations[389].

The PGA hallmarks

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

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

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

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

5. An organisational philosophy based on decentralisation and autonomy.[390]

These hallmarks demonstrate a number of points echoed by the theory and practice of horizontal politics. Numbers one and two focus straightforwardly on naming the entities to which movements following these principles are opposed. The third and fourth hallmarks denote the type of resistance which is perceived to be practically and ideologically necessary. In practical terms, the only way for resistance to be effective is for those at the grass roots to take it into their own hands rather than relying on traditional structures of leadership. In ideological terms, grassroots action is again necessary in order to avoid the development of hierarchical structures which themselves become oppressive. It is the fifth point, however, which has the most bearing on the particular resistance levelled at hierarchy. None of the first four points explicitly rule out a hierarchical movement. It is by no means out of the question for a movement which rejects 'capitalism, imperialism and feudalism'[391]; resists the 'forms and systems of domination and discrimination'[392] which are currently prevalent; and approaches resistance with 'a confrontational attitude'[393] and methods of 'direct action and civil disobedience'[394] to do so while retaining a level of hierarchy

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[389] See chapter two for a brief history of PGA.
[390] Online at http://nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/free/pga/hallm.htm last accessed 2/12/08 Only the most recent incarnations of the hallmarks are shown here: for space reasons, some history has been removed.
[391] *Ibid*. (Hallmark 1)
[392] *Ibid*. (Hallmark 2)
[393] *Ibid*. (Hallmark 3)
[394] *Ibid*. (Hallmark 4)

within its own ranks: in fact, it could be argued that certain movements have done so. The fifth hallmark, however, makes an explicit link to the principles outlined in the introduction, at least to the extent of establishing a framework in which they form the most viable means of putting the organisational philosophy into practice. To investigate how this happens at the grassroots level, it is necessary to start with the descriptions given by those involved, which arguably yield the clearest indicators of a specifically horizontal attitude to hierarchy.

Outright rejections of hierarchy are found in the public output of many groups and spaces organised along horizontal lines.[395] The Camp for Climate Action, when listing its core principles, begins with 'Anarchy: that our process should be non-hierarchical, self-organising and free from oppressive tendencies. While this is hopefully not controversial implementing this principle in practise is non-trivial.'[396] This could in itself be taken as a platitude: however, it is followed by other principles which fill it out and give it potential to be brought into practice. These include 'Transparency: our process should be as transparent as possible with as few dark crevices, where hierarchy can breed, as is practicable. There should be no hierarchy of knowledge regarding the state of the process and no one should have a greater influence over the process due to inside information.'[397] A similar message is expressed in the Camp's guide to organising a gathering[398]: 'The gatherings have been constantly evolving to ensure they remain productive and enjoyable, while also staying committed to principles of non-hierarchy and consensus decision making.'[399] The Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh, meanwhile, declares: 'We share a vision of a world without bosses and so try to work together non-hierarchically in a spirit of respect and friendship. By sharing experiences, skills and knowledge, we hope to help each other improve our homes, communities, workplaces and lives. We try to contribute to the struggles going on around the world that aim to transform our society for the better.'[400] In both cases, active resistance to hierarchy is given a high level of proportionality: it is a key element in the face the groups concerned present to the outside world.

I will now examine some of the components of this concept of resistance to hierarchy, drawing from the public output of horizontal groups and activists.

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[395] Further examples can be found in ch.4 'Organisation'
[396] Processgroup (2010) 'Proposal: Principles for how we organise' online at http://discussion.climatecamp.org.uk/viewtopic.php?id=103 last accessed 4/7/11
[397] *Ibid*.
[398] This task was rotated around the various local neighbourhoods for the sake of de-centralisation and dispersal of both influence and workload.
[399] Camp for Climate Action (undated) 'Guide to running a national gathering' online at http://www.climatecamp.org.uk/get-involved/guide-to-running-a-national-gathering last accessed 25/11/11
[400] Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh (undated a) 'Info' online at http://www.autonomous.org.uk/node/2 last accessed 25/11/11

Diversity

Of all the horizontal principles discussed in the introduction, diversity has the least clearly obvious relationship to hierarchy. However, activists argue that diversity is essential if hierarchy is to be resisted, regarding monolithic movements as those in which an agenda is imposed by a select few on a wider group. Although diversity of political viewpoints and demographic factors are important, the diversity question is generally discussed in movement literature in terms of 'diversity of tactics'. This can be merely a response to the violence question, but its scope runs deeper than that. A member of the American anarchist group CrimethInc defines the diversity question in undeniably anti-hierarchical terms, arguing that: 'Insisting that everyone should adopt the same approach is arrogant and shortsighted – it presumes that you are entitled to make judgements on others' behalf – and also unrealistic: any strategy that demands that everyone think and act the same way is doomed to failure, for human beings are not that simple or submissive.'[401] Ignoring or denying diversity is in this view an intrinsically hierarchical strategy. Meanwhile, 'Honouring a diversity of tactics… reframes the question of strategy in terms of personal responsibility: at every juncture, the question is not what somebody else should be doing, but what you can do.'[402] This argument reflects the principle of self-determination, in that those involved in such movements regard themselves as participants rather than spectators. It also challenges certain tendencies – often attributed to the 'activist mentality' – to expend energy criticising other participants' lack of commitment or other perceived faults and neglect the need to 'alter the contents of our own lives in a revolutionary manner[403]' in terms of relating to one another and the world as a whole. Both these aspects are in themselves anti-hierarchical, or more specifically anti-vanguardist, in that they emphasise the point that leadership in such circumstances can degenerate into a force against, rather than for, liberation. The previously-quoted CrimethInc 'agent'[404] continues: 'Accepting the legitimacy of a diversity of tactics means moving from a competitive mindset in which there is only one right way of doing things to a more inclusive and nuanced way of thinking. This contests hierarchies of value as well as of power, and undermines rigid abstractions such as "violence" and "morality".'[405]

In brief, a hierarchy of value implies that certain tactics are valued more than others. This can create a hierarchy of power, with certain elements of a movement becoming its 'face' while sidelining or excluding others. This tendency was actively resisted in the organising process for

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[401] CrimethInc (2005) *Recipes for Disaster* Olympia: CrimethInc p.20
[402] *Ibid*. p.21
[403] CrimethInc (2003) 'Alive In The Land Of The Dead' online at
http://www.CrimethInc.com/texts/days/alive.php last accessed 03/12/08
[404] This is the term usually used in CrimethInc literature to denote those involved.
[405] CrimethInc (2005) p.21

the anti-G8 mobilisation at Gleneagles, the criterion for involvement being willingness to abide by the PGA hallmarks. Trocchi *et al* suggest that 'By adopting the most minimal radical guiding hallmarks, and by agreeing to disagree on many issues, the Dissent! network succeeded in attracting participation from more than the "usual suspects" in such scenarios.'[406] In practical terms, the principles listed previously ensured for the most part that hierarchies of value and of power were avoided. Regarding the public face of the movement, there were also attempts to prevent a perceived leadership emerging. Trocchi *et al* describe how 'Too often in anarchist groups one person, usually a white male, gets labelled as the "leader" by the media, usually through talking to the media about the message of the protest. One of the earliest decisions by Dissent! was that "anyone who claims to be speaking on behalf of the Dissent! network is lying", in order to prevent any self-proclaimed media spokespeople from arising.'[407] In addition to being a practical measure (to prevent the authorities 'shutting down' what they perceived as 'Dissent!') this is also a statement of the network's horizontal principles. One means of gaining an unsolicited monolithic agenda is to acquire one in the public eye: to become branded with an identity representing a fraction of what a movement aims to achieve. This creates competition and the possibility of emerging hierarchy.

This phenomenon takes the discussion beyond diversity of tactics, and into the diversity of beliefs underlying these tactics. The Gleneagles mobilisation and others of that ilk are notable for encompassing a range of political outlooks and causes: challenging horizontal, anti-hierarchical principles, due to the level of inherent disagreement threatening to swamp the common ground. Evidence can be seen here for prioritising of opposition to hierarchy. The potential exists to exclude those elements most likely to raise disagreements with the majority viewpoint. The result would be, if not a monolithic agenda, possibly greater internal coherence and the potential for greater efficiency. It would also violate core anti-hierarchical principles, compromising the horizontal nature of the movement. Diversity is instead encouraged, and generally regarded as a positive trait. Alex Smith, while examining the implications of the Gleneagles mobilisation and its forerunners, suggests that: 'The global days of action provided a means by which a huge multiplicity of singular struggles could begin to be woven into one, without the very real differences between them (in terms of political histories, forms of resistance, and the material conditions in which movements found themselves) becoming obscured in the process.'[408] While the focus is on the common ground between disparate movements and struggles, no attempt is made to gloss over differences or prioritise certain issues over others. A further distinguishing trait of a horizontal movement is a generalised acceptance of diversity as a goal: intrinsic to the

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[406] Trocchi, Redwolf and Alamire (2005) p.66
[407] *Ibid*. p.71
[408] Smith, A. (2005) 'The International Mobilisation to Gleneagles' in Harvie *et al* (eds) *Shut Them Down!* pp.151-162 (quote from p.157)

mobilisation rather than an inconvenience to be tolerated. Trocchi *et al*, describing the organisational process at the Hori-Zone, argue that 'when organised but disparate groups ranging from the clowns to the black bloc could sit together in one meeting and work together to shut down the G8, the phrase "diversity of tactics" really meant something.'[409]

Autonomy

  The principle of autonomy enables a movement based on diversity to flourish. It warrants an explicit mention in the PGA hallmarks and is a core tenet of Zapatismo. In their 'how-to' manual for horizontal activists, the TRAPESE collective offer this definition: 'Stemming from the Greek, meaning "self-legislation", autonomy is a belief system that values freedom from external authority. This can occur at the individual and collective level. Autonomy has widespread use for many contemporary social movements trying to manage their own lives and communities.'[410] The literal interpretations of the word, particularly self-government and self-determination, feature strongly in horizontal activists' accounts of mobilisations and the organisational processes involved. The basic definition is an anti-hierarchical statement, implying a disregard for 'external authority'. As a guiding principle, autonomy implies active resistance to central structures of command, encouraging instead the 'self-legislation' of the myriad individuals and groups involved. This is partly a practical necessity to maintain common ground without becoming swamped in the problems potentially arising from differences between participants. However, it is also a point of principle, aiming to ensure the equality of all participants and prevent the formation of hierarchies either of power or of value.

  How is the horizontal approach to autonomy distinctive? As the discussion of diversity suggests, there is no clearly defined single, genuine struggle, no specific time for this to take place and no leadership to define it. Rather, the various movements and their struggles are regarded as equally valid and thus not answerable to a central structure. This is not, however, equivalent to an atomistic theory in which individuals and groups can overlook one another's concerns. The Notes From Nowhere collective, writing in the early days of the global justice movement, point out that 'To be autonomous is not to be alone or to act in any way one chooses – a law unto oneself – but to act with regard to others, to feel responsibility for others. This is the crux of autonomy, an ethic of responsibility and reciprocity that comes through recognition that others both desire and are capable of autonomy too.'[411] These two statements may appear to contradict one another, or

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[409] Trocchi *et al* (2005) p.90
[410] Trapese Collective (2007a) 'Glossary' in Trapese Collective (eds.) (2007) *Do It Yourself: a handbook for changing our world* London: Pluto pp.xi-xiv (quote from p.xi)
[411] Notes From Nowhere collective (2003) 'Autonomy: creating spaces for freedom' in Notes from Nowhere (eds.) (2003) *We Are Everywhere* London: Verso pp.107-119 (quote from p.110)

suggest an inconsistency between their respective contexts. However, this need not be so. There is a common ethos of mutual respect: each participant accepts that others have an equal level of autonomy, and should not have another's agenda imposed on them in terms of how to conduct their struggle. Here, the anti-hierarchical element enters the equation; with particular regard to the question of hierarchies of value, for to act with no regard to others would intrinsically prioritise the concerns of certain groups. Seeds for Change – pioneers of consensus decision-making in its current incarnation – suggest that 'Self-government is based on the ideal that every person should have control over their own destiny. This ideal requires us to find ways to organise a society in which we can coexist with each other whilst respecting people's individuality, their diverse needs and desires.'[412] This statement encapsulates a number of horizontal principles, particularly the respect for diversity and the assumption that all participants are equal. However, the idea that 'every person should have control over their own destiny' also warrants discussion. This theme is echoed across the grassroots literature, from the decision to organise mobilisations along autonomous lines to the CrimethInc principle of revolution through small, 'DIY' acts of subversion. It has roots in the Situationist principle of 'revolutionary self-theory', which aims to negate alienation through 'thinking for yourself.'[413]

This idea is still being built upon today, distinguishing horizontal movements from those which regard autonomy as an impossible ideal or an expedient strategy. In terms of resistance to hierarchy, this is an important point to note: in a horizontal context, nobody has the right to decide for others when autonomy is or is not strategically valuable; nor to make the decision on another group's behalf regarding when certain tactics are appropriate.

The Seeds for Change quote also demonstrates the prefigurative nature of horizontal politics: the reference to exploring ways to organise a society suggests a desire to move beyond organising protests and to develop alternative ways of being on a wider scale. Notes from Nowhere point out that 'It is not the tree of tomorrow that our movements are planting today.'[414] Autonomy here encompasses 'direct democracy in zones liberated by the people who live in them – not as enclaves or places to withdraw to – but as outward looking and connected communities of affinity, engaged in mutual co-operation, collective learning and unmediated interaction.'[415] Autonomous zones are by this reading spaces in which resistance is formulated and conducted: however, they are not secretive or shut off from the rest of the world. Rather, they are interconnected both among

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[412] Seeds for Change (2007a) 'Why do it without leaders' in Trapese (eds) (2007) pp.50-62 (quote from p.55)

[413] Law, L. (Undated) 'Revolutionary Self-Theory' online at http://www.burngreave.net/~aland/personal/spectaculartimes/cornersoul.com/revolutionary.html last accessed 24/07/08

[414] Notes from Nowhere collective (2003) pp.108-109

[415] *Ibid*.

themselves and with the wider community. By becoming open spaces – for example by running a community café or library, offering meeting spaces and supporting local campaigns – such zones resist the 'activist mentality'. The spaces in question can be said to have been genuinely 'liberated' rather than becoming closed spaces with limited entry privileges; resisting the formation of hierarchies of value. More prosaically, the organisational strategies deployed within these spaces are designed to prevent the more traditional hierarchies of power becoming a problem.

A useful summary of the role of autonomy in distinguishing the horizontal perspective on hierarchy can be found in this sentence, drawn again from the Notes from Nowhere collective's introduction to the topic: 'Autonomy is freedom and connectedness, necessarily collective and powerfully intuitive, an irrepressible desire that stalls every attempt to crush the will to freedom.'[416] Key here is the conjunction of 'freedom and connectedness'. The principle of autonomy hinges on the freedom of individuals and affinity groups to make their own decisions regarding tactics and policy. Connectedness refers to the relationship these individuals or groups have to other movement participants and the wider community. The emphasis is on respect and mutual aid, and more generally on equality and respecting the freedom of others. The Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh underline this conjunction. Their definition of autonomy encompasses 'independence, independent; the right of self government; an independent state or community; freedom to act as one pleases; freedom of will.'[417] However, they also acknowledge the element of connectedness: 'We recognise that all individuals are inter-dependent. Our actions affect other people. Our aim is to encourage people to work with others to improve their lives. Underlying this is an ideal of mutual aid. By helping and supporting each other, we can all improve our lives.'[418] The horizontal ideas in play here are equality and a way of being and/or doing which suggests an alternative to a central structure. In this context, hierarchy is rejected as unnecessary as respect and co-operation are maintained without an overarching authority to enforce them. The key principle here is affinity, which will now be discussed in more detail.

Affinity

Affinity is defined by an activist writing as 'O.V.' as a principle which lies between extreme individualism and the insistence on a permanent and programmatic organisational arrangement[419]. It connects to the definition of autonomy relating to the conjunction of connectedness and freedom, while rejecting many of the separate political uses ascribed to each and maintaining

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[416] *Ibid*. p.107
[417] Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh (undated a)
[418] Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh (undated b) 'Mutual Aid' online at http://www.autonomous.org.uk/node/18 last accessed 25/11/11
[419] O.V. (undated) 'The Affinity Group' online at http://www.geocities.com/kk_abacus/insurr3.html last accessed 9/12/08

balance between them. Affinity is an autonomous principle, reflecting the extent to which individuals and groups have the freedom to make decisions without answering to a central authority. Affinity is also collective, relating to the connections between autonomous individuals and groups. It is based on trust, consensus, mutual respect and shared goals; between groups as well as the individuals within them. The ways in which this balance is struck relate to key horizontal characteristics: the absence of hierarchy being the most consistently referred to in the activist literature. CrimethInc regard this as the structure's defining feature, arguing that 'Affinity groups and collectives can be distinguished from other organisational structures in that they are explicitly non-hierarchical.'[420] Here, affinity is explicitly an anti-structure, a barrier against the formation of hierarchical structures. Within the affinity group arrangement, consensus is the usual means of reaching democratic decisions. In addition, the affinity group can be transitory rather than permanent: the implications here will become clearer shortly.

  Several elements of the anti-hierarchical stance embodied in the affinity group are encapsulated in the following statement by Seeds for Change: 'Affinity groups offer a means to collective action based on equality and direct democracy. They avoid relying on one strong leader and often use consensus for decision making. This encourages everyone to actively participate in planning, making decisions and taking action. Another important aspect of affinity groups is their autonomy – all important decisions are made within the group even when the group is participating with others in a larger action. This allows the group to stay flexible, creative and responsible for its own actions. It also challenges traditional top-down decision-making.'[421] A number of distinctly horizontal values are alluded to here. Firstly, there is the idea that every participant is equal: a factor in the use of consensus methods aimed at resisting the hierarchy of values resulting from sidelining certain concerns as 'less important'. Self-determination features as both the need to 'actively participate' and the autonomy aspect. Horizontal movements reject the role of the passive spectator, critiquing tactics which encourage participants to see themselves thus. The relationship to autonomy, meanwhile, generates a direct critique of the 'need' for a centralised structure.[422]

  This resistance leads to another characteristic of the affinity group: the 'flexible, creative' element retained by groups as a result of being autonomous. This flexibility extends to affinity groups (and collaborations between multiple groups) being temporary arrangements which can form, disband and reform in different incarnations as circumstances and the will of the participating individuals demand. CrimethInc suggest that 'An affinity group is not a permanent arrangement, but a structure of convenience, ever mutable, assembled from the pool of interested

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[420] CrimethInc (2005) p.191
[421] Seeds for Change (undated) 'Affinity Groups' online at
http://www.activistslegalproject.org.uk/affinitygroups.pdf last accessed 10/12/08
[422] To be discussed further in ch.4, 'Organisation'

and trusted people for the duration of a given project.'[423] This is itself an anti-hierarchical idea, fuelled by a horizontal logic opposing the reification which can emerge in a group with a permanent structure. The ability to change and adapt (or cease to exist) avoids the formation of hierarchies to a great extent, as the group does not become mired in maintaining the bureaucracy and consistent, slow to change policy of a formally constituted organisation. An example might be the scenario outlined by 'O.V.' in which 'to have an affinity with a comrade means to know them, to have deepened one's knowledge of them. As that knowledge grows, the affinity can increase to the point of making an action together possible, but it can also diminish to the point of making it practically impossible.'[424] The longevity of an affinity group depends on the affinity between members; encompassing trust, knowledge of other participants' boundaries, and genuinely shared beliefs and goals. The anti-hierarchical nature of the affinity group is evident in the acknowledgement that these factors can change, and that autonomous participants can break away without losing their affiliation to the wider movement.

The Notes from Nowhere collective also emphasise the role of the affinity group in distinguishing a horizontal movement. They state that 'An affinity group is the fundamental unit of direct action'[425] in which 'participants tend to have more in common, there is an absence of hierarchy, and over time, a deep trust in the group's intelligence can develop, allowing us to let go of some of our own prejudices and consider what is best for the group.'[426] In terms of direct action, the affinity group is the 'fundamental unit' in both practical[427] and ideological terms. Practically speaking, the autonomous affinity group has frequently been of strategic value, particularly for allowing flexibility in a larger mobilisation. Crucially, however, while the affinity group model is useful in the planning of a mobilisation, it becomes essential when the question shifts to how to do so horizontally. Notes from Nowhere are among a number of commentators who make the non-hierarchical aspect of the affinity group explicit. The critique of hierarchy lies in the ability of horizontal movements to demonstrate that a collection of autonomous affinity groups can successfully organise a large-scale mobilisation, maintaining a convergence space in which a diverse range of interests and beliefs can coexist without degenerating into the pejorative sense of the word 'anarchy'. Notes from Nowhere point out that 'The thing to remember is that an affinity group belongs to you – you can decide what actions and what degree of risk you wish to take. *Bringing creative people together to work and play collectively is one of our most powerful acts of resistance.*'[428]

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[423] CrimethInc (2005) p.28
[424] 'O.V.' (undated) *op. cit.*
[425] Notes from Nowhere (2003) p.88
[426] *Ibid.*
[427] Discussed further in ch.4, 'Organisation'
[428] Notes from Nowhere (2003) p.88

Consensus

The means by which this collective work and play is organised and decided upon provides a link to the final major factor by which horizontal movements distinguish themselves. CrimethInc describe the process thus: 'Affinity groups operate on the consensus model: decisions are made collectively, based on the needs and desires of every individual involved. Democratic votes, in which the majority get their way and the minority must hold their tongues, are anathema to affinity groups: if a group is to function smoothly and hold together, every individual involved must be satisfied.[429]' In conventional political terms, the distinction can be made here between direct democracy and the representative, majoritarian variety.[430] Seeds for Change, for example, describe the rationale behind consensus in terms of increased participation and more equal power relations.[431] Both ideas have also been used in defence of direct democracy. However, in explaining the significance of consensus as a defining and explicitly anti-hierarchical principle in horizontal politics, this distinction is the tip of the iceberg. Seeds for Change – whose guidelines formed the basis of the consensus process at the Hori-Zone – repeatedly use words such as 'equal' (or 'equality'), 'participation' (or 'participant'), 'trust' and 'openness'; and concepts such as 'a different understanding of power[432]' (in particular, that it should be 'shared by all rather than concentrated in the hands of a few'[433]), 'work[ing] creatively to take into account everyone's needs',[434] and many of the ideals which were invoked when discussing autonomy. Added together, these generate a distinctively horizontal outlook, emphasising resistance to hierarchies both of power and of value.

In exploring this idea, the critique of representative democracy contained within the consensus literature is an appropriate place to start. Seeds for Change point out that 'When people vote for an executive they also hand over their power to representatives to make decisions and to effect change. Representative democracies create a system of hierarchy, where most of the power lies with a small group of decision makers on top and a broad base of people whose decisions are made for them at the bottom. People are often inactive in this system because they feel that they have no power and that their voice won't be listened to.'[435] Both varieties of hierarchy are evident here. In terms of hierarchies of power, the connotations are clear: power largely resides with those in whom it has been invested, and it is this group of people who hold the specific powers of decision-making and agenda-setting. A hierarchy of value is implicit, as those with the greater

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[429] CrimethInc (2005) p29
[430] To be discussed further in ch.4, 'Organisation'
[431] Seeds for Change (2007a) p53
[432] *Ibid*. p50
[433] *Ibid*. p52
[434] *Ibid*. p53
[435] *Ibid*. p.51

level of power decide which concerns warrant further deliberation and inclusion on the agenda. A horizontal protest movement can in this instance be defined as one in which consensus is used in preference to representative or majoritarian modes of democracy, with the express purpose of resisting such practices. Thirdly, criticism is implied of a system in which the majority become 'inactive': the self-determination component, becoming a participant rather than a spectator, has a greater chance of being realised if everybody explicitly has a say. Seeds for Change emphasise the participation aspect: 'Consensus is a decision-making process that works creatively to include all the people making the decision. Instead of simply voting for an item, and letting the majority of the group get their way, the group is committed to finding solutions that *everyone* can live with.'[436] In this way, the views of each participant are respected, creating the opportunity for genuine participation. This in itself goes some way towards resisting hierarchical influences in the decision-making process: firstly, by not setting regulations regarding who can speak; and secondly, by allowing individuals to speak for themselves and not – except in the circumstances outlined previously – for others.

In this context, consensus allows for diversity to a greater extent than majoritarian democracy: no group is the 'minority' whose concerns are sidelined. Seeds for Change suggest that '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 rights. No decision will be made against the express will of an individual or a minority. Instead, the group constantly adapts to all its members' needs.'[437] While the common ground in a case such as the Hori-zone can be as minimal as an agreement that some form of blockade should take place, this is generally sufficient for the purpose at hand. The key point here, however, is the principle of equality: provided all participating groups are fully invested in operating along horizontal lines, the full range of political beliefs and tactics within this spectrum are considered equally valid, with disagreements or objections often being dealt with by the expedient of being able to work separately.

Seeds for Change also emphasise the need for trust among participants in order for the consensus process to succeed. In a practical guide drawn from the explanatory leaflets used at the Hori-zone, they argue that 'Making decisions by consensus is based on trust and openness – this means learning to openly express both our desires (what we'd like to see happening) and our needs (what we have to see happen in order to be able to support a decision). If everyone is able to trust each other and talk openly, then the group will have the information it requires to take everyone's positions into account and to come up with a solution that everyone can support.'[438] In the absence

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[436] *Ibid*. p.63
[437] *Ibid*. p.53
[438] Seeds for Change (2007b) 'How to make decisions by consensus' in Trapese (eds) *Do It Yourself* London: Pluto pp.63-77 (quote from p.63)

of hierarchy – or, more specifically, in the absence of an overarching agenda with structures to enforce it – an alternative principle is needed, namely affinity. Consensus is the practical manifestation of a desire to actively seek horizontal alternatives to hierarchical, programmatic structures. A group of participants in the Gleneagles mobilisation summarise the usefulness of the consensus approach in practice: 'Without [consensus tactics] we would have been lost. Consensus allows us to create collective bodies and establish collective intelligence. It might seem insane now, but in the space of six frantic hours on Wednesday morning we took part in at least three spokes-councils in the hills and fields around the A9, each involving more than 100 people. And each time we managed to arrive at brave and imaginative decisions. It was a way of slowing things down to reassess. Of course all constituted forms can become empty and institutionalised. What they rest on are affects held in common, the right collective feeling – which allows us to cohere, allowing the range of velocities consistent with each other to be widened.'[439]

Theoretical reflections

If there is a distinctive horizontal political theory, it lies as much in the rationale behind the methods discussed above as in their application in practice. Furthermore, such a theory will inevitably develop directly from political practice and deliberation 'on the ground': from the discussions arising when planning for action, and the reflections following a mobilisation. This need not be an insular process: in a global 'movement of movements', lines of influence can run in strange directions and cross boundaries of geography, local culture and certain political differences. Parallels can, for example, be drawn between horizontal protest movements in the UK and the Zapatistas of Chiapas, notwithstanding the different circumstances in which these movements operate: the overall 'enemies' are similar, and the ethos and tactics involved are often based on the same core principles. Influence is also drawn from earlier movements and theoretical works. However, be it at a global or a local level, the argument still remains that a distinctly 'horizontal' variety of political theory must be to a great extent driven by the practice of the relevant movements. This connection is subject to two basic interpretations. In the more critical of these, the suggestion has been made that horizontal protest movements may be overly self-referential; ignoring wider issues in favour of 'process' and maintaining 'horizontality' at the expense of effectively opposing (for example) the more egregious behaviour of the G8. However, this interpretation hinges on regarding actions in the here and now as unnecessary distractions on the path to 'revolution'; and is as a result directly challenged using arguments advanced by horizontal movements. The idea of a theory developed on the ground has definite horizontal connotations, drawing a clear line between knowledge emerging at the grassroots level and a

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[439] The Free Association (2005) 'On The Road' in Harvie, D., K. Milburn, B. Trott and D. Watts (eds) (2005) *Shut Them Down!* Leeds: Dissent pp.17-26 (quote from p.24)

programme imposed from above: a 'horizontal' means of generating theory, not dependent on percolation through a hierarchical structure. Closer to the core of what makes the horizontal approach distinctive is the 'prefigurative' argument, which emphasises change in the here and now; explicitly opposing this approach to any which defer major change until 'after the revolution'. This element, combined with older ideas relating to the need for the means to be in accord with the ends, gives the rejection of hierarchy in political organisation equal priority with the desire for an eventual non-hierarchical society. These two facets of a potentially distinctive variety of political theory – the rejection of hierarchy and the tendency towards prefigurative politics – will shortly be discussed in more detail. In keeping with the grassroots nature of horizontal politics, the focus will again be on the literature produced or considered as an influence by participants in horizontal movements.

It is worth a note on the specific influence of anarchism on horizontal movements in general, and specifically on any political theory these may generate. Although this influence is a significant one which continues to this day, the horizontal outlook contains enough novel elements to be regarded as a distinct theoretical approach. To say that 'anarchism' has had an influence on horizontal ideas involves drawing upon a wide category of political thought. However, it is possible to look beyond the many variations on the theme and highlight some basic definitions. Firstly, the term is derived from the Greek '*an arkos*', meaning literally 'without rulers'. Voline adds to this the idea that 'there may be – and indeed there are – many varieties of anarchist, yet all have a common characteristic that separates them from the rest of humankind. This uniting point is *the negation of the principle of Authority in social organizations and the hatred of all constraints that originate in institutions founded on this principle.*'[440] The Trapese collective elaborate further, describing anarchism as 'a belief that people can manage their own lives, and so rulers are undesirable and should be abolished. For many anarchists, this also includes institutions of authority, such as the state and capitalism.'[441] In going beyond these definitions and examining the content of early anarchist thought, it is possible to identify the basis of many of today's critiques of hierarchy in political organisation. Although the term 'anarchism' encompasses a variety of ideas and is far from monolithic, many of the values expressed in the 'classic' texts are widely shared.

Proudhon, often regarded as the first self-described anarchist, bases his ideas in the alleged injustice of any person or group 'governing' another. He argues that 'To be governed is to be kept in sight, inspected, spied upon, directed, law-driven, numbered, enrolled, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, estimated, valued, censured, commanded, by creatures who have neither the right, nor the wisdom, nor the virtue to do so.... To be governed is to be at every operation, at every

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[440] From Faure, S. (ed.) (1939) *Encyclopédie Anarchiste* extracted at
http://robertgraham.wordpress.com/2008/12/21/anarchy-anarchist/ last accessed 20/12/08
[441] Trapese Collective (2007a) p.xi

transaction, noted, registered, enrolled, (…) corrected, punished.'[442] Of particular interest when examining the influence of horizontal ideas on hierarchy is the idea that nobody has 'the right, nor the wisdom, nor the virtue' to govern another: all humans are equal[443], according to this argument, and as such the hierarchies which have been constructed in society are unjust and should be abolished.

Proudhon was not concerned with creating a society in which anarchist ideas could be put into practice. This and the revolutionary aspect of anarchism were in the first instance the preserve of Bakunin, whose arguments were sharpened by his feud with Marx into a critique of certain of the latter's ideas. Bakunin objects in particular to the vanguardist elements of Marx's thought, believing these indicated that a specific class of 'doctrinaire revolutionaries' would be the ones to bring revolution to the masses, subsequently building a hierarchy which would last into post-revolutionary society. This revolutionary leadership, he argues, 'must be not only the instigators but the managers of all popular movements, and on the morrow of the revolution a new social organisation must be created not by the free union of popular associations, communes, districts, and provinces from below upward, in conformity with popular needs and instincts, but solely by means of the dictatorial power of this learned minority which *supposedly* expresses the will of the people.'[444] This statement provides clues both to what Bakunin opposed and to what he wished to see in its place; both of which contain seeds of today's anti-hierarchical politics. Firstly, there is no section of the population which is imbued with a greater potential for revolutionary consciousness than the rest; as such, this consciousness must emerge from within the population, without deferring to what would come to be known as specialists. Secondly, the idea of a revolutionary leadership is in itself suspect: a revolution organised along hierarchical lines is liable not to engender revolution but to create a new set of oppressive leaders. Following from this suspicion is a concern regarding the effectiveness of a revolution led by those he criticises: or, more precisely, an indication of a different definition of 'effectiveness'. Bakunin, in common with today's horizontals, regards the exercise of authority not as an integral part of revolution but as a deficiency compromising it. The alternative he suggests has some influence on today's horizontal politics, whose participants generally share his vision of a social revolution which 'arises spontaneously within the people and destroys everything that opposes the broad flow of popular life so as to create new forms of free social organisation out of the very depths of the people's existence.'[445] The emergence of revolutionary spirit from within a population; the idea of humans'

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[442] Proudhon, P.-J. (1851) 'Epilogue from General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century' online at http://fair-use.org/p-j-proudhon/general-idea-of-the-revolution/epilogue last accessed 18/12/08 No substantive content removed.
[443] 'All humans' is a modern extrapolation from Proudhon's views.
[444] Bakunin, M. (2002) *Statism and Anarchy* Cambridge University Press Trans., ed., and intro. M. Shatz p136
[445] *Ibid*. p.133

lived existence as the driving force of this revolution; and the concept of 'free social organisation' based on self-government: these are all ideas which have been picked up and developed by subsequent theorists and movements. Where today's horizontal movements diverge from Bakunin's outlook is however in their perception of the form a revolution should take. Bakunin, for all his criticisms of Marx, is inclined to share his enemy's vision of a revolution as a wide-scale event taking place at a specific time – one which may indeed be predetermined by historical factors – which would be the source of all change. The prefigurative approach discussed in the previous section can be regarded as a criticism of this attitude to revolution, arguing as it does for a 'revolution' based on cracks in the surface of the current order.

To return to the two facets of horizontal political theory referred to previously, the rejection of hierarchy is both explicit and implicit in horizontal literature. The basics of this principle can be seen in the definition of 'hierarchy' given by the Trapese Collective in their handbook for activists: 'A hierarchy is a system of ranking and organising things or people, where each element of the system is subordinate. Many inequalities in our society stem from the fact that most social organisations, such as businesses, churches, workplaces, armies and political movements, are hierarchical.'[446] Here, hierarchy is regarded as the root of many of the problems with which movements for social justice are concerned. An opposition to unequal distribution of resources and power can be regarded as a standard position on the political left, and one which crosses many boundaries including the ones by which 'horizontal' elements tend to be defined. What is distinctive, however, is a focus on *hierarchy* as a concept – beyond particular wealth- or class-based hierarchies predominating in the neoliberal capitalist world – as a foundation of these inequalities. Regarding implicit anti-hierarchical standards, the discussion in the previous section hinges largely on the principles which form the basis for horizontal alternatives to hierarchy. The proposing of alternatives or replacements for a concept which is being subjected to criticism can generally be taken to imply an implicit assumption that the concept in question needs replacing. It is not then too far-fetched to suggest that – given the frequent explicit references to hierarchy as a major component of the 'problem' – the various facets of the 'solution' form part of a critique with rejection of hierarchy as its logical conclusion. The focus here, however, is on the explicitly anti-hierarchical ideas expressed in activist literature.

Explaining why movements should operate without leaders, Seeds For Change argue that 'We need to develop a different understanding of power – where people work with each other rather than seeking to control and command. And we need to find ways of relating to each other without hierarchy and leaders.'[447] The rejection of hierarchy is here linked to the rejection of a concept

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[446] Trapese Collective (2007a) p.xii
[447] Seeds for Change (2007a) p50

known as 'power-over',[448] to be examined further in the chapter on power. Hierarchy is as such the symptom of a wider problem relating to the power structures in society, providing extra impetus for resisting its emergence in movements seeking to do away with these structures. Here, the very existence of hierarchical power or authority is the target for critique: this idea is to some extent a factor in generating a distinctive variety of political theory. The critique of the use of hierarchy and power – of hierarchy within revolutionary movements, and of the seizure of state power – is not in itself a new idea, following on from (for example) the split between Marx and Bakunin in the nineteenth century. The earliest anarchist critiques of Marx's ideas – and of subsequent 'vanguardist' interpretations of the same – focused on these two aspects as evidence that oppression may be perpetuated rather than obliterated by Marx's revolution. Today's horizontal movements do, however, contribute new angles to the debate. The alternatives they propose to hierarchical organisation form the basis of this contribution. Autonomy as an individual concept can be seen in early anarchist and workers' council literature: a conception of autonomy which exists in close proximity to affinity, diversity and consensus, however, is a distinctive element. In a similar way, this proximity can be said to have shifted affinity from the guiding principle of a specific protest tactic into a central role in a new ideological grouping.

It is essential to remember that these principles are guiding not only the end (a 'horizontal' society), but also the means to achieving it. This idea of means and ends is not a new one – a frequent criticism made by Bakunin of Marx was that the means being advocated were contradictory to the desired end of a society in which political power was abolished. It is for this reason that horizontal groups tend to, as the Trapese collective point out, 'prioritise the process – real or direct democracy – more than the end.'[449] This approach, as mentioned previously, has been condemned as 'amount[ing] to a process fetishisation that, admirably principled as it may be, can nevertheless be essentially self-indulgent and ultimately inconsequential to anyone not directly involved with certain activist circles.'[450] Such arguments, however, miss the overall point: this point being that 'process' is not a mere fetish but rather an integral part of the change which horizontal activists wish to bring about. In particular, the success of this 'process' in practice can act as a measure of the extent to which a movement has managed to resist the influence of hierarchy and the 'temptation to revert to old, more established ways of being.'[451] The distinctive element here is the priority which is being given to the rejection of hierarchy, to the extent that the horizontal 'edge' would be lost should a movement compromise on this issue. A similar line is taken by CrimethInc in their criticism of the use – intentional or otherwise – of hierarchical

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[448] Drawn from Holloway, J. (2005) *Change The World Without Taking Power* London: Pluto
[449] Trapese Collective (2007b) 'Introduction: do it yourself' in Trapese Collective (eds) (2007) *Do It Yourself* London: Pluto pp1-10 (quote from p6)
[450] Papadimitriou, T. (2007) 'A social experiment in the midst of G8 power: creating "another world" or the politics of self-indulgence?' Unpublished conference paper p6
[451] The Free Association (2005) p23

methods by revolutionary movements: 'So-called radical ideologies such as Communism that neglected to do away with hierarchy have historically demanded such standardisation from their ranks, and have ended up with consequently sterile movements, artwork, and societies: anarchist thinking, on the other hand, suggests that diversity is necessary to any healthy ecosystem or organisation.'[452] The use of hierarchical modes of organisation, by this reading, leads to a hierarchical future. The distinctive element here is not so much the contention being made as the configuration of ideas within it. It is likely that Bakunin was no more concerned with diversity than were those he criticised: self-government on its own may have been considered sufficient to do away with 'sterility'.

In itself, the 'process' bears a clear resemblance to earlier ideas, particularly those of Pannekoek and Castoriadis regarding the 'soviet' or workers' council.[453] In describing where the power lies in the council system, Castoriadis makes use of a number of terms which are familiar to today's activists. In the organisation he envisions, for example, 'grass-roots organs enjoy as much autonomy as is compatible with the general unity of action of the organization'[454]. Within the councils he advocates for 'direct democracy, i.e., collective decision making by all those involved'[455]. There is very little direct reference to hierarchy; however, the literature of council communism contains several elements which of use to anti-hierarchical movements. Firstly, no extra power or influence is conferred on individuals by the role of the delegate: selected members are explicitly the equals of those of their comrades who are not delegated to participate in the wider decision-making process. Secondly, the councils are not subject to a central command structure: they are relatively autonomous within their own region, and entitled to participate in the making of decisions which have further-reaching effects. Finally, knowledge and theory in a movement organised along these lines is arguably generated at the grass roots rather than being imposed from above. Therefore, although council communism is not explicitly an anti-hierarchical theory, the anti-vanguardist ideas contained within it level a significant challenge at the perceived necessity of hierarchical structures.

It is evident that a number of concepts are shared between this mode of organisation and those advocated by horizontal movements. It is rare to see Castoriadis cited as a direct influence by activists: however, the parallels between the two sets of ideas suggest more than a coincidence. This is not to imply that they are identical, nor that the differences between them can be explained

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[452] CrimethInc (2005) p193

[453] To be discussed in more detail in the chapter on organisation

[454] Castoriadis, C. (1959) 'The Working Class and Organisation' online at http://libcom.org/library/working-class-organisation-socialisme-ou-barbarie last accessed 21/12/08

[455] *Ibid*.

solely through a changed political context. The first visible difference is the form of democracy being advocated: while the workers' councils placed great emphasis on direct democracy, the specifics of how decisions are made are not discussed in any detail. However, it is likely that the voting process operated along majoritarian lines rather than a consensus model, suggesting that consensus as a tactic – let alone a core element of the ethos of a movement – is a more recent development. Also evident is a difference in the factors which hold a movement together. Pannekoek and Castoriadis both envisioned movements in which the majority of beliefs – regarding motivations, tactics, visions for the future and other such factors – were shared; in other words, movements which were to a great extent monolithic. Although councils were in principle autonomous, therefore, the scope for disagreements to emerge would in practice be quite limited. This is in contrast to the horizontal vision of a diverse movement held together by affinity and a basic shared acceptance of horizontal process. It should also be noted that the core demographic has shifted somewhat in recent years, with the debate growing beyond the issue of class struggle.

To summarise briefly, a key features of horizontal political theory or practice is the outright rejection of hierarchy. This in itself is difficult to argue against. In itself, however, it does not automatically form the basis of a distinctive variety of political theory. What could be considered distinctive is the priority given to the anti-hierarchical element of horizontal political thought, over and above other factors such as efficiency or internal consistency. This variety of anti-hierarchical thought can also be distinguished by the proximity of the four concepts discussed in the previous section, which have shaped the ways in which 'horizontal' movements have been organised. Any distinctively 'horizontal' political theory will almost by definition have been shaped at the grass roots, meaning that the central principles tend to be those which have emerged in action and developed in conjunction with the tactics for which they provide a rationale.

A further distinctive element arising largely through horizontal political practice is the 'prefigurative' approach to political action. Prefigurative politics, as alluded to previously, is an approach which seeks to bring about change in the 'here and now', creating spaces for resistance in the gaps in the dominant order. Holloway describes this in terms of a revolution formed of cracks: 'Sometimes these cracks are so tiny that we hardly notice them. But often they are collective, often they lead to a collective and conscious determination to do things differently. And sometimes the cracks are so big that they stand there and radiate their glory through all the world.'[456] Bey, meanwhile, uses the concept of 'insurrection' in a 'temporary autonomous zone' (TAZ)[457]: short-lived revolutionary acts and spaces which collectively have greater potential than

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[456] Holloway, J. (2005b) 'Gleneagles: Breaking Time' in D. Harvie *et al* (eds) (2005) *Shut Them Down* London: Pluto pp.39-42 (quote from p.40)

[457] Bey, H. (n.d.) 'The Temporary Autonomous Zone' online at http://www.hermetic.com/bey/taz3.html#labelTAZ last accessed 18/12/08

the traditional concept of a revolution. The Hori-zone can be regarded as a TAZ, as can any number of political squats and protest camps. These are spaces in which the values discussed above are put into practice, prefiguring a world in which cohesion is generated by affinity rather than hierarchy. The prefigurative approach can also be regarded as the key to a horizontal reconceptualisation of 'revolution', providing an alternative to the grand, one-off event which the word has traditionally evoked. Two factors in particular suggest that prefigurative politics is specifically a horizontal concept. This is to some extent a question of usage, in that 'horizontals' of various persuasions have in general been the most keen to discuss their visions for political change in terms of 'prefiguring' alternatives[458]. The approach is also implicit in much of the literature, which tends to adopt the language of the here and now. Furthermore, the attempts by movements to create spaces in which this occurs – and, equally significantly, to link these spaces to the outside world, giving them a purpose wider than merely 'enclaves'[459] to which activists can withdraw – appear to be a relatively new form of outreach. Focussing on questions related to hierarchy, there are a number of areas where prefigurative politics could contribute to a distinctively horizontal variety of political theory. Firstly, there is the negation of the need to wait for 'the revolution' before changes can be made: the task for activists is instead to create spaces in which horizontal values are realised, inhabiting the cracks referred to above and widening them in the process. It can be argued that this approach directly challenges the hierarchical element of sacrificing oneself for a revolution the effects of which might not be seen by the current generation of activists. This is the first of the challenges levelled by the prefigurative approach at the emergence of a hierarchy of value: the second is the integral role played by diversity in a process which aims to resist the emergence of a monolithic revolutionary programme. The grassroots nature of prefigurative politics also makes it almost intrinsically anti-vanguardist, thus resisting the potential for hierarchies of power emerging within mobilisations.

  This aspect of horizontal politics contains a number of echoes of the Situationist thought of the 1960s. A starting-point for examining the connections between the two movements is the Situationist concept of 'revolutionary self-theory', as previously defined. This challenges existing conceptions of revolutionary consciousness; in particular the idea that it must be brought to the workers by an enlightened vanguard. Indeed, revolutionary self-theory is a direct contradiction to vanguardist ideas, containing in its essence the suggestion that the *only* valid consciousness is that which is derived from individuals thinking for themselves. Law elaborates: 'The construction of self-theory is based on thinking for yourself, being fully conscious of desires and their validity. It is the construction of *radical subjectivity*.'[460] Many of the core principles of horizontal politics are

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[458] Day, R. (2005) *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements* London: Pluto – ch.1 in particular uses 'prefiguring alternatives' as a typological category.
[459] Notes from Nowhere collective (2003) pp.108-109
[460] *Ibid*. p.8

embodied here. In particular, the seeds are planted of autonomy as today's horizontal activists would see it: the autonomy of the individual as well as of the collective; and an autonomy which is rooted in collective responsibility and communal bonds of affinity rather than the rejection of these. The prefigurative approach discussed in the previous section is also foreshadowed here: Law, for example, argues that 'To have a "political" orientation towards one's life is just to know that you can only change your life by changing the nature of life itself through transformation of the world – and that transformation of the world requires collective effort.'[461] According to this approach, revolution is not something to be dictated or deferred, and neither is it the preserve of certain sections of society. Instead, it is something every individual has the potential to create in the here and now: an argument whose anti-hierarchical credentials are discussed in the previous section. In brief, however, the central contention here is that individuals should approach their liberation as participants rather than spectators. A revolution which is not grounded in these principles is one which runs the risk of being overwhelmed by the dominant order and its logic of hierarchy. Vaneigem in particular levels this criticism at the revolutionary movements of his day, which he sees as reinforcing hierarchical principles; in particular, by undermining activists' capacity for self-determination. The problem has its origins in a phenomenon familiar both to today's activists and in all probability to Bakunin: the contention that when a movement accepts the leadership of specialists, 'it abdicates its freedom and enthrones its so-called revolutionary leaders as its oppressors-to-be.'[462] This abdication takes the form of allowing a vanguard to 'think' for the whole movement. The infiltration of such processes into revolutionary organisation, Vaneigem argues, exhausts the liberatory potential of the movements concerned. He describes the effects on 'young leftist radicals'[463] thus: they 'enter the service of a Cause – the "best" of all Causes'[464] and subsequently 'become militants, fetishising action because others are doing their thinking for them.'[465] Here, 'service' implies a level of subordination: in addition, the statement raises the question of who decides the 'best' of all causes. The horizontal principles of diversity and autonomy are in evidence in this critique. Hierarchical power, Vaneigem argues, has an intrinsic logic militating against a movement's prospects for liberation: 'The logic of Bolshevism demanded the heads of the leaders of social-democracy; the latter hastily sold out, and they did so precisely because they were leaders. The logic of anarchism demanded the liquidation of Bolshevik power; the latter rapidly crushed them, and did so inasmuch as it was hierarchical power.'[466] That Marx's predictions of a 'withered' state did not come to fruition, therefore, is due not to the failings of human nature nor to the individual manias of leaders such as Stalin, but is instead the consequence of allowing hierarchical power to be part of the revolution. In such a

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[461] *Ibid*. p.11
[462] Vaneigem, R. (2006) *The Revolution of Everyday Life* London: Rebel Press p.167
[463] *Ibid*. p.109
[464] *Ibid*.
[465] *Ibid*.
[466] *Ibid*. p.59

scenario, Vaneigem argues, 'Those who are able to end a revolution are always the most eager to explain it to those who have made it. The arguments they use to explain it are as good as their argument for ending it, one can say that much. When theory escapes from the makers of a revolution it turns against them. It no longer gets hold of them, it dominates and conditions them.'[467]

The Situationists, arguing along similar lines to today's horizontal activists, regard autonomy (in the literal sense meaning 'self-determination') as a key element in overturning the co-optation of revolution by the logic of hierarchy. Vaneigem argues that 'Everywhere the law is validated: "There is no weapon of your individual will which, once appropriated by others, does not turn against you."'[468] In other words, the problem is the 'appropriation' of 'militants'' will by revolutionary movements infiltrated by hierarchical power; much as the public's will is appropriated by the Spectacle. As such, the 'revolution' gains a similar status to the chimera-like dreams promoted by the Spectacle: 'The moment revolution calls for self-sacrifice it ceases to exist. The individual cannot give himself up for a revolution, only for a fetish.'[469] Vaneigem attributes this tendency in revolutionaries to 'a veritable reflex of submission, an irrational terror of freedom'[470]. Self-determination, therefore, provides as much of a solution to this problem as it does to the domination of the Spectacle. Although phrased in different terms, it is possible to see the seeds here of the horizontal theory discussed in this section.

This objection to sacrifice is not without problems: one could question, for example, whether mutual aid and comradeship more widely could be fulfilled without some level of self-sacrifice on the part of those involved. In particular, Vaneigem's ethos may at first glance appear incompatible with the level of connectedness and compromise involved in today's horizontal movements. How, for example, would it square with the Black Bloc tactic of group identity, partially inspired by the need to protect the anonymity of each participant. A tentative answer might be that, while an element of self-sacrifice (or at the very least self-effacement) can be seen in the logic of affinity, it is nonetheless different from what Vaneigem describes. His critique is of self-sacrifice for a somewhat abstract ideal, rather than for the protection of one's comrades at a barricade or, more mildly, the amendment of a proposal for the sake of reaching consensus.

The Situationist influence on today's horizontal movements is widely acknowledged by those involved. This is in part down to an overt harvesting of tactics (for example, there is a direct lineage from *détournement* to adbusting and other popular forms of action, something which will

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[467] *Ibid*. p.100
[468] *Ibid*. p.23
[469] *Ibid*. p.110
[470] *Ibid*. p.111

be discussed in the chapter on culture): however, this reason on its own could also apply to the council communist methods of organising resistance, suggesting that the influence runs somewhat deeper than the most visible parallels. It can be argued, for example, that the attitudes to theory and practice are similar: theory for the Situationists, as for today's horizontals, is a living entity which emerges from grassroots action. In terms of the content of this theory, the priorities of the two movements are similar. In each case, resistance to or doing away with hierarchy is considered a necessity for complete liberation. In particular, there is a perceived need to resist the imposition of an agenda on the movement by one section. In Situationist terms, this need highlights the importance of self-determination, in the form of refusal to accept such an agenda. Today's horizontals take the solution one step further, positing it in terms of diversity and subsequent resistance to hierarchies of value; however, while they are distinguishable from one another, there is a clear connection between the basic arguments. Today's horizontal activists also build on the idea of self-determination, which forms the basis of the principle of autonomy: the main difference arguably being that the more recent definition covers a wider range of ideas, as discussed above. The nature of the hierarchy being resisted is also somewhat consistent between the two movements: in particular, there appears to be a shared perception that removing the state and capitalism should not be the only goal for a resistance movement. The 'revolution' should therefore take place at a more grassroots, 'micro' level, in which the individual's mindset is a starting-point for wider change. There are, however, factors which distinguish the two movements. Firstly, the Situationists always skirted the line between being a political movement and an artistic one; and secondly, they were for the most-part self-described Marxists. The similarities and differences between the Situationists and today's horizontals will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on culture, where they are more relevant: for now, it is time to return to the specifics of prefigurative politics as envisioned by today's movements.

A starting-point for examining the motivations behind the prefigurative approach might be to look at the implications it has for outreach purposes and the subsequent dissemination of horizontal ideas. Goldring, for example, argues that 'If we want to transform the world, we need solid models of how to do it as well as a critique of what's wrong with it. If we want people to move away from the system they know and which has always provided for their needs, they must feel confident that a new system can provide for their security and survival.'[471] To regard this as a necessity is something of a new idea: while revolutionary theories have been more or less careful to construct a vision of the future, the focus has rarely been on attempting to bring this about as part of day-to-day life and encourage others to become involved as equal participants. In this context it is worth a look back at the challenge Engels levels at the 'anti-authoritarians' of his day:

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[471] Goldring, A. 'Why we need holistic solutions for a world crisis' in Trapese Collective (eds) (2007) *Do It Yourself* London: Pluto pp.11-27 (quote from p.24)

'A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon — authoritarian means, if such there be at all; and if the victorious party does not want to have fought in vain, it must maintain this rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionists.'[472] This conception of revolution is arguably one which a horizontal political theory would need to explicitly challenge, and the prefigurative approach can be regarded as the most viable option for meeting this task. In the first instance, the resulting spaces of resistance demonstrate an alternative mode of operating, which Day describes in the following terms: 'Unlike revolutionary struggles, which seek totalising effects across all aspects of the existing social order by taking state power, and unlike the politics of reform, which seeks global change on selected axes by reforming state power, these movements/networks/tactics do not seek totalising effects on any axis at all.'[473] In other words, horizontal resistance can challenge 'totalising' theories of revolution – the variety in which it is necessary for 'one part of the population [to impose] its will upon the other part'[474] – without resorting to a reformist politics which depends to a great extent on interacting with and making necessarily limited changes within the existing hierarchy. Authority is perceived by Engels as essential to collective action: 'Everywhere combined action, the complication of processes dependent upon each other, displaces independent action by individuals. But whoever mentions combined action speaks of organisation; now, is it possible to have organisation without authority?'[475] The prefigurative aspect of horizontal politics, developed as it is through practical application, provides a counterpoint to this perception. Trocchi *et al*, evaluating the effectiveness of the actions emanating from the Hori-zone, point out that 'Many people, when confronted with the idea of a world without government, quickly retort that without government we would just rob, loot and kill each other off. Instead, without any state, thousands of people lived, loved and actually made decisions by consensus, often agreeing to disagree and respecting the wide array of diverse opinions there. For those in the eco-village, it was like *living the revolution*.'[476] Here, again, is the prefigurative contention that the revolution is being not so much 'organised for' (let alone predetermined) as 'lived' by the participants. It is regarded as an already-existing entity rather than a plan for the future for which other forms of struggle are merely instruments.[477] Here, the idea of 'be[ing] the change you want to see'[478]

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[472] Engels, F. (1872) 'On Authority' online at
http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1872/10/authority.htm last accessed 20/11/08
[473] Day (2005) p.45
[474] Engels (1872)
[475] *Ibid*.
[476] Trocchi *et al* (2005) p.79 (emphases added)
[477] 'Instrumentalist' conceptions of revolution will be discussed further in the chapter on power. See Holloway (2005a) for what has become a standard horizontal viewpoint regarding the effect that the aim of taking power can have on a revolution.

distinguishes this approach, drawing in the process on some of the characteristics outlined above. Firstly, there is a clear focus on the importance of the means in relation to the ends. Secondly, the emphasis is on 'working horizontally', giving priority to the values discussed in the previous section and in particular to the rejection of hierarchy. Thirdly, the extract again suggests that a political theory of horizontal politics must emerge from practice: the ideas which are given priority are those which have been determined by participants to be necessary features in the forms of co-operation which are being developed. Each of these characteristics, as already discussed, has implications for the question of hierarchy: furthermore, each arguably suggests a means by which the emergence of hierarchy can be resisted.

Finally, the emphasis on working in the present raises once more the question of 'living' versus waiting or preparing for the revolution. CrimethInc argue that 'Accordingly, our revolution must be an immediate revolution in our daily lives; anything else is not a revolution but a demand that once again people do what they do not want to do and hope that this time, somehow, the compensation will be enough. Those who assume, often unconsciously, that it is impossible to achieve their own desires—and thus, that it is futile to fight for themselves—often end up fighting for an ideal or cause instead.'[479] Here again evidence can be seen of an attempt to widen the concept of 'revolution' to include insurrectionary everyday acts – and, crucially from the perspective of investigating the nature of a horizontal political theory – a greater level of self-determination than is evident in many more traditional conceptions. The Situationist connection suggests that this is by no means a new idea: however, there are reasons to associate it with a distinctive theory of horizontal politics. Firstly, it appears to be this particular variety of movement which has picked up the relevant ideas and developed them for today's circumstances. Secondly, it should be noted that the idea of a 'revolution of everyday life'[480] is to some extent made distinctive when placed in the context of today's prefigurative politics, in a wider framework of horizontal ideas with the configurations of priority and proximity referred to above. Indeed, this could refer to many of the elements of horizontal politics: as such, I would argue that although many concepts are shared with other areas of political thought, the specific conceptions used in the horizontal literature and the ways in which these are arranged with relation to one another can still be taken as evidence that horizontal movements generate a distinctive variety of political theory.

Answering the challenges

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[478] Nunes, R. (2007) 'Networks, Open Spaces, Horizontality: Instantiations' in *Ephemera* volume 5(2) pp.297-318 online at http://www.ephemeraweb.org/journal/5-2/5-2nunes2.pdf last accessed 11/11/08 (among other sources)
[479] *Ibid*.
[480] From Vaneigem (1967) and (2006), although this is not the only use of the phrase in Situationist literature.

The above expositions have largely been of the ideals which make up the anti-hierarchical element of horizontal politics. Further distinguishing features can however be found in the ways in which horizontal movements respond to less-than-ideal circumstances and avoid or deal with potential pitfalls. These generally hinge on the emergence of unwanted (generally informal) hierarchies and thus constitute threats to the internal coherence of a horizontal ideology. This section outlines some of the problems and proposed solutions, and discuss why these can be regarded as distinctively horizontal.

The explicitly non-hierarchical ethos and organisational style of horizontal movements are relatively new characteristics, and as such involve adjusting to ways of being and doing that are firstly still in the process of developing; and, secondly, unfamiliar to anybody becoming involved in such a movement for the first time. The principle of diversity requires that horizontal movements are open to any individual or group willing to abide by some basic guidelines: however, the question then arises of how to communicate the requirements of horizontal process to new 'members'; and how, furthermore, to ensure that these remain in place in the often fraught situation of organising for action. Communication is perceived as a particular block to the successful maintenance of horizontal principles, as stated by 'AG', an activist involved in the Gleneagles mobilisation: 'There were also problems with the make-up of the group. Someone said at one point that we'd formed a non-hierarchical collective, but not really discussed what that phrase means. Undoubtedly, informal hierarchies emerged at times, based on knowledge, experience and an ability or willingness to speak up (not on a specific desire by anyone to be a "leader").'[481] Two specific problems present themselves. Firstly, the *need* to disseminate information may not always appear obvious to activists who have been involved for a length of time and have an intimate knowledge of how the group operates. New members, meanwhile, may lack the confidence to ask questions: this is particularly likely if they have not fully acclimatised to horizontal modes of operating, and as such regard others as holding leadership roles. Secondly, although this concern is not widely expressed in the literature, there may be fears that 'enforcing' a particular set of practices is in itself a hierarchical act. If such concerns are not dealt with fully, there are two main risks. Firstly, a scenario may emerge where those who have the knowledge and experience continue to operate through horizontal means, while failing to explain the process to others. The result of this, as perceived by Trocchi as occurring at the Hori-zone, was that 'Some felt excluded by the often haphazard decision-making process at the eco-village, including the so-called "bureaucracy bloc", an *ad hoc* group which ended up dealing with infrastructure and all manner of troubleshooting.'[482] Such exclusion – however accidental or based on individual

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[481] 'AG' (2005) 'Reaching the parts where we fear to go' in . Harvie *et al* (eds) (2005) *Shut Them Down* London: Pluto pp.43-50 (quote from p.48)
[482] Trocchi *et al* (2005) p.78

perceptions – points to a failure in the general aim of resisting hierarchy: and, more specifically, in the effort to ensure that nobody is reduced to the role of spectator in their own liberation.

The solutions generally proposed to the communication issue are to a great extent drawn from existing horizontal principles. In terms of widening participation, the provision of information, along with a more general ethos of openness and transparency, appear to be vital factors. An absence of such information is cited by Freeman as a factor in the oppressive nature of certain structureless movements. She argues that 'For everyone to have the opportunity to be involved in a given group and to participate in its activities the structure must be explicit, not implicit. The rules of decision-making must be open and available to everyone, and this can happen only if they are formalized.'[483] This raises the question of whether it would be possible to follow Freeman's advice in a non-hierarchical way. The Seeds for Change guidelines for organising without leaders, while by no means a formal structure, could go some way to fulfil the role Freeman ascribes to these. A further question is whether it is necessary for this role to be filled. Making the necessary information available – and difficult to avoid – and the core principles explicit could potentially go most of the way towards avoiding the emergence of hierarchies based on levels of knowledge. It This, rather than a lack of structure, is cited as the cause of many of the problems previously discussed. In ideological terms, the main point to note is that *remaining non-hierarchical* is considered to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem. It should also be noted that there appears to be active resistance to terms such as 'non-hierarchical' and 'anti-hierarchical' becoming empty tropes: rather, they are considered to be practical guiding principles with specific meanings according to the context. An example might be the transparent organisational strategy in operation for much of the Gleneagles mobilisation. Trocchi describes how 'Although anarchists are used to meeting and planning in a clandestine manner, Dissent! tried its best to be entirely open and public, both to avoid the stereotyping of anarchists as secretive and to allow more people to get involved.'[484] Conceptually, this strategy can be regarded as being based on openness and inclusion: however, at a deeper level it also relates to ideas of equality, since the aim is to rule out the emergence of a privileged group with a greater knowledge of what is going on and how things work.

There are also, however, two challenges to horizontal ideals stemming from the priority given to horizontal process. These are ostensibly separate issues, although connections can be drawn between them. These challenges are commonly known as the 'tyranny of structurelessness' argument as discussed above and the 'activist mentality' critique. The term 'tyranny of structurelessness' deals with the emergence of unwanted if informal hierarchies. Although I would

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[483] Freeman, Jo/Joreen (1972) 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness' online at http://www.jofreeman.com/joreen/tyranny.htm last accessed 27/12/09

[484] Trocchi *et al* (2005) p.66

by no means agree with all her conclusions, Freeman does pose some challenges which can be seen as warnings for movements wishing to do away with structure in their organisation. She argues, for example, that 'The idea of "structurelessness," however, has moved from a healthy counter'[485] to overly-structured movements 'to becoming a goddess in its own right.'[486] Here, she expresses concerns regarding the fetishisation of certain types of process, perceiving the costs to outweigh the benefits. The danger, she argues, lies in the uncritical acceptance of 'structureless' organising, with no significant questioning of the principles involved. In such cases, 'the idea becomes a smokescreen for the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others. This hegemony can be so easily established because the idea of "structurelessness" does not prevent the formation of informal structures, only formal ones.'[487] Rather than resisting hierarchy, therefore, structurelessness can be misused in such a way that hierarchies are in fact reinforced. Freeman continues: 'As long as the structure of the group is informal, 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.'[488] Two reasons exist why Freeman's warnings still stand. Firstly, in a movement where 'security culture'[489] is taken seriously it is possible that security can be taken as an excuse to negate the principles of openness and transparency which are the more usual currency. CrimethInc caution that 'Security concerns should never be an excuse for making others feel left out or inferior'[490] but instead a case of 'establishing group expectations and helping people understand their importance.'[491] This suggests that activists, for the most part, place some importance on the sharing of information. Secondly, the scenario Freeman envisions could potentially arise from innocent beginnings if the details of how a group operates are not shared with new members. Exclusion does not necessarily entail a deliberate withholding of knowledge, but could just as easily be the result of accidental omission. Therefore, while a 'tyranny of structurelessness' is not the inevitability Freeman perceives, it cannot be disregarded as a potential challenge for a horizontal movement. However, it can be handled in a way which is consistent with core horizontal values. This subject is returned to in the chapter on power. For now, however, it is important to note that horizontal movements do *not* regard a return to formal hierarchies as a valid solution to the (potential and actual) emergence of informal ones; and it is this insistence on maintaining explicitly non-hierarchical practices and resisting informal as well as formal hierarchies through these which is distinctly horizontal. Concrete examples here include the

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[485] Freeman (1972)

[486] Freeman (1972)

[487] *Ibid.*

[488] *Ibid.*

[489] Defined by CrimethInc as 'a set of customs shared by a community whose members may engage in illegal activities, the practice of which minimises the risks of such activities.' CrimethInc (2005) p461

[490] CrimethInc (2005) p.468

[491] CrimethInc (2005) p.468

rotation of facilitation in consensus meetings and the emphasis on sharing information as discussed previously.

   The other way in which unwanted hierarchies may emerge is through the development of what has been described as an 'activist mentality'. In its more extreme forms, this can itself become hierarchical and thus poses a significant challenge to the anti-hierarchical nature of horizontal political movements. 'Andrew X', a participant in the June 18 mobilisation, provides the clearest definition of the term 'activist mentality' and also arguably of the problems it causes. He states that 'By 'an activist mentality' what I mean is that people think of themselves primarily as activists and as belonging to some wider community of activists.'[492] Here, then, is a perceived risk of becoming the 'specialists' Vaneigem and Debord criticise: in other words, becoming counter-productive elements in the search for genuine change. As Andrew X suggests, 'A real revolution will involve the breaking out of all preconceived roles and the destruction of all specialism – the reclamation of our lives. The seizing control over our own destinies which is the act of revolution will involve the creation of new selves and new forms of interaction and community. "Experts" in anything can only hinder this.'[493] He fears that 'activists' may regard themselves as a separate class, distinct from the rest of the population; and, potentially, responsible for the enlightenment of this population. Here, the echoes of the revolutionary vanguard become evident. In this case, however, the problem is not with an explicit belief pattern, but with something arguably more insidious: a mindset which develops through, as much as any other factor, frustration at the perceived apathy of the rest of the world. Andrew X again: 'Defining ourselves as activists means defining *our* actions as the ones which will bring about social change, thus disregarding the activity of thousands upon thousands of other non-activists'[494] A hierarchy of value can be perceived here: the actions of 'activists' gain more significance than those of 'non-activists', regardless of the comparative impact, merely through the self-definition of one party with the 'activist' label.

   How are these problems dealt with, and does this help to distinguish horizontal politics as an ideology? The first point, again, is the continuing priority given to remaining non-hierarchical, and in particular to the 'process' that goes with this. The emphasis on process may yield its own problems, but it is also regarded by activists as providing part of the solution. The Free Association, participants in and observers of the Gleneagles mobilisation, argue that 'We can chart this movement by observing it breaking the surface of visibility from one event to the next,

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[492] Andrew X (1999) 'Give Up Activism' http://www.afed.org.uk/online/j18/reflec1.html last accessed 25/12/08
[493] *Ibid*.
[494] *Ibid*.

constantly searching to move on by solving the problems thrown up by the last one…'[495] In other words, the solutions which arise are direct responses to actual problems, rather than purely theoretical reflections, and this practice-based and grassroots-based theory is key to understanding horizontal politics more widely. Attempts to solve the 'activist mentality' problem have involved reaching out beyond activist circles. CrimethInc refers to this process as 'coalition building'[496]; 'a way to foster solidarity and build social power.'[497] Coalition building aims to break out of the 'activist' specialist mindset and resist the development of unwanted hierarchies. CrimethInc issue a warning, pointing out that when the needs and circumstances of the participants vary, activists should 'avoid recruiting and focus on building alliances'[498] Again, they state the need to avoid hierarchies of value: instead, every participant is assumed to make a valid contribution. 'Andrew X' emphasises that 'It may be that this [problem of the activist mindset] is only capable of being corrected by a general upsurge in struggle when we won't be weirdos and freaks any more but will seem simply to be stating what is on everybody's minds. However, to work to escalate the struggle it will be necessary to break with the role of activists to whatever extent is possible – to constantly try to push at the boundaries of our limitations and constraints.'[499] What is distinctively horizontal about these discussions is that they explicitly aim to resist the mindset that hierarchies of any sort are either useful or inevitable: furthermore, it appears to be accepted – in principle if not in practice – that the activists are *not* a vanguard or a separate class, and that the wrongness of regarding them as such should be taken as the starting-point from which further action should stem. The components which form the horizontal critique of hierarchy are meanwhile brought to bear in attempting to find solutions for what has been internally established as a problem.

Arguments have been put forward, however, positing hierarchy as an inevitable fact of political organisation: were this the case, it would severely limit the point of the above measures. The following discussion is limited to analyses which have taken place in the 20th century, which regard hierarchy as a necessary evil rather than something desirable, and which focus on hierarchies within 'progressive' political movements.

The starting-point on this topic is the work of Michels, who formulated an 'iron law of oligarchy'[500] stating in broad terms that any organised political entity, even within a democracy, will by its very nature degenerate sooner or later into an oligarchy: this is inevitable, Michels

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[495] The Free Association (2005) 'On The Road' in D. Harvie *et al* (eds.) (2005) *Shut Them Down* London: Pluto pp.17-26 (quote from p.20)
[496] CrimethInc (2005) pp.183-190
[497] *Ibid*. p.183
[498] *Ibid*.
[499] 'Andrew X' (1999)
[500] Michels, R. (1966) *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy* New York: Free Press throughout

argues, as oligarchical tendencies are inherent in all forms of organisation. These tendencies stem largely from the apathy of the masses (or sometimes their active will to be led); and, conversely, from the 'natural' human desire for power which translates for some into a desire to lead these masses. Furthermore, Michels focuses largely on the 'revolutionary' organisations and political parties in which one might least expect such tendencies. On this subject, he argues that 'the appearance of oligarchical phenomena in the very bosom of the revolutionary parties is a conclusive proof of the existence of immanent oligarchical tendencies in every kind of human organisation which strives for the attainment of definite ends.'[501] So how does this tendency emerge in a revolutionary organisation? Firstly, the rank and file membership have (Michels argues) little desire for self-determination: indeed, they 'experience a profound need to prostrate themselves, not simply before great ideals, but also before the individuals who in their eyes incorporate such ideals.'[502] In a political organisation with a mass membership, oligarchical tendencies develop through what is nowadays called peer pressure: 'It is easier to dominate a large crowd than a small audience. The adhesion of the crowd is tumultuous, summary and unconditional. Once the suggestions have taken effect, the crowd does not readily tolerate contradiction from a small minority, and still less from isolated individuals.'[503] In such an atmosphere, it is difficult to make decisions in which everyone can have a say: something which today's horizontals admit and search for ways to counter. It therefore becomes of more practical use to take the real decision-making process behind the scenes and regard the mass assent as a formality: hence, 'The most important resolutions taken by the most democratic of all parties, the socialist party, always emanate from a handful of members.'[504] The problem of too large a crowd can be solved to an extent by appointing delegates: however, Michels argues, 'One who holds the office of delegate acquires a moral right to that office, and delegates remain in office unless removed by extraordinary circumstances or in obedience to rules observed with exceptional strictness. An election made for a definite purpose becomes a life incumbency. Custom becomes a right.'[505] He admits that anarchists are at less risk of falling into many of the traps of oligarchy. He also, however, argues that 'The theoretical struggle against all authority, against all coercion, to which many of the most eminent anarchists have sacrificed a large portion of their lives, has not stifled in them the natural love of power. All that we can say is that the means of dominion employed by the anarchist leader belong to an epoch which political parties have already outlived. These are the means utilised by the apostle and the orator: the flaming power of thought, greatness

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[501] *Ibid*. p.50
[502] *Ibid*. p.96
[503] *Ibid*. p.64
[504] *Ibid*. p.86
[505] *Ibid*. p.81

of self-sacrifice, profundity of conviction. Their dominion is exercised, not over the organisation, but over minds.'[506]

  A number of criticisms can be levelled at Michels' arguments, from a specifically horizontal and a more general perspective. The first point to note is that his 'iron law' involves assumptions regarding human nature, a factor which it is impossible to prove or disprove. Is following a leader natural, or just what humans are used to? Is the desire for power natural, or just a matter of conditioning? And if these characteristics are learned, is it impossible or merely a challenge to unlearn them, at an individual or collective level or both? There is no conclusive answer to these questions, but they nonetheless serve as alarm bells when 'human nature' is brought into play as a basis for any type of social arrangement.[507] From the horizontal perspective, it is important to remember that his analysis is largely confined to political parties and other groups which are explicitly seeking political power. To apply his framework to horizontal politics, therefore, would involve a level of comparing the proverbial apples with oranges, since the aim is not to 'take' power but to break it up.[508] The risks he highlights in his discussion of anarchism are not to be taken lightly, for the scenario he outlines is not impossible. However, the strategies discussed above suggest that horizontal movements on the whole take this point seriously.

  Hierarchies of value also pose particular concern to groups which explicitly state a commitment to diversity. However, as with hierarchies of power, hierarchies of value are seen by some to be inevitable if a political grouping is to hold together and continue to function. To a well-known example, Sartre's analysis of schisms within the revolutionary left focuses heavily on the tendency for one sub-group at a time to wish to overpower and eliminate one or more others from the movement. He argues that 'In an organised group, one organism wishes to deal with a matter while another claims jurisdiction over it. If the circumstance recurs often, the rivalry of the two subgroups is transformed into open warfare. But why does it recur? Most of the time, we find at the origin of the dispute a real but relative indetermination of the respective competences.'[509] By this line of argument, groups constitute themselves through such internal struggles, reaching positions on every issue through the triumph of one faction over another. There are mixed motivations behind these struggles: 'And in so far as a particular sub-group seeks the death of the other, it really seeks it for the sake of the ensemble, although it is also impelled to do so by a need, a passion or an interest of its own.'[510] The conflicting values and positions of the sub-groups, in Sartre's view, lead not to a compromise but to internal struggles, winners and losers: furthermore,

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[506] *Ibid*. p.326
[507] This debate dates back to Hobbes and Rousseau: however, an in-depth discussion of their arguments would constitute too much of a digression here.
[508] See chapter five for further explanation
[509] Sartre, J.-P. (1991) *Critique of Dialectical Reason* Vol. 2 London: Verso p.55
[510] *Ibid*. p.64

the expulsion or conversion of these losers is essential to the coherence and functionality of the group as a whole. In addition, such struggles are an ongoing process rather than a one-off, for 'When a series of contradiction induced the strongest to liquidate the rest, remaining alone it found itself compelled to become at once its own right and its own left.'[511] As far as today's horizontal movements are concerned, this again is a problem to which a solution is necessary and possible , as discussed previously: the ability of an affinity group cluster to split and reform as necessary is particularly relevant.

  One case where internal schisms overrode an initial desire for diversity is that of Students for a Democratic Society, active in the USA in the 1960s. Adelson, an early participant, describes how 'Back in the naive formative years, before SDS had done much thinking about ideology, it had an almost doctrinaire tolerance for political differences. No one much cared about a member's specific ideas on how change could be brought about, or even on what had to be changed. SDS was wide open. Anyone who wanted to try to fight against the many evils of society, it was declared, would find plenty to keep him [*sic*] working in SDS. But there was no room for such tolerance once SDS was aiming for revolution.'[512] The internal tensions which did away with this tolerance were themselves somewhat diverse: attitudes to race and gender came into play – or rather, attitudes towards the level of priority that should be given to these issues – and there was also much dispute regarding whether the proletariat as traditionally conceived were the agents of revolution or in fact the diametric opposite of this. Here, Adelson reports, 'The old-timers saw two very distinct ideologies developing in SDS – an "internal contradiction" – which they recognised very clearly as paralleling Left history and which they knew would have to be fought out.'[513] The eventual upshot was that one faction – the one whose leader announced that 'We declare that all members of the Progressive Labour Party, the WSA, and anyone else who does not support these principles, are objectively racist and counter-revolutionary. WE DECLARE THAT THEY ARE NO LONGER MEMBERS OF SDS!'[514] – was eventually pushed out. At this stage, those involved feared, 'There were going to be two SDS's. On every campus there was going to have to be a power struggle to see which faction would be able to keep the name, and they'd be bound to spend all their time fighting one another instead of the common enemy.'[515] Instances such as this demonstrate that movements which initially express a commitment to diversity do not always remain this way, and that those which wish to maintain the diversity angle cannot expect this to be automatic or without pitfalls. These are pitfalls which today's movements appear to be aware of to a great extent, and have developed ways to deal with, as discussed above.

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[511] *Ibid*. p.74
[512] Adelson, A. (1972) *SDS: A Profile* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons p.225
[513] *Ibid*. p.226
[514] Bernadine Dohrn, cited *ibid*. p.242 capitals in original
[515] *Ibid*. p.243

The third manifestation of the hierarchy-is-inevitable trope relates to the development of informal hierarchies, said by authors such as Freeman to emerge when a vacuum is left in the absence of formal structures. Freeman's work will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters, but it is worth going over the skeleton of her argument here. Her main premise is that 'Contrary to what we would like to believe, there is no such thing as a structureless group. Any group of people of whatever nature that comes together for any length of time for any purpose will inevitably structure itself in some fashion. The structure may be flexible; it may vary over time; it may evenly or unevenly distribute tasks, power and resources over the members of the group. But it will be formed regardless of the abilities, personalities, or intentions of the people involved.'[516] This is, in effect, the iron law of oligarchy at the micro-political level: Freeman discusses groups which for the most part explicitly reject the processes described by Michels, and which do not engage in power-seeking politics through revolutionary or more conventional channels, but which nonetheless become breeding sites for the formation of hierarchies in which certain self-aggrandising participants take advantage of the apathy of others. Her main target is the idea of 'structurelessness', which 'becomes a way of masking power, and within the women's movement is usually most strongly advocated by those who are the most powerful (whether they are conscious of their power or not). As long as the structure of the group is informal, 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.'[517] Her contention here is that formal structures are more open – an idea which could be contested by Michels in his examination of groups *with* formal structures – and have official channels for the dissemination of necessary information. In a structureless group, elites emerge when, for any number of reasons which do not necessarily include deliberate manoeuvring (although they do not necessarily *exclude* it), a small group of people obtain a disproportionate level of power or influence over the actions of the wider group. She describes how 'At any small group meeting anyone with a sharp eye and an acute ear can tell who is influencing whom. The members of a friendship group will relate more to each other than to other people. They listen more attentively, and interrupt less; they repeat each other's points and give in amiably; they tend to ignore or grapple with the "outs" whose approval is not necessary for making a decision. But it is necessary for the "outs" to stay on good terms with the "ins."'[518] In other words, although there is no formal leadership or power structure, the group is not without internal power relations. The root of the problem, in Freeman's view, appears to hinge on a conflation on her part of formal structures with responsibility, accountability and openness. She argues that 'informal structures have no obligation to be responsible to the group at large. Their power was not given to them; it

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[516] Freeman (1972)

[517] *Ibid*.

[518] *Ibid*.

cannot be taken away. Their influence is not based on what they do for the group; therefore they cannot be directly influenced by the group.'[519]

  As with Michels, Freeman's argument is open to a number of criticisms. Firstly, if one lesson can be drawn from Michels' observations, it is that formal structures and officially-designated hierarchies cannot be directly equated with openness or accountability, and are far from the panacea which Freeman seems to regard them as. Secondly, it should be questioned whether the phenomena she observes are indeed inevitable in a structureless group, or whether they are 'just' something such a group needs to be careful to avoid. In terms of today's horizontal movements, this sort of care is indeed taken, something which will be discussed in more detail in the following section. Finally, the problems she describes are not intrinsic to 'structurelessness' itself, but rather to the role of the term 'structureless' as an empty signifier without any real meaning. Doing away with formal structures when the group in question is unsure what to replace them with and no commitment to doing so can be a mistake. The movements discussed here acknowledge this, and regard the focus on process as part of the solution: if this process is clear and everyone is informed and committed, the general argument runs, then formal structures are not needed.

  In summary, the responses to many of the direct challenges posed by a commitment to resisting hierarchy demonstrate an active rejection of the argument that hierarchy is inevitable. This facet is regarded as one of the strengths of a horizontal approach: instead of imposing a structure and a chain of command, this approach moves in the opposite direction and undermines the logic of hierarchical power in the process. In the early days of the alternative globalisation movement, Klein argued that 'Perhaps what is needed is not a single political party but better links among the affinity groups; perhaps rather than moving toward more centralisation, what is needed is further radical decentralisation.'[520]

Conclusion

  In conclusion, hierarchy is a prevalent theme in the literature of horizontal protest. Horizontal politics is for the most part rooted in the outright rejection of hierarchy in both political organising and human interactions more widely. In particular, the contention that hierarchical political or revolutionary organisation lacks any real potential for liberation is central to the horizontal outlook. For this reason, opposition to hierarchy is given high priority as a component of horizontal politics: as such, it forms a constant strand through the other three themes examined here as well as warranting a chapter in its own right. It is possible to identify four components –

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[519] *Ibid*.
[520] Klein, N. (2002) *Fences and Windows* London: Flamingo p.26

diversity, autonomy, affinity and consensus – which define the horizontal perspective on the rejection of hierarchy. This conjunction is arguably a key factor in differentiating a horizontal political movement. If such movements can be said to generate a distinctive political theory – and the existence of certain factors discussed in the relevant section suggest this is the case – then it emerges for the most part directly from political practice and deliberation on the ground during mobilisations. This process has a number of anti-hierarchical connotations, chiefly the idea that knowledge in a horizontal movement is formed at the grass roots: an explicitly anti-vanguardist approach. A further distinguishing factor is the emphasis on prefigurative politics: broadly speaking, the desire to bring about change in the here and now rather than deferring it until a future revolution. Finally, the high priority given to an explicit rejection of hierarchy is also arguably a distinguishing feature: the suggestion that hierarchies are inevitable is therefore rejected. While other theoretical outlooks are echoed or explicitly drawn from, there is still reasonable cause to mark out horizontal politics as somewhat separate from these. A number of problems and challenges are raised by the approach which is taken to hierarchy, and the solutions which horizontal movements develop to counter these are part of what distinguishes them in ideological terms.

Organisation

Introduction

   While the previous chapter focused on the wide field of the attempts made by those involved in horizontal politics to criticise, reject and actively resist hierarchy, this chapter will follow by examining the specific theme of horizontal (and by extension non-hierarchical) organisation. Organisation is the clearest manifestation of horizontal politics in practice: while the 'process' should not be taken to overshadow the end result, it provides a context in which the key principles can be more easily identified. In addition, one of the defining features of horizontal organisation is the importance of 'process': it is often regarded as having equal importance to the eventual outcome. In terms of normative political theory, some of the implications should already be evident in the light of the previous chapter: the organisational strategies to be discussed here are an indication of how organisation should be according to those involved. More specifically, they aim to demonstrate that this could be possible on a wider basis. From the perspective of conceptualising horizontal politics, 'organisation' constitutes a concept with a variety of often politically-motivated meanings, and as such one to which, in the horizontal context, a decontested meaning can be applied which is relatively distinct from many of those which have gone before. As with the previous chapter, the normative arguments and empirical descriptions emanating from those involved in horizontal political practice will form the starting-point for identifying the key ideas on which horizontal politics is based. The literature from which these ideas are drawn includes accounts of affinity groups and blocs (as used in the organisation of a protest) as well as less momentary examples of horizontal organisation in practice such as social centres.

   The structure of this chapter is similar to the previous one: it is divided between ethos and tactics, theoretical reflections and answers to challenges. I will start with an overview of the concept.

Overview

   Organisation is the second theme to be examined here, on the grounds that it follows on from hierarchy (and the rejection thereof) and, to some extent, foreshadows power by demonstrating some of the practical means by which the latter's 'fragmentation' might take place. The key phrase in examining the horizontal conception of organisation is 'dis-organisation':[521] a term which aims to distinguish itself from merely being unorganised, while doing away with the more potentially hierarchical connotations of the term 'organisation'. A dis-organisation is not a

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[521] Alternative spelling '(dis)organisation'

monolithic concept: rather, based on what Chatterton refers to as 'impure, messy politics'[522], it functions as an umbrella for various facets of horizontal political organising. The 'impurity' and 'messiness' mentioned by Chatterton are frequently referred to in one form or another in the literature, and are factors in the maintenance of non-hierarchical principles when applying these in practice. The purpose of this chapter is to unpick the concepts which form this type of organisation and which as such lie behind the umbrella of 'dis-organisation'. The core principles here are similar to those discussed in the previous chapter: diversity, autonomy, affinity and consensus. There are, however, differences in the angles from which these are approached when applied to the specific case of organisation. As in the case of hierarchy, these interlinked concepts fuel both the critique of hierarchical organisation and the alternatives which horizontal politics offers. Broadly speaking, organisation is the point at which the acceptance of diversity is tested. In tactical terms, diversity is one of the more pragmatic reasons behind the de-centralised nature of horizontal politics, although there are other more ideological reasons relating to autonomy. As regards diversity of viewpoints, the relationship between diversity and consensus comes into its own when applied as part of an organisational model: consensus, as discussed in previous chapters, has the potential to encompass a wide range of viewpoints and lead to outcomes which are acceptable to each of them. The more traditional concept of equality is relevant here, although not central. Consensus, meanwhile, operates as both an organisational and ideological principle. Were it necessary to isolate one individual tenet as key to the nature of horizontal organisation (which is not the case), consensus would be the first choice due to its essential role in the making of decisions regarding action. Autonomy, meanwhile, is represented in the de-centralised nature of horizontal organisation, shaded in this instance by a perception of de-centralisation as a manifestation of respect for diversity and self-determination rather than simply a convenient tactic. Affinity can similarly be ascribed a dual meaning in this context: the 'affinity group' is a key organisational model, particularly when planning for protest mobilisations. Again, however, it is more than a 'mere' strategy: in addition, the central position it occupies in the literature can be taken as emphasising the importance of equality and respect as principles which need to be taken into account in organisation. It is this dual role which helps to fix the meanings ascribed to the core concepts of horizontal politics: as organisational strategies, the terms can be considered relatively vague; when surrounded by the other relevant principles, however, their meanings become more specifically 'horizontal' in nature.

Ethos and tactics

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[522] Chatterton, P. (2008) 'Autonomous spaces and social centres: So what does it mean to be anti-capitalist?' Online at http://shiftmag.co.uk/?p=107 last accessed 09/01/09

Following a similar structure to the previous chapter, this section deals largely with the distinctive ethos and tactics deployed in horizontal organisation. The main components of horizontal organisation are examined here and the role of the core principles discussed in the overview is highlighted.

The previous chapter made much of the explicit resistance to hierarchies as manifested in both the theory and practice of horizontal politics. Two points can be drawn from this. Firstly, in terms of proportionality[523], this anti-hierarchical tendency is the aspect of horizontal politics which – as previously demonstrated – most often ends up in the forefront of activist-generated statements of aims. Secondly, resistance to hierarchy rates highly in terms of priority[524]. Freeden defines priority as the feature of an ideology determining 'which concepts (and which conception of each concept) are allocated core significance'[525], something which is demonstrated in this instance by the refusal to sacrifice the anti-hierarchical element of organisation for the sake of other factors such as efficiency. It is also worth mentioning the effect of a further 'P'[526], namely proximity[527], on the emergence of a distinctive horizontal politics. Specifically, the resistance to hierarchy which to a great extent defines the variety of movement under discussion here is shaped by proximity to other factors, in particular the presence at or near the core of the four principles already outlined and certain sub-concepts which can be derived from or linked to these. 'Anti-hierarchical', 'non-hierarchical' and indeed 'resistance to hierarchy' have the potential to become empty buzzwords, which can in some cases be filled through over-coding with destructive patterns. The addition of consensus, diversity, autonomy, affinity and similar concepts can help to prevent this, by creating a concrete meaning and providing an organisational strategy.

Focussing on the question of organisation, horizontal movements have put forward several arguments for resisting representation, at least as the term is widely understood. Regarding organisational strategies, the aforementioned key principles indicate a form of direct democracy: where possible, this is 'direct' in the most literal sense, with everybody who is concerned participating. When 'representatives' must be used – if large numbers or significant geographical distances are involved – they tend to be strictly mandated delegates, expressing the opinion of their group as decided by consensus. Seeds for Change describe the direct-democratic aims of horizontal politics thus: 'This ideal is based on two notions: first, that every person has the right to self-determination, the right to control their own destiny and no one should have the power to force them into something; and second, that as human beings most of us wish to live in society, to

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[523] See Freeden, M. (2003) *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction* Oxford University Press p.64
[524] *Ibid*. p.61
[525] *Ibid*.
[526] The fourth, permeability, is of lesser relevance in this context
[527] *Ibid*.

interact with other people. Direct-democratic systems aim to find a way of balancing individual needs and desires with the need for co-operation.'[528] There are two key points here. Firstly, the question of 'self-determination' is crucial to understand how horizontal political movements operate and why they do so in the ways discussed here. It is an anti-hierarchical statement – in this context, if not intrinsically – to emphasise that every individual within a movement has the explicit right to participate in decision-making, and should not as such be disempowered by a process which allows a small number to speak and the rest to merely cast a vote. Autonomy plays a significant role here. Secondly, these individual needs must be balanced with those of the community. Affinity is the principle which goes the furthest towards ensuring this. Seeds for Change elaborate on the core principles for direct (and, by implication in this context, consensus-based) democracy as used in horizontal political organisation, pointing out that 'Direct democracy in small groups depends on group members sharing a common goal, building trust and respect, active participation, a clear process. Clearly the same conditions need to apply to making decisions on a much larger scale.'[529] They then highlight a number of points which are especially necessary for larger-scale decision-making according to these principles. The first of these is decentralisation: 'The more local, the more decentralised we can make decisions, and the more control we will each gain over our lives.'[530] They then point out that 'Diversity is our strength'[531], as 'We all have different needs and desires. To accommodate these we need to create a fluid society full of diversity, allowing each to find their niche.'[532] The final necessary points are 'Clear and understandable structures'[533] and 'Accountability.'[534] Here, a number of recurrent themes in horizontal politics are reprised and linked concretely to the practical question of organisation. Horizontal organisation is decentralised, based on the principle of autonomy as outlined in the previous chapter; it is also rooted in a need to respect diversity, resisting in the process the imposition of an overarching agenda or a hierarchy of values. The final two points relate to the prevention of the 'tyranny of structurelessness' scenario discussed in the previous chapter, in which concepts such as 'non-hierarchical' become ciphers to be filled out by informal hierarchies.

  The purpose of direct, consensus-based democracy is elaborated upon by the mission statements of various social centres operating along horizontal lines. The website of the Kebele social centre in Bristol states the following: 'Kebele sees the importance of organising without leaders or bosses, and everyone having an equal say. When power is shared equally in a group, it can be

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[528] Seeds for Change (2007a) 'Why do it without leaders' in Trapese Collective (eds.) (2007) *Do It Yourself: a handbook for changing our world* London: Pluto pp.50-62 (quote from p.52)
[529] *Ibid*. p.55
[530] *Ibid*.
[531] *Ibid*. p.56
[532] *Ibid*.
[533] *Ibid*.
[534] *Ibid*.

more effective and sustainable - as well as empowering - for all involved.'[535] Such statements add the dimension of power and its distribution, to be discussed further in the following chapter. In terms of organisation, this equalisation – through practical measures and formal principles – is crucial to understanding what it is to be 'horizontal' in the practice of political activism. Firstly, as has been discussed at length already, it emphasises an explicit attempt to resist the involvement of hierarchies. Secondly, the emphasis on equal sharing of power and influence contains the seeds of an issue which was also previously discussed here: that of the activist[536] as a genuine participant in, rather than a consumer or spectator of action. The self-description of Brighton's Cowley Club echoes many such sentiments, grounding: 'the values of the co-operative'[537] in 'self-responsibility, self-help, equity, solidarity and grass-roots control outside the influence of political parties and similar coercive hierarchical groupings.'[538] These groups clearly define representative politics as 'hierarchical' and 'other'. They posit their own methods in opposition to such entities and structures: a key to the construction of such methods.

   The development and deployment of horizontal organisational strategies[539] is further motivated by a belief in direct action, with the term being defined more broadly here than is often the case. CrimethInc, for example, describe how 'Practicing direct action means acting directly to meet needs, rather than relying on representatives or choosing from prescribed options. Today the term is commonly applied to the use of illegal protest tactics to pressure governments and corporations to make certain decisions.'[540] The direct action ethos is, however, significantly more than the protest repertoire to which the name is normally attached: rather, it is the practical manifestation of the principles outlined above. Horizontal activists and movements act 'directly' in a number of ways. Firstly, participants are just that: participants rather than spectators, acting for themselves and their communities, rather than assigning or waiting for someone else to do it. Secondly, they take responsibility for taking action, rather than assuming it is someone else's job. Thirdly, they set the agenda directly, on many occasions actively resisting the one that is offered ready-made, and in no circumstances passively consuming it. CrimethInc continue: 'The opposite of direct action is representation. Whether one votes with a ballot for a politician's representation, with dollars for a corporate product, or with one's wardrobe for a youth culture, voting is an act of deferral, in which the voter picks a person or system or concept to represent her interests. This is

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[535] Kebele Community Co-operative 'Principles' at http://www.kebelecoop.org/Principles.html last accessed 27/03/09
[536] Acknowledging the problematic nature of this expression
[537] The Cowley Club 'More Info' at http://www.cowleyclub.org.uk/?About last accessed 27/03/09
[538] *Ibid*.
[539] These are more than merely strategies: however, the strategic element is the visible face of horizontal organisation
[540] CrimethInc (2006) *Recipes for Disaster* Olympia: CrimethInc p.12

an unreliable way to exercise power, to say the least.'[541] The issue of self-determination arises again, requiring organisational forms which reflect this. The rationale behind using direct democracy in the horizontal context is that everybody is a participant; everybody is responsible; and everybody is equally powerful and has an equal right to be included in the decision-making process. The reasons behind the use of consensus will be returned to shortly, but can be summarised in terms of being regarded by horizontal activists as the means of making decisions which is firstly the most effective in allowing such inclusion; and secondly as the most consistent with horizontal values in general. The members of Kebele emphasise these points when they suggest that '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.'[542]

It is now time to look more closely at some specific examples of horizontal organisation in order to elaborate on the factors which make this distinctive. The main organisational models in horizontal movements are the affinity group and the spokescouncil, which are to some extent linked to one another. In the course of a protest mobilisation, the bloc tactic has much organisational significance.

The affinity group, its role in horizontal activism and its significance in terms of horizontal values was already covered to some extent in the previous chapter. To recap, the term 'affinity group' can refer to groups of a wide range of sizes, remits, levels of openness and lengths of existence. There are, however, a number of common factors. Firstly, an affinity group is a collection of equals; decisions are made using consensus, and as such the numbers involved tend not to exceed the point at which this process can be conducted easily. Secondly, affinity groups tend to be directed towards some form of direct action, be it in the narrow sense of a protest action or the wider sense described above. Thirdly, affinity groups are explicitly based on the principle of affinity, defined in brief as the bonds of mutual respect which develop between people acting for a common purpose. Affinity groups are autonomous, but extend their remit by joining with other groups when necessary. While there is little to say about organisation within an individual affinity group, the interaction between groups is of particular interest in this context as it demonstrates how the various distinguishing principles fit together in practice. The most common ways for affinity groups to interact are the cluster (which is limited to the affinity group model) and the spokescouncil (which is used in a wider variety of contexts).

A cluster can be defined in the most basic terms as an affinity group of affinity groups: the model comes into its own in situations where one affinity group would be unable to carry out certain

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[541] *Ibid*. p.13
[542] Kebele, 'Principles' *op. cit.*

actions without help. Direct Democracy Now offers the following definition: 'A cluster is a grouping of affinity groups that come together to work on a certain task or part of a larger action. Thus, a cluster might be responsible for blockading an area, organizing one day of a multi-day action, or putting together and performing a mass street theatre performance. Clusters could be organized around where affinity groups are from (example: Texas cluster), an issue or identity (examples: student cluster or anti-sweatshop cluster), or action interest (examples: street theatre or black bloc).'[543] Clusters have more potential than individual affinity groups to be transient and event-specific, although they operate upon the same principles as an affinity group in terms of, for example, using consensus to make decisions as a whole group. The cluster is still generally small enough not to resort to using delegates. CrimethInc, for example, argue that 'The cluster formation enables a larger number of individuals to act with the same advantages a single affinity group has.'[544]

When numbers get beyond a certain level – or cross geographical boundaries to an extent that collecting everybody together become a problem – the spokescouncil is often regarded as at least a partial solution. Direct Democracy Now define a spokescouncil in the following terms: 'A spokescouncil is the larger organizing structure used in the affinity group model to coordinate a mass action. Each affinity group (or cluster) empowers a spoke (representative) to go to a spokescouncil meeting to decide on important issues for the action. For instance, affinity groups need to decide on a legal/jail strategy, possible tactical issues, meeting places, and many other logistics. A spokescouncil does not take away an individual affinity group's autonomy within an action; affinity groups make their own decisions about what they want to do on the streets.'[545] The nature of the representation involved is generally closer to the direct delegate model advocated by council communists than to the style of representative democracy more widely known today, although this depends to some extent on factors such as the level of trust and cohesion within each affinity group. Seeds for Change emphasise that 'For a spokescouncil to work effectively the role of the spoke needs to be clearly defined. A group can choose to use the spoke as a voice – feeding back to the group the collective, agreed thoughts. Or the small group might empower their spoke to make certain decisions based on their knowledge of the small group.'[546] It might be useful at this stage to note certain principles which are evident within the spokescouncil model. Consensus is used here as both a practical device and a key to maintaining horizontality in process. However, consensus is only generally required on certain specific issues, allowing for a high level of

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[543] Direct Democracy Now (undated) 'Affinity Groups' reproduced by Anarchism in Action at http://aia.mahost.org/dec_affinity.html last accessed 29/03/09
[544] CrimethInc (2006) p.31
[545] *Ibid*.
[546] Seeds for Change (2007b) 'How to make decisions by consensus' in Trapese Collective (eds.) (2007) *Do It Yourself: a handbook for changing our world* London: Pluto pp.63-77 (quote from p.73)

diversity within the mobilisation. These differences can be talked through and a collective action decided upon which does not compromise the principles of any given participating group. In this way, the autonomy of each individual affinity group and/or cluster is respected, as they are only bound by decisions to the extent that their actions affect the wider collective or the integrity of the mobilisation. Affinity, rather than binding laws, maintains a level of respect for group decisions. CrimethInc express the following view of the role of a spokescouncil: 'In this author's humble experience, the most effective, constructive spokescouncils are those that limit themselves to providing a forum in which different affinity groups and clusters can inform one another (to whatever extent is wise) of their intentions, rather than seeking to direct activity or dictate principles for all.'[547] This view appears somewhat extreme given that decisions do on occasion need to be made and disagreements resolved in a larger group, and that the spokescouncil may appear the most logical and consistent way for a horizontal movement to go about this. Seeds for Change – one of the more well-known proponents of the forms of direct democracy discussed here – appear to regard it as such, arguing that of it 'enables large numbers of people to work together as democratically as possible, allowing the maximum number of opinions and ideas to be heard in an efficient way.'[548]

The horizontal mobilisation against the 2005 G8 Summit at Gleneagles – based at the temporary eco-village known as the Hori-zone – contained a number of examples of spokescouncils in action, for the purpose not only of planning actions but also of managing the day-to-day business of the site according to horizontal principles. Seeds for Change describe how 'Delegates from all working groups and all neighbourhoods met daily in the format of a spokescouncil for a site meeting, where this work was co-ordinated, policies agreed, and jobs identified and allocated.'[549] Each group – be it an activist affinity group, a kitchen collective or any working group – would hold their own meeting daily to discuss any issues arising, and choose delegates who were 'generally rotated from day to day, were accountable to their groups and had limited decision-making power'[550] to attend the relevant wider meeting and put forward their group's point of view. Consensus was used to reach decisions at each stage.

Another organisational tactic popular within horizontal protest movements is the 'bloc'. The bloc tactic is specific to the protest situation, and consists of a group of activists or cluster of affinity groups agreeing to join the protest on the same terms and use pre-agreed tactics. It is also common for activists to dress the same and present a similar appearance, both to make a statement and to confuse the authorities regarding the identity of any given individual. The best-known example is

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[547] CrimethInc (2006) p.31
[548] Seeds for Change (2007b) p.72
[549] Seeds for Change (2007a) p.59
[550] *Ibid.*

the militant 'black bloc': as CrimethInc describe it it, 'a venerable, if not doddering, anarchist tradition in which a mass of direct action enthusiasts gather, all wearing black clothing and masks, and engage in some form of illegal activity.'[551] The bloc, in the context of a wider mobilisation, epitomises 'diversity of tactics' in that many different blocs should be able to coexist within the same protest. The 'black bloc', as mentioned previously, is where respect for diversity of tactics gets tested. As regards organisation within the bloc, the principles are similar to those applied in other forms of horizontal organisation, with the proviso that allowances must be made for quicker and more potentially fraught decision-making. CrimethInc make a number of points on this and related issues. Firstly, they suggest that 'It is impossible to overstate the importance of engaging in bloc activity as part of a small group capable of fending for itself and making decisions; to do otherwise is to abdicate responsibility for yourself to the mass, and to deny that mass the benefit of your participation as an equal.'[552] The emphasis is again on those involved being participants rather than spectators; something the bloc tactic encourages by its very nature. Autonomy, in terms of simple self-government by individuals and affinity groups and also in the more detailed sense discussed in the previous chapter, is an essential component of the bloc as CrimethInc perceive it. The affinity group must be able to take responsibility for itself rather than relying on others; a bloc should not, conversely, coerce its component individuals or groups, and constraints should be limited to those regarding pre-agreed rules of appropriate behaviour.

  The composition of a bloc can vary in terms of size and range of participants as well as tactics. CrimethInc suggest that 'An affinity group can form a small, ad-hoc bloc on its own, but a cluster of affinity groups can form a larger, more powerful bloc. In this case, it is critical that efficient and democratic structures be set up within the cluster. It should be possible for news, questions, and answers to be communicated swiftly within and between affinity groups, even in the tensest situation.'[553] The default in these scenarios is the use of consensus, which as discussed previously can work efficiently under protest conditions such as those endured by participants in the Gleneagles blockade. The balance between 'democratic' and 'efficient' is a delicate one: for example, whether a bloc should resort to a show of hands to decide some matter, or should remain strict about consensus. As with an individual affinity group, however, the levels of respect and trust (and indeed affinity) should allow for controversial issues to be discussed and agreements reached before the action begins: possibly including an agreement on when it is acceptable to use a show of hands. CrimethInc tip this balance towards the democratic element, as they describe the following debate: 'Some have argued in favour of a more militaristic bloc model, that would presumably operate more like the hierarchical regiments our enemies pit against us, but the very

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[551] CrimethInc (2006) p.128
[552] *Ibid*. p.136
[553] *Ibid*. p.137

strength of the bloc is its decentralised, unpredictable nature.'[554] 'Decentralised' and 'unpredictable' are both used to describe many areas of horizontal organisation (or dis-organisation), as will be discussed shortly. With specific regard to a 'decentralised, unpredictable' bloc as a protest tactic, these factors distinguish such an entity as horizontal. It is part of an ethos described by the Free Association in the following terms: 'we're not in control. Even when all the right preconditions are in place there's no guarantee things will gel and cohere. And even if they do there's no guarantee that what emerges will work.'[555] The emphasis is on immanence, not transcendence, and decidedly not on control. In terms of distinguishing a horizontal movement, while some might argue that introducing structure and hierarchy would make the tactic more efficient, those who self-define as horizontal generally regard this as the sacrifice of a core value. This is a question of priority: a non-hierarchical network is central to the aims of a horizontal movement, while traditional ideas of efficiency are given less consideration.

In the absence of control or predictability, let alone a hierarchical structure, the alternative principle holding horizontal organisation together is affinity. This is, activists argue, the case at every level, from the small affinity group to the larger spokescouncils, and in circumstances ranging from protest organisation to the day-to-day running of a social centre. It also applies in a sense to the relations between movements/activists and the outside world, and can potentially – if remembered in the heat of the moment – counteract the likelihood of an 'activist mentality' emerging. CrimethInc suggest the following: 'As your relationships with people outside of your usual circles become stronger, you may get to the point where it makes sense to talk about your political differences in order for these relationships to grow. Don't go into these discussions expecting to change anyone.'[556] The purpose of dialogue – between a diverse range of activists and also with communities and individuals 'outside' the expected remit of a movement – is rather to respectfully exchange ideas on an equal basis and develop a deeper understanding of all the various perspectives involved. More recently, South Coast Climate Action have applied this principle to their dealings between their camp and the local community: 'of course the lifeblood of the project has been the daytime influx of locals, bringing with them curiosity, ideas and energy to mix with our own, bringing their world (and their shovels and seeds) into the alternative one that we have shown them on their doorstep.'[557] Here, activists make explicit the point that they are learning from the non-'activist' locals, finding the common ground and attempting to turn the camp into a genuine community space rather than one from which the locals feel excluded.

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[554] *Ibid.*
[555] The Free Association (2005) 'On the Road' in D. Harvie *et al* (eds) (2005) *Shut Them Down!* Leeds: Dissent pp.17-26 (quote from p.20)
[556] CrimethInc (2006) p.190
[557] South Coast Climate Action (undated) 'Resurrection for the Insurrection' online at http://brightonclimateaction.org.uk/open-letter/resurrection-for-the-insurrection/ last accessed 30/11/11

Transition Heathrow, meanwhile, state their aim to empower and co-operate with the local community while also protesting the environmental impact of the aviation industry: 'We aim to promote, green, living, working fellowships – equipped to deal with the impacts of climate change and peak oil – controlled by those directly affected by expansion plans – the Heathrow workers and residents.'[558] Here, the perception in some communities that protesters are negatively impacting on local life is directly challenged: by allying with the community and the transition town movement, the effect can be seen in a more positive light. Transition Heathrow argue that 'This, in turn, empowers the community and helps it fight the profit-driven decisions imposed by Governments and corporations, rather than simply suffering the consequences.'[559] The idea that workers in environmentally damaging industries are potential allies due to their oppression by the said industries is not without controversy: however, part of the value of opening dialogue is the potential involved for resolving such issues. The application of principles such as this in organisation is not strictly limited to the category of movement which can be described as horizontal. The distinctive element can again be traced to priority, proximity and to some extent proportionality. Affinity has priority in that it is regarded by horizontal activists as an essential component of the way they operate. It is shaped by proximity to the other principles, particularly in this instance consensus, which give a practical outline to the ideals put forward. As regards proportionality, the term is used frequently in more detailed movement literature, if only in the context of the affinity group. Admittedly the principles behind the use of affinity groups may be less in the forefront of material aimed at non-activists: however, this may be a pragmatic attempt to focus on the practicalities of non-hierarchical organisation in order to demonstrate that it can work, rather than emphasising why it should be used.

  The next distinguishing feature of horizontal organisation is the focus on and commitment to consensus shown in the literature. To recap, consensus is regarded as both a key principle and a practical strategy for making decisions. 'Consensus' refers not to forcing complete agreement by any possible means, but to accepting and working around differences until common ground can be established. Broadly speaking, consensus is the key to a collective decision-making process taking the 'needs and desires'[560] of all concerned into account. It operates in ways diametrically opposed to hierarchy and traditional forms of representation: the focus is on maximising participation and levelling power relations. The process allows for diversity, with the views of 'minorities' listened to and incorporated into the resulting decision (unless a 'stand aside' is used) rather than sidelined for 'losing' a vote. The emphasis, as suggested by the connections with affinity, is on trust and

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[558] Transition Heathrow (undated) 'About Us' online at http://www.transitionheathrow.com/about-us/ last accessed 25/11/11
[559] *Ibid*.
[560] CrimethInc (2006) p.29

openness[561]. The members of the Kebele social centre summarise the process in the following terms, identifying both its purpose and the problems which may arise: '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!'[562] Forms of consensus decision-making are used by a variety of groups, including Quakers and pacifist entities which cannot necessarily be defined as horizontal. However, it is the conception of consensus which is the key point here, shaped by the ideas listed above and, in particular, by proximity to values such as affinity, diversity and autonomy as well as an overall intention to resist the emergence of hierarchy in organising for action.

   While the role of consensus in horizontal organisation goes beyond the basic practicalities of the decision-making method, these practicalities do hold a number of clues about its broader significance. In particular, the guidelines suggested by Seeds for Change hint at several of the principles already discussed in this chapter. Among the conditions they consider necessary for 'good consensus'[563] are 'Commitment to reaching consensus on all decisions'[564] and, connected to this, 'Clear process: everyone needs to share an understanding of how consensus is being used.'[565] In other words, the use of consensus is prioritised over factors such as speed in reaching a decision, and this is due largely to the rationale behind its use as elaborated on in the previous chapter. In addition, everybody must be properly informed of how the process works. This is so each participant enters the decision-making process on an equal footing, and as such has the same opportunity to participate fully. The sharing of information is accompanied by some principles which have already been discussed in the context of affinity, as Seeds for Change state the need for 'Trust and respect: we all need to trust that everyone shares our commitment, and respects our opinions and equal rights.'[566] This condition above all is relied upon to prevent participants abusing the consensus process. Although not infallible, it can be said to lay groundwork for respectful behaviour, as it is clear to all that this is expected of them. These points build up to a further condition, namely 'Active participation: if we all want a decision we can agree on, we all need to play an active role in the decision-making.'[567] This condition makes clear that self-determination is an essential part of the consensus process. Seeds for Change later state that, during the consensus process, 'all members of the meeting should always feel responsible for the

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[561] With exceptions stemming from the need for security culture in certain cases
[562] Kebele 'Principles' *op. cit.*
[563] Seeds for Change (2007b) p.64
[564] *Ibid.*
[565] *Ibid.*
[566] *Ibid.*
[567] *Ibid.*

progress of the meeting'[568] As mentioned previously, a politics based on consensus is – particularly when the consensus process is tied to certain other principles– an explicitly anti-representative politics, as each individual is speaking and acting in their own right. It is also a strongly anti-hierarchical process, eroding divisions between leaders and followers, representatives and the represented, and those who do and do not have power. For this reason the obsession with 'process' alluded to previously appears a positive rather than a negative feature, particularly with regard to the use of consensus: the 'process' in question does not happen in isolation, but rather is essential to the formation of horizontal ideals and the efforts made to live up to these. Juris emphasises this point, arguing that 'Indeed, more than merely a technical matter, consensus formed part of a wider networking politics involving autonomy, horizontal co-ordination, and direct democracy. In this sense, political ideals were expressed directly through concrete organisational practice.'[569] The practicalities of the consensus decision-making are themselves a distinguishing feature of horizontal organisation: however, when examined in context, they also point to deeply-held principles which go beyond the purely practical level.

  A horizontal protest movement is further distinguished by its decentralised nature: a characteristic which highlights a respect for both diversity and autonomy and a desire to deconstruct hierarchies of both power and value. While this method of organising has tactical benefits, these are not the sole reason for its adoption by horizontal movements. Like consensus, it is not a tool to be rejected when more hierarchical and structured methods are more efficient, but rather a set of deeply-held beliefs that require problems to be worked through in a manner consistent with certain core principles. CrimethInc describe how 'Without any argument or coercion, autonomous groups had formed for a truly diverse range of actions: climbing on the roof of the building and dropping banners, digging up the front yard of the biotechnology company to plant seeds, doing independent media work, passing out fliers on the sides of nearby highways to the traffic that would be snarled by the spectacle we were to create, performing a play involving the giant indigenous farmer puppet, acting as police liaisons (a police liaison is a person whose job is basically to delay the police by acting as the "spokesperson" for the group), and, of course, property destruction.'[570] The mobilisation against the G8 at Gleneagles is an example of a decentralised action: the main blockade, while ostensibly a central event, was nonetheless made up of a large number of affinity groups using a wide range of tactics. There were also further, autonomously organised blockades on the smaller roads surrounding the site. Juris uses the metaphors of a pack and a swarm to describe the coming-together of such an action, suggesting that '"packs" are small and serve as "crowd crystals" enacting scattered motions across space. By

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[568] *Ibid*. p.67
[569] Juris, J. (2008) *Networking Futures: The Movements Against Corporate Globalisation* Durham and London: Duke University Press p.227
[570] CrimethInc (2006) p.157

contrast, "swarms" openly confront their targets through coordinated actions from all sides. As we shall see, affinity groups move in packs, while the overall blockade strategy produces a swarming effect'[571] while 'At the same time, these distinct spatial practices embody alternative political visions.'[572] Such multilayered formations allow a mobilisation to come together or break apart as necessary: it also provides opportunities for individuals and affinity groups to co-operate with one another, without imposing a party line which says they must do so. Juris continues: 'Competing networks and their distinct styles and visions would thus be performed through alternative bodily and spatial practices. The overall diversity-of-tactics strategy would reproduce a networking logic on the tactical plane as emerging network norms and forms were transposed onto urban space and expressed through horizontal coordination among distinct protest performances.'[573] The 'logic' here is one which allows for a multitude of diverse, autonomous groups to come together in a larger entity when it is useful to do so, without compromising on either characteristic or becoming reified as part of a central command structure.

An example of this logic in action, as previously mentioned, is the mobilisation against the 2005 G8 Summit at Gleneagles. Here, the account given by the Free Association highlights a number of relevant principles. In the days leading up to the main day of action, there were concerns that a lack of co-ordination would impede any successful action. However, it can be argued that the opposite happened. The Free Association describe how 'We couldn't see how we could manage to get thousands of people out of the camp and into the hills. But we were asking the wrong question: as individuals, the task seemed daunting because it was hard to see the collective intelligence at work. But in a mass meeting of 300-plus, the strategy made sense because we could feel our collective power across the site, people were already self-organising, starting to make their own plans.'[574] In terms of organisational success, this decentralised model builds on the principle of autonomy: an already risky strategy would be made riskier if those 300-plus people were relying on a central planning body or leadership to tell them what to do. 300-plus active participants who are committed to organising a decentralised action autonomously using the consensus model (in affinity groups and wider spokescouncils), however, are a different matter.

The decision to create a specifically horizontal mobilisation at the Gleneagles site was one of the few potentially 'central' plans which can be traced to the Dissent network as nominal organisers. At this stage, however, the decision was also made that any such mobilisation should be as autonomous and decentralised as possible, and that horizontal principles should be at the heart of any actions and the organisational processes behind them: put more simply, 'Once we had decided

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[571] Juris (2008) p.128
[572] *Ibid*. p.128
[573] *Ibid*. p.131
[574] The Free Association (2005) p.23

to go to Scotland and disrupt the summit we were able to be more open about how people did that.'[575] This was, as previously mentioned, partly a response to (rightly) anticipated state repression and the likelihood of authorities picking out 'leaders' to isolate and neutralise. A decentralised action breaches this obstacle as it is more difficult to identify key players, and in the event that this happens they are likely to be 'key' to a small part of the action rather than the whole mobilisation. Once a centralised action had been ruled out, the Free Association describe how 'After that virtually every other organisational move helped to keep options open. Everything we organised in advance was about creating the preconditions of spontaneity. We organised the infrastructure to allow people to be in the right areas with the space and time to organise themselves to do what they wanted. At the Hori-zone, in meeting after meeting we made decisions to defer final decisions, or rather, we made decisions that maximised our degrees of freedom.'[576] In so far as such a thing exists, then, the role for a 'central' organising body in a horizontal mobilisation is to lay the groundwork for autonomous affinity groups to determine their own role in achieving a broad set of aims such as the disruption of a summit. During the blockade itself, 'Information was shared, but no one was told what to do or where to go: a critical difference. During the morning of the blockades they were a means of maintaining the collective affect when many people were physically split up and wanted reassurance that they weren't the only people about to rush onto the road.'[577] The necessity for sharing information extends beyond the decision-making process and into the stage of putting the decisions into practice; as can the need for trust and respect. In a decentralised action, therefore, it can be argued that affinity (a principle which embodies these requirements to a great extent) helps to bind such a mobilisation together.

The significance horizontal groups assign to diversity challenges certain traditional theories on organisation, in which common identity and focus were defining characteristics of the concept. In particular, organisation theory focuses on how a common worldview emerges within an organisation, although there are a range of perspectives regarding how this comes about and what form it takes. However, this mode of integrating individuals into an organisation appears to be commonly accepted among organisational scholars. Weick, whose main focus is on 'sensemaking', describes the process by which members of organisations begin to interpret events according to a common set of cues,[578] which in a large organisation are developed collectively over time and taken as read by newer participants. Weick argues that 'To organise is to impose order, counteract deviations, simplify, and connect, and the same holds when people try to make

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[575] *Ibid.* p.19

[576] *Ibid.*

[577] *Ibid.* p.21

[578] Weick, K (1995) *Sensemaking in Organisations* London: Sage p.8 – quotes are from Porac, J.F., Thomas, H. and Baden-Fuller, C. (1989) Competitive groups as cognitive communities: The case of Scottish knitwear manufacturers, *Journal of Management Studies*, 26: 397-416

sense. Organising and sensemaking have much in common.'[579] In other words, as humans themselves are 'organised' in terms of being integrated into a larger entity, their thoughts are also organised by way of an accepted set of prompts.

From a horizontal perspective, the general idea of a common worldview is an interesting phenomenon. On the one hand, diversity is a key component of many horizontal conceptions, including to an extent organisation. On the other, many of the practices of horizontal politics depend on some commonality of values: for example, if consensus decision-making is to work, everybody involved needs to accept the basic reasoning behind it and be prepared to take it to its conclusion (a decision everybody is happy with) rather than demanding a vote or sabotaging the process. Perhaps – and this is a tentative suggestion rather than a conclusion – the key to the difference between the two conceptions of organisation is the origin of the commonalities involved. Within a formal hierarchy, the values in question are disseminated to the lower ranks from above, and surface-level adherence is required even from those for whom they are not deeply-held beliefs. In an organisation using consensus, the development of common values aims to be a genuinely inclusive process; and one which acknowledges and on occasions celebrates the differences which exist.

The decentred, autonomous nature of a horizontal political movement is based to an extent on a desire to maintain flexibility, which in turn relates to the refusal of a monolithic agenda or a single 'right way' of going about activism. This flexibility is apparent in the temporary manifestations of horizontal organisation: a protest mobilisation, for example, convenes and disbands as is necessary, with no need to build longer-term structures. Likewise, many squats and other prefigurative and experimental dis-organisations are only intended to last for specific periods of time, creating an emphasis on the immediate and a tolerance of or desire for frequent mutations caused by, for example, changes of location or turnover of participants. However, flexibility is equally important for the organisation (or dis-organisation) of longer-term horizontal ventures such as permanent social centres. Chatterton makes the point that 'there's no blueprint, *nor should there be*. There's a rejection of fixed leadership and committees, in favour of more flexible, experimental and participatory strategic priorities to achieving radical social change.'[580] His claim that there is no blueprint is fairly self-explanatory: while the social centre has various forerunners, its current incarnation is still relatively new and each individual centre is shaped by myriad circumstances to the extent that commonality – and hence the scope for a blueprint – is somewhat limited. However, the defining factor here is the widely-held sentiment that such a thing is in fact not wanted – hence the claim 'nor should there be'. The emphasis is on creating a base for

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[579] Weick (1995) p.82
[580] Chatterton (2008) Emphases added.

horizontal activism and, in many cases, forging links with the local community beyond the activist ghetto: and, in doing so, to maintain and promote the principles discussed here rather than undermining or compromising them. While long-term plans are necessary in some cases – for example when a collectively-owned building is necessary – and often require the nominal construction of some official structures, the focus is still on maintaining horizontal practice and demonstrating the potential for alternatives to the current system by putting them into practice. Chatterton further describes how 'Overall, organisationally, social centres are defined by their flexibility and pragmatism, choosing minimum formal legalities and, in parallel, developing their own forms of direct democracy. Trial and error feature large as well as a willingness to accept mistakes and try new avenues when things don't work. This flows naturally from the fairly widespread distrust of institution building, hierarchy and bureaucratic organisations within anti-capitalist, anarchist movements. This informality and pragmatism is about the importance of deeds rather than propaganda.'[581] The ability to mutate and evolve is a characteristic of horizontal protest mobilisations, and this has been carried over into manifestations where it is less intrinsic to proceedings: the reason being a perceived need to remain consistent to principles such as diversity and autonomy which negate the usefulness or desirability of a strict blueprint. There is also an element of spontaneity, a factor which was alluded to earlier in the context of decentralised action. The focus on 'deeds rather than propaganda', meanwhile, evokes a focus on direct action (in the broad and narrow senses of the term): in this context, the idea that horizontal organisation and its associated concepts must become more than a set of buzzwords if any genuine change is to be brought about.

The argument that there is no blueprint has the potential to be problematic: what is prefiguration, after all, if not a display of how participants believe the world should be? This need not however constitute a major flaw. What Chatterton is arguing against is the idea put forward by Marx and Bakunin[582] that there is a specific path to revolution and a single ideal for a desirable post-revolution world. Rejecting a blueprint in the sense in which he uses the term does not require rejecting a vision of a better future: it does, however, require accepting that such a future will encompass a level of diversity.

Finally it must be emphasised that, while the factors discussed above play a practical role in organisation and often yield tactical benefits, they are a long way from being merely organisational strategies. This is not to diminish their importance in this capacity, but rather to highlight the equal or greater importance of the principles on which they are based. As organisational strategies chosen for their tactical usefulness, any of the elements discussed above

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[581] *Ibid*.
[582] See previous chapter for discussion of this topic

could be considered disposable if circumstances suggested that they were becoming a hindrance to proceedings. The consensus process, for example, could in some cases become unwieldy and time-consuming to the extent that those who are less committed to the principles of horizontal organisation might be tempted to bypass it and go straight for a majority vote in the interests of efficiency. However, underpinned by the rejection of hierarchy and the concepts which shape this rejection, these elements can be regarded as non-negotiable. The defining factor is priority, and in the case of horizontal organisation this is given to the principles which have been outlined here. This –particularly the attitude to hierarchy – is the key to distinguishing a horizontal political movement when the question of organisation is raised.

Theoretical reflections

With regard to organisation, a distinctively horizontal political theory is likely to contain two key elements. Firstly, it will involve an explicitly prefigurative approach, emphasising the need to create spaces of resistance in the here and now. It does not refer to a distant future, and particularly not one which can only be achieved by a full-scale revolution. Secondly, it will hinge on the concept of a 'dis-organisation' in the sense of a technical term used by activists to denote the capacity for organising while rejecting the more hierarchical connotations of the term 'organisation'. Again, the distinctive nature of horizontal politics hinges on the way in which certain principles are defined and ordered by those concerned as much as on their presence, and those discussed in the previous section will be evident here.

In exploring whether a distinctive political theory is generated by horizontal movements, a starting-point is the conception of horizontal organisation as a 'dis-organisation'. Use of the term 'dis-organisation' neither rules out *organising* or *being organised* nor expresses a desire for chaos. It does, however, differentiate the organisational forms involved from the hierarchical structures implied by the term 'organisation'. However, a dis-organisation is not solely defined by what it eliminates: it also has a number of positive connotations. Firstly there is the explicit rejection of hierarchy and the priority given to this. Secondly, a dis-organisation does not have a central structure to a greater extent than is strictly necessary (for example when a new social centre is subject to legal requirements): it is consistent, therefore, with the networked logic outlined in the previous section. Thirdly, a dis-organisation is fluid and flexible, not requiring a party line or significant levels of homogeneity. These features can encompass any manifestation of dis-organisation, and display the same principles. Chatterton describes how, in a horizontally-organised social centre, 'the whole point of the politics of the place is that they are open, complex and messy. This impure politics opens up debate so that conflicts and differences can be

acknowledged and resolved.'[583] At the surface level, 'open, complex and messy' can be taken to refer to the absence of a single monolithic structure; or, more positively, to an explicit respect for diversity and autonomy. However, the phrase can also be interpreted as referring to a level of liminality in horizontal politics, with the attendant perception that this is a desirable trait. While there are some ideas which remain constant, there is also an element which resists reification and overcoding[584], and which cannot be overlooked when discussing questions of organisation since it influences the way such questions are answered. This element allows for the constant mutations and evolutions that characterise such a movement: the changes in tactics from one mobilisation to the next, the ability to move around obstructions by dividing and reconvening, and to demonstrate the fragmented nature of power within a horizontal movement. In terms of organising for action, this outlook is summarised by the Free Association thus: 'It would have been easy to go for a single set-piece battle in an attempt to shut down the summit. But that would have flattened all our compositional efforts (creating and maintaining multiple convergence spaces, each containing a whole range of subjectivities) into one spectacular moment of opposition.'[585] This harks back to the issue of hierarchies of value, resisting as it does the idea that one way of opposing (for example) the G8 is intrinsically 'better' than the others and as such has the right to be prioritised as the main feature of the day. The value of dis-organisation as a principle, then, lies in the desire to remain organised while still respecting certain values. It is also significant that these values are applied in proximity to a requirement for openness and transparency: allowing for occasional limitations caused by security culture[586], it is considered necessary that everybody involved should be treated as an equal participant in terms of the sharing of knowledge regarding how the process works.

The absence of (or indeed active resistance to) a defined blueprint can therefore be regarded as a horizontal trait in itself. This is to some extent linked to the idea of prefigurative politics discussed in the previous chapter: rather than being a programmatic revolutionary strategy focused on a point in the more or less distant future, the focus is on creating alternatives in the here and now and building upon these. In organisational terms, a distinctive theory would start from the idea expressed by Chatterton and Hodkinson that 'self-managed autonomous spaces can become environments in which people are genuinely able to relate to and treat each other as equals with solidarity and mutual respect.'[587] The organisation of such spaces is a vital means of ensuring that

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[583] *Ibid*.
[584] Deleuze and Guattari's terminology, drawn from Deleuze, G. and F. Guattari (2004) *A Thousand Plateaus* London and New York: Continuum
[585] The Free Association (2005) p.19
[586] Less problematic in this context than when the knowledge in question pertains to an illegal act.
[587] Chatterton, P. and S. Hodkinson (2007) 'Why we need autonomous spaces in the fight against capitalism' in Trapese Collective (eds.) (2007) *Do It Yourself: a handbook for changing our world* London: Pluto pp.201-215 (quote from p.211)

these principles are lived up to. Chatterton and Hodkinson continue: 'Core to this is the practice of "self-management", which rests on a number of key ideas: horizontality (without leaders); informality (no fixed executive roles); open discussion (where everyone can have an equal say); shared labour (no division between thinkers and doers or producers and consumers); and consensus (shared agreement by negotiation).'[588] Here, organisational questions are extended beyond their initial and clearly obvious remit to demonstrate a wider political outlook: one which rejects hierarchies of power, value or access to the decision-making process, and promotes co-operation and respect. As regards prefigurative politics, a compelling argument is made by CrimethInc on the usefulness of the approach: 'the chief argument of fascism and reactionary thinking has always been that cooperation and autonomy are mutually exclusive, that people have to be ordered and controlled or else they will do nothing but be lazy and kill each other. The more we can demonstrate that this is untrue, the less appeal their claims will have.'[589] This shows an element of explicit resistance in the prefigurative approach, not merely by organising *for* a revolution but also by organising in ways which generate revolutionary thought and practice in the everyday context. To CrimethInc, 'The affinity group is not only a vehicle for changing the world – like any good anarchist practice, it is also a model for alternative worlds, and a seed from which such worlds can grow.'[590] It should be noted that the affinity group constitutes a 'seed' rather than a definitive structure: something which could grow in multiple heterogeneous forms and directions, a rhizomatic entity rather than a tree or a fascicular root.[591]

The language used above is borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari, whose concept of a rhizome is significant in tracing the influences on horizontal politics. The rhizome is a less direct influence than certain other theories: it does however provide a framework for describing and explaining a number of aspects of horizontal organisation. Juris describes how the networks he examines 'constantly emerged, split, and morphed, alternatively fusing and separating through a fluid and dynamic process of interaction.'[592] Furthermore, 'observers have characterised contemporary social movement networks more generally as "rhizomatic". This dynamic pattern of mobilisation is often seen as an alternative to traditional static models of organising.'[593] In terms of the relationship to social movement networks highlighted by Juris, it may be worth looking more closely at some of the more significant features of the rhizome. Firstly, when attempting to clarify their definition of a rhizome, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that 'The rhizome itself assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extensions in all directions to concretion into bulbs and

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[588] *Ibid.*
[589] CrimethInc (2006) p.194
[590] *Ibid.*, p.31
[591] Terminology from Deleuze and Guattari (2004)
[592] Juris (2008) p.95
[593] *Ibid.*

tubers.'[594] They also highlight what they describe as 'Principles of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order.'[595] It could be argued that there is an inherent contradiction in a diverse network in which connections between elements are necessary: however, it is this combination of factors which makes the rhizome a compelling model for organisation within a horizontal network in which various diverse groups are able to come together for a common purpose, creating connections which can either be temporary or permanent, while maintaining their overall autonomy and individual character. The basic principles behind this form of network are inclined to resist reification into a concrete structure.

Juris is particularly keen to explore the links between the rhizome and what he describes as a 'network' model of social movement activity, observing that the image of the rhizome as presented by Deleuze and Guattari 'does seem to reflect the dynamics of contemporary activist networking, at least in a metaphoric sense. Still, the question remains: how are such rhizomatic patterns actually generated in practice?'[596] His first point relates to the fluid and immediate nature of horizontal politics, as discussed in preceding sections. However, there is also a link to the idea of small, often locally-focused entities being connected to – but not controlled by – something larger. He argues that networks 'often serve as tools that mobilise activists within wider political spaces, giving rise to an extremely dynamic mode of activist participation',[597] and also that 'Building contemporary social movement networks involves diverse modes of interaction whereby activists communicate to one another while reaching out to potential supporters.'[598] Dynamism in particular is a rhizomatic trait: rather than remaining constant and static, the rhizome is prepared to adapt itself to circumstances. The element of diversity is important here, maintaining as it does the constant potential for change, with certain elements becoming more or less visible according to the general climate. It may be useful to note at this point that a rhizome does not need to have all its plateaus and connections on display at any given time: some may well be under the ground, or exist in a form which is too small to be easily visible. This, Juris argues, relates to the 'dormant' phases of a horizontal network: in other words, the times at which there is no major mobilisation to be concerned with. It is in these phases that the shape of a movement evolves and adapts, determining the form in which it will next become visible. This is necessary to the extent that, according to Juris, 'activist networks flourish when there is significant discussion and debate, but they quickly stagnate when communication lags. In this sense, if activist networks are generated by the communication flows that circulate through them, and are thus self-reflexive, organisational

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[594] *Ibid*. p.7

[595] *Ibid*.

[596] Juris (2008) p.95

[597] *Ibid*. p.96

[598] *Ibid*. p.97

debates become important mechanisms for reproducing networks during moments of reduced visibility.'[599] As such, movements remain 'alive' during these phases, avoiding reification.

The element of a rhizome which best sums up the process described above is defined by Deleuze and Guattari in terms of a 'Principle of asignifying rupture: against the oversignifying breaks separating structures or cutting across a single structure. A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of the old lines, or on new lines.'[600] These breakages can take a number of forms in the context of a social movement network. A network can rupture along ideological lines, as certain affinity groups decide they can no longer work directly together; they can take a tactical form of dividing to move around an obstacle (the Gleneagles mobilisation being an example of this tactic in practice); or they can be caused by external events (witness the debate surrounding the potential for movement survival following 9/11). Such ruptures, however, strengthen rather than weakening or destroying the rhizome, as Deleuze and Guattari explain: 'There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome.'[601] To bring the discussion back to the explicit question of organisation, a number of parallels should be noted. Firstly, the elements of diversity and autonomy reflect the heterogeneous, multi-centred nature of the rhizome, in which an overall 'coding' is resisted. As components of an organisational practice, these are considered to be strengths rather than potentially undermining weaknesses. The connections between these diverse plateaus, based on affinity, are also rhizomatic in that they are not tied to a linear dynamic; furthermore, they represent an alternative to and a critique of such dynamics. The prefigurative approach which colours the forms taken by horizontal organisation – specifically in terms of what is being organised for – can be seen in the rhizome's focus on the immediate: it is not a model which lends itself to the prospect of a distant and all-encompassing revolution, but rather to the need for change and resistance at the everyday level.

The prefigurative approach taken here adds a normative component to the theory generated by horizontal movements, putting into practice the values which are considered desirable within such an outlook and demonstrating that this can be done successfully. Such demonstrations are generally explicitly accompanied by an explanation of why these values and related practices should become the norm. Furthermore, these spaces and the organisational processes on which they are based go, according to the views expressed by activists in the literature used here, some way towards bringing about the desired society merely by occupying space within the existing one. A key distinguishing feature, therefore, is this trust in interstitial spaces and cracks to perform the task generally attributed to blueprints in bringing about change. From these spaces, and the

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[599] *Ibid*. p.99
[600] Deleuze and Guattari (2004) p.10
[601] *Ibid*.

practices on which they are based, the distinguishing features of horizontal politics emerge. This process is summarised by a participant in the Hori-zone, talking after the protests against the 2005 G8 summit: 'It was possible to catch glimpses of what a free society could be like: so many moments of co-operation, of people helping each other to overcome adverse circumstances.'[602] Again, a distinctively horizontal political theory is generated by the day-to-day practice of a movement; furthermore, this argument is potentially at its most convincing when made in relation to organisational practices, as it is these which form the basis for the other aspects of the movements and the ideas which develop from them.

A further component of a distinctively horizontal theory of organisation relates to the element of the direct, participatory and immediate in the thought and practice of horizontal movements. This links to an extent to the prefigurative ideas discussed above: for example, when CrimethInc argue that 'If you can somehow invest yourself in creating and perpetuating another world, that world will exist at least to the extent that you exist – that's the logic of living a radical lifestyle'[603] they are arguing in part for the development of new worlds *in* and *through practice*, rather than the construction of a blueprint to be followed to the letter. They are also, however, focused on doing so *in the here and now*, something which relates to the discussion in the previous chapter on the question of deferring change until some future post-revolutionary scenario. In developing these ideas, horizontal movements provide an implicit and explicit critique of both deterministic models of revolution and the idea of a dividing-line between 'before' and 'after' the 'revolution'.

A final characteristic relates to the overall approach taken by horizontal movements to the question of organisation, and specifically the response to the question posed here by an activist writing as 'AG': 'What is the greater problem? The people who are perceived as being leaders, or the apparent willingness to follow? And how do we resolve it?'[604] A theory of organisation generated by horizontal movements must engage with the question of how (and why) to organise in a way which explicitly resists the distinction between leaders and followers and attempts to break out of these patterns. To a great extent, this again links to the prefigurative element discussed above, in that it is deemed necessary to create in practice models of how non-hierarchical organisation can take place. Here, then, the principles discussed in the previous section begin to pull together in a conclusion to this one. Firstly, the emphasis is on autonomy: as Chatterton points out, 'One of the trickiest issues faced by social centres is developing a collective understanding of what self-management actually means, and how to get people to take this on.'[605]

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[602] Quoted in Seeds for Change (2007a) p.59
[603] CrimethInc (2006) p.195
[604] 'AG' (2005) 'Reaching the parts where we fear to go' in D. Harvie *et al* (eds) (2005) *Shut Them Down!* Leeds: Dissent pp.43-50 (quote from p48)
[605] Chatterton (2008)

The bracketed 'and why' above becomes relevant in this instance: the 'collective understanding' referred to by Chatterton is very much grounded in a basic shared belief in autonomy and its relationship to the other principles discussed here. The attitude to diversity is especially important here as, in Chatterton's words, 'It's not easy – it's a politics that needs constant work as different views and backgrounds bash together.'[606] The problem which arises is highlighted by CrimethInc: 'Of course, collectives composed of members with widely differing degrees of privilege will have to work extra hard on learning to interact as equals. Oppressive patterns – middle class people tending to take over the organising, working class people to do the physical labour, men to make decisions in ways that exclude women, and so on – come with us into our collectives from the hierarchical world that raised us; let's make these groups social laboratories in which we learn how to break these patterns, in preparation for breaking that world.'[607] A horizontal theory of organisation can therefore be said to develop along lines which allow for acknowledging and handling such differences, rather than glossing them over and assuming heterogeneity: furthermore, it can be argued that the rationale for this relates to earlier discussions regarding hierarchies of value. There is also a role for affinity here, in particular in developing bonds of mutual respect which are explicitly posited as an alternative to hierarchical structures as a basis for organisation. The distinctive element –which also relates to the prefigurative approach taken to bringing about change – is the extent to which these principles are given priority, and the emphasis on living up to them as far as possible in day-to-day organisational practice.

  This day-to-day organisational practice does to an extent have historical forerunners in the form of aspects of council communism. The direct link is made most clearly by CrimethInc when they point out that 'Indeed, the affinity group/cluster/spokescouncil model is simply another incarnation of the communes and workers' councils that formed the backbone of earlier successful (however short-lived) anarchist revolutions.'[608] They refer in particular to the 'delegate' model of workers' council organisation, developed in (among other places) the pre-Bolshevik soviet movement and based heavily on direct democracy and a resistance to the delegation of liberation to an official leadership. The problem being responded to in the development of this organisational model is summarised by Castoriadis, who argues that 'The organizations created by the working class for its liberation have become cogs in the system of exploitation. This is the brutal conclusion forced upon anyone who is prepared to face up to reality. One consequence is that today many are perplexed by an apparent dilemma. Can one become involved without organisation? And if one cannot, how can one organize without following the path that has made

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[606] *Ibid*.
[607] CrimethInc (2006) pp.194-195
[608] *Ibid*. p.31

traditional organizations the fiercest enemies of the aims they originally set out to achieve?'[609] If liberation is to be achieved, therefore, it is necessary to use a mode of organisation which avoids this outcome. Pannekoek offers a solution: the need for self-determination within the proletariat. He argues that 'Fighting for freedom is not letting your leaders think for you and decide, and following obediently behind them, or from time to time scolding them. Fighting for freedom is partaking to the full of one's capacity, thinking and deciding for oneself, taking all the responsibilities as a self-relying individual amidst equal comrades. It is true that to think for oneself, to think out what is true and right, with a head dulled by fatigue, is the hardest, the most difficult task; it is much harder than to pay and to obey. But it is the only way to freedom. To be liberated by others, whose leadership is the essential part of the liberation, means the getting of new masters instead of the old ones.'[610] This – in particular the emphasis on autonomy and participation – was adopted and adapted by the Situationists and is echoed in today's horizontal literature. Although there is more emphasis on the group and less on the individual, the idea that each person should consider themselves responsible for their liberation is nonetheless being made in the literature of council communism. Castoriadis, for example, points out that socialism 'cannot arise out of a mere revolt against exploitation but only from the capacity of the proletariat to extract from itself positive answers to the immense problems involved in the reconstruction of modern society. No one – no individual, group, or party – can be delegated this consciousness "on behalf of" the proletarian class or in its stead.'[611] For Pannekoek, meanwhile, 'True organization, as the workers need it in the revolution, implies that everyone takes part in it, body and soul and brains; that everyone takes part in leadership as well as in action, and has to think out, to decide and to perform to the full of his capacities. Such an organization is a body of self-determining people. There is no place for professional leaders. Certainly there is obeying; everybody has to follow the decisions which he himself has taken part in making. But the full power always rests with the workers themselves.'[612] In both instances, dissent is being expressed at the tendency of certain strains of Marxism to regard revolutionary consciousness as something brought to the workers by a distinct revolutionary class. Rather, it should emerge from *within* the proletariat, and the form it takes should be decided at the grass roots level. This approach also contains an element of mistrust levelled at the idea of a revolution controlled from the centre: the purpose of the council model was to ensure that decision-making happened at the level of those affected, with central decisions determined by those made in each locality or workplace.

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[609]Castoriadis, C. (1959) 'The Proletariat and Organisation' online at http://www.geocities.com/cordobakaf/proleorga.html last accessed 29/4/09
[610] *Ibid*.
[611] Castoriadis (1959)
[612] Pannekoek, A. (1936) 'Workers' Councils' online at http://www.marxists.org/archive/pannekoe/1936/councils.htm last accessed 29/04/09

In common with today's movements, the council model was based on decentralisation and direct democracy, although there are evident differences in how these are perceived. Speaking practically, the major difference between this system and that preferred by the Bolsheviks was the attempt to eliminate or minimise the need for an official leadership. Instead, should the decision-making process need to be taken beyond the local level, a delegate was elected to speak for each group. Pannekoek describes the delegate model thus: 'In the soviet system, each delegate can be repealed at any moment. Not only do the workers continually remain in touch with the delegate, discussing and deciding for themselves, but the delegate is only a temporary messenger to the council assemblies.'[613] The basic principle here is similar to the spokescouncil model discussed above: representation is done on the terms of those being represented, after consultation both about the opinion to be expressed on their behalf and the extent to which the delegate has leeway for making diverging from this. The means by which councils are defined is also similar, if historically specific. According to Pannekoek, 'In the councils, the workers are represented in their natural groups, according to factories, shops and plants. The workers of one factory or one big plant form a unit of production; they belong together by their collective work. In revolutionary epochs, they are in immediate contact to interchange opinions; they live under the same conditions and have the same interests. They must act together; the factory is the unit which as a unit has to strike or to work, and its workers must decide what they collectively have to do.'[614] The division into councils is therefore considered by advocates of the system to be a natural one, based on proximity and a high level of common interest: although the circumstances are different, echoes can again be seen in today's horizontal organisation, in that affinity groups, blocs and the like tend to be formed out of a shared desire to commit a particular type of action. These similarities may appear superficial, but to some extent there is a deeper resemblance hinted at by Castoriadis when he argues that 'in deciding their own activities, grassroots organs enjoy as much autonomy as is compatible with the general unity of action of the organization'.[615] Here, then, are specific principles which go beyond the immediate issue of self-management of places of work, and connect to a more general idea of decentralisation and autonomy. Combined with the element of direct democracy, it is seen as intrinsically desirable for central control to be limited unless strictly necessary. In particular, there is an insistence that any central entity should still be under the control of workers at the grass roots, rather than dictating policy to them from outside or above.

It would not, however, be unproblematic to map the two sets of ideas onto one another: some significant differences are clearly evident. To begin with, there is the nature of the struggle involved: today's horizontal politics is not based as clearly on the specific issue of class antagonism, but is instead rooted in multiple intersections between a variety of forms of

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[613] *Ibid.*

[614] *Ibid.*

[615] Castoriadis (1959)

oppression and resistance. Related to this, Pannekoek's work contains a number of references to Marx's concept of a 'dictatorship of the proletariat', something which he discusses for the most part without critical examination. Although it can be argued (*contra* Bakunin) that Marx's intention was not the variety of 'dictatorship' by which the term is understood today, today's movements tend towards problematising the idea that one group in society can bring about liberation through obtaining power over another, however temporary this condition is intended to be. This is a question of overall priorities, which for horizontal movements today are centred on explicit resistance to hierarchy. In addition, the elements of de-centralisation, autonomy and direct democracy appear significantly more negotiable to the council movement than to today's horizontal activists. Of particular note here is Castoriadis' use of terms similar to 'as far as possible': an idea which, although used to some extent in the literature of today's movements, is used more critically and with more detailed explanations of how, why and indeed if adhering to these principles might *not* be possible. These factors help to distinguish horizontal politics from its predecessors.

Finally, given the overall influence of classical anarchist ideas on horizontal politics, it is necessary to mention these briefly here. In terms of concrete organisational strategies, Bakunin and his contemporaries are little help in discerning an influence. The principles behind horizontal organisation, however, are explicitly anarchist in origin and certain of them reflect a resistance to the same bugbears Bakunin perceived in Marx's vision of revolution. The explicit, centrally-placed resistance to hierarchy is the clearest example of this influence. The focus on autonomy and direct democracy also relates to the anarchist origins of many horizontal movements, although they are not intrinsically linked to anarchism.

In summary, elements exist which suggest that a distinctive variety of political theory is being generated by horizontal movements, and that the organisational practices involved in the practical manifestations of horizontal politics make a significant contribution to such a theory. For the most part the theory generated follows from the elements which distinguish such movements: in addition, it goes a long way towards explaining why these elements are in place.

Answering the challenges

As with the question of hierarchy, an examination of the history of the concept of organisation throws up some interesting challenges for the horizontal conception given above. In particular, studies of organisation[616] have tended to focus on the efficient achievement of goals, and have for

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[616] Generally in the sense of 'an organisation' rather than 'being organised' *per. se*.

the most part attributed as high level of proportionality to hierarchy as horizontal movements have to resisting it.

On the first point, Gabriel points out that 'whatever organisations seek to accomplish, they seek to do it in a methodological, business-like, efficient manner. Efficiency is raised to the standard of a universal value: one to be compared with altruism, love and independence.'[617] The desire for efficiency does not *necessarily* conflict with any horizontal value: however, the priority it is given in this conception of organisation does. The same could be said for the targeting of the aforementioned efficiency towards specific goals. Here, Gabriel suggests that 'In spite of grave difficulties in establishing organisational goals, there can be little doubt that most of our time in organisations is spent being conscious of certain goals which are to be achieved.'[618] Horizontal movements do not object in principle to overall goals, as they have plenty of their own and affinity groups are often formed towards particular ends. What distinguishes the two overall approaches, however, is the question of priority: for horizontal movements, other factors – such as maintaining non-hierarchical practices – are often considered to take precedence over efficiency and, as such, the process by which decisions are made is of equal importance to the outcome. This is discussed in the previous chapter, responding to concerns raised by Papadimitriou.

A wider gap emerges, however, on the question of hierarchy, a trait viewed by Gabriel and the authors he cites as one of the most necessary traits of the type of organisation with which they are concerned. In particular, Gabriel points to a variety of organisational hierarchy which combines hierarchy itself with other features he has listed. He suggests that 'Without hierarchies, it is hardly conceivable that massive organisations would have come into being.'[619] In addition, such hierarchies generate 'a chronic rivalry among officials competing for promotion.'[620] It is possible at a certain point that such an environment ceases to be harmonious, despite the shared goals. At any rate, Gabriel suggests, 'Organisational hierarchies represent hierarchies of both authority and accountability. Within such hierarchies superiors hold certain rights over their subordinates, which include the rights to issue particular types of command, to reward and to discipline. At the same time, superiors are accountable both for their own actions and those of their subordinates to their own superiors. Subordinates, for their part, are obligated to carry out the commands of their superiors, provided that they accord with the organisation's impersonal system of rules and regulations. Thus, authority and accountability, from the organisation's point of view, are not attached to individuals but invested in the positions within the hierarchy.'[621] A positive effect here

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[617] Gabriel, Y (1999) *Organisations in Depth* London: Sage p.92
[618] Gabriel p.90
[619] *Ibid*.
[620] *Ibid*. p.87
[621] *Ibid*. p.85

might be that everybody knows what is expected of them and what they can expect from one another and the organisation: this is similar to the points made by Freeman regarding the need for formal structures. What it does not encourage, however, is initiative and responsibility on a more personal level, something which is liable to be a drain on the power-to of those involved.

  This definition of the key features of an organisation raises two significant questions relevant to the study of horizontal politics: firstly, whether hierarchy is an intrinsic part of organisation; and secondly, whether horizontal politics can be discussed in terms of organisation. A challenge to the levelling of these questions might be that the literature discussed above relates explicitly to certain types of organisation – namely companies and government agencies – and may not consider movements for social change to be within its remit. However, on the question of hierarchy, similar comments have been made regarding explicitly politicised entities, and indeed extended to include the idea of being organised as one which is almost inevitably hierarchical. Michels, whose perspective states that oligarchy is a foregone conclusion in organised politics, states that 'Organisation implies the tendency to oligarchy. In every organisation, whether it be a political party, a professional union, or any other association of any kind, the aristocratic tendency manifests itself very clearly.'[622] The reasoning behind his claims can be found in the final section of the previous chapter. His arguments regarding organisation, however, require some attention here. He takes 'organised' to be a somewhat literal term, in that a political grouping forms itself into a body with organs, each of which has a specific function and place in the order of things. This functional division becomes more reified and hierarchical the larger the organisation gets: 'The technical specialisation that inevitably results from all extensive organisation renders necessary what is called expert leadership. Consequently the power of determination comes to be considered one of the specific attributes of leadership, and is gradually withdrawn from the masses to be concentrated in the hands of the leaders alone.'[623] Here, there are echoes of Vaneigem's fears regarding the ascent of 'specialists' in the ranks of revolutionary movements: however, Vaneigem clearly saw this phenomena as avoidable. The next step, as Michels sees it, is as follows: 'It may be enunciated as a general rule that the increase in the power of the leaders is directly proportional to the extension of the organisation.'[624] Subsequently, 'Where organisation is stronger, we find that there is a lesser degree of applied democracy.'[625] The act or process of organising, in his view, is what saps the democratic element from a political movement. He then raises the blurring of means and ends, arguing that 'from a means, organisation becomes an end. To the institutions and qualities which at the outset were defined simply to ensure the good working of the party machine

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[622] Michels, R. (1966) *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy* New York: Free Press p70
[623] *Ibid.*
[624] *Ibid.* p.71
[625] *Ibid.*

(subordination, the harmonious cooperation of individual members, hierarchical relationships, discretion, propriety of conduct), a greater importance comes ultimately to be attached than to the productivity of the machine.'[626]

   Furthermore, even those organised entities which explicitly reject formal leadership are not immune from this phenomenon. In his brief engagement with anarchism, Michels states that 'While anarchists repudiate the formation of political parties, they adhere none the less to the principle of organisation in the economic field. Some of them, even explicitly recognise the need for the technical guidance of the masses, whilst others declare their conviction that it would suffice to restrict the functions of the leaders to purely administrative work, to eliminate, once and for all, the differences, so dangerous to the organisation, which arise between the leaders and the led. As if the technical and administrative superiority of the leaders were not alone sufficient to establish their supremacy over the masses in all other respects!'[627] The ways in which horizontal movements have engaged with this issue are discussed in this chapter and the previous and following ones, but the brief version of their argument is that such traits should not be seen in terms of 'superiority': furthermore, it has been made explicit many times that the imbalance of power caused by inequalities in such capacities should *not* become a source of unequal power. As Jones argues in a piece questioning whether 'anarchist organisation' is an oxymoron, 'There are leaders in the anarchist movement, make no mistake about that. What is different about anarchists is that we distrust leaders in general, and demand instant accountability. We want the "leadership of ideas" instead of the "leadership of authority". Leaders are fallible. Theoreticians make mistakes. People are blinded by their own privilege. Anarchists recognise that and seek to check the power of individuals over others at every turn.'[628] This argument provides a tentative solution to the question of authority, as discussed in the previous chapter. Engels regarded authority as a necessary element in any organised group, launching a counter-argument at anarchist critics on this basis. In the context of reconcontestation and reconceptualisation of concepts such as organisation and power, would it not be possible to also recontest 'authority' and open up the possibility of a conception of authority based on the sharing of skills and knowledge from a position of greater knowledge, as opposed to the top-down exercise of power?

   This discussion is more relevant to formal than to informal organisations: however, it would be remiss to assume that groups with no formal structure were immune from these issues. Freeman, for example, argues that '"Structurelessness" is organizationally impossible. We cannot decide

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[626] *Ibid*. p.338
[627] *Ibid*. p.326
[628] Jones, F. (2001) 'Anarchist Organisation: an Oxymoron, or Not?' online at http://www.endpage.com/Archives/Subversive_Texts/Misc_Livertarian_Communism/AnarOrg.htm last accessed 02/06/04 (EndPage no longer exists: a paper copy was used here)

whether to have a structured or structureless group, only whether or not to have a formally structured one.'[629] As discussed in the previous chapter, informal organisation is not free from hierarchy: rather, groups organised along these lines can be hierarchical in a more insidious way than those with formal structures. Furthermore, she argues, 'Only if we refused to relate or interact on any basis whatsoever could we approximate structurelessness -- and that is not the nature of a human group.'[630] The implication here is that no organised group can rid itself of hierarchical traits in any meaningful way: as such, groups should take the structured form and use it to their advantage by promoting openness and accountability. Although we have moved on from the corporation to the social movement, there are echoes here of Gabriel's criteria for a formal organisation. Horizontal activists, however, dispute such claims. As seen previously, they regard the removal of hierarchy as a challenge to strive for as opposed to an easy foregone conclusion. However, the presence of the dis-organisational models discussed in this chapter firstly demonstrates that they actively problematise the hierarchical patterns identified by Freeman; and secondly indicates the form that their proposed solutions take. Again, the distinctive element is found in the fact that all hierarchy is regarded explicitly as a problem, and in the priority given to solving it.

One of the distinguishing features of horizontal political movements is the way in which they engage with these problems. In particular, they promote the concept of the dis-organisation, which aims to retain the basic ability to *organise* without developing what they regard as the more unsavoury traits of becoming *an organisation*. Can these movements be described as organisations? That depends on the circumstances: in particular, social centres and more permanent groups often need to develop some organisational infrastructure, if only for the purpose of satisfying outside agencies. A small, temporary affinity group may be harder to reconcile with the definition of an organisation, and indeed its members may baulk at being described as such. It cannot, however, be disputed that such groups are 'organised' – or specifically that they organise themselves. It is also clear that horizontal movements deploy a distinct repertoire of organisational strategies, as discussed in the section on ethos and tactics. The term 'dis-organisation' has the potential to sound flippant or derogatory: however, it also has the potential to denote a form of organisation which is distinctively horizontal and actively resists the pitfalls discussed in this section.

Conclusion

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[629] Freeman, Jo/Joreen (1972) 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness' online at http://www.jofreeman.com/joreen/tyranny.htm last accessed 18/11/08
[630] *Ibid*.

In conclusion, there are a number of ways in which horizontal political movements distinguish themselves in terms of organisation. Firstly, there is an active resistance to traditional ideas of representation, which generally takes the form of a consensus-based direct democracy. The focus is on direct action, which reflects both the self-determination of those involved and the desire for immediacy embodied by the prefigurative approach taken to bringing about change. In practical terms, the affinity group tends to be the standard unit for organisation: larger mobilisations are often made up of either clusters or blocs, formed from a number of affinity groups. It is important to remember that these are more than organisational strategies, reflecting as they do the core principles of horizontal politics. Although aspects of horizontal organisation are influenced by existing theoretical models, it is possible to argue that horizontal movements nonetheless generate a distinctive variety of political theory, based for the most part on the principles which lie behind the organisational models which are used.

Power

Introduction

The previous chapters dealt with themes on which horizontal movements directly generate a distinctive outlook which they express through their public output. One element of this outlook has been less explicit: the concept in question is power. Power is in the background of any political discussion: it must at least be conceded that no examination of hierarchy or organisation is complete without some discussion of power. In morphological terms, power can perhaps be best regarded as an adjacent concept which plays a clear role in shaping those at the core. As the relationship of power to the overall horizontal outlook differs, so does the structure of this chapter and the range of concepts and sources in comparison to the previous two chapters.

The horizontal conception of power is, as in the case of hierarchy and organisation, shaped from within by a number of components which play a role in identifying *why* power is important, *what* it is, *where* it is located, *who* holds it and *how* it should be approached. However, the range of concepts used in this chapter is wider than for the previous two, due to the issues thrown up specifically by power. Autonomy, affinity, consensus and diversity are still in evidence here. These are joined by ideas such as power-to, anti-power and resistance to hegemony. This chapter engages with many varieties and layers of power which generate vastly different problems and possible solutions, and also provides a greater depth of engagement with problems which have been raised in the previous chapters with regards to the challenges faced by horizontal movements: problems of which power is close to the root. I also discuss how the horizontal engagement with power as a concept is shaped by the ideas previously expressed – and, more pertinently, the role it plays in defining the nature of horizontal politics.

The discussion also features an examination of different types of power, in particular the three outlined by Starhawk and elaborated upon by Gordon.[631] The first is 'power-over', which refers in the terms Gordon uses to 'power through domination'[632] and by Holloway as 'the breaking of the social flow of doing'[633], exerted by people who by necessity 'deny the subjectivity of those others, deny their part in the flow of doing, exclude them from history.'[634] This version of power is generally used pejoratively, while the other two are largely positive but not without their darker

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[631] Two are also deployed by Holloway (2005), in slightly different forms.
[632] Gordon, U. (2008) *Anarchy Alive!* London: Pluto p.49
[633] Holloway, J. (2005) *Change the World Without Taking Power* London: Pluto p.29
[634] *Ibid*.

sides. The second type of power is 'power-to', referred to by Starhawk as 'power-from-within'.[635] It is 'akin to the sense of mastery we develop as young children with each new unfolding ability: the exhilaration of standing erect, of walking, of speaking the magic words that convey our needs and thoughts'[636], and can be felt in 'acts of creation and connection, in planting, building, writing, cleaning, healing, soothing, playing, singing, making love.'[637] Holloway, more prosaically, refers to it as 'can-ness, capacity-to-do, the ability to do things.'[638] Finally, there is 'power-with', which is in Starhawk's terms 'the power of a strong individual in a group of equals, the power not to command, but to suggest and be listened to, to begin something and see it happen.'[639] One of the distinguishing features of horizontal politics in its engagement with the concept of power is that problems relating to the second and third types of power are openly discussed and solutions sought.

The starting point for the discussion of the various layers of power is summed up in the following quote from John Holloway:

'What can we do to put an end to all the misery and exploitation? There is an answer ready at hand. *Do it through the state*. Join a political party, help it to win governmental power, change the country in that way. Or, if you are more impatient, more angry, more doubtful about what can be achieved through parliamentary means, join a revolutionary organisation, help it to conquer state power, by violent or non-violent means, and then use the revolutionary state to change society.'[640]

The first point of resistance to power is resistance to the capitalist state. This is not in itself a distinctly horizontal characteristic. More distinctive, however, is the corresponding resistance to the 'revolutionary' state, [641] which activists believe would be little different in practice to the one it replaces. Here the concept of *domination* – power expressed by one entity over another at any number of a wide range of levels – comes into play. In examining domination from a horizontal perspective, it is necessary to engage with the exercise of power at a micro level *within* a horizontal political movement. The concerted engagement at this level makes horizontal politics distinct. The proposed solution is a 'breaking-up' of power, largely through self-determination and direct action.

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[635] Starhawk (1987) *Truth or Dare: Encounters with power, authority and mystery* San Francisco: Harper Collins pp.9-10 quoted Gordon (2008) p.49
[636] *Ibid.*
[637] *Ibid.*
[638] Holloway (2005) p.28
[639] Starhawk (1987) quoted Gordon (2008) p.50
[640] Holloway (2005) p.11
[641] With reference to Stalin's practice more than Marx's theory

Ethos and tactics

Overview

The horizontal conception of power relates to prior discussions of hierarchy, particularly the placement of anti-hierarchy as a core concept on the ideational landscape of horizontal politics. The anti-power sentiments expressed throughout the chapter relate specifically to *hierarchical* forms of power, meaning power exercised over one individual or group by another. Central to this conception of power is the idea of power-over, intrinsically hierarchical and based on domination and control, and how it can be resisted. Opposition to power-over fuels the objections on activists' parts to state power in particular. Capitalist state power is discussed: however, since anti-capitalism is not an inherently horizontal trait the distinction hinges on how this form of power is resisted. More distinctive is the opposition to 'revolutionary' state power which, while not unique to today's movements, is an essential component of the horizontal outlook. However, the intrinsic objection to hierarchy and by extension hierarchical power goes beyond the question of state power and necessitates an examination of power at the micro-level. In terms of society as a whole, this question will be examined further in the chapter on culture, as this is the terrain on which such power is often exercised and resisted. The problem to be examined here, therefore, is that of micro-level power *within* the movements themselves, and in particular how the horizontal outlook is or might be shaped by attempts to deal with this. At this point the discussion shifts slightly from power-over to explore how other forms of power – power-to and power-with, neither of which is intrinsically hierarchical and both of which are cited as potentially being part of the solution – can nonetheless in some circumstances become the basis for hierarchical behaviour.

State power and beyond

Resistance to capitalist state power is far from unique to horizontal social and political movements. The form this resistance takes is more distinctive in that hierarchical and state-based 'solutions' are regarded as a continuation of the problem. In brief, the thread which runs from the anarchists of the 19th century to horizontal movements today is the belief that a revolution organised on hierarchical lines does not live up to its revolutionary promise, merely replacing one set of intrinsically (because for anarchists it is intrinsic) repressive leaders with another. This distinguishes today's horizontals, along with more traditional anarchists and earlier council communists and autonomists, from strands of Marxism based on the idea that state power must be taken from the capitalists by the proletariat and remain in the hands of the latter until it is practical to let the state wither away. (Bakunin and others question the likelihood of this occurring, and it is suggested that his predictions were prescient.) The key factor distinguishing today's horizontals

from their forerunners with regard to the overthrow of the capitalist state[642] is that they see it not in terms of a single 'revolution' but as a variety of low-level revolutionary moments undermining the dominant order and prefiguring alternatives.

  More distinctively horizontal, although not unique to today's movements, is the opposition to 'revolutionary' state power following from previously levelled objections to hierarchical methods of organising for change; and in the process going against the dominant paradigm of political movements and insisting that the problem be posed from another perspective. Holloway describes how this problem is traditionally set out: 'In the revolutionary perspective and also in the more radical parliamentary approaches, the winning of state power is seen as the centrepiece of the revolutionary process, the hub from which revolutionary change will radiate.'[643] This is inspired by the perceived relationship between state and capital, where the former is largely a tool of the latter; a tool, furthermore, which can be wielded as much for good in the 'right' hands as for 'bad' in the 'wrong' ones. Holloway poses the problem thus: 'Revolutionary movements inspired by Marxism have always been aware of the capitalist nature of the state. Why then have they focused on winning state power as the means of changing society? One answer is that these movements have often had an instrumental view of the capitalist nature of the state. They have typically seen the state as being the instrument of the capitalist class.'[644] The state, by this reading, has no interests of its own and is a neutral entity in that its power is conferred and exercised from outside. As such, Holloway argues, 'The notion of an "instrument" implies that the relation between the state and the capitalist class is an external one: like a hammer, the state is now wielded by the capitalist class in their own interests, while after the revolution it will be wielded by the working class in *their* interests.'[645] This vision of state as instrument implies that the problem lies not with state power in itself, but with those who wield it. It makes sense, therefore, that state power wielded by the 'right' group should be a central tenet of a revolution. Therefore, Holloway points out, 'the capturing of the state has generally been seen as a particularly important element, a focal point in the process of social change, one which demands a focusing of the energies devoted to social transformation. The focusing inevitably privileges the state as a site of power.'[646] Taking state power becomes an end rather than a means in such a context, prioritised over 'empowering' the population in a broader sense. The variety of marxism at which Holloway – a self-defined Marxist – aims his vitriol has strayed some distance from Marx's ideas on the use of the state, which could on a sympathetic reading be regarded as advocating that the state be seized and quickly dismantled, albeit with some level of force used to prevent capitalists regaining control. In

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[642] The concept of a 'capitalist state' is subject to its own debate.
[643] Holloway, J. (2005) *Change The World Without Taking Power* London: Pluto pp.11-12
[644] *Ibid*. p.13
[645] *Ibid*.
[646] *Ibid*. p.15

these ideas, however, Bakunin saw the seed for something more sinister: whether he was justified or not, these seeds developed into warped plants when put into practice.

The objections posed by horizontals to the use of state power for revolutionary ends hinge on the idea that state power, or any hierarchical power-over, is the problem: as such, it cannot be form part of the solution. A viable counter-argument here might be that, rather than the taking of power being intrinsically oppressive, the decline towards repression begins when elements of a revolutionary organisation begin to value personal power over their original ends. Holloway, however, argues that 'The struggle is lost from the beginning, long before the victorious party or army conquers state power and "betrays" its promises. It is lost once power itself seeps into the struggle, once the logic of power becomes the logic of the revolutionary process.'[647] Holloway's terminology in this passage helps to identify the final criticism which can be made of revolutionary state power from a horizontal standpoint: that of the *logic of power*. The logic of power dictates that power (in the hierarchical sense of unequal power-over) is inevitable, necessary and potentially a force for good. This logic precludes the search for viable alternatives, simply by imposing a definition of viability which rules out such notions. It is this logic which horizontal politics aims to resist, most notably through the use of prefigurative methods such as those discussed previously. It is especially necessary to combat this logic inside the movements, to avoid becoming the variety of revolutionary leadership most prone to the problems described above. Day describes how, in certain strands on the left, 'the same identities that have hit the limits of the politics of demand have begun to move beyond them, towards a *politics of the act* driven by an *ethics of the real*. This alternative ethico-political couple relies upon, and results from, getting over the hope that the state and corporate forms, as structures of domination, exploitation and division, are somehow capable of producing effects of emancipation.'[648] This shift away from the logic of power – based on hierarchy, competition and demand – and towards a new logic based on characteristics such as affinity goes some way towards distinguishing a horizontal movement in its engagement with state power.

The third form of power to be engaged with is micro-level power, concentrated in the everyday relations between individuals. Engagement with power at this level is not a new phenomenon: the idea that an analysis of power should not focus purely at state level dates back to Foucault. Horizontal political movement distinguish themselves by the explicit attempts they make to engage with their own internal power relations.

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[647] *Ibid*. p.17
[648] Day (2005) p.15

The explicit resistance to hierarchy, both in the wider ethos of horizontal movements and in their day-to-day organisation, is an explicit attempt to dispense with power-over of the variety deployed by the state and other forms of top-down leadership. However, neither power-to nor power-with is intrinsically horizontal, so the tactics on this level are focused on combating inequalities in the distribution of these forms of power and encouraging their positive, 'empowering' potential. The most explicit engagement has been with power-to: on power-with, it is somewhat lacking, an issue which will be discussed further in the final section.

Power-to links directly to humans' capacities to 'do', including capacity to resist power-over. This relates to the colloquial meaning of 'empowerment', although with distinct connotations. In particular, echoing earlier discussions of diversity and coalitions, the focus today is on empowering communities in their local context: a direct challenge to the paradigm of unenlightened masses requiring leadership to mobilise for action. Empowerment entails feeling responsibility for change: it means not being a spectator. Climate activist 'Ramblinman' sums it up thus: 'The prospect of taking individual responsibility for the future of the planet is a pretty scary thought – many would say that it's laughable, naive, pointless to take a stand in this manner, but despite my fears and insecurities about where this radical shift in perspective will take me, I find that I'm completely compelled. This is mostly because I've never felt more alive than I do now.'[649] Furthermore, in networked movements, this factor is tied to a critique of privilege: empowerment, to be truly horizontal, must extend power-to to those who are historically dealt less of it. 'Anti-oppression' network So We Stand, aware of the potential for existing inequalities to extend into activism if left unchecked, make explicit that 'We are committed to anti-oppression. This means committing to constantly challenging ourselves as; individuals, SWS as an organisation, players in wider systems and structures as well as always being critical of the hierarchies in the world around us.'[650] This impacts directly on the campaigns with which So We Stand become involved and the focus they take. In particular, they aim to avoid devolving into a post-materialist group dealing with pollution and climate change without concern for underlying social factors. They state that 'We don't prioritise our own voices or those of the more privileged. We prioritise the voices of those already fighting their own battles.'[651] Here is a reminder of the Zapatista model of solidarity: each local struggle is different, and no group can prescribe modes of resistance to another, but they can all nonetheless make connections and help each other. The introduction of self-critique and deconstruction of privilege makes the model more appropriate in the developed world where certain types of activist movement – namely any which does not deal

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[649] 'Ramblinman' (2011) 'From Climate Camp to Stokes Croft'
http://brightonclimateaction.org.uk/from-climate-camp-to-stokes-croft/ last accessed 25/11/11
[650] So We Stand (undated a) 'So We Stand's Principles' online at http://sowestand.com/so-we-stands-principles/ last accessed 03/12/11
[651] *Ibid*.

solely with poverty issues in one's own country – tend to be regarded as middle-class concerns. The 'challenge' So We Stand identify is levelled at those activists who find themselves in possession of privilege: they argue that 'Having privilege means that to truly want to destabilise and fuck the systems of oppression as they stand, you need to want to destabilise and fuck the systems of oppression that you, personally, uphold.'[652] Here personal responsibility goes beyond saving the planet in general terms, and focuses specifically on improving one's own contribution to non-hegemonic interpersonal relations between the said planet's inhabitants. In practical terms, this responsibility entails 'Self-educating, understanding, learning how to deal with being told that your behaviour or language is oppressive, challenging (and losing) our sense of entitlement, being willing to shut up and listen to those with less privilege, not dominating spaces while you're dealing with processing and understanding what your privilege is are all ways of doing this.'[653] Empowerment involves acknowledging that you hold disproportionate power due to factors such as social class, race or gender, and consciously surrendering or mitigating this power. Oppressive power, that which is held by some at the expense of others, is in principle broken up by this process in the manner suggested by Holloway.

Even within an explicitly anti-hierarchical and anti-hegemonic movement, the process of breaking up power is far from unproblematic. The questions it raises are returned to in the section on answering challenges.

Before moving on, it is worth discussing the concept of authority, which is referred to in much of the discussion here but not fully engaged with. In the chapter on Hierarchy, we saw the criticisms put forward by Engels of those who wish to organise revolution without authority. Authority can be defined as a hierarchical exercise of power, by one individual or group over another: by this reading, it is implicitly criticised by the horizontal rejection of power-over. However, more problematically in this context, it can also be seen in terms of 'being an authority on' a specific area, for example the construction of lock-on devices or compost toilets. Here, a possible critique lies in the uneven distribution of power-to: the disproportionate influence that can come with being skilled in an essential area. The general tendency, as we shall see in the section on answering challenges, is to engage with this imbalance by encouraging the sharing of skills. Therefore, while there is little explicit critique of the concept of authority, such a critique can nonetheless be discerned in horizontal commentaries on both hierarchy and power.

Theoretical reflections

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[652] So We Stand (undated b) 'Anti Oppression Organising' online at http://sowestand.com/anti-oppression-organising/ last accessed 03/12/11
[653] *Ibid*.

Overview

Previously, I argued that one of the more distinctive aspects of the horizontal conception of power involves the engagement with micro-level power within the movements themselves. However, there are also distinctively horizontal elements to the engagement with macro-level power, for example power at a state level. This section will briefly discuss the continuity between horizontal politics and older theoretical outlooks, following on from more detailed examinations of these outlooks in the previous two chapters, as well as the ways in which it has moved on and developed as a distinct entity. The concepts involved in defining power come into play at this point, leading to one of the key distinguishing theoretical features of horizontal politics: the rejection of counter-hegemony in favour of anti-hegemony. A further distinguishing feature is the engagement with the existence of power – in particular the acknowledgement that this existence will continue outside of the capitalist context – and the subsequent need to actively break it up and hence to develop a means to do so.

Anarchists and horizontals – defining 'breaking' power

The connections between horizontal politics and theoretical forerunners such as classical anarchism and council communism are discussed thoroughly in previous chapters, meaning detailed discussion here would involve some repetition. However, certain points warrant raising with specific reference to questions of power. In particular, the rejection of *taking power* is not an intrinsically new trait, having been emphasised by the early anarchists in distinguishing themselves from their Marxist contemporaries. Day, describing Bakunin's attitude to power, points out that 'In his polemics with Marx and his followers, Bakunin associated what he called political revolution with the desire to wield state power as a weapon of the dispossessed. Social revolution, on the other hand, was about *breaking* rather than *taking* state power.'[654] Bakunin expressed a disdain for the Marxist idea of a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' which would hold power while necessary and oversee the post-revolutionary decline of the state.[655] The transfer of power from one set of hands to another, he argued, would just generate a new ruling class. To this extent, his ideas on power are echoed by today's horizontals. He does not, however, question where power will go and what will be done with it after the revolution: almost as if power relations will cease to exist, which is unlikely to happen. Today's horizontals have moved on, developing an explicit theory of breaking up power and the reasons for doing so, a point which will be returned to shortly. Regarding the revolution itself, the description of social revolution as 'a spontaneous uprising with no leaders or preformed goals, a passage to anarchism (the just

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[654] Day (2005) p.113
[655] See the chapter on Hierarchy for further discussion

society) through anarchy (disorder and chaos)'[656] is largely accepted in today's horizontal movements, allowing for some change in context. Day, however, outlines a clear difference: 'Although he postulated the Revolution as a millenarian break, he saw its transition occurring via a two-stage process: first, existing institutions of domination had to be destroyed, so as to clear the way for a second period in which a new world would be build.'[657] This is not, then, a prefigurative approach, but rather one which waits for 'the revolution' to be complete for genuine change to occur.

The two main features of a distinctively horizontal theory of power are the conception of power being deployed and the means by which power is to be broken up: these will now be discussed.

Dominance, hegemony, counter-hegemony and anti-hegemony: defining and engaging with power

When examining how power is defined in horizontal terms, three concepts emerge from the literature. One of these is *power-over*, as discussed above. The next is *dominance* or *domination*, which widens the scope of power-over allowing for the exertion of power-to or even power-with in potentially oppressive ways. The third, representing an explicit break between horizontal theories and certain others, is *hegemony*. Day provides a liminal working definition: 'for the moment it can be taken as describing a process through which various factions struggle over meaning, identity and political power.'[658] He continues: 'Hegemony is a simultaneously coercive and consensual struggle for *dominance*, seen in nineteenth- and twentieth-century marxisms as limited to the context of a particular nation-state, but increasingly being analysed at a global level.'[659] Historically, resistance to the hegemony of one group has frequently consisted of counter-hegemony: the struggle for hegemony of the previously oppressed over their former oppressors. Day describes how 'It is crucial to note that hegemony is a process, not an accomplishment, that the actions of a dominant group are always open to contestation. Yet, in most societies based on the nation-state, most of the time, a relatively steady equilibrium can be observed, a state best defined as one of non-crisis, punctuated by crises that lead to the achievement of a new relative equilibrium.'[660] Here, a horizontal theory of power is distinctive in being *anti-hegemonic*: aiming to actively resist the concept of hegemony and to explore and prefigure alternatives. Holloway, although he uses the term 'power' rather than explicitly defining it in terms of hegemony, outlines the idea in the following terms: 'Anti-power, then, is not

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[656] *Ibid.*

[657] *Ibid.*

[658] *Ibid.* p.6

[659] *Ibid.* p.7

[660] *Ibid.*

counter-power, but something much more radical: it is the dissolution of power-over, the emancipation of power-to.'[661]

Before examining an anti-hegemonic theory of power, it is worth exploring why horizontal theories are critical of counter-hegemony. Counter-hegemonic revolutionary strategies, Day argues, come about because 'dominant ideas tend to take on an appearance of naturalness and inevitability that renders them relatively impervious to critique.'[662] The means to resist a group's dominance may also subsequently appear 'natural' despite being on that group's terms, as per the earlier discussion on Marxist conceptions of ideology: 'The obvious answer is to try to establish counter-hegemony, to shift the historical balance back, as much as possible, in favour of the oppressed.'[663] However, Day argues that this 'is to remain within the logic of neoliberalism; it is to accept what I call the *hegemony of hegemony*. By this I mean to refer to the assumption that effective social change can only be achieved simultaneously and *en masse*, across an entire national or supranational space.'[664] While counter-hegemonic thinking appears to provide a logical solution, it actually reinforces the problem: firstly by clinging to the idea that what is needed is a transfer of power from one set of hands to another; and secondly through a totalising logic that necessitates the mapping of one set of ideas, one strategy for change, on a wide scale. Non- or anti-hegemonic theories, by contrast, focus on resisting the logic of hegemony. For example, the editors' introduction to activist manual *Do It Yourself* states that 'This book is an advocate for fundamental change, not for seizing power but challenging the way power operates and is linked to wealth and private power in our society. The past has shown us that often seizing power has meant replicating the very systems of oppression that revolutionary movements have struggled to overthrow. In creating fundamental change we need to use a range of methods and tactics and in this our imaginations are our only limitations.'[665] Here, then, is a theoretical outlook aiming to resist not just the current manifestation but the *logic* of hegemonic power-over. Holloway describes this process of resistance thus: 'The struggle to liberate power-to is not the struggle to construct a counter-power, but rather an anti-power, something that is radically different from power-over. Concepts of revolution that focus on the taking of power are typically centred on the notion of counter-power, a power that can stand against the ruling power.'[666]

This resistance to the logic of hegemony must take non- or anti-hegemonic forms. Some argue that these methods resist power-over in some sense merely by existing. Holloway observes that

[661] Holloway (2005) p.36
[662] Day (2005) p.46
[663] *Ibid*. p.8
[664] *Ibid*.
[665] Trapese Collective (2007) 'Introduction' in Trapese Collective (eds.) (2007) *Do It Yourself: a handbook for changing our world* London: Pluto pp.1-10 quote from pp.4-5
[666] Holloway (2005) p.36

'Anti-power is fundamentally opposed to power-over not only in the sense of being a radically different project, but also in the fact that it exists in constant conflict with power-over. The attempt to exercise power-to in a way that does not entail the exercise of power over others inevitably comes into conflict with power-over.'[667] Furthermore, a struggle is often involved to stop such conflicts taking hegemonic forms: this involves acknowledging a level of diversity in the site of struggle, the oppressions to which participants are subjected and the ways in which they resist. A clear line is drawn differentiating a horizontal theory of power from those which perceive a specific class of people to be *the* 'revolutionary' class and another to be the source of oppression. Here Holloway argues that 'There are indeed a million forms of resistance, an immensely complex world of antagonisms. To reduce these to an empirical unity of conflict between capital and labour, or to argue for a hegemony of working-class struggle, understood empirically, or to argue that these apparently non-class resistances must be subsumed under class struggle, would be an absurd violence.'[668] This relates closely to the ideas discussed in the chapter on hierarchy, amounting to explicit rejection of a hierarchy of values and, by extension of struggles: in this context, such a hierarchy is regarded as imposing hegemony and, consequently yielding to the hegemonic logic underlying what is being resisted. As such, expressions of anti-power go beyond traditional ideas of 'revolutionary' or 'political'. This links to the idea of prefiguration, at a basic level of creating spaces in which interpersonal relations centre on affinity rather than hierarchy or competition; on power-to and power-with used non-hierarchically rather than power-over. At times, the resistances generated can seem frivolous, but this in itself is seen by those involved as to some extent a subversion of the hegemonic logic to which they are opposed. The Free Association describe how, during the Gleneagles protests, 'The whole idea of the counter-summit wasn't really about protesting against the G8. For us, it wasn't even directly about abolishing global poverty. It was about life. It was about becoming human. It was about our desire.'[669] Furthermore, 'this process of creation, invention and becoming isn't a "feeling", it's a material reality. The new capacities we experience at these events don't just disappear. They are there to be accessed during the rest of our lives… if we can work out how to reach them again.'[670] Holloway emphasises the grassroots nature of anti-power in describing where he sees it located: 'Anti-power is in the relations that we form all the time, relations of love, friendship, comradeship, community, cooperation. Obviously, such relations are traversed by power because of the nature of the society in which we live, yet the element of love, friendship, comradeship lies in the constant struggle which we wage against power, to establish those relations on a basis of mutual recognition, the

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[667] *Ibid.*, p.37

[668] *Ibid.*, p.41

[669] The Free Association (2005) 'On the Road' in Harvie, D., K. Milburn, B. Trott and D. Watts eds. (2005) *Shut them Down!* pp.17-26 quote from p.25

[670] *Ibid.*

mutual recognition of one another's dignity.'[671] With this resistance to hegemonic power-over comes a recognition that, since power will not cease to exist, it must instead be somehow broken up among the population and take the form of non-hierarchical power-to and power-with. It is this process of breaking up power which will now be discussed.

Breaking up (and breaking down) power

The key term in describing how power is broken up is 'process,' a concept which should be familiar from previous chapters. This term denotes a number of ideas. One of these is an acknowledgement that nothing is set in stone, that horizontal politics – in terms of both theory and practice – is constantly evolving and being created through action and deliberation. In other words, horizontal politics is *in the process* of developing. It also aims to break down power by means of *a process* (or more accurately a number of processes). The Trapese collective, for example, point out that horizontal groups 'prioritise the process – real or direct democracy – more than the end. It is a process which is always in the making. It does and should look messy and unfinished. This rough and readiness is a central part of the politics of horizontality. It is a choice that nobody can represent you.'[672]

The theory of power generated by this process contains a number of components. The first of these is the idea of consensus, covered to an extent in previous chapters, which as a decision-making process is described by Seeds For Change as being 'about participation and equalising power.'[673] 'Equalising power' implies that power-over will be removed from the equation, and power-to and -with exercised in a non-hierarchical way. The term 'equalising power' is a controversial one, and its technicalities may become complex: nonetheless, this is the practical intention behind the use of consensus. 'Participation' demonstrates the role of self-determination in a horizontal theory of power, as emphasised by the steps recommended by Seeds For Change for 'gaining control over your life'.[674] The first of these addresses the question of power-over by asking that activists 'Refuse to exert power over others. Look at your relationships with your family, friends and colleagues.'[675] This is a prefigurative step, one which aims to undermine power-over even in hierarchical contexts such as the workplace; and furthermore it speaks directly to the networks of relations between people cited by Holloway as the keystone of anti-power. It is also necessary, Seeds for Change suggest, to 'Learn about power and the true meaning of

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[671] Holloway (2008) p.158
[672] Trapese Collective (2007) p.6
[673] Seeds for Change (2007a) 'Why do it without leaders' in Trapese Collective (eds.) (2007) *Do It Yourself: a handbook for changing our world* London: Pluto pp.50-62 quote from p.53
[674] *Ibid*. p.62
[675] *Ibid*.

democracy.'[676] This process involves considering where power is located as well as questioning the idea that the majority viewpoint must by definition be 'right': this step is an important precondition to successful involvement in the consensus process. A further step is to 'Share your knowledge and skills with the people around you.'[677] The aim here is to prevent the emergence of the sort of hierarchy of power-with which was discussed in the previous section. The focus here is initially on what the individual can do: it is this self-empowerment which ultimately breaks up power and prevents its hegemonic aggregation as power-over. However, this is not a 'self-empowerment' which requires selfishness, but rather one which emphasises the importance of links between the individual and the wider community. It has also been posited in terms of direct action, for example by Cutler and Bryan: 'Acting directly means not deferring your personal ability, power and responsibility to pre-existing structures, but doing it yourself.'[678]

  As with every element of horizontal theory discussed so far, this is very much a theory which arises from practice. The variety of practice involved in this case is described as follows by Cutler and Bryan: 'Taking action involves stepping on the side of risk, spontaneity, possibility and creativity, and requires being willing to observe, explore and experiment'[679]: the ability to create change exists when ordinary people stand up and act together for their beliefs.'[680] Such change is related to the prefigurative aspect of horizontal politics: it is the politics of demonstrating that alternatives can exist in the here and now, and that the small cracks they create can be widened. Such a politics generates a theory that is distinctive in that it resists the logic of existing power relations as well as the structure. This provides some answer to critics who ask what the point is of a disruption such as those caused by the barricades of Gleneagles: why expend the time and energy on holding up for one day proceedings which will carry on as usual the next, aimed at delegates who will barely notice? The answer lies in the perceived impact of these small ruptures over a longer time period. Day argues that 'This politics is radical in the sense that it is less concerned with affecting the content of current forms of domination and exploitation than it is with creating alternatives to *the forms themselves*.'[681] Horizontal politics does not co-operate with hegemonic power, either by submitting to it or by following its logic. Day observes that 'Obviously, when a major motorway or downtown street is barricaded for a party lasting several hours, it becomes more difficult for the dominant system to operate as normal.'[682] The physical disruption to this power caused by a day of protests may be minimal, but the psychological impact

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[676] *Ibid.*

[677] *Ibid.*

[678] Cutler, A. and K. Bryan (2007) 'Why we need to take direct action' in Trapese Collective (eds.) (2007) *Do It Yourself: a handbook for changing our world* London: Pluto pp.262-276 quote from p.262

[679] *Ibid.*

[680] *Ibid.* p.276

[681] Day (2005) p.19

[682] *Ibid.*, p.25

can open ruptures. Furthermore, these ruptures can grow: 'One forest isn't cut, but another is; one family isn't deported, but dozens are denied entry to avoid further disruptions to the immigration system. This problem is inherent to direct action to impede flows and will not go away. However, if this kind of action proliferates sufficiently, the flows overall will start to decay beyond the ability of systems of control to manage them.'[683]

In terms of creating alternatives, it is worth exploring what type of 'logic' is involved once the logic of hegemonic power is rejected. There are many names which could be derived from the ideas involved: however, the term 'networking logic' as deployed by Juris sums up many of the key points. Juris describes how 'Networking logics specifically entail an embedded and embodied set of social and cultural dispositions that orient actors toward (1) the building of horizontal ties and connections among diverse autonomous elements, (2) the free and open circulation of information, (3) collaboration through decentralised coordination and consensus-based decision making, and (4) self-directed networking.'[684] It is the logic of a de-centred dis-organisation, one which is based on the idea of autonomy and diversity but nonetheless acknowledges myriad connections between the entities involved. In particular, it is an anti-hierarchical and anti-hegemonic logic, one in which autonomous power-with develops in the form of direct action.

Answering the challenges

Lukes identifies three faces of power: decision-making, non-decision making and agenda-setting[685]. This section examines the challenges raised in earlier sections, in the light of these different dimensions of power.

Bachrach and Baratz note that 'Sociologically orientated researchers have consistently found that power is highly centralised, while scholars trained in political science have just as regularly concluded that in "their" communities power is widely diffused.'[686] This divide was identified by political scientists as one between 'pluralist' and 'elitist' approaches.[687] Of the elitists, the most relevant point here is that they measure power in terms of *reputation*: if an individual or group are regarded by the local community as possessing power, a sociologist taking this approach will take that as evidence that they do.[688] Pluralists, meanwhile, examine observable behaviour: in particular the making of political decisions. An explanation is found in Dahl's conception of power: 'A has

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[683] *Ibid.*, p.33
[684] Juris (2008) p.11
[685] Lukes, S. (1974) *Power: A Radical View* Basingstoke: Palgrave
[686] Bachrach, P. and M. Baratz (1962) 'Two Faces of Power' *American Political Science Review* 56/4 pp947-952 p.947
[687] *Ibid.*
[688] *Ibid.* pp.947-948

power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do'.[689] Lukes notes that 'among pluralists "power", "influence", etc, tend to be used interchangeably'[690], something which it is sadly outside the remit of this project to unpick further but which gives an insight into the varieties of power being examined. The preferred measure of power, by this reckoning, is the outcome of a decision-making process. Polsby argues that 'one can conceive of "power" – "influence" and "control" are serviceable synonyms – as the capacity of one actor to do something affecting another actor, which changes the probable pattern of specified future events. This can be envisaged most easily in a decision-making situation.'[691] The key here is the presence of clearly observable conflict, and which 'side' benefits the most from the direction in which such conflict is resolved. Crucially for later critics, pluralists also tend to 'speak of the decisions being about *issues* in selected "issue-areas" – the assumption again being that such issues are controversial and involve actual conflict.'[692] It is assumed, therefore, that person A's means of getting person B to go against her usual habits is based upon person A's influence over the making of decisions in their mutual community. This is what Lukes refers to as a 'one-dimensional' view of power, with decision-making as the first of three dimensions he examines.

  This face of power appears at first glance to be irrelevant to horizontal political movements: indeed, one of the aims of the use of consensus is to prevent such situations from arising. However, the issue cannot be overlooked, as decision-making has been at the heart of at least one recent and significant controversy regarding power relations in a horizontal movement. In February 2010, it was decided that the Camp for Climate Action should be disbanded as a national entity. This was seen by some as a necessary move in the changing political climate, and furthermore as a means of devolving power to local climate action groups. However, it was seen by others as an undemocratic decision made by a select and unaccountable group of people. The gathering at which the decision was made, Space for Change, was widely advertised[693] but also had a limitation on numbers[694] meaning attendance was noticeably down from previous Camps and gatherings. The negative reaction to the decision is encapsulated by the activist newssheet *SchNews*, which describes how 'In what seems to be a direct attack on the autonomous, grass-roots nature of the collective, a small group of the 'old guard' came to the national planning meeting on 21st - 26th February with their own agenda and passed the decision to kill Climate

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[689] Dahl, R. A. (1957) 'The Concept of Power', *Behavioural Science* 2 pp.201-205 quoted in Lukes (1974) p.12
[690] Lukes (1974) p.12
[691] Polsby, N. W. (1963) *Community Power and Political Theory* New Haven and London: Yale University Press pp3-4 quoted in Lukes (1974) p.13
[692] Lukes (1974) p.13
[693] Camp for Climate Action (2011) Minutes from 'Space for Change', Monkton Wyld 22-27 February 2011 online at http://climatecamp.org.uk/Minutes_of_Space_for_Change.pdf last accessed 13/07/11
[694] *Ibid*.

Camp, despite a block and four stand-asides in the "consensus" process.'[695] It should be noted that while stand-asides do not prevent a decision taking place, it is generally considered good form to respect them and investigate the reasons before going ahead. Blocks, meanwhile, are intended to hold proceedings up until a solution can be found that is acceptable to all. Furthermore, SchNews argue that 'Ultimately, the act of a minority to shut-down an organisation which is meant to be run autonomously is entirely contradictory. It shows a lack of flexibility, a willingness to allow active participation of new individuals.'[696]

The first face of power is potentially the simplest to solve by horizontal means: the problem lies in the ineffective or inconsistent application of the necessary process. A key part of the consensus process, in general, involves giving everybody who will be affected by a decision the chance to participate: this is clearly not unanimously felt to be the case with regard to the end of the Camp for Climate Action. The internal critiques levelled in this case appear to challenge the imbalances of decision-making power through enforcing consistent application of the existing principles. Decision-making, however, is only one dimension of power: the other two will now be discussed.

The pluralist focus on decision-making is criticised by scholars such as Bachrach and Baratz and, later, Crenson[697], for ignoring what the former refer to as the second face of power; namely *non-decision making*. Bachrach and Baratz argue that 'the [pluralist] model takes no account of the fact that power may be, and often is, exercised by confining the scope of decision-making to relatively "safe" issues.'[698] As such, they extend Dahl's definition of power as follows: 'Of course power is exercised when A participates in the making of decisions that affect B. But power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those items which are relatively innocuous to A.'[699] Crenson, using the case study of air pollution policy, elaborates on this idea with the hypothesis that 'pluralistic policies, for all their apparent penetrability and heterogeneity, may in reality restrict the scope of the political process to a limited range of "acceptable" issues and political demands.'[700] The first step to non-decision making is the creation of non-issues, ensuring that questions which are not 'acceptable' are not subject to serious discussion. Crenson defines an 'issue' as 'any unresolved matter, controversial or non-controversial, which awaits an authoritative decision. It is a topic which has been included

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[695] *SchNews* (2011) 'Penny for the Guy Ropes' online at
http://www.schnews.org.uk/archive/news7611.php last accessed 17/03/11
[696] *Ibid*.
[697] Crenson, M. (1971) *The Un-Politics of Air Pollution: A Study of Non-Decisionmaking in the Cities* Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press
[698] Bachrach and Baratz (1962) p.948
[699] *Ibid*.
[700] Crenson (1971) p.23

on a community's political agenda. The problem is to decide at just what point a topic becomes an agenda item and is therefore ripe for authoritative resolution.'[701] Power, by this token, is being exercised *before* the decision-making stage, by those who are able to prevent – for example by refusing to take a position – a question such as air pollution becoming an 'issue'[702] over which a public disagreement arises. This is what Lukes calls a 'two-dimensional'[703] model of power, the second dimension being somewhat more insidious than the first and clearly harder to observe directly. It contains a wider conception of power, one that encompasses 'coercion, influence, authority, force and manipulation'[704].

Lukes acknowledges that a two-dimensional analysis of power goes further than the one-dimensional approach, but argues that it still stops short of encompassing the full scope of power. The two-dimensional view, he suggests, 'gives a misleading picture of the ways in which individuals and, above all, groups and institutions succeed in excluding potential issues from the political process.'[705] He cautions against regarding the exercise of power by non-decision making as a conscious process, arguing instead that 'the bias of the system can be mobilised, recreated and reinforced in ways that are neither consciously chosen nor the intended result of particular individuals' choices.'[706] Indeed, 'the domination of defenders of the status quo may be so secure and pervasive that they are unaware of any potential challengers to their position and thus of any alternatives to the existing political process.'[707] The third dimension, therefore, is largely structural and also more insidious than even non-decision making: Lukes suggests that 'To put the matter sharply, A may exercise power over B by getting him to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping or determining his very wants.'[708] This view is somewhat similar to the ideas put forward by the Situationists although, despite examining questions of power within the same time period, there is no known cross-pollination. This third face of power is often referred to as *agenda-setting*. It encompasses an inherent critique of the behavioural focus of the other two approaches, dealing as it does with often unconscious actions rather than observable conflicts. In particular, the control of the agenda is 'not necessarily [exerted] through decisions'[709]. Both of these faces of power are to an extent exhibited when imbalances of power-to (and potentially power-with) emerge.

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[701] *Ibid.* p.29
[702] Crenson defines an issue as 'a subject on which community *leaders* have taken public positions' (p.94, emphasis added), indicating several assumptions regarding the nature and location of power.
[703] Lukes (1974)
[704] *Ibid*. p.17
[705] *Ibid*. p.21
[706] *Ibid*.
[707] *Ibid*.
[708] *Ibid*. p.23
[709] *Ibid*. p.25

The majority of the references to power-to in the literature pertaining to horizontal activism appear to be positive: Holloway, for example, regards it as the direct counterpoint to power-over. While the latter is intrinsically 'vertical', hierarchical and tied in with relations of domination, power-to is closer to what is generally understood by 'empowerment' in that it relates to people's capacities to *do*: in this context, to resist power-over, to break up power and to prefigure a world based on logics of affinity and autonomy rather than hierarchy. However, the capacity to act is in itself a neutral element: which is to say, it can shore up or generate hierarchies, consciously or otherwise, as well as deconstructing or destroying them. This is a micro-level form of power, but it can nonetheless be unequally divided and misused by those who hold it: Gordon observes that 'Power-over always has its source in the dominant party's power-to.'[710] As such, it is the capitalists' power-to which oppresses the workforce; revolutionary dictators' power-to that carries this oppression over into the post-revolution world; and potentially the power-to of those activists more historically privileged than their comrades which, if left unexamined, reproduces the outside world's inequalities within autonomous spaces. Gordon continues: 'Thus we can also see that the possession of power-to is logically and temporally antecedent to its use: it is "there" to the extent that success can be *predicted* for the possessor's attempts to influence physical objects or other persons' behaviour.'[711] The implication is of agenda-setting, which is not necessarily the case: however, Gordon has highlighted the means by which hierarchies of power-to have the potential to emerge. As power-to is grounded in individual capacities, certain of these are liable to be distributed unevenly: furthermore, while some are relatively easy to redistribute, in other cases this is near impossible. As Gordon explains, 'The first issue regards the unequal distribution of power-to among activists, which in turn generates unequal access to power-with. This may be called the "static" aspect of power, and it is relatively easier to disentangle by tracing the sources of this inequality and suggesting tools for removing it.'[712] These inequalities can relate to the possession of or access to tangible resources, disproportionate access to time or money, or to knowledge or experience of useful skills. Redistribution of all but the last – and sometimes even of that – can be something of a minefield, a question which will be returned to later. Such inequalities run the risk of being camouflaged under the rhetoric of affinity and diversity, or in some cases silenced due to a level of discomfort at raising such issues publicly in an open meeting, suggesting that a level of non-decision making can take place. However, open discussion using the dialogical methods described in previous chapters is what is needed in such cases. Inequalities of power-to can occur on a global scale or within a local affinity group, and can be closely linked to other factors such as race, gender or class: the links between micro-level power and privilege are among the more contentious issues horizontal movements have had to deal with. Juris, for example, points out that

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[710] *Ibid*. p.52
[711] *Ibid*. p.53
[712] *Ibid*. p.55

'discourses of open networking often conceal other forms of exclusion based on unequal access to information or technology. As a grassroots activist from India suggested to me at the 2002 WSF in Porto Alegre, "It's not enough to talk about networks; we also have to talk about democracy and the distribution of power within them."'[713]

However, while inequalities of resources (time, money, equipment and the like) and skills are far from desirable, the imbalance of power-with which can stem from this is even less so. Power-with, broadly speaking, refers to the exercise of 'social power or influence among equals'[714].

Power-with is a more horizontal form of power than power-over; however, it is not immune from hierarchical connotations. Furthermore, risks of this nature are potentially unavoidable due to the (anti-)structure of a horizontal movement and the decentralised, affinity-based modes of interaction within it. Foucault, in particular, has argued that the top-down state-centric conception of power is somewhat outdated, and advocates instead for a change of paradigm to one in which power is acknowledged as being exerted in multiple directions and in less direct forms than was previously the case[715]. Foucault examined power in terms of its relationship to knowledge and, more pertinently, the relationship of both those entities to 'the subject'[716]. Of particular interest to him were the historical factors involved and the repertoires and 'technology' of power.[717]

As regards knowledge, Foucault argues that, in Colin Gordon's words, 'what is most interesting about links between power and knowledge is not the detection of false or spurious knowledge at work in human affairs but, rather, the role of knowledges that are valued and effective because of their reliable instrumental efficacy.'[718] This knowledge is sustained by and deployed to exercise a micro-level 'biopower'[719] intrinsic to the growing exercise of 'pastoral'[720] power. This form of power is 'focused on individuals and the details of their behaviour and conduct',[721] and based on the idea that 'global and hierarchical structures of domination within a society depend on and operate through more local, low-level "capillary" circuits of power relationship'[722] rather than

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[713] Juris, J. (2008) *Networking Futures: The Movements Against Corporate Globalisation* Durham and London: Duke University Press p.14

[714] Starhawk (n.d.) Synopsis of *Truth or Dare* at http://www.starhawk.org/writings/truth-dare.html last accessed 27/12/09

[715] Foucault's views changed significantly over the years: I focus on his earlier conception of power here as it illustrates the most relevant departures in conceptualising power.

[716] Gordon, C. (1994) 'Introduction' in J. D. Faubion (ed.) (1994) *Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984* London: Penguin pp.xiii-xli (quote from p.xiv)

[717] *Ibid.*

[718] *Ibid.* p.xviii

[719] Various sources in Faubion (ed.) (1994)

[720] Foucault, M. (1982) 'The Subject and Power' in Faubion (ed.) (1994) pp.326-348

[721] C. Gordon (1994) p.xxiv

[722] *Ibid.* pp.xxiv-xxv

from any centralised base. This can be regarded as a shift from enforcement by punishment to enforcement by 'discipline' via management of day-to-day conduct. Day describes the phenomena thus: 'The concepts of governmentality, biopower and society of control all describe ways in which the state form has been generalised, or disseminated, out of the "public" realm assigned to it in liberal theory and into the supposedly inviolate world of the "private" lives of its citizens.'[723] How widely such power was disseminated is elaborated upon by Foucault himself, who describes how 'power of a pastoral type, which over centuries – for more than a millennium – had been linked to a defined religious institution, suddenly spread out into the whole social body. It found support in a multitude of institutions. And, instead of a pastoral power and a political power, more or less linked to each other, more or less in rivalry, there was an individualising "tactic" that characterised a series of powers; those of the family, medicine, psychiatry, education, and employers.'[724] This power is not, as other conceptions would have it, one which is purely exercised by a sovereign over a group of subjects: rather, it is a power exercised by a variety of actors via a range of complex webs. In highlighting the manifestation of power at an individual level Foucault expresses his suspicion of more structural notions of power, arguing that 'if we speak of the power of laws, institutions, and ideologies, if we speak of structures or mechanisms of power, it is only insofar as we suppose that certain persons exercise power over others.'[725]

  This shift from a society largely based on sovereignty to one largely based on government – administrative rather than personal power, for example – has, Foucault argues, changed the nature of power. Day explains the situation thus: 'In such a system it no longer makes sense to speak of "the state" as a locus of relations of domination, since relations of domination are everywhere. It no longer makes sense to speak of "the king", since kings are now found in families, convents, factories and schools.'[726] It is no longer strictly speaking 'certain persons' exercising power over others, and neither does power emanate solely from a central authority. This also alters how the state authorities exercise power. Foucault argues that 'I believe we are at an important turning point here: whereas the end of sovereignty is internal to itself and possesses its own intrinsic instruments in the shape of its laws, the finality of government resides in the things it manages and in the pursuit of the perfection and intensification of the processes it directs; and the instruments of government, instead of being laws, now come to be a range of multiform tactics.'[727] In such a scenario, even state power is exercised through 'discipline' at a low level, through control – often invisible – of factors such as population growth and movement and public health and welfare. Although a direct link is never made, this bears some resemblance to the 'third face of power'

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[723] Day, R. (2005) *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements* London: Pluto p.134

[724] Foucault, M. (1977) 'Truth and Power' in Faubion (ed.) (1994) pp111-133 quote from p.335

[725] Foucault (1982) p.337

[726] Day (2005) p.135

[727] Foucault, M. (1978) 'Governmentality' in Faubion (ed.) (1994) pp.201-222 (quote from p.211)

previously described: the exercise of power by means of influencing the formation of opinions. The state, however, is not the be-all and end-all of the exercise of power. Furthermore, Foucault argues, state power could not be exercised were other mechanisms of power not in place: 'I don't want to say that the state isn't important; what I want to say is that relations of power, and hence the analysis that must be made of them, necessarily extend beyond the limits of the state – in two senses. First of all, because the state, for all the omnipotence of its apparatuses, is far from being able to occupy the whole field of actual power relations; and, further, because the state can only operate on the basis of other, already-existing power relations.'[728] The idea that power is exerted at multiple levels is a pertinent one for activists today, which will be returned to. When Foucault asserts that 'We need to cut off the king's head'[729], he refers to a need to stop positing repressive – a point which will be returned to momentarily – top-down and state-centred power as the only or even the main problematic when analysing the exercise of power as a whole.

In short, power is exercised between individuals, at the everyday and often informal level, but it is nonetheless the exercise of power by one person or group over another. Influence and respect – features which characterised leaders within communities – are facets of this exercise of power. While many activists would deny that this was a problem, others are keen to bring such instances into the light or prevent them emerging. Gordon describes the emergence of individual power-with in the following terms:

'Because of the highly decentralised nature of activist movements, the ability to initiate and carry out actions is strongly conditioned on the ability to communicate with individuals outside one's face-to-face setting. Access to networks can thus be thought of in terms of the quantity and quality of communication links that a person has with other activists, in particular those outside her immediate group or local area.'[730]

Freeman, examining what she calls a 'tyranny of structurelessness' in the women's movement of the 1970s, refers to a similar concept when she explains the formation of (as she sees them) elites. 'Elites' form in structureless movements when

'friendship groups function as networks of communication outside any regular channels for such communication that may have been set up by a group. If no channels are set up, they function as the only networks of communication. Because people are friends, because they usually share the same values and orientations, because they talk to each other socially and consult with each other when common decisions have to be made, the people involved in these networks have more power

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[728] Foucault (1977) p.123
[729] *Ibid*. p.122
[730] Gordon (2008) p.59

in the group than those who don't. And it is a rare group that does not establish some informal networks of communication through the friends that are made in it.'[731]

Furthermore, she observes that

'If there are two or more such networks of friends, they may compete for power within the group, thus forming factions, or one may deliberately opt out of the competition, leaving the other as the elite. In a Structured group, two or more such friendship networks usually compete with each other for formal power. This is often the healthiest situation, as the other members are in a position to arbitrate between the two competitors for power and thus to make demands on those to whom they give their temporary allegiance.'[732]

The power competed for here is power-with: the ability not to exercise authority and set the agenda from above, but to do so more subtly (and, from Freeman's perspective, insidiously) from inside by making personal connections with other activists and becoming an influential figure whose opinions help to shape the dialogue that takes place within a movement.

Freeman continues:

'The members of a friendship group will relate more to each other than to other people. They listen more attentively, and interrupt less; they repeat each other's points and give in amiably; they tend to ignore or grapple with the "outs" whose approval is not necessary for making a decision. But it is necessary for the "outs" to stay on good terms with the "ins."'[733]

This is not necessarily a deliberate exclusion, nor – contrary to Freeman's framing of the problem – a concerted effort to 'win' power. The result, however, is a build-up of influence around certain individuals. While this is a power which – for want of a better word – flows between equals and is not inflicted with intrinsically hierarchical characteristics, the potential is nonetheless there for any of Lukes' three types of power to be exercised. When decision-making takes place by consensus, factors such as who is more readily listened to, who finds it easier for whatever reason to express an opinion in a meeting, and indeed the circumstances in which it is considered appropriate to deploy the 'block' can potentially have a significant effect on the outcome. If pre-planning takes place within friendship groups such as those described by Freeman, this will contribute to non-decision making. Furthermore, the agenda-setting face of power can be applied in the case of

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[731] Freeman, Jo/Joreen (1972) 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness' online at http://www.jofreeman.com/joreen/tyranny.htm last accessed 27/12/09
[732] *Ibid.*
[733] *Ibid.*

power-with, should an individual or segment have a sufficient level of influence to shape the opinions of others within the wider group.

  More difficult still to deal with, however, are the less sinister imbalances of power-with stemming from variations in levels of certain resources and skills between the individuals involved. These happen at three levels, the first two relating to power-to as discussed previously. The first level is linked to imbalances in possession of or access to tangible resources. Examples include money (through having a higher income and therefore being able to make financial contributions to activist projects), a vehicle or computer and printing equipment. A disproportionate level of influence can build up around the individuals who can, at least in principle, control access to these necessary resources. This is a question less of individuals misusing their potential to act as gatekeepers, and more of others in the group feeling that they must afford some respect to those to whom such a role is ascribed. The second level relates to imbalances in less tangible capacities which nonetheless influence the level of respect it is possible to garner within a horizontal movement. The clearest examples are time and physical health: the capacities enabling certain individuals to contribute the baseline amount of labour necessary to keep a social centre running or ensure that a protest takes place and has an impact. A hierarchy of power-with can emerge when those who put in more labour are afforded greater respect. Whether or not this is justified is a topic ripe for dispute: while some argue that those who are involved most closely in the day-to-day running of a project should have a greater say in decisions[734] either because they are morally 'deserving' or (more convincingly) because they have a greater knowledge of how the project operates and how any changes will impact on this, others point out that it is a privilege of sorts to be able to be a full-time activist and do not therefore agree that *more* privilege (in the broader sense of the word) should accrue in turn.

  The third level involves power-with in the most direct sense, and relates to imbalances in interpersonal communication skills and similar personal resources between individuals in a group. This can also be seen as a form of power-to, but one which is less tangible than ownership of a vehicle or sufficient time or physical capacity to take on a larger share of practical tasks. These capacities are the hardest to quantify and the most nebulous, but they are the most significant in terms of deciphering hierarchies of power-with. In a movement where so much emphasis is put on dialogue, the ability to put an articulate case and argue in a way that convinces others rather than antagonising them can increase the level of influence built up by an individual. Here, the friendship group question raised by Freeman is relevant, as power-with is gained in part by staying

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[734] For example, the decision to close the Camp for Climate Action

on good terms with others in the group. In the affinity group setting[735] power-with based on interpersonal skills is the most acceptable and inevitable form of power, given that it is based on respect among equals. However, it is far from unproblematic. Gordon poses the question of whether an articulate, confident, genuinely friendly and committed individual, who has garnered a high level of influence within a group due to these qualities, might be exercising a disproportionate advantage in terms of power-with compared to those who lack them[736]. Juris, meanwhile, outlines the different levels of participation in a way which makes clear how informal hierarchies can appear, describing how 'First, core groups of activists often take responsibility for much of the detailed planning and logistical arrangements around specific meetings, actions, and events. Rather than relying on elected leaders or staff members, those who are most interested in a project become informal coordinators.'[737] Organising the work involved in each project around who most wants to do it may not sound like a basis for power imbalances, and it itself it is not. However, 'many others will assume more passive roles, attending protests and events, but not contributing to planning and coordination. Once again, horizontal networking facilitates grassroots participation and democratic decision making among those who are the most informed or skilled or simply have more available time, but may exclude others who lack sufficient access, abilities or information.'[738] CrimethInc use the example of a band to demonstrate how less-than-healthy scenarios can emerge: 'Being able to express one's feelings in words, to speak one's mind publicly, to articulate complex ideas on the spot, all these are valuable skills to have – the problem is not that the singer in this example exercises these, but that the specialisation within the traditional band format tends to develop these skills in one person and not in the others. The singer may well be saying and organising things that need saying and organising, and he or she may for that matter be the one who takes the most responsibility for important matters such as the relationship between the band and other people – but this specialisation is not usually sustainable, and never healthy.'[739]

   The most straightforward means of dealing with resource-based power imbalances may be a simple redistribution of the resources in question. However, in this case such a solution would be less than simple. As far as tangible resources are concerned, it is perfectly feasible that they *could* be redistributed, and indeed that individuals may feel inclined to offer them up for communal use as far as possible. However, it is not in the nature of a movement based on equality and consensus to coerce them to do so. Meanwhile, in the case of the less tangible resources and capacities that

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[735] See previous chapters for more detail of the affinity group model of organisation and its significance to horizontal politics
[736] Gordon (2008) pp.74-75
[737] Juris, J. (2008) *Networking Futures: The Movements Against Corporate Globalisation* Durham and London: Duke University Press p.84
[738] *Ibid.*, p.85
[739] CrimethInc (2005) *Recipes for Disaster* Olympia: CrimethInc p.197

compose the second and third categories of power-with, suggesting redistribution in the traditional sense sounds faintly ridiculous: how does one redistribute time, physical energy or interpersonal skills? This suggests a need for solutions which go beyond a traditional idea of redistribution, which can be applied to less tangible capacities and without any need for coercion. Gordon poses the problem as follows: 'Thus we seem to have come to an impasse – while a great deal of work can be done towards redistributing many material and immaterial resources, there are at least some in which equality can hardly, if ever, be achieved. But if they cannot be transferred, can the degree to which these qualities are allowed to generate power be *diminished*?'[740] This refocuses the question towards why respect, influence and power tend to become attached to such capacities, and whether this should be the case.

  To an extent, the decentralised nature of a horizontal political movement aims to avoid the more obvious imbalances of power: the organisational ethics and processes that have been built up over the past few years mean in principle that there is no 'central' body directing operations or making decisions. However, the autonomous nature of affinity and working groups can create its own imbalances, particularly in terms of power-with. As Gordon points out, 'what should be clear is that a working group on transport or legal support is not in any way a "local" node, since it operates on a network-wide level. What it is is *a new centre of power-with*.'[741] What this does not do is reduce the number of centres of power: instead, the decentralised model can be said to create more centres with less power. In Gordon's words, 'It means that there should be a process to increase the number of "places" (face-to-face or virtual) where power gets exercised, while avoiding disproportionate aggregations of power'[742]. The question, then, is one of *how* such aggregations can be effectively avoided. Here, a number of solutions have been suggested. Firstly, the activists cited here see it as necessary to keep all processes visible (allowing to an extent for security culture) so the insidious patterns alleged by Freeman have as little scope as possible to emerge. Secondly, such patterns are for the most part directly challenged as they emerge: the discussion generated by the disbanding of the Camp for Climate Action being an example. Here, the factor which goes the furthest towards distinguishing a horizontal movement is the removal of *enforcement* from the equation: the exercise of power-over to deal with imbalances of power-to or power-with is discouraged and seen to go against horizontal aims. The general tone of discussion suggests that imbalances of power are a genuine problem to be dealt with: that they are likely to emerge, and that they must be challenged. This strikes me less as a claim to perfection and more as a pragmatic response to a significant issue.

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[740] Gordon (2008) p.55
[741] *Ibid*. p.66
[742] *Ibid*.

Openness is necessary, Gordon argues, precisely because of the decentralised nature of power in a horizontal movement. It could be argued that this anti-structure goes some way towards breaking up power in the way advocated by Holloway: however, it is also the case that 'the transfer of such power to new centres goes unmanaged and unlegitimated.'[743] As such, 'There is a felt need to have some way of monitoring, checking and making visible the operations of influence within anti-authoritarian groups. People find it disempowering to participate in actions and projects that are steered behind their back. Being put in a situation you did not create and over which you have only marginal control – this may be the norm in environments like the army, workplace or school, but they should not be the norm in anarchist organising which wants to empower the individual.'[744] Were this the only source of power imbalance, the solution would be to ensure that working groups and the like were, for want of a better word, 'accountable' to the wider movement: that involvement is as open as possible and that the decision-making process and its results should be visible. At this stage it could almost go without saying that 'security culture', while important when planning an illegal action, should not be misused in order to create an 'in-crowd' or provide an excuse for unnecessary secrecy. However, for this openness to have any effect, it is also necessary for hierarchical behaviour patterns and dynamics to be directly and openly challenged. That 'horizontal' movements are beginning to do this in earnest can be taken as a sign of their commitment to maintaining an anti-hierarchical core: however, it cannot be seen as an automatic process. As such, it is necessary to actively engage with the potential causes of power imbalance. Key among these are imbalances of experience and privilege.

Experience is a difficult stumbling block to navigate compared to some of the other factors: it is difficult to deny that those who have essential skills and the experience of using them do tend to garner a larger share of respect, but it is also debateable whether this is necessarily a negative point. In terms of unequal power-with, however, the consequences can impact upon the practical realisation of key principles such as self-determination and participation as those without the relevant knowledge end up in the position of passive spectators. Those with the knowledge, meanwhile, risk being pushed into the 'specialist' role criticised by Vaneigem. Bryan and Chatterton, for example, suggest that 'There are inevitably hierarchies of experience within horizontal projects working towards social change, which can lead to newcomers feeling inadequate and hence reluctant to get involved. These hierarchies develop totally unintentionally but can lead to imbalance and bitterness within a group. It is important that any group working horizontally spends time working on the personal dynamics of the group and that macho or

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[743] *Ibid*.
[744] *Ibid*. p.65

controlling behaviour is confronted in a positive way.'[745] Here, it is necessary to return briefly to the question of appropriate process – and the appropriateness of focussing on process – raised previously. The 'process' in this instance, as well as aiming to reach consensus and take all the relevant views into account, must also ensure that certain individuals do not dominate. In addition, as discussed above, information on the process in question must be freely available and newcomers directed towards it – in particular, so they are aware that they can contribute. CrimethInc express this view when discussing the combination of affinity groups into a bloc: 'In a bloc made up of affinity groups from different areas, the local group will inevitably have the most information about what is possible, and may well consequently have done the most thinking and preparing. This is not necessarily a problem, as long as others trust them and are organised enough themselves to retain their autonomy. The local group should make provisions for sharing as much information with others as is safe, and also be sure not to assume unthinkingly a position of authority over the other groups…'[746] Here, again, the proposed solution goes beyond the basic sharing of information and into the terrain of active questioning of one's own behaviour and assumptions. The local group is well-off in terms of power-to (by virtue of being in familiar surroundings with their own resources to hand) and power-with (as other groups respect their local knowledge). However, throughout the process before and during the action, CrimethInc argue that they must consciously avoid maintaining a significant imbalance in either form of power, instead committing to sharing and redistributing the sources as far as possible.

On the subject of power-with, one question which is often raised is that of who gets to be the 'public face' of the movement. This has been of particular concern during the recent Camp for Climate Action, in which it was noted frequently that the media contacts are something of a different breed of activist from those involved in the direct actions and convergence site. One contributor to a recent volume of commentaries describes how 'At the 2008 Earth First! Gathering there was a long debate about the CCA. Out of this it emerged that the division of labour within the camp was falling along class and political lines. That was, site was largely made up of by the working class and anarchists while the media and outreach teams were dominated by the middle-class/politically liberal end of the spectrum.'[747] In grappling with this issue, a member of the Camp's media team reiterates the issues raised above: 'It's the same as you wouldn't want me to put up a marquee, it's about finding people who have got the skills, the experience and the training to do the jobs. If I want to put up a marquee then brilliant I'll get together with some experienced

[745] Bryan, K. and P. Chatterton (2007) 'How to build active campaigns' in Trapese Collective (eds.) (2007) *Do It Yourself: a handbook for changing our world* London: Pluto pp.277-291 quote from p.287

[746] CrimethInc (2006) p.138

[747] a g.r.o.a.t. (2010) 'Critiquing Climate Camp' in Shift Magazine and Dysophia (eds) *Criticism without Critique: A Climate Camp Reader* online at http://dysophia.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/cca_reader.pdf accessed 20/1/10

people and get involved but I wouldn't be expected to put up the biggest marquee in the middle of the Camp by myself. In the same way people can join the media team take on a small role to begin with and get experienced but you don't have someone on the first day and put them on TV. It's what's best for the Camp but also for the person.'[748] This quote illustrates the importance of skill-sharing in a horizontal movement or mobilization, which is often in evidence at activist gatherings and in social centres. It also, however, highlights the continuing risk of 'specialism'.

Discussion on how to break down the value hierarchies which relate to different skills appears to be in short supply in the literature. While on site at a larger mobilisation or activist gathering, it is normal to hear about how every task is important, and in particular about the importance attached to tasks considered menial by the outside world, including dealing with the lavatorial business of a crowded tent city. However, this message is not conveyed as widely as it should be, as evidenced by the Stirling resident activist who 'was asked if I wanted to help in the kitchen, which gave me little pleasure. I felt that local political activists should have been treated with importance.'[749] In addition, this reconsideration of which tasks should be valued highly leaves two particular issues unanswered. Firstly, there is the point raised above regarding which categories of people perform which tasks. The notes from the Camp for Climate Action in Blackheath in September 2009 raise the following concerns: 'Despite peoples best efforts, hierarchies are replicated within the camp. e.g. kids space with women; media mostly white middle class men … needs to be a space where people can experiment with roles', followed by 'More women than men cleaning the loos.'[750] There is a risk here that existing societal hierarchies are insufficiently challenged. Secondly, the inversion of a hierarchy of value does not *eliminate* such hierarchies, any more than the concentration of power in the hands of the proletariat automatically ends oppression. While no concrete solution appears to have been proposed, it is at least a topic for sustained discussion; suggesting that transparency and acknowledgement that problems exist is a keystone of the horizontal strategy for solving these problems.

The second imbalance engaged with in the written output is that of privilege. This relates to the point raised above regarding gender, race and class, and how it is all too easy to reproduce these hierarchies if those who possess privilege do not question it. In general terms it is easier to reach a consensus that privilege constitutes a problem that must be dealt with: in specific terms, however, it can be difficult to get individuals and groups to acknowledge that *they* have privilege and that *their* privilege can aggregate to them a greater level of both power-to and power-with. CrimethInc

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[748] Indymedia (2009) 'The Camp for Climate Action and the media – part 1' online at http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2009/04/428061.html accessed 20/1/10

[749] 'Sarah' (2005) 'G8 on our doorstep' in Harvie, D., Milburn, K., Trott, B., and Watts, D. (eds.) (2005) *Shut Them Down!* Leeds: Dissent pp.103-107 (quote from p.104)

[750] 'Processgroup' post on thread 'Notes from Blackheath, September 2009' http://discussion.climatecamp.org.uk/viewtopic.php?id=14 accessed 20/1/10

suggest that 'Privilege depends on the existence of hierarchy: an imbalance of power extending throughout society, providing some demographics with more resources, leverage, and comfort than other. The workings of hierarchy are justified by supremacist thinking, such as the idea that some groups are harder working, better equipped, or more deserving than others'.[751] However, while their book *Recipes for Disaster* contains advice on challenging privilege, this is evidently not infallible since their own convergence in the summer of 2009 was disrupted by anarchists of colour protesting what they saw as covert racism.[752] This disruption generated much dialogue around the issue of privilege in anarchist and horizontal movements.[753] In terms of dealing with privilege, open dialogue – genuinely open in the sense that less privileged groups should not be made to feel silence and those with more privilege should be prepared to listen and learn to remain quiet – is a key method deployed in horizontal movements. The emphasis is on dialogue and the working out of solutions among equals, as opposed to top-down strategies of 'enforcement', and this is potentially the main distinguishing feature.

   As previously argued, the means deployed within horizontal movements to address imbalances of micro-level power constitute a distinctive feature of their approach to the concept of power and how it contributes to the wider morphological landscape of horizontal politics. It is now time to summarise why this is the case. CrimethInc advance the following argument to explain the approach: 'How can a collective resist this insidious tendency? There's the reformist approach: stay aware of the privilege and power you hold as a result of the tasks you take on, try to keep those who assume key roles in check with continuous feedback. And then there's the radical approach: rotate responsibilities frequently between participants in the collective, keep things so nebulous that no set roles can crystallise within your collective. Neither strategy can work without the other, really: no radical restructuring of our working groups could by itself undo the effects of the decades of hierarchical conditioning all of us have already undergone.'[754] This quote highlights the importance of questioning and dialogue in a horizontal approach to power relations, but also highlights the prefigurative angle of horizontal politics discussed in previous chapters. There is a perceived need to undermine existing hierarchies and demonstrate that alternatives exist, even in the process of dealing with internal problems. This process goes further than challenging the observable behaviour within a group, and involves a change of mindset in the way in which people relate to one another. Gordon, for example, argues that 'any change in the anarchist use of power-with would have to be itself a *cultural* change, which can proliferate organically in a diffuse

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[751] CrimethInc (2006) p.565
[752] See P., Peter (2009) 'CrimethInc Convergence Controversy' online at http://www.CrimethInc.com/blog/2009/08/03/CrimethInc-convergence-controversy/ accessed 21/1/10
[753] An example can be found here: http://anarchists.livejournal.com/2583009.html#cutid1 last accessed 12/12/11
[754] CrimethInc (2006) p.198

process. Unlike structures and protocols, only cultural change can reach beyond the public theatre of power and influence habits and attitudes in anarchists' everyday activities.'[755] Here, the relevance of internal relations of power-with to the wider themes of horizontal politics is highlighted, with particular emphasis on the everyday as the site for change.

Furthermore, in the refusal to 'enforce', the element of self-determination is shown to be part of the horizontal toolkit for dealing with power. Gordon, for example, makes the point that 'what cannot be denied is that as far as the contemporary movement is concerned, decentralisation and autonomy are not just values but also facts on the ground. They are there because the impossibility of rationalised, permanent enforcement stands the entirety of anarchist activities on the basis of voluntary association.'[756] Here, the element of breaking up power is demonstrated and the autonomous nature of this process highlighted. There is no initial distribution of power by some central entity or centralised monitoring against imbalances: this distinguishes horizontal politics from the varieties of socialism which regard a proletarian dictatorship as necessary to ensure that the bourgeoisie do not regain power.

In summary, a horizontal political outlook does not necessarily take a particularly distinctive line on resistance to capitalist state power, although it does diverge somewhat from more traditional revolutionaries on how this resistance should take place. More distinctive is the approach taken to 'revolutionary' state power, which draws from the classical anarchist approach but goes beyond it in terms of preferring prefiguration in the here and now to relying on an all-encompassing revolution to bring about change. In terms of micro-level power, it is somewhat distinctive that horizontal movements acknowledge the relevant issues and make attempts to address them. More distinctive, however, is the way in which they do this, which again relates largely to the prefigurative approach discussed in previous chapters. There is no role here for ideas such as enforcement, but rather an emphasis on dialogue and respect for autonomy while creating a culture which questions imbalances in power-to and power-with as much as it does the exercise of power-over.

Conclusion

In conclusion, power can be regarded as an adjacent concept in the morphological landscape of horizontal politics: one which, while not always sufficiently prominent to form part of the core, is in the background of the central debates such as those raised in the previous two chapters. A horizontal political movement can be seen to engage with power in a number of ways. One such is

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[755] Gordon (2008) p.76
[756] *Ibid*., p.69

a resistance to the logic of hegemonic power-over as well as to state power itself: this leads to a refusal of revolutionary methods which involve the seizure or attempted seizure of state power, and a rejection of the idea that the state can be the agent of meaningful change. Another distinguishing feature of horizontal movements is the tendency to engage with micro-level power relations within the movements themselves, and in particular how power-to and power-with – forms of power which are not intrinsically hierarchical and can be exercised in horizontal ways – can nonetheless lead to power imbalances and unwanted hierarchies. As regards a distinctive variety of political theory generated by such movements, the anti-hegemonic aspect is essential to understanding the form such a theory might take. A counter-hegemonic theory proposes building an alternative potential hegemony: an anti-hegemonic theory, by contrast, resists the 'hegemony of hegemony' itself and aims to find means of resistance which do not subscribe to hegemonic logic. The second key feature of such a theory is an acknowledgement that power will continue to exist regardless of context, and that questions of power should be engaged with on this basis. As such, distinctively horizontal theories tend to explore ways in which power can be broken up and made into non-hierarchical power-to and power-with. Such a theory can be said to emerge directly from the practical measures discussed in the context of challenging micro-level power relations.

Culture

Introduction

  Culture is both explicitly discussed and prioritised in the activist literature and implicit in many of the discussions: explicit in the sense that phrases such as 'culture' and 'cultural resistance' are used consistently when discussing both specific actions and the level at which resistance is pitched, and implicit in the focus on prefigurative grassroots politics. Before going further, it is worth a brief note on how the word is defined. 'Culture' has many meanings. An online dictionary provides four pertinent definitions: 'the total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge, which constitute the shared bases of social action'[757]; 'the total range of activities and ideas of a group of people with shared traditions, which are transmitted and reinforced by members of the group'[758]; 'the artistic and social pursuits, expression, and tastes valued by a society or class, as in the arts, manners, dress, etc'[759]; and 'the attitudes, feelings, values, and behaviour that characterize and inform society as a whole or any social group within it'.[760] A general impression can be gained, therefore, of culture as developed and shared by groups of people, covering almost every aspect of life within that group.

  Culture is a nebulous concept, and cannot be easily defined even allowing for some decontestation in the horizontal context. There are, however, certain elements which form a working definition. Key among these is the idea of the everyday: this is 'culture' in the sense that it focuses on the day-to-day lives of, if such a term can be appropriately used, 'ordinary' people, as opposed to any definition that encompasses high culture. Neither, however, is it limited to the scope of 'popular' culture, although a connection exists: the conception of culture used here also involves an examination of multiple aspects of life including people's relationships with work and leisure, our disconnection from the production of the food we eat and the clothes we wear, and the (de)construction of community in modern society. It is an explicitly politicised definition, encompassing the sub-concept of cultural *resistance* and undermining hierarchical relations of domination at the grassroots.

  Morphologically, culture is an adjacent concept, due to its role in shaping the core concepts of horizontal politics. Consider the explicit resistance to hierarchy discussed in chapter three: I argue that the cultural dimension brings the analysis of hierarchy from the level of official hierarchies and formal political structures down to the level of everyday relations of domination. Notably, the

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[757] At http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/culture accessed 19/08/10
[758] *Ibid.*
[759] *Ibid.*
[760] *Ibid.*

idea of a hierarchy of value contains a strong culture-based element. The other core concept clearly shaped by culture is that of resistance: the proximity to culture determines the forms this resistance takes and the level at which it occurs.

  The role of culture in shaping the core concepts of horizontal politics is one reason to examine it more closely. More practically, culture encompasses a number of concrete examples of horizontal politics in theory and practice, from which potentially crucial details can be derived. This could also be achieved through an analysis of resistance; however, the effect of culture via proximity on the overall morphology of horizontal politics made it appear a more logical choice for getting a broader picture. In this context, culture is far from a frivolous add-on: rather, it is in many ways an essential component of an overall ideology. It also faces charges of being frivolous and a distraction from more serious political business, and the defences put forward yield interesting insights about the nature of horizontal politics.

  Culture is made up of a number of components which shape its decontested meaning and its position within the morphological landscape of horizontal politics. The first and most wide-ranging can be summarised under the heading of everyday life: the focus is on dominations and resistances that occur in day-to-day life. A more specific component is a focus on cultural artefacts such as advertisements and the media and the subversion thereof – the specific case discussed here is 'culture jamming', in which autonomous messages are created within the artefacts of the dominant culture. The most controversial component, particularly in terms of taking culture 'seriously', is the emphasis placed upon carnival as a tactic of resistance. However, the slant put on carnival in this context takes it beyond the 'fluffy', 'fun' or indeed 'lifestylist', adding an explicit political dimension. At the heart of cultural activism and cultural resistance is a prefigurative element: the desire to provide glimpses of another world within the here and now. This slant is more clearly evident here than in the minutiae of anti-hierarchical organising, although many practical manifestations of horizontal politics combine the two. Finally, the horizontal conception of culture cannot be accurately described without reference to the explicit and heavily prioritised element of resistance to the dominant culture, using cultural tactics, with the aim of challenging domination at all levels.

Ethos and tactics

  In examining the conception of culture contained within horizontal politics, a number of components are discussed. Some are familiar from previous chapters while others are more specific to this particular concept. The internal construction of the concept has been discussed briefly in the introduction to this chapter, but is worth returning to briefly in the context of

distinguishing a horizontal political movement. The first distinguishing feature is that such a movement is explicitly anti-hierarchical: the implication being that horizontal cultural resistance is anti-hierarchical by virtue of promoting people and communities taking action rather than waiting to be 'mobilised' from above. The idea of being a participant rather than a spectator comes into play here: cultural tactics are seen by their proponents in horizontal politics to facilitate this. Related to this is the idea of everyday life as the main site of resistance: it is with regard to culture that everyday life comes into its own. The tactics of resistance used stem from the idea that hegemony and domination have their roots in the everyday and that as such the bulk of anti-hegemonic resistance should also happen at this level, often using the everyday artefacts of the dominating classes as tools through the use of subversion. Everyday life, far from being a distraction from 'serious' political resistance, constitutes an essential terrain on which struggles are enacted. This section examines the concepts of everyday life and full-spectrum resistance, both vital to the understanding of cultural resistance in a horizontal context. Empirical examples are then given, drawn from activist accounts of mobilisations where tactics of cultural resistance were deployed.

The 'everyday' has many guises, each of which can be overlooked when discussing political questions. Acknowledging it can create situations where the political becomes personalised to the extent that acts of selfishness are regarded as blows against the system. However, to see everyday resistance in these terms misses the point horizontal activists are making: the potential of the everyday to become a terrain of domination or of resistance and the subsequent need to resist domination at this level. CrimethInc point out that 'When you separate politics from the immediate, everyday experiences of individual men and women, it becomes completely irrelevant.'[761] The political significance of these experiences starts with the processes which cultural activists attempt to subvert and resist; for example the mass media and advertising and their impact on people's consciousnesses. CrimethInc argue that people 'have been bombarded from birth with advertisements and other propaganda proclaiming that happiness, youth, meaning, and everything else in life are to be found in possessions and status symbols. They learn to spend their lives working hard to collect these, rather than taking advantage of whatever chances they might have to seek adventure and pleasure.'[762] Cultural activism, then, is a means of reclaiming everyday life – and, crucially, a means for individuals to reclaim it themselves rather than waiting to 'be liberated' – from the forces precipitating this 'bombardment'. As a mode of resistance, it relies largely on small cracks rather than wider ruptures: but when a hegemonic class wishes to appear invincible, the argument goes, even small cracks in its facade are significant. On these grounds, CrimethInc argue that: 'Every time one of us remembers not to accept at face value the

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[761] CrimethInc (2001) p.190
[762] *Ibid*. p.63

authority of the powers that be, each time one of us is able to escape the system of domination for a moment'[763] it becomes 'a victory for the individual and a blow against hierarchy.'[764]

Cultural tactics are generally seen as part of a wider repertoire of resistance, not expected to produce a 'revolution' by themselves. Here, the idea of 'full spectrum' resistance becomes significant: the idea that there are many points of domination and resistance, each of which requires a different approach to intervention. Verson argues that 'Cultural activists are taking direct action against war, ecological destruction, injustice and capitalism, but they are also constantly asking how we can act directly against their social and psychological effects. Just as military empires have defined full spectrum domination, we have embraced the idea of full spectrum resistance. After all, who can really know what it is that really inspires an individual to care, or to turn away, or to give up?'[765] The 'spectrum', broadly speaking, encompasses points of production, destruction, consumption, decision, potential and assumption.[766] Production, destruction and decision are the points at which it has been traditional for activist movements to intervene, and at which methods such as pickets (Decision), strikes (Production) and roadblocks (Destruction) are aimed. To use the full spectrum, however, means intervening at all the different points, and requires a wider variety of methods, as listed by Verson: 'Intervention at points of potential – 'Future scenarios, actualising alternatives, transforming an empty lot into a garden, Reclaim the Streets, etc' – assumption – 'Challenging underlying beliefs or control mythologies, such as environment must be sacrificed for jobs. Also hijacking spectacles and using popular culture.' – and consumption – 'Chain stores, supermarkets. Places where customers can be reached. The realm of consumer boycotts and market campaigns.'[767] From this perspective, cultural tactics complement the more traditional methods, widening the terrain of resistance.

It is now time to examine some of the methods involved in more detail. The examples used are culture-jamming, carnival, the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army and the creation of community spaces. Each of these intervenes at one or more points, and is relevant to the wider context of horizontal politics in a number of ways. Collected together, the examples demonstrate the wide scope of the term 'cultural activism', which ranges from the production of independent news media to the more colourful actions.

Culture Jamming

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[763] *Ibid*. p.40
[764] *Ibid*.
[765] Verson (2007) p.171
[766] *Ibid*. p.174
[767] *Ibid*.

Culture jamming is an intervention mainly at the points of assumption and, in the case of the altered advert, consumption. It has roots in *détournement*, a Situationist tactic focused on the reappropriation, co-optation and subversion of the dominant culture's symbols. *Détournement* is defined in the Situationist International's glossary: 'Short for "*détournement* of preexisting aesthetic elements." The integration of present or past artistic productions into a superior construction of a milieu.'[768] Here, artefacts coded by the Spectacle are converted into tools of resistance. An example can be found in one instance during the Paris occupation, in which the 'first non-university territory to be occupied by students during the revolt was the "Theatre de France" at the Odeon. The wardrobe department was raided and dozens of demonstrators came out to face the CS gas dressed as centurions, pirates and princesses.'[769] This use of costume to appropriate something familiar – in this instance the cultural signifiers present in theatrical costume – and to alter the impact of something *un*familiar such as a protest was popular at the time and has remained so. By turning a protest into carnival, the element of the absurd spreads beyond those who introduced it and can even infect bystanders and opponents. At a 'quieter' level *détournement* can entail the defacing of an advert or a work of art, altering the message to reflect dissatisfaction with the society that produced the artefact in question. The use of graffiti and altered advertising, in particular, stands out as a clear example of resistance at the everyday level: it is a direct challenge to the traditional norms and values of society, based on the subversion of their outward manifestations.

The 1990s saw a revival in culture jamming[770], with roots in the earliest days of the alternative globalisation movement. Naomi Klein suggests that 'Attempting to pinpoint the roots of culture jamming is next to impossible, largely because the practice itself is a cutting and pasting of graffiti, modern art, do-it-yourself punk philosophy and age-old pranksterism.'[771] However, while the tactic has no single source, it was publicised and made 'cool' by the magazine *Adbusters*.[772] At first, *Adbusters* was largely a collection of adverts which has been defaced, parodied or otherwise *détourned*, interspersed with cultural critique. In the early stages of the movement it gained influence by showcasing the efforts of culture jammers and demonstrating the possibilities arising from altering artefacts of the dominant culture, particularly billboard and magazine advertising. The mission statement for this enterprise contains some familiar refrains, particularly the claim that 'We try to coax people from spectator to participant in this quest. We want folks to get mad about corporate disinformation, injustices in the global economy, and any industry that pollutes

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[768] 'Definitions', Situationist International 1 (1958) online at http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/1.definitions.htm last accessed 03/03/08

[769] Beyond TV (n.d.) 'Détournement' online at http://www.beyondtv.org/nato/detournement/detournement.htm (accessed 13/10/09)

[770] Known in some contexts as 'adbusting'

[771] Klein, N. (2000) *No Logo* London: Flamingo p.282

[772] Now online at https://www.adbusters.org/ last accessed 22/03/10

our physical or mental commons.'[773] The idea of the mental environment and its links to the physical one is echoed in many of the more recent manifestations of cultural activism, not only culture jamming as such but also the creation of community spaces and Temporary Autonomous Zones.

The political message of a culture jam can be as heavy or light as the circumstances demand or allow. Klein, writing at a time when the influence of *Adbusters* was waning but the tactic itself was not, describes the base instinct behind culture jamming thus: 'A growing number of activists believe the time has come for the public to stop asking that some space be left unsponsored, and to begin seizing it back.'[774] This approach is more directly confrontational than the activist media, as the 'hijacking' of popular culture is done in a less polite manner and involves explicit appropriation rather than shared space. Klein describes 'A good jam'[775] as 'an X-ray of the subconscious of a campaign, uncovering not an opposite meaning but the deeper truth hiding beneath the layers of advertising euphemisms.'[776] In the case of a *détourned* advert, the 'deeper truth' is often one that involves a lack of concern for factors such as workers' rights or public health, and it is these issues that the more explicitly political jammers are attempting to highlight in the changes they make. CrimethInc suggest the following tactic of in-person adbusting: 'Stand just inside the door, and as customers walk in, smile and say something like "welcome to the GAP, where we bring you low prices by destroying the planet. Can I help you find something?" If you prefer a more subtle approach, try writing a slogan on your t-shirt and striking a pose with the mannequins – everyone loves a cute anarchist showing off the latest fashions covered in handwritten slogans like "GAP: made for kids, by kids" or simply the cleverly-modified logo "CRAP".'[777] This is undeniably a 'fun' approach containing an element of adventure; however, it is also clearly being used to put out a serious message.

Although such tactics are popular on protests, it is more common to deface billboard adverts and other publicly-displayed artefacts of consumer culture. CrimethInc suggest that 'If you can totally change the meaning of an advertisement by changing one or two letters, you'll save a lot of time and trouble. Some ads lend themselves to parody by the inclusion of a small image or symbol in the appropriate place – a skull, radiation symbol, happy face, swastika, vibrator. On other boards, the addition of a cartoon thought bubble or speech balloon for one of the characters might be all that is needed.'[778] Specific uses have included 'skulling' (using a black marker pen to add hollows

[773] Adbusters (n.d.) 'About Adbusters' online at https://www.adbusters.org/about/adbusters last accessed 22/03/10
[774] Klein (2000) pp.280-281
[775] *Ibid.*
[776] *Ibid.* pp.281-282
[777] CrimethInc (2005) *Recipes for Disaster* Olympia: CrimethInc p.207
[778] *Ibid.* p.114

to eyes and cheeks) and the addition of slogans. The idea is to encourage people to do a double-take and, instead of mindlessly processing the advert, question what might lie behind the message. This could be regarded as a prefigurative action: in the here and now, where one set of voices holds hegemonic power, culture jamming and adbusting provide glimpses of another voice and the potential for another way of being. Verson demonstrates the significance of these tactics from a horizontal perspective when she argues that 'While some question the usefulness of [culture jamming], it is crucially changing both idea space and public space from a corporate or party political monologue to a dialogue where people are speaking for themselves.'[779] In addition to being a form of prefigurative resistance, culture jamming is also an anti-hierarchical and participatory tactic: anyone is able to join in and, unlike the adverts which encourage mindless consumption and becoming, to paraphrase Vaneigem, senseless and easily handled, it promotes the opposite in terms of seeing through the Spectacle and thinking for oneself. In this way, it is an intervention at the point of potential as well as the points of assumption and consumption referred to previously.

Carnival(esque)

  On the emancipatory potential of the carnival, Scott argues that 'What all these occasions seem to share is that they are socially defined in some important ways as being out of the ordinary. Normal rules of social intercourse are not enforced, and either the wearing of actual disguises or the anonymity conferred by being part of a large crowd amplifies a general air of license.'[780] In this scenario, near-open resistance is possible: 'Carnival, it its ritual structure and anonymity, gives a privileged place to normally suppressed speech and aggression. It was, in many societies, virtually the only time during the year when the lower classes were permitted to assemble in unprecedented numbers behind masks and make threatening gestures toward those who ruled in daily life.'[781] Bakhtin explains this phenomenon further, arguing that 'one might say that carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalised and completed.'[782] While carnival then was not openly political, this and other attributes are echoed by political movements, including the Situationists. As a mode of resistance, carnival defies reification, constantly adapting and keeping one step ahead of the dominant forces.

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[779] Verson (2007) p.179
[780] Scott, J. (1990) *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* New Haven and London: Yale University Press p.173
[781] *Ibid*. p.181
[782] Bakhtin, M. (1984) *Rabelais and his World* Bloomington: Indiana University Press p.10

The carnival in Rabelais' era involved a subversive element based on mockery of usual norms and of people in power. Bakhtin describes how 'Civil and social ceremonies and rituals took on a comic aspect as clowns and fools, constant participants in these festivals, mimicked serious rituals such as the tribute rendered to the victors at tournaments, the transfer of feudal rights, or the initiation of a knight.'[783] This could be merely a way for dominated groups to 'harmlessly' let off steam: however, it could also undermine relations of domination by emphasising the inherent ridiculousness of much formal ritual in society.

Another key element of the carnival, seen through a lens coloured by exposure to later movements which draw from it explicitly as a tactic of resistance, is the focus on participation and popular involvement. Bakhtin describes how 'Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates just because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal, in which all take part.'[784] Therefore, although the carnival contains spectacular elements, it is not merely a spectacle reducing those in the vicinity to spectators. Instead, everybody is involved to a greater or lesser extent and, with the usual hierarchies overturned in at least a symbolic way, involved at an equal level.

Some of the first openly political uses of the carnivalesque can be seen in the work of the Situationists in Europe in the late 1960s. Here, the participatory element described above came into its own in a movement which held self-determination to be a core principle of what is often referred to by those involved as 'revolutionary self-theory'.[785] The origins of this latter concept can be found in 'The alienation felt as a result of having your thinking done for you by the ideologies of our day, can lead to the search for the pleasurable negation of that alienation: thinking for yourself'[786] in a social order which encourages being 'senseless and easily handled'.[787] The Situationists were keen to resist the leadership of what they termed 'specialists', taking instead a perspective neatly summarised by a popular graffiti slogan of their era: 'Don't

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[783] *Ibid*. p.5

[784] *Ibid*. p.7

[785] A pamphlet by this name has been published as part of the *Spectacular Times* series, although it is not the only manifestation: Law, L. (Undated) 'Revolutionary Self-Theory' online at
http://www.burngreave.net/~aland/personal/spectaculartimes/cornersoul.com/revolutionary.html last
accessed 24/07/08

[786] *Ibid*.

[787] Vaneigem, R. (1967) 'The Revolution of Everyday Life' online at
http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/pub_contents/5 last accessed 03/03/10

liberate me – I'll take care of that'.[788] Each person must participate in his or her own liberation, for it is too important a task to be delegated to another. This participatory ethos is echoed by today's movements.

   The use of cultural resistance in today's movement arises from a number of sources, but two clear precursors are Reclaim the Streets and the emergent 'culture jamming' and 'subvertising' movements encapsulated by the Canadian magazine *Adbusters*. Reclaim the Streets can trace its origins to the early 1990s and had its heyday in at the end of that decade. [789] Its motives are largely to raise awareness of pollution caused by motor vehicles, and to temporarily liberate 'public' space from car culture by closing busy roads and holding street parties. They can be seen as overly frivolous: however, serious messages are expressed. They emphasise the need to reclaim the 'street' from the 'road': 'The road is mechanical, linear movement epitomised by the car. The street, at best, is a living place of human movement and social intercourse, of freedom and spontaneity. The car system steals the street from under us and sells it back for the price of petrol. It privileges time over space, corrupting and reducing both to an obsession with speed or, in economic lingo, "turnover". It doesn't matter who "drives" this system for its movements are already pre-determined.'[790] The scope of Reclaim the Streets goes beyond the pollution issue and examines the ways in which people relate to space and to one another. To borrow a phrase from *Adbusters*, they are as keen to tackle pollution of the mental environment as the physical environment. They argue that 'To act for the ecology of a city then, is to go beyond simply recycling papers and bottles or cutting car-use, to exploring and transforming the ongoing relationships and interactions between individuals, the social and the natural worlds; our hopes for community and the wider economic, political and institutional context. This sense of interconnection is intrinsic to a radical ecological approach. It suggests that dealing with the environmental crisis generally, and the effects of cities in particular, requires not only personal lifestyle changes but a radical remaking of social life itself.'[791] The medium of a street party serves two main ends. Firstly, it grabs the public's attention and encourages their participation. Secondly, it is a form of direct action which physically obstructs car culture by preventing vehicles from entering one of the busier roads in the local area. The direct generative link between Reclaim the Streets as an entity and the horizontal elements of the global justice movement a decade later is the 'Carnival Against Capital' held in the City of London on June 18 1999 (also known as J18). This

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[788] May 1968 graffiti collected at http://www.everything2.com/index.pl?node_id=760469 last accessed
03/03/08
[789] A list of RTS actions can be found online at http://rts.gn.apc.org/archive.htm last accessed
18/03/10
[790] RTS homepage http://rts.gn.apc.org/prop04.htm last accessed 18/03/10
[791] RTS (2000) 'Ecology and the Social City' online at http://rts.gn.apc.org/socialcity.htm last accessed 18/03/10

was nominally an RTS action: however, it was one which went far beyond the usual scope of closing a road to traffic and which brought multiple other issues into the spotlight.

Many larger mobilisations, following on from Reclaim The Streets and similar, adopt carnivalesque elements to get their message across: the ideas are similar to those involved in culture jamming, on a larger, less clandestine and more immediate scale. In describing the use of Carnival, Notes from Nowhere invoke similar historical tendencies to those discussed by Bakhtin: 'Throughout history carnival has been a time for inverting the social order, where the village fool dresses as the king and the king waits on the pauper, where men and women wear each other's clothing and perform each other's roles. This inversion exposes the power structures and illuminates the processes of maintaining hierarchies – seen from a new angle, the foundations of authority are shaken up and flipped around.'[792] In this context, carnival is an intervention at one or more points of potential, a means of prefiguring alternatives by living them in their most joyous form, if only for a day. The point is largely to claim and defend space for these alternatives, amidst the everyday goings on of the existing hegemonic order: this juxtaposition has the potential to make the message more appealing. This is not a 'revolution' in its traditional form, yet Notes from Nowhere observe that 'It is in the capricious moments of history when we can best see that carnival and revolution have identical goals: to turn the world upside down with joyous abandon and to celebrate our indestructible lust for life, a lust that capitalism tries so hard to destroy with its monotonous merry go round of work and consumerism.'[793] Bookchin is sceptical of the concept of the joy of living: however, taking these movements as examples, it is easier to see how, in a context where the dominant order aims to suppress such urges, it can be taken as an active form of resistance to subvert this process. This is the rationale offered by participants both in the Edinburgh Carnival Against Capital in 2005 and in various Reclaim The Streets actions. In the former case, Trocchi describes how 'Many people were disgusted with police behaviour and enjoyed the Carnival because of, not despite, the chaos: people roaming the streets, cars trapped, music playing, clowns mocking police officers, the houses of the corrupt and wealthy targeted for payback. It was anarchy in its most pure and undistilled form, and it felt a hell of a lot better to everyone involved than the zombie-like shopping that dominates Princes Street every other day of the week.'[794] Carnivalesque protest allows for and encourages the participation of those who are not officially 'involved', providing opportunities to miss work, mock the authorities and other subversive behaviours that are absent[795] from their everyday landscape. Notes from Nowhere emphasise this participatory aspect, arguing that 'Passivity disappears when carnival comes to

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[792] Notes from Nowhere Collective (2003b) 'Carnival' in Notes from Nowhere (eds.) (2003) *We Are Everywhere* London: Verso pp.173-183 (quote from pp.174-175)
[793] *Ibid*. p.175
[794] Trocchi *et al* (2005) p.82
[795] At least in overt forms

town, with its unyielding demand for participation. It is the time for celebrating the joy of collectivity, the exhilaration of creating something that snowballs into something much bigger, and more amazing than previously imagined possible.'[796]

The 'fun' element of this variety of activism is often criticised. However, there are practical and serious sides even to the most apparently frivolous tactics, as Notes from Nowhere suggest when they argue that 'Carnival works all over the world, as political action, as festive celebration, as cathartic release, as wild abandonment of the status quo, as networking tool, as a way to create a new world. One of the key reasons for its wild success was overheard during the WTO shut down in Seattle, "Even if we are getting our asses kicked, we're having more fun than they are."'.[797] The prefigurative effect of such actions can be overstated: however, this does not mean it can be overlooked. The juxtaposition presented by Verson is useful here: she describes how 'Some will say that pink and silver is making protest "fun" but to me it's about tapping into ancient forms of collective celebration, which are about inclusion and joy, something we often lack in individualised Western cultures.'[798] By this logic, it could be argued that carnival-style protests can not only physically undermine the dominant culture but can also have a psychological effect in highlighting the shortage of elements such as 'inclusion and joy' and the existence of other ways of being. The participatory nature of carnival can also be a catalyst for the promotion of power-to and power-with among those involved (in the broad sense of the term 'involved', which can include those who have for example joined on the spur of the moment instead of returning directly to the office after lunch as well as the more confirmed activists who constructed the situation in the first place), not least by demonstrating that there is more to life than being a consumer and spectator. Whitney, a participant in the Infernal Noise Brigade at the protest against the World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference in Seattle in 1999, describes how 'We were experiencing a complete shift in the balance of power for the first time in our lives, and it felt amazing. We were manic, ecstatic, every cell vibrating, electric, experiencing freedom in a way we'd only ever dreamt of. History was ours to shape with our own hands.'[799] This feeling could be a momentary illusion: however, there is genuine belief among those involved that these moments could add up to something significant.

The second notable characteristic of this type of activism is the tendency to emphasise elements of humanity and vulnerability that tactics such as the Black Bloc generally play down. Evans points out that 'Doing an action in a carnival costume is mental. For women, facing all-male riot

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[796] Notes from Nowhere (2003b) p.177
[797] *Ibid*. p.180
[798] Verson (2007) p.181
[799] Whitney, J. (2003) 'Infernal Noise: the soundtrack to insurrection' in Notes from Nowhere (eds.) (2003) *We Are Everywhere* London: Verso pp.216-227 (quote from p.226)

police, it is a way of exploiting our vulnerability, making them see that we're people, not just things to be hit.'[800] This approach is as confrontational as the Black Bloc or other more 'serious' manifestations of the radical end of the global justice movement: however, it aims at a different type of confrontation, one offering an alternative to the aggression offered by the forces of the state rather than fighting them with their own weapons. This aspect of cultural activism will be discussed further when dealing with CIRCA.

Finally, carnival is distinctive in its potential for creating new public spaces and opening them up for what activists argue are more inclusive uses than those to which they are normally put. The most obvious example here is Reclaim the Streets and other actions in a similar vein: in physical terms, these mark out an area of space to become – using the terminology outlined in the previous section of this chapter – a 'street' rather than a 'road', a very open Temporary Autonomous Zone in the heart of a city; in psychological terms, they perform the prefigurative function of opening these spaces up as cracks in the everyday in which resistance of a sort can thrive. CrimethInc describe RTS actions in the following terms: 'A Reclaim the Streets action hijacks public space to show some of the ways it can be used that are more creative, exciting and community-oriented than mere commerce or traffic'[801] and which 'can be an excellent way for a radical community to have a good time and practice reinterpreting and rearranging public life, while breeding new desires and an expanded sense of the possible in passersby.'[802] The criticism could be made that such actions take space away from the community by disrupting day-to-day life: the counter-argument made by activists hinges on the idea that this ordinary day-to-day life is the terrain on which oppressive dynamics of domination are played out, and that inviting people to participate in acts of resistance at this level is central to overcoming domination. The idea of 'taking back' space that has been stolen from the public is also a popular trope in the literature. Fourier's analysis of an RTS action he participated in describes how 'We want to fire an arrow of hope and life into the heart of our dying city. We're going to take back the M41, reclaim it, steal it back from the machine.'[803] For RTS the car in particular is an emblem of the enclosure that permeates today's society, and the road of the dominance of this enclosed outlook: physically resisting the 'road' involves literally reclaiming the 'street' as an open space for free interaction, as it may have been in earlier eras. It would be possible to do this in a more 'serious' way – after all, many a road has been blocked without resorting to the frivolities of street party tactics – but to deploy the confrontational approach in this scenario would be counterproductive, intimidating the general public rather than encouraging participation. Furthermore, the carnivalesque approach has the

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[800] Evans, K. (2003) 'It's Got To Be Silver and Pink: on the road with Tactical Frivolity' in Notes from Nowhere (eds.) (2003) *We Are Everywhere* London: Verso pp.290-295 (quote from p.294)
[801] CrimethInc (2005) pp.421-422
[802] *Ibid*.
[803] Fourier, C. (2003) 'Reclaim the Streets: an arrow of hope' in Notes from Nowhere (eds.) (2003) *We Are Everywhere* London: Verso pp.51-59 (quote from p.51)

same immediate, psychological effect as was described above, in terms of generating at least the perception of power-to and power-with. In this vein, Fourier describes the transformation of a stretch of motorway by an RTS action: 'Within moments what was empty motorway, hot strips of tarmac, utterly dead, is living and moving, an instant joyous celebration. It is our moment; everyone and everything seems incredibly and wonderfully alive. Seconds later a sound-system fires up and our fragile dashed hopes become resurrected in the certainty of the dancing crowd.'[804] This resurrection of hope is a microcosm of what activists seek to achieve when using these tactics: on a larger scale, hopes are 'dashed' daily by the reality of life in a capitalist society, and the prefigurative approach taken by groups such as Reclaim the Streets aims to deliver new hope.

The Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army

  The Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA for short) are somewhat controversial within horizontal circles. Where violence is generally accepted by way of diversity of tactics, dressing in army fatigues, greasepaint and feathers and applying lipstick to police officers' riot shields still generates heated discussion; even deployed as part of a wider protest march or blockade. Critics of CIRCA's approach to protest regard it as a trivialisation of protest and the serious issues involved. Its defenders, however, regard it as an intervention at points of potential and assumption, producing an undermining effect on the forces of law and order – police officers are, after all, more accustomed to being ambushed with bricks and bottles than lipstick and feather dusters – and challenging the hegemonic categorisation of protesters.

  In the first instance, CIRCA actions have much in common with the RTS actions discussed above, giving them a valid claim to be intervening at the point of potential by opening up new physical and mental spaces in the cracks in the everyday. A case in point is the occupation of a petrol station, as 'Corporal Clutter' describes: 'In high afternoon heat, clowns play on the premises of two petrol stations, transforming them into urban oases of the hallucinatory variety. We get on our knees to pray to the filling stations and flirt with the pumps ("Oh, it's soooo big"). We play tig and lay about. We charm workers into donating an application form for assistant manager. The media are loving it. The cops are bemused but amusingly impotent. Shutting down the oil industry has never been more fun. Mission accomplished.'[805] There is a practical effect to the protest, in that the everyday manifestation of an environmentally-damaging industry is physically prevented from functioning for an afternoon and the message is brought to a wider audience through the media. Furthermore, the police are confused about how to proceed.

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[804] *Ibid*. p.59
[805] 'Corporal Clutter of CIRCA' (2005) 'Operation Splish Splash Splosh' in Harvie, D., Milburn, K., Trott, B., and Watts, D. (eds.) (2005) *Shut Them Down!* Leeds: Dissent pp.255-256 (quote from p.255)

This confusion on the part of the police is one way in which CIRCA-style tactics can be said to undermine the dominant order: police officers lacking control of a situation can be accused of missing the point. 'Kolonel Klepto' and 'Major Up Evil' describe a fairly typical scenario: 'A pair of clowns dressed as cops, part of the hilarious Backwards Intelligence Team, start to count down – "Five, four, three, two, one – go!" The (real) police and clowns rush towards each other, their hands outstretched, faces grimacing and screaming "Kazamm". There is a floating moment of confusion and then they rush into each other's open arms – clowns hug cops, cops hug clowns. Everyone is a bit surprised, there is a roar of celebratory cheers from the clowns and slightly sheepish and embarrassed applause from the police. Somehow, this clown gaggle had managed to persuade the police to play a game with them.'[806] This is a direct challenge to the authority of the police: proponents of such actions argue that by extension it also undermines the wider relations of domination in society. Verson describes this process in the following terms: 'As one of the major functions of mounted police is to intimidate protesters, the act of laughing at the horses was significant in redistributing power and agency in the situation.'[807] This is a further intervention at the point of assumption: a challenge to all the police represent.

A further challenge is levelled at the idea that there is a dichotomy between 'good' and 'bad' protesters, or 'spiky' and 'fluffy' or 'peaceful' and 'confrontational'. This challenge stems from instances such as this one described by 'Commodore Koogie': 'two clowns stood in front of a line of policemen, who had encircled and contained a group of activists in Edinburgh, all looking stern and grim, but still wearing bright yellow jerkins nonetheless, and started singing the banana song: One banana, two banana, three banana, four... One by one a larger group of us joined in, the song gathering volume and beautiful harmonies (we started to sound really good) as we went. It took on a life of its own'.[808] He concludes that 'it was our vulnerability, standing there with nothing but our humanity to protect us, that was our best defence against repression.'[809] Echoes are visible of Evans' arguments regarding the use of carnival: it is vulnerability, not indestructibility, which distinguishes this type of action. This is not passive resistance, and neither is it based on backing down or avoiding conflict. It is explicitly confrontational. However, the confrontation is based not on violence but on humour and humanity. Verson explains this idea further: 'Whatever we were doing, I thought, it must have been working. Clowning is dangerous because it subverts the

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[806] Kolonel Klepto' and 'Major Up Evil' (2005) 'The Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army goes to Scotland via a few other places' in Harvie, D., Milburn, K., Trott, B., and Watts, D. (eds.) (2005) *Shut Them Down!* Leeds: Dissent pp.243-253 (quote from pp.243-244)
[807] Verson (2007) p.184
[808] 'Commodore Koogie' (2005) 'Private Parts in the General Mayhem' in Harvie, D., Milburn, K., Trott, B., and Watts, D. (eds.) (2005) *Shut Them Down!* Leeds: Dissent pp.127-134 (quote from p.129)
[809] *Ibid*.

protocols of war and policing: where "good" protesters are supposed to obey and "bad" protesters are supposed to resist with violence. It deconstructs the opposition between fluffy and violent protest.'[810] Depending on the perception of effectiveness, such a break from the 'normal' categories of protest may also challenge the idea that cultural activism in its most outwardly frivolous manifestations constitutes a form of ineffectual protest that at best has little or no impact and at worst undermines the rest of the movement; suggesting instead that what is being undermined are some of the more pernicious relations of domination which horizontal politics in general aims to resist.

Community spaces and guerrilla gardens

The final example is the creation of community spaces, with a focus on 'guerrilla gardening' tactics, exemplified in particular by the Cre8 Summat garden which appeared in Glasgow during the G8 protests of 2005. As with the other examples used here, the criticism can potentially be made that this tactic is somewhat frivolous. However, again similarly to the other cases, it can also be defended on multiple grounds; and it is these grounds which can help to distinguish a horizontal political movement.

The initial rationale for a community garden is grounded in the practicalities of attempting to disengage from the relations of domination which, if left unchecked, permeate every aspect of everyday life down to what we eat: 'Learning to produce our own food is a threat to capitalism as it begins to break us free of the cycle of supply and demand, liberating us from the role of passive consumer, remote from real decisions, alienated from nature.'[811] However, whether the garden in question aims to grow food or 'merely' to brighten up a patch of waste ground, guerrilla community gardening in the horizontal context goes beyond basic practicalities. The article just quoted refers to guerrilla gardening as a form of 'direct action', and the extract reproduced here is keen to refer to the participatory, autonomous dimension of rejecting the passive consumer role and taking control of something basic but important in one's day-to-day life.[812] The Cre8 Summat, according to those involved, played this role in an impoverished neighbourhood threatened with demolition. Trocchi describes how 'The idea of a "Cre8 Summat" finally took flesh when a group of permaculture activists hooked up with campaigners in Glasgow to create a community garden in a desolate patch of urban wasteland, in one of the city's poorest neighbourhoods.'[813] There is a risk in such projects that the local community will be – or feel – overlooked or preached at, and

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[810] Verson (2007) p.185

[811] Notes from Nowhere (2003c) 'Direct Action: Guerrilla Gardening' in Notes from Nowhere (eds.) (2003) *We Are Everywhere* London: Verso pp.150-151 (quote from p.150)

[812] Similar ideas are raised when discussing off-the-grid energy and indeed compost lavatories, but these have less of a directly cultural element.

[813] Trocchi *et al* (2005) p.74

will object to the strange behaviour of outsiders in their midst: they may perceive the space in question as closed to them rather than opened up, defeating the stated aims of the action. However, in the case of Cre8 Summat the outcome was more positive: 'One by one people walking their dogs and kids riding their bikes came through the garden and were soon gardening hand-in-hand with the anarchists. In this wasteland on which the state was planning to construct a supporting-column for the massive road, there soon stood a garden with sculptures, paintings, flowers and herb beds. The Cre8 Summat ended with an all-day celebration at which the entire neighbourhood showed up to party and local newspapers published encouraging stories about this "new way of protesting".'[814] This is another example of the promotion of power-to and power-with – and rejection of the 'spectator' role normally assigned by society – by cultural activism. As such, while Cre8 Summat's direct impact on the G8 proceedings was unlikely to rate on any known measure, a challenge to relations of domination more generally is clearly evident. In the light of such arguments, the community garden appears as a prefigurative mode of resistance intervening in particular at the points of intention and assumption. Actions such as Cre8 Summat aim not just to raise objections to some perceived evil, but also to demonstrate the existence of alternative ways of being.

  To summarise, horizontal political movements are distinguished by a prefigurative approach based on the promotion of power-to and power-with and the rejection of the role of passive consumer and spectator. These distinguishing factors are embodied in the tactics of cultural resistance, which also aim to challenge ingrained ideas such as a dichotomy between 'good' and 'bad' protesters and undermine relations of domination using tactics which at first glance appear 'fluffy' and unthreatening but are nonetheless confrontational in their approach.

Theoretical reflections

  Horizontal politics draws directly from a number of earlier movements, and this is truer of culture than with any other concept: in those cases, there has been some dividing line between horizontal politics *per se* and its forebears or the other descendents and continuations thereof. However, the process by which theory is generated from the grass roots goes a long way to adapt inherited ideas to different circumstances. Attention should be given to the ideas of everyday resistances and carnivalesque which form part of the narrative of cultural activism: however, in their early days these were not regarded as 'political' in the traditional sense and often aimed to avoid direct confrontation with hegemonic power. In the same vein, many of the tactics used were explicitly drawn from movements such as the Situationists, and horizontal cultural resistance has roots in such movements. However, for the Situationist International there was always some

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[814] *Ibid*. pp.75-76

confusion about whether it was a political or an artistic movement. While today's cultural activists still blur the lines between the categories, there is no doubt that their aims are explicitly political and that, in general, art is appropriated to political ends rather than vice versa. There are, however, other distinguishing elements to the political theory generated by horizontal movements with regard to culture. The first is a link to the rhizomatic nature of such theory more widely; the second is the element of prefiguration which earmarks much of this type of theory: here, culture is vital to understanding how alternatives are prefigured and what this entails.

The role of the everyday in resistance has as long a history as the idea of culture as a site of domination. This discussion began with Bourdieu, who saw factors as language and social and behavioural norms as contributing to the development of hegemonic relations of domination in which one group predominates due to having the means to build and subsequently understand these conventions. He posits this as a political issue, arguing that 'The theory of knowledge is a dimension of political theory because the specifically symbolic power to impose the principles of the construction of reality – in particular, social reality – is a major dimension of political power.'[815] Here there are echoes of the discussion of agenda-setting in the previous chapter: there, power entailed the ability to shape the preferences of a population; here, symbolic power consists of the ability to shape the cultural norms from which such preferences arise, legitimating certain (for example) linguistic patterns and de-legitimating others. By this process, 'The dominant culture contributes to the real integration of the dominant class (by facilitating the communication between all its members and distinguishing them from other classes): it also contributes to the fictitious integration of society as a whole, and thus to the apathy (false consciousness) of the dominated classes; and finally, it contributes to the legitimation of the established order by establishing distinctions (hierarchies) and legitimising those hierarchies.'[816] This 'culture' is composed of the everyday norms and patterns, conformity to which is easier the higher the level of 'cultural capital'[817] an individual or group can garner: the point here being that it is *easier* for members of the dominant group to develop and maintain cultural capital.

Furthermore, both the norms in question and their reinforcement of the hegemonic relations in society are instilled into the processes by which the population come to form their ideas about the world. Bourdieu uses the examples of education and language to demonstrate this point, arguing that 'The laws of the transmission of linguistic capital are a particular case of the laws of the

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[815] Bourdieu, P (2000) *Outline of a Theory of Practice* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press p.165
[816] Bourdieu, P (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press p.167
[817] Phrase used consistently throughout Bourdieu's work

legitimate transmission of cultural capital between the generations...'[818] Given these factors, it may even be difficult to improve one's position in society while adhering to the norms of the dominant culture. Bourdieu continues: 'Given that the educational system possesses the delegated authority necessary to engage in a universal process of durable inculcation in matters of language, and given that it tends to vary the duration and intensity of this inculcation in proportion to inherited cultural capital, it follows that the social mechanisms of cultural transmission tend to reproduce the structural disparity between the very unequal *knowledge* of the legitimate language and the much more uniform *recognition* of this language.'[819] The hierarchical element here, then, is the extent to which the officially accepted language and linguistic patterns are understood: in other words, the dominant group in society has an in-depth 'knowledge' (to use Bourdieu's terminology) of how the language functions, while others merely 'recognise' that this set of linguistic norms, rather than those which they may deploy among themselves, is the official one which they must use if they wish to be taken seriously in wider society.

As domination often lies in the everyday details that can go unnoticed, so does resistance. Scott was one of the first authors to make clear the need to uncover the 'hidden transcripts'[820] which run through many scenes of apparently passive acceptance by the dominated classes in order to discover the low-level resistance which is going on below the surface. He argues that 'What is missing from the account of "normal" passivity is the slow, grinding, quiet struggle over rents, crops, labour, and taxes in which submission and stupidity are often no more than a pose – a necessary tactic.'[821] Beneath the cover of this tactical passivity, however, lurks a variety of small acts of subversion ranging from petty insults levelled at those in power out of their earshot through more open mockery and satire to anonymous and hard-to-detect acts of sabotage. He argues that it is a mistake to ignore these apparently minor acts or write them off as ineffectual, pointing out that while 'By virtue of their institutional invisibility, activities on anything less than a massive scale are, if they are noticed at all, rarely accorded any social significance',[822] it is nonetheless the case that when 'Multiplied many thousandfold, such petty acts of resistance by peasants may in the end make an utter shambles of the policies dreamed up by their would-be superiors.'[823] The unobtrusiveness of such modes of resistance therefore contributes to their effectiveness, allowing them to have a significant impact before registering on the radar of those in charge. While there is a psychological element to these modes of resistance, there is also a practical function in terms of strengthening the dominated classes and generating the power to carve out concessions to bring

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[818] Bourdieu (1991) p.61
[819] *Ibid*. p.61
[820] Scott, J. (1990) *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* New Haven and London: Yale University Press throughout
[821] Scott, J. (1985) *Weapons of the Weak* New Haven and London: Yale University Press p.37
[822] *Ibid*. p.35
[823] *Ibid* pp.35-36

short term gains. At any rate, Scott argues, 'What everyday forms of resistance share with the more dramatic public confrontations is of course that they are intended to mitigate or deny claims made by superordinate classes or to advance claims *vis-a-vis* those superordinate classes.'[824] It should also be noted that the modes of resistance described by Scott account for 'dormant' periods: in other words, stretches of time when there is no visible uprising.

The tactics used by the Situationists and similar movements of that era contain echoes of some of the strategies for resistance described by Scott, albeit done more blatantly. The Provos in the Netherlands generated one particular incident which succeeded in making the local police force look somewhat ridiculous in their over-reaction to what turned out to be an innocent event. Van Herpen describes how

'The Provo movement started in 1965 as an absurdist movement around "anti-smoke" rituals organised near "het Lieverdje", a statue of an Amsterdam streetboy, offered by a cigarette company to the city. These 'happenings' on Saturday night on the Spui square attracted more and more spectators and began to make the police nervous. According to the Dutch novelist Harry Mulisch, the happenings started with the "marihuette play": "But marihuana didn't almost play a role, unlike hay that looked like it ("marihoe"), and the rules were not understood by anybody, what was also intended.'[825]

The police became part of the happening: they found no grounds for action since it would be ridiculous to arrest people for smoking hay. Their involvement, however, highlights the hypocrisy of objecting to marijuana use in the vicinity of a statue promoting what many believe to be a more dangerous substance.

However, the element of Situationist theory and practice most clearly adopted by today's movements is the idea of revolution as a celebration rather than as a sacrifice.[826] The enemies according to this view are 'Causes' and 'a higher good', for which revolutionaries sacrifice themselves; and, Vaneigem in particular argues, also sacrifice revolution itself. Indeed, the existence of a higher purpose – or a purpose perceived to be higher than one's own lived existence – is alleged to negate the very concept of revolution, perpetuating instead the established order.

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[824] Scott (1985) p.32
[825] Van Herpen, M. (2008) 'Paris May 68 and Provo Amsterdam 65' online at http://www.cicerofoundation.org/lectures/Marcel_Van_Herpen_May_68_and_Provo_Amsterdam_65.pdf (accessed 13/10/09)
[826] Advanced in more detail at Harding, E. (2008) 'The Situationist Legacy: Revolution as Celebration' online at http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/shared/shared_cssgj/Documents/working_papers/wp002.pdf last accessed 17/03/10 (Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice Working Paper no. 2)

Vaneigem argues that 'When the rebel believes that he is fighting for a higher good, the authoritarian principle gets a fillip. Humanity has never been short of justifications for giving up what is human. In fact some people possess a veritable reflex of submission, an irrational terror of freedom; this masochism is everywhere visible in everyday life.'[827] Here we see an idea central to this perspective on revolution: that 'what is human', far from being a frivolous distraction from revolution, is on the contrary its essence: for Vaneigem, 'Revolutionary moments are carnivals in which the individual life celebrates its unification with a regenerated society.'[828] The question of revolution without sacrifice raises questions, as discussed previously: realistically, in any struggle there is some element of sacrifice involved. The difference is one of emphasis: in particular, the shift away from the idea of a 'higher cause' and towards an ethic of affinity. Furthermore, there is no explicit urge to sacrifice and no glory in doing so.

According to this view, then, what is truly revolutionary is the overcoming of socially instilled reflexes of submission, and a developing excitement – rather than fear – at the idea of freedom. A clue to the form such a revolution might take lies in the oft-repeated Situationist idea of living 'without dead time': resisting the urge to spend time mindlessly consuming the Spectacle, being part of the illusion, living up to socially expected goals and acquiring symbols of status. If submission to the Spectacle is resisted, the illusion is undermined and everyday life can be to a greater or lesser extent liberated. A revolution on these terms is, Vaneigem argues, a 'poetic creation'[829] springing from 'lived experience'.[830]

The rhizomatic[831] nature of horizontal politics is relevant to the role of the different varieties of cultural activism as part of a full spectrum of resistance. The Free Association, for example, argue that 'For years the state have tried to label us as "good" protesters or "bad".'[832] 'This time around, however, it was us who shifted the roles, both individually and collectively: masked-up militant; pink and fluffy fairy; obliging bystander; outraged citizen.'[833] They conclude that 'for long periods we wrong-footed the state with our versatility. The advantage that we have is that we're quicker to respond, more flexible and far more dynamic than they can ever be.'[834] There are a number of rhizomatic characteristics here. The first is the sheer adaptability of this type of movement, one which can encompass all the different 'roles' and switch between them on the surface within a

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[827] Vaneigem (1967)

[828] *Ibid*.

[829] *Ibid*.

[830] *Ibid*.

[831] From Deleuze, G. and F. Guattari (2004) *A Thousand Plateaus* London and New York: Continuum

[832] The Free Association (2005) 'On the Road' in D. Harvie *et al* (eds) (2005) *Shut Them Down!* Leeds: Dissent pp.17-26 (quote from pp.21-22)

[833] *Ibid*.

[834] *Ibid*.

potentially very short space of time as circumstances demand. The principle of heterogeneity is particularly evident. The principle of connectedness is also demonstrated, as the various points are connected to one another, largely through having a common purpose in a particular mobilisation but also through more complex networks that are not so immediately visible. For the most part, although cultural activism yields a set of tactics distinct from those deployed by more 'serious' horizontal movements, it is nonetheless tied closely into a wider context courtesy of ideas such as full-spectrum resistance and diversity of tactics. However, it should be remembered that one characteristic of a horizontal movement is the equally rhizomatic ability to split and reconvene as needed. Here we see the principle of asignifying rupture in practice: horizontal movements can operate using vastly different modes of resistance, but can also blur the lines between these.

Much of the theory generated by horizontal movements focuses on the idea of prefiguration: frequently summarised as 'be the change you want to see', prefiguration runs counter to ideas of waiting for a revolution, working instead to produce change to a greater or lesser extent in the world as it is. This is almost by necessity resistance at the grassroots level: a mode of resistance into which cultural activism fits as neatly as anything can in this context. Cultural tactics contribute to the prefigurative politics of horizontal movements in two ways. Firstly, they help to sow the seeds in people's consciousness that alternatives to the current way of being exist: this could be to the greater extent of actually demonstrating these alternatives, or the lesser extent of 'merely' drawing attention to the existence of critiques of 'normal' life. Secondly, it is a form of resistance that *must* happen at the grassroots level if it is not to contradict itself.

In terms of sowing seeds of other ways of being, I will start with the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army, their participation in the G8 protests at Gleneagles and the educational tour which preceded the mobilisation. At the simplest level, 'Commodore Koogie' refers to the process of sowing these seeds as 'magic', describing how 'Everyone's clown was different and special and every clown contributed to make magic happen while the governments of the G8 tried to make everyone forget their illegal wars and open up the way for more thefts – of lives, land and resources. The clowns made magic happen while four suicide bombers planned their final exits. It happened when clowns kissed the Perspex shields of the riot police, leaving lipstick kisses. It happened when they bowed down in front of a line of police that just happened to be called away at that moment – making it look like a rapid retreat before the unbearable worshipping of the clowns. It happened whenever a policeman laughed or smiled against his will.'[835] This 'magic' is more prosaic than the Commodore makes out, but this does not make it less effective: its prefigurative value lies in the fact that it is attention-grabbing even in the wider context of a protest, that it challenges onlookers' perceptions of normality and of authority; and that, as

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[835] 'Commodore Koogie' (2005) p.131

discussed in the previous section, it is a participatory action which rejects the idea that onlookers are mere spectators but instead draws them in and encourages them to become involved in the scene. 'Kolonel Klepto' and 'Major Up Evil' elaborate on the more serious side of CIRCA tactics in the context of their educational tour: 'By using popular forms of culture in public spaces we attempted to make our ideas and values visible, attractive, and hopefully irresistible! We felt that turning up in the middle of a city with free food, showing films and putting on performances that glorify civil disobedience, was a strategy that challenges a system which works so hard on demonising us and pushing us to the margins.'[836] In the first instance a critique is being offered of this system and the society it has developed in: however, as with other instances of prefigurative politics discussed throughout this project, there is a clear intention to go beyond this critique; simultaneously challenging the perception that practical alternatives do not exist and outlining what the potential alternatives might be. Verson defines this process in terms of 'insurrectionary imagination', which she describes thus: 'Baking a cake and building a house are infinitely easier than creating a sane and just world, so how can we be expected to do it without instructions? It is no wonder that people love political manifestos that prescribe exactly how to do it. But what would happen if you sat down and visualised the world that you wanted to live in? Were you even ever taught how to visualise? Have you practiced closing your eyes and seeing a picture in your mind? What if you could not only see that picture clearly but also truly believed that you could create it in your waking life?'[837] This potential is crucial to a horizontal political theory, as it shapes the approach which is taken to the normative aspects of the political outlook.

The other key prefigurative element of a horizontal political theory is the necessity for this type of resistance to happen at a grassroots level: the examples described in the previous section would be more difficult to organise using a command and control structure or in a standardised way: they are more suited to the affinity group, cluster and bloc. The emphasis is on participation and creativity, with the rhizomatic potential to adapt quickly to circumstances. Verson reinforces this view: 'To me, cultural activism is where art, activism, performance and politics meet, mingle and interact. It builds bridges between these forms but also exists as the bridge itself, stuck permanently between two places. What links activism and art is the shared desire to create the reality that you see in your mind's eye and believe in your capacity to build that world with your own hands.'[838] The prefigurative approach to cultural activism challenges the allegations of pretentiousness that could be levelled where the word 'culture' is attached: this is not a theory held by a vanguard to be outside the remit of the 'ordinary' person. Instead, anybody who shares the relevant core beliefs is able to participate – as opposed to spectating or consuming – and build other worlds 'with [their] own hands'. This in itself is the seed of a new way of being and a

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[836] 'Kolonel Klepto' and 'Major Up Evil' (2005) p.250
[837] Verson (2007) p.175
[838] *Ibid*. p.172

critique of the existing one, and in particular an alternative to the way in which relations of domination are reproduced in everyday life.

In summary, a number of distinctive theoretical strands can be drawn from the literature of horizontal cultural activism; key among these is the intersection between cultural activism and prefigurative politics, with the former playing a key role in generating critiques of and, more importantly, alternatives to the current hegemonic culture.

Answering challenges

The overarching criticism of culture-based activism, which feeds to a greater or lesser extent into all of the issues discussed here, is that it in one way or another diverts time, energy and other resources away from what the critics at hand regard as 'serious' political activism. This debate is framed by Klein in terms of a long-standing 'tension between the forces of the merry prankster and the hard-core revolutionary. Nagging questions re-emerge: are play and pleasure themselves revolutionary acts, as the Situationists might argue? Is screwing up the culture's information flow inherently subversive? Or is the mix of art and politics just a matter of making sure, to paraphrase Emma Goldman, that somebody has hooked up a good sound system at the revolution?'[839] This section examines these ideas more closely by unpicking the main strands. The first point to note is that cultural activism has suffered from association with what has been called 'lifestylism', and the individualist currents that sometimes appear. It has also been argued that making protest 'fun' detracts from the serious reasoning behind it, and furthermore that *détournement* can to an extent work in reverse and be recuperated by the dominant culture. This section will explore some of these objections, alongside the defences levelled by cultural activists; key among these being the tendency of cultural activism to co-exist and function alongside more 'serious' modes of resistance.

The idea of 'lifestyle' anarchism was first mooted in today's context by Murray Bookchin.[840] This concept encompasses a continuum from the belief that small individual acts can bring about genuine change to the idea that revolution is purely an individual process focused as much on one's own 'mental environment' as on the wider context of the outside world. Bookchin posits the controversy as an 'unbridgeable chasm' between 'two basically contradictory tendencies: a personalistic commitment to individual autonomy and a collectivist commitment to social

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[839] Klein (2000) p.283
[840] Bookchin, M. (1995) 'Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm' online at http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bookchin/soclife.htm last accessed 17/02/2010

freedom.'[841] Many horizontal activists would dispute his notion of autonomy as incompatible with social freedom. Furthermore, there are discernable differences between the modes of resistance used by these movements and the extremes he portrays. Bookchin characterises lifestyle anarchism in the following terms: 'Ad hoc adventurism, personal bravura, an aversion to theory oddly akin to the antirational biases of postmodernism, celebrations of theoretical incoherence (pluralism), a basically apolitical and anti-organisational commitment to imagination, desire, and ecstasy, and an intensely self-orientated enchantment of everyday life, reflect the toll that social reaction has taken on Euro-American anarchism over the past two decades.'[842] He links this to other aspects of the political and cultural climate of the 1990s, in particular the selfish tendencies allegedly fostered by a capitalist society along with the apparent triumph of the said capitalist values. By his account, lifestyle anarchism's 'preoccupations with the ego and its uniqueness and its polymorphous concepts of resistance are steadily eroding the socialistic character of the libertarian tradition.'[843] There are two main allegations being made here: firstly that rebellions and insurrections focused along these lines are in themselves ineffectual; and secondly and more seriously, that they actively impede the effectiveness of 'genuine' resistance.

The 'ineffectual' allegation is more difficult for cultural activists to dispute as immediate and tangible results can be thin on the ground, limiting the evidence base from which to challenge Bookchin's assertion that 'this kind of narcissistic anarchism is socially innocuous, often merely a safety valve for discontent toward the prevailing social order.'[844] However, from the perspective of the activists concerned the implication seems to be that the discussion should move away from immediate and tangible results and examine the subtler effects and the longer-term relevance of a series of small cracks in society's relations of domination. Molyneaux describes the heart of the debate in the following terms: 'some people thought the Carnival plans weren't important and we must all save ourselves for our proverbial wedding night on Wednesday. In retrospect, this showed a narrow view of what a "blockade" could be – couldn't it also be about "blocking" how capitalism functions and runs?'[845] This feeds into the more serious issue of the potential for cultural activism to 'undermine' the wider movement. However, Molyneaux raises a valid point regarding the 'usefulness' of this type of action. In terms of prefiguration, a 'Carnival against Capital' can be said to highlight the existence of alternatives to the current order. In practical terms, this particular action – containing 'fun' elements but a serious underlying message – also physically blocked certain functions of capitalism in a city for a day while inviting those around to question the status quo. There is no single for the effectiveness of an action: however, providing a

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[841] *Ibid.*

[842] *Ibid.*

[843] *Ibid.*

[844] *Ibid.*

[845] Molyneaux, L. (2005) 'The Carnival Continues...' in Harvie, D., Milburn, K., Trott, B., and Watts, D. (eds.) (2005) *Shut Them Down!* Leeds: Dissent pp.109-123 (quote from p.116)

physical impediment has generally been accepted by activists as a form of success. Similar points can be made regarding 'Cre8 Summat', the community garden previously discussed. Although it lacked permanence and would not have the efficacy of a protest camp in preventing the development, by the standards of those concerned it lived up to its key aim of challenging the idea that this land was useless. Furthermore, it aimed to have a psychological effect on how local residents perceive their environment. Trocchi *et al* highlight how 'the Cre8 Summat helped to empower people in the neighbourhood around the project and demonstrated that people do have the ability to bring about positive change without waiting for the "sympathy" and the "aid" of any politician.'[846] In this context, the 'mental environment' may be a more important terrain for resistance than it is given credit for.

The second allegation to be frequently levelled at culturally-inclined activist movements is that, by using tactics based on frivolous or ephemeral elements, they do not merely limit their own effectiveness but also undermine the wider movement of movements by making a joke out of serious issues. The most heavily criticised out of example is the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army, known as CIRCA for short. CIRCA attend protests dressed in flamboyant combinations of army surplus, clown makeup and accessories such as feather boas and water pistols. Like Bakhtin's carnival revellers or the hay-smoking Provos, they attempt to highlight the ridiculousness of the dominant order and its public manifestations, particularly the police. Verson, a participant in CIRCA at the Gleneagles mobilisation, shows how the dichotomy between the clowns and other participants is often framed: 'OK, the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army is an absurd army but it is also a serious response to the criminalisation of protesters and dissent. So I was not prepared for the angry comments of a very serious acquaintance of mine, dressed in black: "This isn't funny. We are at war and we need to be able to fight... You are encouraging people to think that this is a joke, and the state is very, very serious."'[847] In CIRCA's defence, as previously discussed, the rationale behind such actions hinges on the use of factors such as humanity and positivity in confrontations with power: as such, those concerned argue that illegally planting flowers or feather-dusting a police officer's riot shield have *as much* impact as throwing the nearest projectile object; but it is a *different* impact and one which in some circumstances stands a better chance of getting the underlying political message across.

The final controversy relates of 'recuperation': the re-absorption of counter-culture and subcultures and by extension the rebellions that have grown from these back into the dominant

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[846] Trocchi, A., Redwolf, G. and Alamire, P. 'Reinventing Dissent! An Unabridged Story of Resistance' in D. Harvie, K. Milburn, B. Trott and D. Watts (eds) *Shut Them Down! The G8, Gleneagles 2005 and the movement of movements* Leeds: Dissent! pp.61-100 (quote from p.76)
[847] Verson, J. (2007) 'Why we need cultural activism' in The Trapese Collective (eds.) (2007) *Do It Yourself: A Handbook for Changing Our World* London: Pluto pp.171-186 (quote from p.171)

culture, often through a process which to add insult to injury involves commodification. Examples include commercial use of Situationist slogans and imagery[848], or the reproduction by advertisers of apparently 'jammed' campaigns. Bookchin, seeing the recuperation of activist imagery from earlier eras, argues that 'lifestyle anarchism is well on its way to becoming just this kind of rebellious chic, in which jaded Americans rakishly adorn themselves with the symbols and idioms of personal resistance, all the more to accommodate themselves to the status quo.'[849] It may appear natural, at least to doubters of this approach to activism, that modes of resistance based on images and cultural artefacts would slip back into becoming part of the hegemonic culture: or that activists may cease to notice or care when this process takes place. If this is the case, it adds a new dimension to the problems discussed above. Klein, for example, suggests that 'To add further evidence that culture jamming is more drop in the bucket than spanner in the works, marketers are increasingly deciding to join in the fun.'[850] In addition, 'It turns out that culture jamming – with its combination of hip-hop attitude, punk anti-authoritarianism and a well of visual gimmicks – has great sales potential.'[851] However, it underestimates both past and present movements to assume that they accept this recuperation. The Situationists deployed the simple method of ceasing to exist: 'Guy Debord dissolved the Situationist International when people began trying to join in order to become associated with such a prestigious radical group'[852] This prevented the SI in its original form from becoming de-radicalised: however, aside from the autocratic manner in which Debord is said to have handled the dissolution, it can also be argued that such a 'solution' does nothing to prevent the later co-option of slogans and imagery. Today's culture jammers, on the other hand, have been known to take measures against such occurrences through re-*détournement*.[853]

Many of the issues raised here hinge on suspicions that this mode of resistance is somehow separate from the wider movement of movements. This misperception, if Klein is to be believed, is shared beyond the movements themselves: 'Perhaps the gravest miscalculation on the part of both markets and media is the insistence on seeing culture jamming solely as harmless satire, a game that exists in isolation from a genuine political movement or ideology. Certainly for some jammers, parody is perceived, in rather grandiose fashion, as a powerful end in itself.'[854] For others, however, 'it is simply a new tool for packaging anticorporate salvos, one that is more

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[848] See Appendix 2
[849] Bookchin, M. (1998) 'Whither Anarchism? A Reply to Recent Anarchist Critics' online at http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bookchin/whither.html last accessed 17/02/2010
[850] Klein (2000) p.297
[851] *Ibid*. and see appendix 3 here.
[852] CrimethInc (2001) *Days of War, Nights of Love* Olympia: CrimethInc pp169-170
[853] Figure 2, Appendix 3
[854] Klein (2000) p.309

effective than most at breaking through the media barrage.' [855] Here, again, is the 'diversity of tactics' argument alluded to in earlier chapters: in other words, the argument that cultural activism – however useful or otherwise it may be in a stand-alone context – is just one part of something far wider, which is for the most part used in conjunction with more 'serious' methods of protest and which is largely used when the circumstances make it appropriate.

Conclusion

  I argue here that culture occupies an adjacent position in the morphological landscape of horizontal politics, helping to shape a number of the core concepts but most notably resistance. The idea of culture as a terrain of resistance has a long history, based on the idea that since relations of domination operate most effectively at the level of the everyday opposition to these relations must also take place at this level. However, today's horizontal movements are still distinctive enough to warrant treating horizontal politics as a discrete ideological configuration. Horizontal politics can be distinguished by a number of elements, most notably: a tendency towards direct confrontation with authority; an explicitly political focus, which distances these movements somewhat from their more artistically-inclined forebears; a belief in 'full-spectrum' resistance in which intervention is necessary in a number of points in the dominant order, of which cultural tactics generally cover the three which can be neglected by other methods; and a focus on prefigurative politics, that is on bringing about change in everyday life.

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[855] *Ibid*.

Conclusion

Introduction

  The basic premises of this project are as follows: firstly, the structure of the project as a whole is thematic, based around two core and two adjacent concepts drawn from the literature of 'horizontal' political movements. Secondly, the focus is on the question of how such movements distinguish themselves. This conclusion works aims to summarise my proposed answer to this central question.

The movements

  The movements examined here self-define as 'horizontal', with the baseline that they adopt non-hierarchical ideas and practices in campaigning for social justice. Many groups adhere to the hallmarks of People's Global Action.[856] This 'movement of movements' is a constellation of affinity groups, clusters, blocs and campaigns, some established on a more-or-less permanent basis while others come together for a single mobilisation. Despite this there is a high level of internal consistency. Particular attention is paid in this project to the horizontal component(s) of the mobilisation against the 2005 G8 summit at Gleneagles, as it is during phases such as this that ideas crystallise into action. However, evidence has also been drawn from periods between mobilisations.

The themes

  The chapters of this project are arranged thematically, the chosen themes being concepts which occupy significant places in the morphological landscape of horizontal politics. The first two, hierarchy (or more accurately an opposition to and rejection of hierarchy) and organisation, are core concepts, which can be broadly defined as those without which an ideology would become something significantly different. Power and culture are adjacent concepts, which in general terms means that they play a significant role in shaping the internal configuration of and interaction between the core concepts. In the early stages I identified all four as possible core concepts, influencing my choice of themes. Further investigation revealed that their status was closer to that of an adjacent concept. However, given the importance of adjacent concepts in the overall morphological configuration of a political ideology, they add an extra dimension to possible understandings of horizontal politics as an ideology. These four themes form part of a wider morphological landscape.

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[856] See introduction

The morphological landscape

I have identified three core concepts – (anti-)hierarchy, organisation and resistance – and four main adjacent concepts: power, culture, prefiguration and direct action, as well as a number of perimeter and marginal concepts which are discussed in more detail in the introduction. At this stage, it is worth a recap on why the four concepts listed above were chosen as key themes here. Hierarchy appeared from the outset to be an obvious choice, for several reasons. Firstly, in terms of sheer volume of referencing, resistance to various forms of hierarchy seems to outweigh the other concepts in the literature. Secondly, the anti-hierarchical tendencies of these movements appear to influence every other aspect of their ideological character: this concept can interact with any other within the configuration, shaping every aspect of a movement's theory and practice and occupying the background during every discussion. Were it to occupy a different position or be removed completely, the character of horizontal politics would change beyond recognition. Having made this the first chapter, organisation appeared a logical choice to follow it, crystallising as it does many practical issues raised in the discussion of hierarchy. The two concepts share the main components – consensus, affinity, autonomy and diversity – but the manifestations of these ideas are more specific in the case of organisation. For example, while the wider idea of consensus is important to the conception of hierarchy and resistance to hierarchy which forms part of horizontal politics, the related conception of organisation hinges partly on the particular example of consensus decision-making as an alternative to more allegedly 'vertical' methods of reaching a decision. Likewise, affinity as a general principle is a key component of this conception of hierarchy; represented in the internal morphology of horizontal organisation in the form of the affinity group. The third core concept, resistance, was left out to avoid going over the same ground multiple times, since resistance is a constant strand throughout the project. What is covered in more depth is two adjacent concepts – power and culture – which are integral to shaping the conception of resistance in use here. As such, the conception of resistance used by horizontal movements is examined from several angles to what is possibly a greater extent than it would be in a separate chapter.

Power, while not frequently referenced in so many words, is in many instances a clear subtext to discussions among and statements made by activists in horizontal movements. One particularly distinctive feature is the ongoing dialogue regarding how to deal with power at a 'micro' level within the movements themselves. This issue is hinted at in particular in the discussions of hierarchy and organisation, and a separate chapter dealing with horizontal conceptions of power allowed for some of the resulting loose ends to be tied up. Culture might appear the odd concept out: however, it is this appearance of difference which makes it useful to examine culture

separately. Culture has a different internal morphology from the other three concepts: the main components include everyday life, carnival and the spectacle, while issues such as autonomy and affinity are 'relegated' to the background. However, while the chapter on culture does not focus closely on the ongoing themes of this project, it does pick up some threads which can aid a full explanation of the conceptual configuration of horizontal politics. In particular, the argument that culture and everyday life are the key sites of domination and should as such be the preferred terrain for resistance has implications for the way in which core concepts such as resistance and hierarchy are conceived. One distinctive feature of horizontal politics with regard to hierarchy is the perceived need to resist 'hierarchies of value'; here, a compelling argument can be made that culture is a factor in the emergence of such hierarchies. Many of the tactics being used by horizontal movements are described as 'cultural', suggesting that the idea of culture has just as significant an influence as that of power.

The sources

  The next point to be made regards how I have identified the core concepts of a horizontal ideology. My main sources are from the public output of horizontal movements: the material put out by the activists themselves. This divides into two broad categories. Firstly there is the polished material: this includes press releases and the like, but is largely composed of edited volumes of reflections on larger protests – which increasingly seem to be designed for 'outside' audiences – and how-to guides for new groups wishing to organise themselves along horizontal lines. Secondly there is the 'rough' material, the blogs, online discussions, internally-directed leaflets and hastily-posted Indymedia items. These are not necessarily constructed with the same level of thought as the polished sources, but sometimes this in itself is helpful in uncovering what is considered important since it has not been mediated by a need to convince the outside world.

  In general the time span of this project encompasses the first decade of the 21st century, with particular attention to the middle years of that decade. The older material is often the most useful as a result of a time lag allowing more thorough and detailed analyses, critiques and comparisons to develop. However, I am aware that the movements in question are constantly developing and facing new challenges which are relevant to their morphological profile.

  I have also made some use of works of 'activist research' and 'militant ethnography': academic work conducted by individuals or groups who, while sympathetic to and often connected in some way with horizontal movements, are nonetheless taking a perspective which is a combination of insider and outsider. The intention of authors such as Day, Juris or Gordon is undeniably to interpret rather than to promote the ideas put forward by horizontal movements: however, this

interpretation is drawn from rather than imposed onto what they see and hear while conducting their research. Research methodology for Gordon and Juris in particular has included a level of deep ethnography, involving immersion in the activities of the movements concerned, meaning that if nothing else they are well-versed in the horizontal perspective. The usefulness of these volumes here is twofold and may at first glance appear somewhat contradictory. At one level it offers the same variety of analysis as the activist-authored volumes previously discussed: exposition, evaluation and critique from the perspective of someone involved in the actions concerned. The downside here is that, since the participant observation was generally overt in that the researchers were open about their intentions with the rest of the group, their exposure to some of the discussions involved may have been limited. However, the factor which compensates for this is the application of academic rigour to the analysis of what is observed.

The questions

The central question underlying this project is whether a distinct 'ideology' of horizontal politics can be said to exist, and in particular how horizontal activists and groups distinguish themselves. These distinctions are divided between those relating to ethos and tactics, and those based on theoretical concerns. The challenges which such movements face are also investigated. This point is relevant because often the internal morphological landscape of an ideology can be highlighted most clearly by the ways in which those involved deal with problems. The clearest example can be found when examining the issues surrounding the development of informal hierarchies within activist groups, based on imbalances of 'power-to' and/or 'power-with'. As discussed in the chapter on power, commentators on earlier movements have regarded the problem as one of an absence of formal structures: removing these is said to lead not to a non-hierarchical group but to a more insidious form of hierarchy. The solution, by this reckoning, is to have formal structures (and by extension hierarchies) in place, on the assumption that these remain above board and accountable. For a horizontal movement, however, this solution would be unacceptable as the resistance to hierarchy is part of the core and is not an issue on which to compromise.

The original contribution

The main contribution of this project is to the field of ideology studies, to be returned to in more detail shortly. Firstly, however, I will deal with the minor contribution it makes in the area of social movement studies. The literature of social movements[857] – and in particular 'New Social Movements' (NSMs) has traditionally aimed to trace the patterns of movement activity, the

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[857] See for example Della Porta, D. and Diani, M. (1999) *Social Movements: An Introduction* Oxford: Blackwells or Tarrow, S. (1994) *Power in Movement* Cambridge University Press

repertoires of action each movement uses, the changes to these repertoires over time and with changing circumstances, and other related factors. Tarrow in particular focuses on the 'cyclical' nature of NSM activity[858], which in brief refers to a cycle of activity interspersed with 'down' periods in which the aims and repertoires of a movement are clarified and adjusted. My work contributes to this canon in the following ways: building on existing literature which identifies a 'new'-er variety of social movement and summarising and examining the repertoires of such movements; examining and explaining in detail the purpose the more significant actions in these repertoires; providing a detailed analysis of what goes on in the 'down' periods and explaining how these are significant in terms of the more 'visible' actions; and creating a basis for further examination of the patterns these movements are likely to follow in future.

The stronger contribution, however, is to the field of ideology studies: namely, the addition of horizontal politics *as such* to the ideological landscape through the investigation of a range of internal sources and an evaluation of factors such as internal coherency and distinctiveness from close counterparts. To verify this claim, it is worth briefly going over what *has* previously been done, particularly as this is all work on which I have to some extent built prior to generating any original findings. Certainly the older ideologies from which certain strands of this one originally grew have been covered in varying amounts of detail: socialism by Freeden[859], classical anarchism by White[860] and 'new' anarchism by Gordon.[861] However, the ways in which horizontal politics is distinct from these are given in detail in preceding chapters. The next section reviews how my conclusions differ from Gordon's, even when dealing with similar material: the short version is that he regards the movements we both examine as being to the greatest extent a permutation of anarchism, while I argue that it is a free-standing ideological configuration, albeit one in an early stage of development. Furthermore, I argue that horizontal politics is a full or thick (rather than thin) ideology. The ideological morphology of social movements *has* been the subject of previous study: Freeden, for example, has conducted detailed analyses of feminist and 'green' politics.[862] He regards these as 'thin' ideologies, focussing on a limited range of issues with little to say about the majority of political and social life. It is not my place here to examine his or other claims regarding those specific cases. I argue, however, that horizontal politics goes further than either and can be regarded as a thick ideology, as it would if lived to the full require a fuller overhaul of society than any hitherto-examined thin ideology.

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[858] Tarrow (1994) Throughout
[859] Freeden, M. (1996) *Ideologies and Political Theory* Oxford: Clarendon chs.11-12
[860] White, S. (2007) 'Making anarchism respectable? The social philosophy of Colin Ward' in *Journal of Political Ideologies* 12(1) February 2007 pp.11-28
[861] Gordon, U. (2008) *Anarchy Alive! Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory* London: Pluto
[862] Freeden (1996) chs.13 and 14

The usefulness of this contribution hinges to an extent on the question of whether horizontal politics can in fact constitute a distinct ideology: this question will now be examined in more detail.

Does horizontal politics constitute a distinct ideology?

The preceding chapters have discussed some of the factors which contribute to the possibility of horizontal politics being regarded as a distinct ideology, in terms of theory, practice, and the areas of tension where the two intersect. The overall question, however, still needs more of an answer. There are two issues here: the first is whether horizontal politics is distinct from other political ideologies; and the second is whether it can in fact be accurately described as an ideology. I have decided to tackle the question of distinctiveness first because as the less convoluted debate.

Is horizontal politics distinct from other ideologies?

Distinctiveness does not imply a complete absence of commonality between horizontal politics and any other given ideology. Shared core concepts, even when similar conceptions are in use, do not rule out a distinction between two ideologies: neither does a shared past or linked origins. Freeden summarises the complexities involved thus: 'It would be wrong to take for granted that the grand ideological traditions, or their virulent counterparts, fill the entire field. Occasionally distinct ideological formations are carved out of an area that straddles two already existing ideologies. In other cases, a full ideological family may act as host to a less developed one. A less developed, or what I shall call thin, ideology, may also exist on its own.'[863] There is also scope for initially less developed ideologies to develop and leave their hosts; and to have crossed between more than one of these in the first place. The factors which distinguish horizontal politics from those ideologies with which it has a level of ideological crossover have been dealt with in each chapter regarding the approach taken to each individual concept. There is much commonality and some direct inheritance, but also enough digression to warrant considering horizontal politics as separate. More difficult is the separation of horizontal politics from some later permutations of anarchism. Gordon, for example, describes how 'Perhaps not surprisingly, contemporary anarchism is only in small part a direct continuation of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anarchist movements'.[864] Despite this, however, Gordon does regard the movements in question as intrinsically anarchist, at least sufficiently so for an alternative classfication to be unnecessary. At this point my perspective and Gordon's diverge. My reasons for labouring this point are firstly,

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[863] Freeden, M. (2003) *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction* Oxford University Press p.94
[864] Gordon (2008) p.5

that the movements in question are influenced by a diverse range of elements while not being identical with any of these; and secondly, while some participating individuals and groups self-define as anarchists, others do not. As self-identification played a vital part in identifying the sources I have used, I feel a pressing need to respect it where possible.

  To Gordon, rather than being a direct continuation of the anarchism of Bakunin and the like, 'the roots of today's anarchist networks can be found in the processes of intersection and fusion among radical social movements since the 1960s, whose paths had never been overtly anarchist.'[865] Here, I agree partially with Gordon: the movements in question *have* undeniably been influenced by those of the 1960s, which marked a number of turning-points described elsewhere in this project. The contentious point, however, is whether a movement fed by these non-anarchist influences can still regard itself as purely anarchist: or whether a new designation, however apparently non-committal in nature, might be needed. Gordon continues: 'There is something risky about using the words "anarchist" and "anarchism" to talk about a group of people many of whom *do not* normally call themselves anarchists, and sometimes actively shun the label. Words are, after all, important – and the fact that all these euphemisms are invented for the sole purpose of not saying "anarchism" deserves closer attention.'[866] Here, I dispute that the terms in question are merely euphemisms, and that a reluctance to self-identify as 'anarchist' *per se* can be reduced to an avoidance of negative connotations. If the role of anarchist ideas and practices is concealed for this reason, the concealment is not entirely successful, since I see no evidence of an effort to reject the term. It is used in a number of ways: as a designation for the origins of certain ideas; as a partial designator for the identity of certain movements and/or individuals (anarchist with or anarchist and, rather than less anarchist); and as a shorthand for the more general type of movement, with the proviso that it is such, and a lighthearted apology to other elements within horizontal movements which self-identify otherwise.[867] I do not argue that anarchism is ruled out or that it is insignificant to the development of horizontal politics, but rather that the two are connected but ultimately separate. Neither am I arguing that anarchism is superseded: it has merely acquired a new ideological neighbour with which to peacefully coexist.

  In the preceding paragraph I alluded to the terms 'anarchist with' and 'anarchist and': these might also be joined by 'anarchist but' and 'not anarchist but' in the spectrum of relationships to anarchism of those individuals and groups affiliated to horizontal politics. The lexicographical descent of anarchism and anarchy from *an arkos*, without rulers, is widely charted and does not

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[865] *Ibid.*

[866] *Ibid.* p.12

[867] Trocchi, A., Redwolf, G. and Alamire, P. (2005) 'Reinventing Dissent! An Unabridged Story of Resistance' in D. Harvie, K. Milburn, B. Trott and D. Watts (eds.) (2005) *Shut Them Down! The G8, Gleneagles 2005 and the movement of movements* Leeds: Dissent! Pp.61-100 quote from pp.63-64

need to be gone into in any depth here. It does, however, constitute an important root of the horizontal opposition to hierarchy. Were this root the full story, there would be little point in trying to identify a distinction between the two ideologies. However, the target has changed somewhat, from the straightforward and obvious hierarchies involved in the existence of state power to the wider relations of domination in society; and even the power relations within resistance movements themselves. The strategies have shifted from all-out revolution to more prefigurative tactics, which to a great extent reflect the different varieties of domination being dealt with. These are shifts which Gordon has charted, and to an extent we draw from the same evidence and reach different conclusions: for I argue that in reaching this point strategies and aims have been taken from strands other than anarchism, and while these do not take away anarchist characteristics do add extra layers which create a remove from anarchism. The emphasis on cultural resistance is a case in point: such tactics were never intrinsic to anarchism, but are drawn from a different tradition of grassroots resistance and politicised to a great extent by a Marxist group. Horizontal movements, however, have made it their own. The anarchist tradition has since the 1960s encompassed something of a debate regarding whether cultural tactics are compatible with serious political aims: here, the disjuncture is if not erased then at least narrowed by acknowledgement that resistance has many faces and each have a part to play. I argue that these factors place horizontal politics at a remove from 'anarchism' *per se* and require the acknowledgement that a distinct ideological configuration is possible.

Is horizontal politics an ideology?

  Before examining the morphological credentials of horizontal politics, it is worth reviewing some of the criteria Freeden puts forth for defining an ideology. Firstly, he argues that 'A political ideology is a set of ideas, beliefs, opinions and values that (1) exhibit a recurring pattern; (2) are held by significant groups; (3) compete over providing and controlling plans for public policy; (4) do so with the aim of justifying, contesting or changing the social and political arrangements and processes of a political community.'[868] I argue that, going on the evidence collected in the preceding four chapters, a recurring pattern is indeed evident. The 'significant group' point is be more controversial: however, the coverage horizontal movements garner in the mainstream media during and in the run-up to their above-the-surface phases; and indeed, the time and energy which is put into policing them. Also relevant is the need felt by more mainstream movements to hitch themselves to the open manifestations: witness the spat over who 'hijacked' whose G8-related action in 2005[869], and the concern expressed by some participants in the Camp for Climate Action

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[868] Freeden (2003) p.32
[869] For example Hewson, P. (2005) '"It's the politics, stupid". How Neoliberal politicians, NGOs and rock stars hijacked the global justice movement at Gleneagles... and how we let them' in D.

over a dilution of the movement stemming from the 'trendiness' of the cause at hand and of the methods employed by the horizontal activists involved.[870] Although the measures of significance are different here, I argue that they are nonetheless valid. On Freeden's third point, horizontal politics quite happily falls down: however, this may be less of a problem than it appears at first glance. The fourth point provides no obstacle: it is clear that horizontal activists are indeed set on contesting the current social and political arrangements in some quite radical ways.

  I will now focus briefly on the more contentious issues raised by the use of the term 'ideology' to describe horizontal politics. These hinge on its greatest difference from many more established ideologies: its avoidance of engagement with the processes of the state and competition for power in this arena, due to a significant component of the 'recurring pattern' alluded to above; namely a concerted resistance to hierarchy and hegemonic power relations which by extension results in a critique of traditional political processes. This places a question mark over the status of horizontal politics as an ideology, since it does not aim for 'control' over 'public policy' in any recognisable way. This point must be taken seriously, for the gist of it is reiterated by Freeden on a number of occasions. In particular, he argues that 'Ideologies are aimed at the public arena, and they usually are in contention over drawing up macro-programmes (as in party-political manifestos) for social and economic policy and for effective administration.'[871] There is no dispute that horizontal politics lives up to the first part of this claim, for the public arena is a key site of resistance. To refer to the aims of these movements in terms of 'social and economic policy' is something of a stretch, let alone 'administration': however, it is not impossible to see it as such. Granted the policies come from a different source than that to which we are in general used; nonetheless, although it contains a built-in opposition to being dogmatic or imposed from above, a distinct programme for the future of society can be discerned from the horizontal literature. Another possible point of contention is the following: that 'ideologies are major exercises in swaying key political decision-makers'[872] and that as such 'Political actors are recruited through ideologies to important causes with immense practical consequences.'[873] However, it is made less contentious by considering that horizontal movements tend as part of their overall aim to reconceptualise the idea of a 'political actor', focussing their strategies on grassroots participation and the shattering and redistribution of power. By this conception, it is possible to argue that horizontal politics takes the grassroots public as its decision-makers, in that they make the decision to prefigure and create change at the everyday level. Before moving on from this issue, it is worth noting that anarchism

Harvie, K. Milburn, B. Trott and D. Watts (eds) (2005) *Shut Them Down! The G8, Gleneagles 2005 and the movement of movements* Leeds: Dissent! Pp.135-150

[870] Shift Magazine and Dysophia (eds) (2010) *Criticism without Critique: A Climate Camp Reader* online at http://dysophia.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/cca_reader.pdf last accessed 20/01/10

[871] Freeden (2003) p.34

[872] *Ibid*.

[873] *Ibid*.

is generally recognised as an ideology in the sense used here, demonstrating that this criteria can be interpreted in ways which allow for suspicion of 'normal' political processes to be factored into a valid morphological landscape.

  The more pressing issues in determining whether horizontal politics can be defined as an ideology are the level of internal consistency and coherence, and the area it covers in terms of political life. On the first issue, Freeden argues that 'Ideologies are consequently the systems of thought through which specific meaning is conferred upon every political concept in their domain.'[874] Is this true of horizontal politics? I would argue that it is. This may appear strange for an ideology which privileges diversity in the internal morphology of at least two core concepts (hierarchy and organisation): however, the 'recurring pattern' alluded to earlier is evident in this as well as other areas. The anti-hierarchical nature of horizontal politics permeates the other concepts and their interaction with one another, and the concern for diversity is part of this. Other strands would demonstrate this argument equally well, are found in the preceding chapters. I admit there may be gaps, and possibly inconsistencies which cannot be easily put down to diversity: however, horizontal politics as an ideology is in an early stage of its development even if we consider the late 1990s to be the starting point. Over time, such issues will be ironed out: or those involved may agree to disagree without compromising the overall morphological structure. I argue, however, that a high level of internal consistency is already displayed in the theory and practice of horizontal political movements.

  The second question relates to whether horizontal politics is a full or a 'thin' ideology. Freeden defines a thin ideology as 'one that, like mainstream ideologies, has an identifiable morphology but, unlike mainstream ideologies, a restricted one. It severs itself from wider ideational contexts by deliberately removing or replacing many concepts we would expect an ideology to include.'[875] This definition, as previously mentioned, covers a number of social and political movements-turned-ideologies, with Freeden paying particular attention to feminism and environmentalism. It is reasonable, therefore, to consider the question of whether horizontal politics is better suited to this category than to that of a fully-fledged ideology. However, I argue otherwise and regard horizontal politics as a full ideology, albeit one at a relatively early stage of its development in which perspectives on certain issues have had little chance to emerge. To begin with, horizontal politics as a category has its roots in a far wider range of issues than the 'thin' ideologies mentioned above, making its morphological construction less restricted. Following on from this, it has developed to include commentary, critique and the prefiguration of alternatives across a spectrum of social and political areas: and also, crucially, expresses a desire for change that could

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[874] *Ibid*. p.53
[875] *Ibid*. p.98

not fully come about without a radical overhaul of society. I say 'crucial' because this is a factor which distinguishes horizontal politics from environmentalism or feminism. It is possible, for example, to have equality between men and women in a capitalist society, and furthermore for the two sexes to have equal 'rights' to participate in the destruction of the environment and the exploitation of poorer countries. Likewise, a sexist, racist or otherwise oppressive society can hypothetically (unacceptable as this would in practice be to ecological movements) generate solutions to environmental problems. Dismantling hierarchy, however, goes beyond a single set of changes but rather touches every aspect of social and political life. As such, although it has not necessarily developed to its fullest extent, I am prepared to argue that horizontal politics is – or at the very least has the potential to be – a full or 'thick' ideology.

Conclusion

To summarise, I have argued here that horizontal politics constitutes a distinct political ideology. It shares a family resemblance to anarchism and various socialist strands, but is not synonymous with any of these and cannot be reduced to an outcrop of one of them. It is an ideology in the sense that it has an identifiable conceptual morphology which is put to use in the public domain. Furthermore, although it is in a relatively early stage of its development, it has at least the potential to cover a full range of social and political issues. The core and adjacent concepts have been outlined in this conclusion and examined in detail in the preceding four chapters, based largely on the ways in which each one makes horizontal politics distinctive in both theoretical and practical terms.

Appendix 1: Adbusted
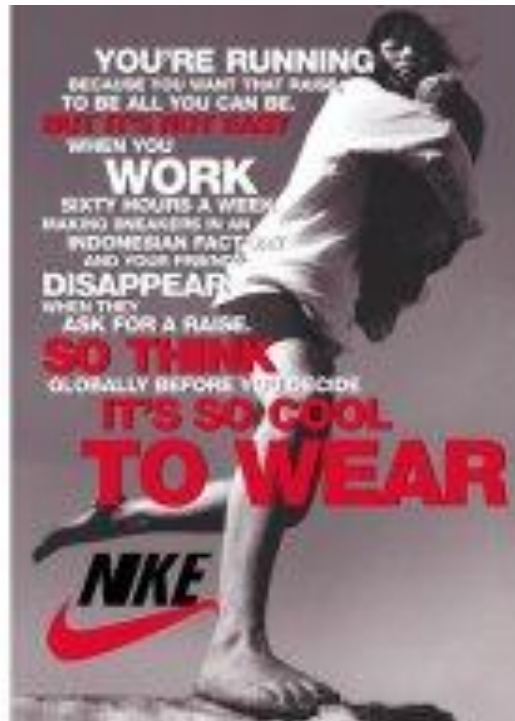
'Jammed' advert (Adbusters)

Appendix 2: Recuperation

Situationist imagery on chain-store t-shirt. D. Barnard-Wills (2006)

Appendix 3: Recuperation and re-*détournement*

Figure 1: Recuperation by Diesel (http://www.advertolog.com/diesel-clothing/print-outdoor/respect-your-mom-45167/ last accessed 28/03/10)

Figure 2: Reappropriating the recuperated image. (We Are Everywhere: http://artactivism.members.gn.apc.org/allpdfs/244-%5BDA%5DCulture%20Jamming.pdf last accessed 28/03/10)

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