Occupy representation and democratise prefiguration: Speaking for others in global justice movements

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Abstract
This paper seeks an articulation between Marxist and anarchist approaches to representation in social movements. A generalised dismissal of representational politics leaves power with too many places to hide and sets unnecessary limits to political imagination. Prefigurative politics should not exclude political representation, as the exclusion can imply a class bias. The paper explores two different paths beyond strict assumptions of horizontality. Using mostly Latin American examples, a distinction is made between more classical state-centric paths and less theorised alternatives of non-state representation. Finally, the article approaches global democratisation from a non-state-centric perspective, tentatively called transnational libertarian socialism.

Keywords
Anarchism, democratic theory, global democracy, prefigurative politics, Marxism, representation, social movements

Introduction

At a meeting of the International Council of the World Social Forum in Italy in 2004, a South African trade unionist got into a debate with a couple of other participants. As in many activist spaces, decision making in the council was supposed to be based on the

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principle of consensus. As no consensus seemed to emerge, the trade unionist finally expressed his frustration: 'I am here representing millions of African workers, who the fuck are you?' After a moment of vexed silence, the situation calmed down and the meeting went on in a friendly manner.[1] It was an example of the silence with which representational claims to speak for others often meet, in contexts assumedly based on the absence of representational politics.

The International Council of the World Social Forum was founded in 2001 as an organisational hybrid, in which contending attitudes toward representation sometimes clash and lead to frustrations. Its individual participants are representatives of member organisations that range from trade unions to activist networks. As a whole, however, it avoids claiming to represent anything, and its working principles are influenced by 'non-representational' activism (see e.g. Caruso 2013; Teivainen 2012). Ten years later, in 2011, Occupy Wall Street constituted general assemblies as a decision-making procedure within the occupied city squares. In many characterisations, their individual participants were not supposed to be representatives of anything but themselves. The Occupy activists have thus often been considered enthusiastic participants in what Simon Tormey (2012: 136) calls the 'generalised revolt against representation'.

The rejection of representation has been more explicit in the Occupy movements than in the Social Forums. Both, however, offer various examples of representational practices. This becomes evident if we distinguish the overall ideological orientation of the activist spaces (such as the World Social Forum or Occupy Wall Street) from the workings of their decision-making bodies (such as the International Council or General Assembly). Decades ago, Jo Freeman (1972–73) famously analysed the 'tyranny of structurelessness' within feminist groups that wanted to avoid traditional organisational hierarchies. More recently, a participant in the International Council of the World Social Forum commented that despite the pretensions of participatory democracy, it was like being in a central committee meeting without knowing who was Stalin.[2] On Occupy Wall Street, David Graeber (2013: 136–137) has drawn attention to the dilemmas of organising through 'spokescouncils' that were often seen as top-down and divisive. Similar concerns can be found in Hannah Chadeyane Appel's (2012: 112–116) description of the 'bureaucracies of anarchy' in the Occupy assemblies. An Occupy Wall Street activist interviewed by Micha Fiedlschuster (2013) highlighted the difficulties of following the anti-representationalist doctrines by stating, 'in a movement you are in a position where you need to negotiate on behalf of other [sic] or the group'.[3]

Among the many sources of inspiration for the Occupy movements were the assemblies that emerged in neighborhoods and occupied factories in Argentina during the politically chaotic first years of the millennium (e.g. Sitrin & Azzellini 2014). With a strong emphasis on direct participation, the assemblies expressed a rejection of existing forms of political representation, encapsulated by the slogan *Que se vayan todos* ('Out with them all'). The slogan's main target was the country's political elite, but it also implied a desire to move beyond the existing system of political representation. Countless other activist spaces and organisations in different parts of the world, and many of their researchers, have been repeating or making their own versions of the dichotomy between (good) participatory or direct democracy and (bad) representative democracy. Their emphasis on direct participation has energised debates on the meaning of democracy in

many wonderful ways, but once this dichotomy is assumed, and a caricature of representative democracy is conflated with all representational politics, an important dimension of organisational debates tends to receive little further attention. One motivation for this paper is that as a participant and scholar of globalisation protest movements, I have experienced representation as a practice that seldom dares to speak its name. Avoiding questions of representation leaves power with too many places in which to hide, and sets unnecessary limits to political imagination.

Among globalisation protest activists without apparent leaders, representation is widely criticised. The criticism is most prevalent in the anarchist-inspired rejection of the state, but it is also expressed in dismissive attitudes toward representational politics more generally, including the organisational forms of the movements themselves. As noted by Steve Edwards (2012), the critique of representation is 'more often spoken and heard than written and read, but it constitutes the background common sense for much thinking about politics today'.

An anti-representational statement that became popular among some (post-)anarchists was made by Gilles Deleuze when he congratulated Michel Foucault for emphasising the 'indignity of speaking for others' (Foucault & Deleuze 1977: 205–17). Rather than generalising Deleuze's remark to dismiss all representation, I make the case that the indignity should be attached to such representation that is not authorised by the represented. Simplistic anti-representationalists tend to overlook the indignity of denying people the possibility of authorising others to speak for them. I will argue that depriving people of the freedom to decide that others can sometimes speak for them has a class bias, because the poor (such as the 'millions of African workers') have limited means for making themselves directly present to speak for themselves in decision-making sites. This does not mean that representational politics should be regarded as superior to directly participatory procedures, but simply that it needs to be considered a political possibility. Increasing the scale of organisational efforts to confront global capitalism reinforces the importance of that possibility. For many anarchists, the idea that some can speak or stand for others has been a core problem of states and political parties. In this paper, I will argue that anarchist critiques of state-centric representation provide important insights for democratic alternatives that may emerge from globalisation protest activism and other global justice movements. Nevertheless, I will also argue against more generalised forms of anti-representationalism.

I will analyse recent globalisation protest activism associated with global justice movements, with examples from the World Social Forum and Occupy movements. Focusing on some of their ideological assumptions, I will combine anarchist and Marxist insights in order to conceptualise democratic representation in the spirit of what I tentatively call 'transnational libertarian socialism'. In this task, I will also refer to two Latin American theorists, Rodrigo Nunes and Ezequiel Adamovsky, who have analysed emerging forms of leadership and representation within contemporary social movements. Next, I will briefly explore the way in which representation has been approached in Marxist and anarchist traditions, drawing also on more mainstream political theory. As my emphasis is more on exploring the relevance of anarchist-inspired theories, when I refer to Marxism I mostly assume a Leninist way of understanding organisational questions, which has been the main reference point of the anarchist critiques and which leaves out a more nuanced

discussion on various kinds of dissident and critical interpretations of the Marxist tradition. In the subsequent section, I will defend an interpretation of the anarchist principle of prefiguration that does not exclude representative practices, suggesting that the exclusion may imply a class bias. This interpretation provides the basis for analysing two different ways in which recent social movements and scholars have been moving beyond strict assumptions of horizontality and opening up new possibilities for imagining and practicing representation. Using examples mostly from Latin America, I will distinguish between the more classical state-centric routes to representation and the less theorised alternatives of non-state politics of representation. Finally, I will briefly reflect on the possibilities for approaching global democratisation from a non-state-centric perspective.

Representation, Marxism and anarchism

Similar to many later anarchists, Peter Kropotkin belittled the political importance of the transition from being represented by a king to being represented by an elected assembly. For him, 'the best way of being free is not to be represented, not to abandon affairs – all affairs – to Providence or to the elected ones, but to handle them ourselves' (Kropotkin 1885). For Saul Newman (2010: 32), writing from a post-anarchist perspective that combines the anarchist tradition with poststructuralist insights, representation 'always binds democracy to the state' and is thus a way of 'channelling the will of the people into state structures'. To the extent that this is a general statement about all representational politics, I disagree, yet this seems to be the norm in most anarchist writing. More recently, in her analysis of decision-making in the alterglobalisation movements, Marianne Maeckelbergh (2013: 346) states that representation 'presumes that the diversity of interests held by the body politic can be fully understood and given voice to by one of a few political actors'. While this claim applies to some understandings of representation, my starting point is that such fullness is never possible. Among the multiple meanings of representation in political theory, in this paper I follow a general definition that makes it clear that representation can never be perfect. This impossibility lies in its very meaning as stated by Hanna Fenichel Pitkin (1989: 142): making present in some sense what is nevertheless not literally present.

The general idea of making what is absent somehow present is a problem for aesthetics, as much as for political agency. Even if the debates clearly overlap and connect across disciplinary boundaries, my focus will be on political representation as the possibility that some can stand for or speak for others. Using Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's (1988) distinction, this means dealing with representation as a 'proxy' rather than a 'portrait'.

One passage in which Marx deals directly with political representation is in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, where he refers to the French peasantry as being 'incapable of asserting their class interest in their own name, whether through a parliament or a convention'. He then claims that 'they cannot represent themselves, they must be represented' (Marx 1995).[4] The idea of some speaking for others, implicit in Marx's argument, is always vulnerable to the accusation that there exists a broken telephone. Representational politics comes with the inherent risk that representatives may turn into despots. Most anarchists find this risk hopelessly high, with some claiming that all representational politics should be rejected.

There are, however, exceptions to the dichotomy of Marxists who believe in representation and anarchists who do not. John Holloway's (2010) analysis of state power is based on mostly Marxist categories, but results in anti-representational conclusions. For Holloway (2004), an act of representation implies betrayal: 'We betray ourselves when we say to someone "you take my place, you speak on my behalf"'. On the other hand, as shown by Jesse Cohn (2006), it is possible to find examples of representational principles and politics in the history of anarchist organising. The key example he refers to is the practice of recallable delegates. He challenges simplistic ideas of anarchism by arguing that the recallable delegate 'is more truly representative than an elected official, because the system does not assume that the popular will is a reified object' (Cohn 2003). In his recent book of the possibilities and limits of anarchism, Matthew Wilson (2014: 147–148) similarly analyses the spokespeople of neighbourhood assemblies as true representatives, as opposed to 'appointed decision makers who decide for themselves how those who voted for them would want to be represented'.

One part of the ambiguous relationship between delegation and representation in anarchist theory can be considered a question of terminological choice. As various anarchists including Kropotkin (1885) have contrasted representation with delegation, it is possible to make sweeping anti-representationalist claims and at the same time engage in representational practices, but simply call these practices 'delegation'. In the history of anarchist organising, the most typical feature of delegates is that they are supposed to act according to a strict mandate, and that they can be recalled by their constituency. Defending the desirability of the anarchist mode of delegation, however, need not be based on a conceptual opposition to representation. In fact, if political representation is understood as 'speaking for others', the anarchist mode of recallable delegation can be argued as fulfilling that criterion better than the model in which representatives act autonomously of the expressed mandate of their constituents. Following Pitkin's definition of representation as making present, delegation can be considered one form of representation.[5] Without pretending to make any claims about the historically most correct anarchist line on this question, my position is that anarchist-inspired theorists and movements can enhance their contribution to building radically democratic alternatives if they argue for better representation rather than for a rejection of all representation. This conceptual move would also allow for the discovery of more common ground between anarchist and Marxist politics, especially in transnational contexts. At the risk of stating the obvious, I presuppose that both traditions share the idea that post-capitalist futures are possible and desirable. Only slightly more controversially, along with Chiara Bottici (2013: 12–16) and many others, I also assume that they both consider human freedom as one of their main goals. For the purposes of this paper, their key difference is around the strategic role of the state and representation more generally, in the struggle for freedom beyond capitalism.

In what follows, I will defend the position that it is possible and in many cases also desirable to construct non-state forms of democratic representation. Political representation should not be reduced to a question of seeking participation in, or articulation with, state structures. One of the key challenges for social movements and other actors seeking democratic transformations of the world is that of how to create mechanisms of collective decision-making to coordinate their own activities. The key organisational buzzword

related to meeting this challenge within recent anarchist-inspired globalisation protest movements is 'prefiguration', normally defined as the idea that democratic goals need to be achieved through democratic means. I will now move to argue that a democratic concept of prefiguration is not compatible with a wholesale rejection of the principle of political representation.

Democratic prefiguration and representation

Andrej Grubačić (2013: 187) offers a compact definition of anarchism: it is about 'taking democracy seriously and organizing prefiguratively'. The definition is based on his experience in the Belgrade Libertarian Group, influenced by both Marxism and anarchism during the Yugoslav years. It fits well into what David Graeber (2010: 124) calls 'anarchist process', emphasising the role of non-sectarian 'small-a anarchists'. It is the process through which key anarchist principles have become increasingly accepted by a wide spectrum of activists. Even if it is possible to distinguish 'autonomism' and 'anarchism', and many more tendencies and identities within and across both, I will rely on an open-ended concept of anarchist process that emphasises the principles of prefiguration and democracy. Apart from people self-identified as anarchists or libertarian socialists, it can include what Cinzia Arruzza (2013: 117) calls 'unconscious anarchism'. Many such examples can be found within feminist movements (see Dean, Maiguashca & Keith, this issue).

In this paper, democracy means the possibilities open to the people to take part in decisions that concern the basic conditions of their lives. It needs to be distinguished from such definitions of democracy that reduce it to a set of state institutions. We can thus assess the democratic extent of states or any other kinds of institution, but there is no essential connection between democracy and the state. While in this wide sense most Marxist and anarchist tendencies share the general goal of post-capitalist democracy,[6] anarchists have tended to assume that democratic decision-making is most feasible in units of relatively small scale. There has therefore been little anarchist emphasis on the possibilities of transnational and global democratic alternatives. This is compounded by a lack of subtlety in anarchist theories of representation.

The other element of Grubačić's definition, prefiguration, the congruence between ends and means, is more clearly associated with anarchism. As argued by Wilson (2014: 87), prefiguration can be traced back to Bakunin's writings. It can be concisely defined as practicing what you preach. Richard Day (2005: 34) identifies it as a key element of affinity groups that emerged 'in Spanish anarchist circles in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries', when it was adopted in 'conscious opposition to hierarchical Marxist styles of organizing'. A criticism that generations of anarchists have directed at Marxists is that the latter, at least in their Leninist incarnations, have time and again sacrificed organisational democracy in the name of strategic necessity to create a vanguard party. This criticism can be based on the general principle of prefiguration if it is believed (and it is a plausible belief) that the idea of a vanguard party differs from the democratic ideals of the future society that the Leninists desire.

The anarchist principle of prefiguration is often presented as if it were in contradiction not only with the Leninist betrayal of democratic ideals but also with strategic

thinking more generally. Nevertheless, as Marianne Maeckelbergh (2011) has argued, prefiguration can also be a strategic practice. According to Maeckelbergh, means not only have consequences but also are consequences (2011: 8). Prefiguration is thus not in opposition to consequence-oriented strategic action per se, but rather a 'rejection of consequentialism which privileges the ends to the complete exclusion of the means' (2011: 8).

In and around radical activism, it often seems to be taken for granted that prefiguration in itself implies an acceptance of democratic norms. But leaders of fascist organisations aiming for a fascist society also practice what they preach. Democratic prefiguration should therefore be conceptually distinguished as a special case of the more general principle of prefiguration. This specification still leaves open the question of to what extent representation may form part of prefigurative politics. Even if it makes logical sense to extend the idea of prefiguration to a political platform that both preaches and practices democratic representation, this is not how the term is normally used.

The prevalent meaning of prefiguration is typically based on the assumption that it implies participatory and direct forms of democracy. One of the scholars who first used the term was Wini Breines. Focusing on community organising during the 1960s, she argued that 'if the new society were to be characterised by participatory democracy, anti-authoritarianism and liberation, the political means for achieving these goals had to be consonant' (Breines 1989: 53). In his militant ethnography of the more recent movements against corporate globalisation, Jeffrey Juris (2008) explored how activists were building local, regional and global networks that prefigured the worlds they were trying to create. Especially among anarchist-inspired groups, this is reflected in the emphasis on open assemblies rather than hierarchic organisations. The decision-making is typically based on consensus rather than voting, aiming to 'synthesise a proposal that best serves everyone's vision', as one Occupy Wall Street primer characterised it (Kauffman 2011: 47).

Having participated actively in the creation of Occupy Wall Street, David Graeber commented on the confusions surrounding the consensus principles both among their defenders and opponents. His own position, phrased as a reference to the people who originally came up with the idea, was that:

> They saw consensus as a set of principles, a commitment to making decisions in a spirit of problem-solving, mutual respect, and above all, a refusal of coercion. It was an attempt to create processes that could work in a truly free society. None of them, even the most legalistic, were so presumptuous to claim those were the only procedures that could ever work in a free society. (Graeber 2013)

Graeber's interpretation leaves room for diverse ways of understanding democratic prefiguration. If the 'free society' (that can be considered near-synonymous with a democratic society) of the future needs also other procedures than the ones provided by the consensus principles, to what extent should these procedures also be practiced by the movements aiming at such a society?

It can be useful to reflect on Graeber's point about multiple procedures in the context of Maeckelbergh's way of defending the strategic importance of prefiguration. Maeckelbergh (2011: 6) makes a useful distinction between movements that have a

singular and predetermined goal and those with more plural goals. A key example of this distinction is between traditional Marxist organisations and the anarchist-inspired tendencies of the global justice movements. Even if it can be argued that coherence between ends and means should be important for both, Maeckelbergh (2011: 15) defends the position that prefiguration is a particularly strategic practice for movements with 'multiple, open and context-specific' goals.

I agree with Maeckelbergh's distinction. The openness of movement goals strengthens the case for prefigurative democratic experimentation. I do not, however, find convincing reasons to conclude that this experimentation should exclude all forms of representation. If we take seriously the spirit of the multiple goals emphasised by Maeckelbergh, or the multiple procedures implied by Graeber, there can be room also for democratic representation as one of the multiple ways of making decisions. One reason why anarchist theories have often disregarded representation is their tendency to pay little attention to transnational and global forms of organising. If we take seriously the global nature of capitalism, effective anti-capitalist struggles demand at least some transnational coordination and arguably also some perspective on how to organise decision-making transnationally in a post-capitalist future. Neither is possible without taking seriously the question of representation.

There may be no need to delegate political responsibilities when it is possible for all concerned parties to be present in the same space. Avoiding questions of representation becomes increasingly difficult when the geographical scale of the movement activities expands and shared presence becomes more difficult to achieve. New communication technologies have certainly helped overcome some barriers of physical space. There are many wonderful examples of directly participatory transnational network politics. A Marxist-inspired analysis of class differences, however, can help focus on the limitations of anti-representationalist interpretations of network politics. Various kinds of barriers can prevent poor people from participating in networks that may seem open and horizontal to activists who have the required resources. If participation is possible only through making oneself directly present at the decision-making site, the interests and the visions of the people who cannot afford to make it are left with less attention. As argued by the Analytical Marxist G. A. Cohen (2011: 176–181), money structures freedom and functions as an entry ticket to many goods and services. There are of course also other barriers to physical travel or to entrance into cyberspace, but in the capitalist world, the lack of money is an important one. Rejecting the possibility of people authorising others to speak for them tends to limit the freedom of the poor more than the freedom of the non-poor because the latter have more possibilities to make themselves present. In this sense, anti-representational doctrines can imply a class bias.

Even if many of the new global justice activists are not self-declared anarchists, understandings derived from historical anarchism, sometimes connected to newer poststructuralist theories, have become an important part of the common sense among social movements fighting against hierarchic power structures. This common sense is reproduced and challenged in a complex back-and-forth between anti-representational doctrines and concrete representational experiences. Without claiming to provide a description of their full complexity, I will now focus on two different avenues that some of these movements and their theorists have been opening toward representational

politics. The more classical option explored briefly in the next chapter of this paper is to reclaim the possibility of connecting with state structures. In the following section, I will discuss a less state-centric option, more ambiguous and sometimes only implicit in theoretical arguments, that focuses on the relations of power among the movements themselves and constructs organisational alternatives outside the state that do not shy away from radically democratic conceptions of representation when needed.

State-centric routes beyond horizontality

One catchword of many contemporary movements influenced by anarchist ideas is horizontalism, often used synonymously with horizontality. As described by Marina Sitrin (2012), based on her deep experience with the *horizontalidad* of neighbourhood assemblies in Argentina and reflecting on the later mobilisations in different parts of the world, it 'implies the use of direct democracy and the striving for consensus, processes in which attempts are made so that everyone is heard and new relationships are created'.[7] It has often been posed as an anarchist-inspired alternative to what people with horizontalist identities tend to call 'verticalism'. The latter is typically associated with hierarchically organised political parties and the state structures they aim to seize.

The horizontalist avoidance of representational questions boomed during the first years of the globalisation activism of the new millennium. For some, especially but not only those with anarchist identities, the avoidance was based on ethico-political convictions about a fundamentally antidemocratic nature of representation. Others, such as Tadzio Mueller, emphasised tactical considerations against linking with the state in a specific historical context. For Mueller, during the first years of the globalisation protests at the turn of the millennium, 'nothing else really made sense' as 'neoliberalism ha[d] successfully colonised all major institutions, as a result of which cooperation with them seemed pointless, in fact, it seemed like collaborating with the enemy' (*Notes from Below* 2010).

More recently, and simultaneously with the strongly anti-representationalist messages coming out of occupied squares and street mobilisations, there have also been signs of state-centric representation being taken more seriously by social movements. One expression can be found in the articulations that some movements have constructed with left-leaning governments in Latin America. Some of the unemployed workers' movements that had emerged in the horizontalist mobilisations at the turn of the millennium in Argentina connected more closely with the state by the end the millennium's first decade (Sitrin & Azzellini 2014: 193–194).

Even if in most cases the movements seek articulations with their 'own' state, often through strategies that can be called 'national-popular', there are also expressions of transnational state-movement collaboration. Latin American social movements' closer relationship with the state has not always meant linking mainly with their 'own' governments. The most important social movement of the past 30 years in Latin America, the Brazilian Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST), has had an ambiguous and often highly critical connection with the governments led by the Workers' Party in Brazil, but it has associated itself more enthusiastically with the Bolivarian regime of Venezuela. The most visible leader of the MST, João Pedro Stédile, visited Venezuela during the

presidential election of 2013, actively asking for Venezuelans to vote for Nicolás Maduro, the successor of Hugo Chávez, (MST 2013). This kind of cross-border activism bears similarities to many historical solidarity movements, and can be considered a renewal of state-centric movement strategies.

In Spain, an emerging openness to representational politics was evident in the participation in the European Parliament elections of 2014 by new groups such as Podemos and Partido X. They emerged after the massive street protests known as 15-M or indignad@s in 2011. The strong performance of Podemos first in the electoral results and thereafter in the opinion polls led to a vigorous debate on the possibilities of political representation for radical politics. In my April 2015 interview with a Podemos co-founder, Juan Carlos Monedero, he located the changing moods in how the crowds chanted 'yes, yes, they represent us' after Podemos had won five seats in the European Parliament in May 2014. For him, the popular assemblies of the earlier mobilisations had been 'radically democratic' but also 'radically ineffective' (Gerbaudo 2014). The search for a more effective politics tended to focus on the possibilities of representation in or through the state or the European Parliament.[8]

One reason for the changing moods among some social movements vis-à-vis the desirability of representation through the state can be found in the perceptions of ineffectiveness associated with the anti-state strategies. A full explanation of these changes is, however, beyond the aims of this paper. In some contexts, the changes can be partially understood as cyclically changing responses to frustrations of a previous moment. A more global concern that also helps understand why some activists have decided to look for increased co-operation with parties and government is the increasing visibility of climate change as a new kind of global threat (see *Notes from Below* 2010). This co-operation is sometimes conflictual, as during the walk-out by the more radical environmental groups from the global climate negotiations in Warsaw in November 2013 (Vidal & Harvey 2013). Some climate change activists have found the positions of the Bolivian government led by Evo Morales worth supporting in international summits, even if its tensions with indigenous and environmental movements within Bolivia have also led to disillusionments among others.

As especially the Latin American examples show, activist attitudes toward state politics can change when governments change. The debate on the relationship movements should have with arguably progressive governments in Latin America or elsewhere is, however, only one facet of the more general challenge the movements need to face about representational politics. Chantal Mouffe (2013: 125–127) criticises Occupy activists who celebrated the Argentine horizontalist experience for ignoring the 'democratic advances' that have taken place in Argentina 'thanks to an articulation that combines extra-parliamentary and parliamentary struggles'. While I agree with her claim that 'non-representative democracy' is not enough for building democratic futures, she analyzes this question as if taking representation seriously would only mean 'alliances with traditional channels'. These channels, in her argument, seem to lead inevitably to state structures. Moving beyond strict horizontalism, however, does not have to mean connecting with the state. Even if states are important sites of representation, we should not let state-centric imaginaries prevent us from dealing with the difficult political questions of representation also in non-state contexts.

Beyond horizontality through distributed leadership, diffuse vanguardism and autonomous interface

The globalisation protest movements have been involved in various kinds of innovative democratic practices. In order to understand the potential of these practices, we need to start from a realist analysis of their limitations and dilemmas. Assumptions of horizontality have been one reason for avoiding political questions of representation. If all are truly equal, they can equally speak for themselves. In a world characterised by capitalist and other hierarchies, however, assumptions of equality tend to be unrealistic. Being aware of power relations within and among activist spaces is a necessary though not a sufficient condition for considering representation a democratic possibility.

The alternatives to strict horizontalism do not have to be state-centric. One way of expressing this has been through the term 'diagonalism', sometimes offered as a middle point between horizontalism and verticalism (e.g. Haysom 2014). One example of moving beyond traditional dichotomies between horizontalist autonomism and hierarchical vanguardism is emerging in the work of the Brazilian philosopher Rodrigo Nunes. While his own activist roots can be located in the autonomist traditions, he asks novel questions about the possibility of strategic thinking and acting in networks. They do not point directly to representation as a democratic possibility, but I consider them inspiring steps in the process that helps take questions of representation more seriously.

One of the key characteristics typically attributed to recent activist networks has been their leaderlessness, but Nunes (2014: 33–36) claims that they are in fact 'leaderful' (for an earlier use of the term in organisational theory, see Raelin 2005). This recognition of leadership among activists does not imply that they would need to be represented by a new Stalin. The leaders described by Nunes are 'several, of different kinds, at different scales and on different layers, at any given time'. While one may have doubts about the practical relevance of his claim that 'in principle anyone can occupy [a leadership] position', the concept of distributed leadership helps us move beyond the idea that if one leaves the seemingly democratic plateaus of horizontalism, a new tyrant is bound to appear behind the next hill.

The concept of diffuse vanguardism hits a similar nerve. Nunes (2012) defines it as the power 'to ignite large scale effects without any sort of [previously existing or at a proportionally large scale] decision making procedure'. Even if it remains a relatively vague concept, it is an example of approaching relations of power within non-state activist spaces and networks. It helps build bridges across some of the divides between anarchist-inspired horizontalism and Marxist vanguardism. In the organisational horizon of Nunes (2012), the criticism of the old-style leaders and vanguards is connected to a general crisis of representation and, thereby results in a 'suspicion towards representative names'.

Not surprisingly for a philosopher heavily influenced by Gilles Deleuze, whose remark on the indignity of speaking for others I briefly noted above, Nunes does not pay much attention to representation as a democratic possibility. Nevertheless, as my basic definition of representation, following Pitkin, is about making the absent in some sense present, Nunes (2012) does in fact contribute directly to debates on representation when he

refers to the 'fetish of presence' in the assemblies of occupied squares. One democratic concern about the decision-making in the assemblies where everyone simply represents herself or himself is how difficult it is to take into account the visions or interests of those who have no means to be present. In the terminology of Nunes (2012), this risks 'losing sight of non-presential affects as well as the others of that experience'. For me, it means that questions of representation have been inadequately dealt with.

To take another example of innovative contemporary Latin American theorising, Ezequiel Adamovsky is an anticapitalist historian who, coming from an autonomist tradition, has been more explicit about the unavoidability of representational politics. Analyzing the experience of the neighbourhood assemblies of Buenos Aires, in which he actively participated, he observed that 'the justified critique of representatives that end up "substituting" the represented, has taken us, in some cases, to reject *all* representation in favor of supposed practices of direct democracy' (Adamovsky 2007: 142, emphasis in the original). Even if his analysis of the Argentine experience has some resemblance with that of Chantal Mouffe, he does not jump to similarly state-centric conclusions.

Adamovsky (2007) argues that 'the problem is not that there *are* representatives but that they become a permanent *special group*, that distinguishes itself and separates itself from the collective'. He puts forward the idea of an autonomous interface capable of large-scale operations. As a historical precedent, he refers to the Russian revolutionary councils of 1905 and 1917, before the dictatorship of a single party took over (2007: 149–150). While he suggests that one of the possible causes of their dissolution could be the excessive distance between the representative delegates and the represented people, this is no reason for him to simply reject the principle of representation. He sketches an imaginary Assembly of the Social Movement based mostly on consensus principles but also with clearly defined procedures for voting when needed. Electronic means would be used to hear the voices and also in some cases take into account the votes of those who cannot be physically present. He offers alternative scenarios for how the Assembly could gradually 'colonise' some state functions or promote a more insurrectional strategy, possibly relying on both options simultaneously (2007: 151–155; see also Adamovsky 2008).

Adamovsky's example is important in showing that it is possible to transgress false dichotomies between horizontality and representation without necessitating traditional state-centrism or vanguardism. His reference to electronic means as a way to make present the voices and votes of those who are not present in person also helps move beyond dichotomies between direct participation and representation. In one sense, however, his strategic options are limited by state-centric assumptions: they are situated within a national context. Unfortunately, the various World Social Forum events in which assemblies of social movements have been organised have also fallen short of elaborating anything resembling the democratic procedures outlined by Adamovsky.

Imagining and constructing transnational institutions that would take into account the best insights of Marxism and anarchism is a task for the future, but there already exists some work that that can be helpful in the process. Even if the anarchist and Marxist traditions have strong differences vis-à-vis the desirability of conquering the state, both have historically tended to make state-centric assumptions about the relevant boundaries of the societies that need to be transformed. While many Marxists have assumed that socialism comes with a socialist state, many anarchists have located their desired forms of

society in smaller units. There are, however, exceptions that point to the possibility of transnational libertarian socialist projects.

Toward new forms of transnational non-state representation

The ambiguous attitude of some radical scholars toward representation can be found also in the influential work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. They combine elements from both anarchist and Marxist traditions and often situate the movements in a transnational or global context.[9] On one hand, they have stated that 'democracy and representation stand at odds with one another' (Hardt & Negri 2004: 244). They have correspondingly been associated with the position that 'radical politics today must of necessity be unrepresentable' (Passavant & Dean 2004: 319). This is too quick an association. When Hardt and Negri (2004: 244) speak of the need to explore new forms of democracy, they call for forms that are 'non-representative *or differently representative*' (my emphasis).

While Hardt and Negri criticise the 'modern' concept of representation, 'conceived for the dimensions of the nation-state', they also argue that new forms of representation are made possible both by the leap from the national to the global level and by what they call the biopolitical nature of contemporary social production (Hardt & Negri 2004: 295). Its relevant characteristics, the extent of which Hardt and Negri may sometimes exaggerate, include the increased importance of the network form and, in particular, the emergence of the multitude, the 'only social subject capable of realizing democracy, that is, the rule of everyone by everyone' (2004: 100). In the spirit of anarchist prefiguration, Hardt and Negri (2004: xiv) argue that the organisation process of the globalisation protest movements as a multitude is not only a 'means to achieve a democratic society' but also that it needs to 'create internally, within the organisational structure, democratic relationships'.

Hardt and Negri (2009: 362–363) offer various useful insights on the dilemmas of creating a global democratic order, rejecting the Leninist idea that since people are 'not yet able to rule themselves democratically', a transitional dictatorship is needed. Unlike most anarchists with whom they share the dismissal of Leninist organisation, they explicitly argue for a democratic constitutional system (2009: 374), while also recognising that they are 'not yet in a position to describe the structures and functions of such a democracy' (2009: 306). In recent decades, there have been increasing attempts to build more detailed models of global democracy, but their decision-making mechanisms have mostly dealt with inter-state relations, though increasingly adding elements of peoples' (or people's) assemblies and other forms of 'civil society participation' (see e.g. Patomäki & Teivainen 2004). As regards social movements aiming at global democracy, Jackie Smith (2008: 228–229) provides a perceptive analysis of the strategic options of the movements that want to directly engage with existing global institutions, but does not focus on anarchist or autonomist alternatives. There are significant contributions to understanding the role of anarchist ideas for International Relations (e.g. Prichard 2010) or for cosmopolitan theories (e.g. Levy 2011), but more specific scholarship on the anarchist principle of prefiguration has generally focused on nonglobal alternatives.

Some of the most consistent proposals for global democracy are inspired by the long-existing tradition of global federalism. They tend to rely on an analogy between the governance structures of the existing territorial states and those of a future global federal state. This analogy needs to be broken. One of the defining characteristics of a territorial state is that it exists in relation to other states. In this sense, a 'world state' is an oxymoron. Proposing global democratic alternatives as models of a world state makes the whole idea of democratising the globe look unnecessarily unattractive to movements which already find the representative structures of the existing nation-states hopelessly hierarchic and undemocratic.

The increasing scale of democratic alternatives does not mean that all of their problematic features would always increase exponentially. The 'democratic deficit' that has resulted from the partial transfer of governance from national states to the European quasi-federal order is often seen as a reason to believe that any attempt to create global democratic institutions is doomed to result in a much larger deficit. This reasoning, however, overlooks a crucial spatial difference between the national, the regional and the global. The European Union or any similar regional arrangement can be considered in many (though clearly not all) ways analogous to a national state that exists as an actor inside the capitalist world-system. Many (though clearly not all) of their undemocratic features are causally related to hegemonic competition with other actors and conditionalities provided by transnational credit-rating agencies and other 'external' structural features that some Marxists are good at explaining.

Capital has many transterritorial possibilities for imposing undemocratic discipline in territorially bounded units within the world-system. One well-known conclusion drawn by proponents of global democracy is that we need at least some global institutions to break free from this discipline. Unfortunately there has been less attention paid to the real possibility that these institutions need not be governed analogously to the existing state structures. For global forms of democratic coordination and decision-making, the 'external' constraints to democracy have a different meaning and may partially disappear. Attempts to apply radically democratic principles to states have often resulted in huge disappointments, of which Stalinism is but one example. Attempts to apply them to transnational and global institutions for the democratic self-governance of humanity have no guarantees of success, but at least some of the reasons to prevent us from trying are based on false assumptions. In this task, the anarchist principle of democratic prefiguration can offer valuable lessons.

In order for the anarchist principles to have greater relevance for debates on global democracy, two of their common but unnecessary self-limitations need to be overcome: the strict dichotomy between participation and representation, and the relative lack of attention to global organising. In both tasks, inspiration can be found also inside the anarchist tradition. For the first task, in this paper I have used as an example Jesse Cohn's model of anarchist representation that 'not only allows us to create policy directly, but keeps open the possibility of our intervening our own representation, empowering us to quickly withdraw the authority of spurious representatives and replace them with better ones' (Cohn 2003). For the second task, one problem is that even if there have been examples of anarchist-inspired global organising such as Peoples' Global Action and Industrial Workers of the World, and some anarchists played a crucial role during the

previous waves of globalisation (see Bantman & Altena 2015), the main focus of anarchist groups and scholars has traditionally been on relatively local spheres of action. The local scale also contributes to the feasibility of relying on a dichotomy between participatory democracy and mechanisms of representation. In a village association, squat or occupied square, it can be feasible to practice direct democracy in the sense that everyone can physically participate in face-to-face decision making about issue that concern them. In the construction of transnational or global social movements, the idea that I can only represent myself becomes more problematic.[10]

For issues that cover geographically large areas, anarchists have often proposed federalist models of delegation (see e.g. Zurbrugg 2014). Their concept of federalism is different from the state-centric framework of global federalists. As a system of societal governance, anarchist federalism has mostly been proposed as a mechanism to disperse the power of existing states and empires, rather than as a model to create new global alternatives. As an organisational principle to link different local groups and coordinate their shared activities, however, it may have interesting ideas to offer for debates on building transnational non-state forms of democratic representation. Some aspects of the recent attempts to coordinate 'inter-Occupy' activities between local mobilisations, to democratise the governance of the World Social Forum, to build global peasant alliances through Via Campesina, and to practice transnational feminism in organisations such as the World March of Women or Articulación Feminista Marcosur have found various degrees of inspiration in anarchist principles. To the extent that the movements, self-identified as anarchists or perhaps at some point as cosmopolitan or transnational libertarian socialists, develop their global coordination in the 21st century, we may become better equipped to assess more clearly the relevance of their principles for global futures.

To conclude, the anarchist principle of prefiguration can provoke those working within Marxist political tendencies to reflect self-critically on the hierarchical elements of their tradition. It is, however, both analytically confusing and politically unwise to base democratic struggles on a wholesale rejection of all representational politics.

Endnotes

1. Based on my participant observation in the meeting, April 2004 in Passignano, Italy.
2. Based on confidential personal communication.
3. See also Dean and Jones (2012) on how fantasy at work in the insistence on the unrepresentability of Occupy is a fantasy of multiplicity without antagonism, of difference without division
4. There have been various interpretations of the possible meaning of the statement, especially since Edward Said (1979) famously quoted it as an example of Orientalism. As Jessop (2002: 179–194) has shown, Marx was referring to political representation.
5. See also Nadia Urbinati's (2006: 60–66) analysis of Rousseau's way of distinguishing delegation from representation.
6. See, however, Gordon (2014) for criticism of the tendency by many anarchists to use the language of democracy.
7. Sitrin (2012) notes that horizontalism, with its connotation of an ism, might be a somewhat misleading translation for the term horizontalidad that was used in Argentina. I will mostly use the slightly clumsier term 'principle of horizontality', which captures better the original meaning of the Argentine assemblies.

8. At least at the time of finishing this paper, in April 2015, electoral enthusiasm within Podemos did not leave much room for public reflections on the possibilities of non-state-centric representation. The key leaders of Podemos were influenced, among others, by the theories of Ernesto Laclau and Immanuel Wallerstein, and at the beginning of 2015 it seemed that national populism associated with the former had become more important than the global socialism of the latter.
9. On the difficulties of locating Hardt and Negri in the two traditions and especially on their claim to be anti-anarchist, see Bates 2012.
10. Monica Brito Vieira and David Runciman (2008: 155) have noted that if the activists were simply speaking internationally on their own behalf, there would be no reason to expect their objections, or indeed their decisions, to hold for anyone other than themselves. To this an anarchist might answer that the whole idea of anarchism is that decisions hold only for those who participate in making them.

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