Anarchists and autonomist Marxists played a vital role in the development of the Alternative Globalization Movement (AGM), especially with regard to their distinct contributions and insights in the realm of strategy and organization. Despite their common anticapitalist and antiauthoritarian orientation, however, their practical and theoretical approaches to issues of organization and change remain substantially different and in some contexts have been deeply divisive. This paper explores the theoretical and practical similarities and differences between anarchists and autonomists. It begins with an analysis of the tenuous binary between "lifestyle" and "social" anarchism, primarily within the U.S., where anarchism has significantly impacted AGM activism. What follows is a discussion of autonomist movements in Italy and Germany from the 1950s onward. The article then compares both tendencies in terms of how they balance the organizational requisites for change with their desires for freedom.

After the smashing of the Niketown and Starbuck's windows at the 1999 Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO), the mainstream press marveled at the appearance of a new generation of "anarchist" protesters. Time Magazine journalist Michael Krantz wrote about "How Organized Anarchists Led Seattle into Chaos" to gripe about the young vandals and express his awe at how well organized they seemed to be: "The anarchist movement today is a sprawling welter of thousands of mostly young activists populating hundreds of mostly tiny splinter groups espousing dozens of mostly socialist critiques of the capitalist machine. Ironically, the groups are increasingly organized ..." (Krantz 1999). Newsweek, The Wall Street Journal, and various other mainstream newspapers and magazines later derided these same activists as young, violent and destructive, politically incoherent, and terrorist.

Seattle was just one of many manifestations of the Alternative Globalization Movement (AGM), whose origins can be traced to the anti-International Monetary Fund (IMF) riots of the 1970s in Peru, Liberia, Ghana, Jamaica, Egypt, and Germany in the 1980s (Katsiaficas 2001; Starr 2006). A truly global movement, from the 1990s onward the AGM was composed of a vast network of social and political actors including indigenous peoples' movements; human rights and ecology advocates; socialists, communists, and social democrats; nongovernmental organization (NGO), interfaith and trade union activists; and many others. The AGM essentially served as a catchall for the large collection of groups and movements opposed to neoliberalism, although there was not, by any means, general consensus regarding the mechanisms of resistance or what alternative social and political formations might replace it. Oftentimes, divisions among participants were reflected in the names different groups assigned to the AGM's network. In an effort to combat media misrepresentation of the "antiglobalist" label, for example, some activists and organizations resorted to the name "Global Justice Movement" to emphasize their goal to establish more egalitarian forms of globalization. Although popular, especially among NGOs, the title proved to be less than adequate because philosophical and ethical meanings of "justice" varied so significantly among the network's constituents. Interfaith groups, for example, derive their sense of justice from divine law and posit God as an ultimate authority. Others locate justice in a universal rule of law that they feel has been violated by neoliberalism's privileging of corporate interests and uneven and undemocratic distribution of political power. These groups designated "civil society" and public opinion as key representatives of justice but also acknowledge the authority of legal structures and systems of civil and political rights. While these first two groups may have welcomed the "Global Justice Movement" title, others, including many anarchists and autonomists, reject it entirely because they do not acknowledge states,
nations, deities, or legal systems as legitimate authorities over social life or guarantors of freedom.

Despite the diversity of political, ethical, and tactical orientations in the AGM, anarchists attracted a great deal of attention in and outside the movement, especially in the U.S. Police and mainstream media identified anarchists with the "black bloc," whose dramatic appearance and unconventional tactics appeared as something new and threatening. Within the movement, however, anarchism has inspired a much broader array of activists. As Barbara Epstein (2001) commented, "(m)any among today's young radical activists, especially those at the center of the anti-globalization and anti-corporate movements, call themselves anarchists . . . anarchism is the dominant perspective within the movement." While Epstein perhaps inappropriately assigns the label "anarchism" to a politically heterogeneous set of actors, her instinct is not entirely wrong. Many of the activists in the AGM, for example, adopted direct-action tactics and organizational forms that reflect key aspects of anarchist praxis. As David Graeber (2002) put it,

The very notion of direct action, with its rejection of a politics which appeals to governments to modify their behavior, in favor of physical intervention against state power in a form that prefigures an alternative - all of this emerges directly from the libertarian tradition. Anarchism is the heart of the movement, its soul; the source of most of what's new and hopeful about it.

Alongside anarchists, other prominent groups in the AGM, like the Italian tute bianche ("white overalls"), cited autonomist Marxism as their primary influence. In the opening pages of Storming Heaven, Steven Wright (2002) describes the influence of autonomism on the "upsurge of anti-statist politics" associated with the AGM: "[i]f much of this resurgence can rightly be claimed by various anarchist tendencies, autonomist Marxism has also encountered renewed interest of late" (1). This renewed interest is based in large part on anarchist and autonomist movements' common emphasis on building alternative forms of sociality outside electoral, state, and other forms of conventional politics and cultural practice. While some of these groups literally seek to "smash the state" as well as the corporation, school, and other agents of social control, others remain committed to movement building and challenging all illegitimate forms of authority that deflect power away from everyday people (Graeber and Grubacic 2004). Many autonomists and anarchists believe that radical change, and ultimately, freedom and the good life, can be discovered through direct action (protests, but also various forms of "squatting") and the development of cooperative projects and countercultural communities, and not through the realization of a predetermined revolutionary moment or participation in electoral processes abstracted from the conditions of daily life. They distinguish themselves from other groups on "the left" by linking their antistatism with an anticapitalist critique of the ways in which exploitation and the logic of state sovereignty have permeated all levels of social life. They tend to be critical of progressive NGOs and social democratic groups that seek to bolster social programs and political influence within legal structures and the electoral sphere rather than argue for a more systemic change.

Despite their common anticapitalist, antiauthoritarian, and antisystemic orientation - which has set them apart from other groups in the AGM - substantial differences exist among anarchists and autonomists over issues related to strategy, organization, and practice. This article explores some of these theoretical and practical similarities and differences. It begins with an analysis of
the tenuous binary between "lifestyle" and "social" anarchism, primarily within the U.S., where anarchism has significantly impacted the movements. What follows is a discussion of autonomist movements in Italy and Germany from the 1950s on. The article then compares both tendencies in terms of how they balance the organizational requisites for change with their desires for freedom.

Which Anarchism?

Born in Europe in the mid-1800s, anarchism as a political strategy has varied in its relevance in the landscape of left politics both in the U.S. and beyond. In the 1930s, for example, anarchism took a backseat to Communist Party and trade union politics and the industrial and unemployed workers' movements that empowered them. Thirty years later, it emerged in the context of the 1960s counterculture, which was critical not only of the state but of most other forms of authority. While the mainstream civil rights movement focused primarily on juridical solutions to racial inequality, anarchists made strange bedfellows with Christian civil rights activists concerned with organizational ethics and direct action. In the throes of the Cold War, they also found kindred spirits in the New Left, especially among radical feminists and student groups characterized by their rejection of centralized and bureaucratic organization. Sixties activists were not only critical of capitalism but also of the patriarchal state and all forms of authority, overregulation, and social control (see Haraway 1991; Rupp and Taylor 1999; Willis 1992). Into the 1970s, the anti-Vietnam era produced a mix of militants also critical of Old Left bureaucracy - factions of Students for a Democratic Society, for instance - and while the antinuclear power movements in the U.S. and Europe featured affinity groups and consensus decision making popular among today's anarchists, they also gave birth to punk, which resisted the cultural consensus of the conservative 1980s on the level of style.

As countless theorists have pointed out, it is nearly impossible to present a single theory of anarchism. Not only are there multiple strands - anarcho-syndicalism, primitivism, mysticism, communist anarchism, libertarian socialism, and so on - but anarchism itself generally eschews the very idea of formulating (for them, imposing) a general, all-encompassing theory to explain social phenomena, especially revolution and social change. Anarchism is perhaps better understood by its methods and principles rather than through a single, unified theory or political strategy (Chomsky 2005, 18; Graeber 2004; Grubacic 2006; Neal 1997). Because of the lack of a unified theory, anarchism is often criticized as aimless, formless, and strategically unrealistic in advanced capitalist societies marked by deep consumerism and acute political hierarchy. Advocates point out, however, that it is precisely within technologically advanced societies that decentralized, nonhierarchical, and radically democratic forms of organization can occur, even on a global scale (Aronowitz and DiFazio 1994; Chomsky 2005).

Anarchism may resist submission to a general theory, but it does not lack an organizational perspective. Historically, anarchist organizations have ranged from small affinity groups and decentralized communities to large-scale movements and networks. The origins of affinity group praxis can be traced back to the 1930s with the Spanish Federación Anarquista Ibérica, anarcho-syndicalists working inside the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo trade union that organized a mass movement of several thousands. In more contemporary settings, affinity groups were used in the 1970s anti nuclear power campaigns in Germany and the U.S. (Starhawk 2008), and more
recently, among groups at anti-G8, WTO, and World Bank protests associated with the AGM (Alach 2008).

The affinity groups in the U.S. AGMs were comprised of roughly five to fifteen people, with an agreed upon commitment of mutual support. The extent of the commitment within groups could vary widely: some converged specifically for demonstrations, direct actions, and other political activity, whereas others connected more regularly in the spheres of daily life such as the university or high school, community, and work settings. In addition to providing mutual support, they shared common political views or interests that served as a basis for their collective affinity. Trust and political compatibility were the glue that held many of these groups together, especially in vulnerable protest situations but also in the spaces of the everyday.

Despite the importance of organization to many anarchists, the public perception of them as individualist and nihilistic is not entirely unfounded, but it is widely misunderstood. Anarchist individualism is often associated with "lifestyle anarchism," which has its roots in the egoism of Max Stirner. Stirner was by no means a nihilist, but he did argue for the primacy of self-determination and self-mastery over the demands and obligations of social life including those associated with friends and family. Among anarchists, lifestylers are often counterposed, albeit tenuously, to "social anarchists" who advocate for an anti-authoritarianism or statelessness rooted in the thought of Michael Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin, both of whom identified as socialists.

In his critique of lifestyle anarchism, Murray Bookchin (1995) traced the development of lifestylism from Stirner to nineteenth-century bohemians, who, he asserted, selfishly romanticized their alienation from mainstream society, expressed through "outrageous" clothing, and "aberrant" lifestyles. Bookchin also pointed to more contemporary examples of lifestylism including Hakim Bey's well-known essay on Temporary Autonomous Zones (TAZs), in which Bey extols the virtues of "autonomous" spaces for release and self-actualization, off the grid of social control. TAZs are spaces that enable one to live authentically, release his or her self from past and future, and experience moments of freedom in the present. They offer a positive experience of individual freedom but also operate as a counterforce against the intrusion of state and market in the subjective realm (Bey 1991). Bey's TAZ is said to have influenced the development of the wildly popular Burning Man festival, which eventually became co-opted by commercial enterprises as well as seemingly spontaneous "flash mobs," in which groups of mostly strangers engage in nonsensical concerted actions such as meeting in public places dressed in silly outfits or freezing like statues at an agreed upon moment in frequently traveled venues like New York's Grand Central Station or shopping malls. Despite the popularity of these experiences, Bookchin discredits Bey's work as "an insurrection lived in the imagination of a juvenile brain, a safe retreat into unreality" that ignores "the basic social relationships of capitalist exploitation and domination . . . overshadowed by metaphysical generalizations about the ego and la technique, blurring public insight into the basic causes of social and ecological crises - commodity relations that spawn the corporate brokers of power, industry, and wealth" (Bookchin 1995).

Similar to bohemianism, the punk subculture in Britain and the U.S. in the late 1970s and 1980s has also been categorized as part of the lifestyle tradition. In the throes of the Reagan-Thatcher era, punks used the anarchist symbol - an "A" within a circle around it - to signify their penchant
for chaos and refusal of authority but also for its shock value. Some groups, like The Clash, exhibited strong Marxist tendencies, while others - the Sex Pistols, for instance - openly referred to themselves as anarchists in songs like "Anarchy in the UK," which displayed a more nihilistic tendency: "When there's no future, how can there be sin? We're the flowers in the dustbin. We're the poison in your human machine. We're the future, your future" (Sex Pistols 1977). Others, like Crass, reflected a more "social" anarchist disposition. Crass criticized groups like The Clash and Sex Pistols for selling out to record labels and producers and becoming part of what they called the "pop machine." They were also critical of Oi!'s and Chaos punks' machismo and produced an album - Penis Envy - entirely dedicated to radical feminism. The band's anticapitalist project also involved selling records at low process, playing free shows and benefits (their last show was a benefit for striking miners) and engaging in acts of sabotage such as spray-painting over advertisements in subway stations (Appleford 2005).

While "punk" was anything but homogenous, it did involve a radical and defiant "Do It Yourself culture that fused lifestylism with social activism. Punks created their own music, clothing stores, record labels, and presses outside the mainstream. In this regard, it constituted a distinct form of revolt and refusal that played out on (and disrupted) the landscape of culture and style. In doing so, it gave voice to significant numbers of young people disillusioned with the status quo and the authority structures that supported it. In his effort to recover a political project for anarchism, Bookchin ignores how punk and bohemianism operated as social formations that exercised their power through the collective resistance of authority structures manifest in cultural norms and values. Punks' challenge to authority hinged on what Dick Hebdige called their "power to disfigure." Mainstream fashion, music, and behavioral norms were not only refused; they were actively and publicly violated. Moreover, punk signified a breakdown in the very idea of consensus. Because its refusal was motivated by desires for freedom and disgust for the status quo, and not relative deprivation, punks' resistance cut across class boundaries, disrupting typical categories of social and political representation altogether (Hebdige 1979, 5-22). Punks' disdain for authority and the legacy of the 1960s and early 1970s manifested in a seeming nihilism that was really about highlighting social problems they faced as a generation, including the steep decline in and betrayal of trade unionism, the death of working class culture, lack of future job prospects for young people, and the failure of a once vibrant left to pose significant challenges to the hegemony of the conservative right.

The distinction between lifestyle and social anarchism becomes even muddier when considering tactical issues, a subject that has won anarchists a great deal of media attention but also considerable trouble and controversy. In the post-9/11 U.S., for example, police began labeling property destruction as a terrorist act, justifying preemptive searches and other infringements on activists' civil liberties (Starr 2006, 61). Even before 9/11, property destruction by anarchists and other groups was punished heavily: in 2001, for example, twenty-two-year-old Jeffrey Luers was sentenced to over twenty-two years in prison for torching three sports utility vehicles (SUVs) and attempted arson of an empty oil tanker. Years later, Stanislas Meyerhoff was sentenced to thirteen years for setting fire to a Eugene police substation, an SUV dealership, a tree farm, and a ski resort in Vail, Colorado. During the hearing, the presiding judge told Meyerhoff: "It was your intent to scare and frighten other people through a very dangerous and psychological act. . . . Your actions included elements of terrorism to achieve your goal" (Bernard 2007). Anarchists from Eugene were also held responsible for the widespread property damage in Seattle even
though people from other areas and other political standpoints were involved. Activist formations like the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) have been targeted by the FBI and named "eco-terrorists" even though ELF is really just a marker for any group or individual eco-activist (ELF 2009).

Because these activists claim to be motivated by concern for the environment and go to great lengths to ensure that their actions do not harm and threaten human and animal life, it is inaccurate to characterize them as nihilistic or terroristic, as compared to anarchists like "Unabomber" Ted Kaczynski or Alexander Berkman. According to Avery Starr, sabotage, as a tactic, focuses on "disruption when other options appear ineffective or impossible" and is not aimed at inflicting violence, especially on people. For groups like the Animal Liberation Front and ELF, the term ecotage has been used to describe a brand of self-defense (the defense of animals and the environment) that aims to "move beyond" civil disobedience but remain nonviolent. As Starr (2006) points out, while such tactics have become controversial for today's militants, sabotage has been used by progressive movements throughout history, from labor struggles in the late nineteenth century to the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and anti nuclear power activity in Germany and elsewhere (64-5).

In the context of the AGM protests, some socially oriented anarchists decided to forego property destruction or direct confrontation with police because they did not want to endanger other groups. During the 2002 antiWorld Economic Forum (WEF) demonstrations in New York, for example, anarchists engaged in "snake marches" (roving, unsanctioned marches) away from the main demonstration so as to not attract police brutality. AGM activists accommodated their diversity of tactics on a broader scale through the practice of zoning protest territories according to level of risk: (1) "green" zones did not involve risk of arrest or police attack; (2) "yellow" were reserved for civil disobedience and nonviolent direct action; and (3) "red" included more confrontational tactics such as property destruction. Red zones tended to be positioned in close proximity to meeting sites and police lines (Starr 2006, 67). The zone structure was used in protests around the world, but at events like the anti-Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in Quebec City or the anti-G8 in Genoa, the sheer volume of tear gas in the air, the unruly nature of the events, and excessive police force made it difficult, if not impossible, for such lines to be maintained.

Despite efforts to embrace an array of tactics, the black bloc remained a subject of controversy within the AGM, especially among activists from liberal democratic NGOs, pacifists, and those associated with political parties and state officials. Some activists of color derided their actions as symptomatic of race and class privilege (Starr 2006), and others chastised them for escalating police violence and rendering fellow protesters vulnerable to attack, asserting that the black bloc "discredits the movement as a whole and that tactics should be decided democratically, not by small groups acting autonomously" (Epstein 2001). The black bloc was also scrutinized by people in and outside the movement for the increased police presence they tended to attract, which, their critics contended, diverted public funds away from much needed social services. Perhaps the most serious criticism, however, was waged after the anti-G8 protests in Genoa when Italian police allegedly installed undercover officers and neo-fascist into the demonstration, and, posing as black bloc protesters, vandalized cars and small businesses to foster a poor public image of the AGM protesters and exacerbate divisions among them (Graeber
It worked: many people in the movement scorned the black bloc for its rogue tactics, which, they asserted, made it difficult to differentiate between them and police provocateurs, endangered masses of people, and undermined the efforts of those more interested in large-scale disobedience than guerilla tactics or property destruction. In an interview with Il Manifesto, for example, tute bianche spokesperson Luca Casarini criticized the black bloc at Genoa, asserting that "They're people who believe that all it takes to strike at capitalism is to break a shop window. . . . We think differently. We believe in a process of social transformation" (Shawki 2001).

Contrary to popular belief, the black bloc is not a particular group or organization; it is a tactic that is said to have originated with the European autonomist and militant squatter youth (Autonomen) in the 1980s who were distinguished by their all-black clothing and masks (Katsiaficas 2006, 177). Black blocs are not necessarily composed of people who identify as "anarchist," although their methods may reflect anarchist principles. At AGM protests in the U.S., for example, they tended to operate in "free association," converging only temporarily for particular events or actions and organizing nonhierarchically. Even when they did not agree on tactics at a given moment, there was a strong culture of tolerance and autonomy: each member was free to decide how and when to participate. It is important to note, however, that the constitution of black blocs change with each action or venue. Sometimes they increase the visibility of protests and provoke more direct confrontation with police or meeting delegates; other times, they participate in main marches or protect them from police attack. At anti-Iraq and Afghanistan war marches in the U.S., they participated in legally sanctioned marches and, in some cases, heightened tensions by burning effigies or dramatically breaking out of central marches in packs to rove the city. At the "Al 6" (April 16) protest in Washington, DC against the World Bank and the IMF, members of the black bloc served as a buffer from police; at the World Bank and IMF summit in Prague in September 2000, they threw stones at the cops and were generally more confrontational. In Quebec City, they played a central role in breaching the large security wall around the meeting site, winning favor from other protesters (Starr 2006, 67).

While protest tactics among lifestyle and social anarchists may not serve as reliable markers of difference, perhaps a clearer distinction can be established by looking at how each conceptualizes and attempts to operationalize freedom and autonomy. Lifestyle anarchists emphasize spontaneity, temporariness, and the production of an underground, subversive existence against the fixed boundaries of conventional life. Anarcho-primitivists, like John Zerzan, call for a return to the wild ("rewilding") or primitive life as a way to recapture the freedom of nature, outside a market-dominated life mediated by technological developments and civilizing processes. They tend to focus on personal freedom and escape as a solution to society's ills rather than understanding freedom as a collective construct. Sean Penn's 2007 film "Into the Wild" depicts a diluted version of such primitivism through the life and death of Christopher McCandless, a young college graduate influenced by the work of Tolstoy and Thoreau, who rejected his middle-class life to "rewild" in the Alaskan forest.
In contrast to anarchists interested in personal authenticity and building a life at the margins, social anarchists engage in movement building, community outreach, and collective forms of resistance, although many of them also enjoy unconventional lifestyles and live in squatter communities or other kinds of cooperative housing arrangements. Unlike primitivists, they laud technological inventions like the Internet because it facilitates cooperation and interconnection. Social anarchists are more apt to build relationships with other movement actors, including nonanarchists, whereas lifestylers are more likely to get involved in small group direct actions or retreat entirely into a life underground.

Which Autonomismi

Many activists in the AGM, including "social" anarchists, cite the Italian Autonomia Operaia ("Worker's Autonomy") movement of the 1970s as a significant influence. Worker's Autonomy has its roots in operiasmo or workerism, which was a central force in the development of the Italian Left from the 1950s to the end of the 1970s. Workerism emerged from Italian Communist Party (PCI) and Socialist Party critics like Raniero Panzieri and others, who sought to rethink Marxism amid a fledgling, post-World War Two Italian economy that, within the span of the decade, would experience intense industrialization and economic growth. Workerism's specificity lay in its focus on "the real factory" rather than building political programs based on abstract analyses of capitalism. As Steven Wright put it, "The most peculiar aspect of Italian workerism . . . was to be the importance it placed upon the relationship between the material structure of the working class, and its behavior as a subject autonomous from the dictates of both the labor movement and capital" (Wright 2002, 3, 6). For workerists, autonomy meant that class struggle would occur autonomously from the circulation of capital but also that it would not be led by traditional organizations of the Left such as the PCI or the country's national trade union, the Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL) (Katsiaficas 2006, 7). In its early years, however, workerism would maintain an ambiguous relationship to the PCI and the CGIL; some supported PCI and union involvement in worker organization, while others rejected them vehemently as agents of compromise. Following the war, Italian workers were making substantial gains in and outside the factory - from improvements in working conditions to "freezes upon both layoffs and the price of bread" - but Italy's industrializing process required a docile labor force, and the PCI, with its newfound political power, would more than once sell out its worker base for political gain (Wright 2002, 7, 9).

A key figure in the development of workerist thought, Panzieri, emphasized the importance of self-critique and -interrogation and a "refusal of partyspecificity." seeking to return to workers themselves as a source of revolutionary struggle rather than a revisionist party or abstract theoretical framework. For Panzieri, Marxist intellectuals should be directly involved in worker struggles and conduct sociological "worker's enquiries" in order to understand the needs and experiences of Italy's factory workers. Another distinctive characteristic of workerism in the early period was its emphasis on the working class as an engine of capitalist production. Renowned workerist Mario Tronti (1965) theorized the antagonistic power arrangements that constituted capitalist production, positioning labor as a critical force within the logic of capital and observing the ways in which worker's resistance repeatedly forced capital to adjust and redefine itself - that is, to reload. For Tronti, a revolutionary, anticapitalist project would involve breaking this relationship by way of a refusal of work. Other workerists during this period
advocated worker control over the factory (self-management) rather than a breaking of the fundamental power relationship between capital and labor outlined by Tronti (1972; Wright 2002, 16-21, 37-9).

The "Hot Autumn" of 1969 would mark a sea change in the development of Italian autonomism, as hundreds of thousands of workers protested in the streets, occupied factories, and committed acts of sabotage in them (Katsiaficas 2006, 18). In addition to playing a central role in the autonomous labor movement, workerists built alliances with other social subjects including students, feminists, the unemployed, and migrant and technical workers, as many of them were becoming key protagonists in the Italian scene. Debates over the role of students in and outside the university permeated workerist debates alongside the ongoing controversies over unions and the PCI (18). Actions like the "go-slow" and other acts of sabotage on the shop floor circumvented union and party involvement, further dividing the traditional left from the autonomists while broadening the latter's movement base (Wright 2002, 118-19).

In the mid-1970s, autonomist activity took the form of various acts of "self-reduction" in which people all over the country refused price increases on service, electricity, and phone services, signifying yet another wave of activism that did not involve unions or the PCI. Nor were these acts of resistance limited to workers. Self-reduction was accompanied by a surge in squat activity by university and high school students, which set the stage for Italy's vibrant social center movement (Katsiaficas 2006, 22; Wright 2002, 172). Although the move was certainly not unanimous, workerist theorists made a conceptual shift from the "mass worker" to the "socialized worker," which reflected the infusion of these new social subjects in the horizon of contention. While the concept of the "mass worker" focused on the factory, the "socialized worker" included those whose productive activities were performed in the realm of social reproduction as much of the grassroots resistance associated with the Hot Autumn and again, in the mid-1970s, was led by women, young people, and neighborhood committees, acting autonomously from formal political institutions.

While workerists contributed a great deal to the development of Italian autonomism, the women's movement also played an integral role. Feminists focused on transformation in the realm of everyday life and on politicization of seemingly personal issues like divorce and abortion, seeking to construct autonomous spaces for women and challenge the machismo of the traditional and workerist left. Feminists of all stripes founded their own abortion clinics and shelters for victims of rape and domestic violence, and formed consciousness-raising groups to deal with issues specifically related to patriarchy and its manifestations in the lives of women. Feminists like Maria Rosa Dalla Costa argued for recognition of women's work in the household as unpaid labor - wages for housework - while others such as Alisa del Re suggested a refusal of housework because it ran the risk of relegating women to the home rather than liberating them (Katsiaficas 2006, 27-33). Students also played an important role in the development of autonomism in the late 1960s and 1970s. They criticized government cutbacks, fought neofascist groups and politicians, and occupied universities and squat houses. The Metropeutan Indians (MI) represented one of the more creative elements of the student movement, operating by way of affinity-based collectives rather than through traditional political organizations. The MI argued against the military industrial complex and animal cruelty and for the legalization of drugs. In the spirit of self-reduction, they refused to pay for bus services and housing, as well as
cultural commodities like films and records. The MI and other student groups forged alliances with the workerists but remained uniquely countercultural in their expression.

Deeply influenced by the events in Italy and the vitality of its movements, the Autonomen in Germany emerged from a confluence of tendencies including the feminist and anti nuclear power movements, as well as punk and squatter subcultures. Feminists in Germany tackled many of the same issues as their Italian counterparts including divorce, abortion, and domestic violence. Moreover, they defined autonomy in nonpatriarchal terms as personal autonomy and focused on facilitating an existence that was not defined in relation to men. To that end, feminist autonomy involved establishing women's institutions - for example, shelters for victims of domestic violence and women's social centers - as spaces strictly for and by women. It also involved applying their concept of personal autonomy to the problem of organization: feminist organizations eschewed hierarchy, operated without defined leadership or charismatic figures, and did not depend on existing party structures (Katsiaficas 2006, 74-5).

The organizational structures and ethics that characterized feminist autonomy prefigured the Autonomen's rejection of defined leadership, hierarchy, and centralism. Rather than involve spokespersons, Autonomen speakers would go so far as to sit in trucks or wear masks to conceal their identity at protest events. Their decentralization, amorphous character not only protected them from police infiltration, but more importantly, enabled them to remain free from divisive hierarchies. Italian autonomism, on the other hand, to this day remains marked by a culture of celebrity. Many of Autonomia's leaders suffered severe repression, exile, and incarceration as a result of their conspicuous involvement. Even today, their spokespersons are targeted by neofascist and police, and they remain steeped in legal battles associated with their civil and social disobedience.

Unlike the Italian Marxists, the Autonomen rejected the use of unifying theories of revolution and counterpower, but they did operate according to loose sets of principles: they rejected the idea of a revolutionary party or vanguard, emphasized difference (what Katsiaficas has called "continuing differentiation"), and believed in self-determination in all aspects of life (Katsiaficas 2006, 9). Like their Italian counterparts, they engaged in confrontational protest, counterculture, parody, and sabotage to fight gentrification, fascism, and the state's increasing use of nuclear power, and they did so autonomously from traditional political parties. With the rise of neo-Nazism in the 1990s, Autonomen were crucial in waging an antifascist resistance by defending immigrants and other "marginals" from attack, when police and the traditional left had abandoned them. Despite such egalitarian efforts, however, the decentralization nature of Autonomen life left them vulnerable to allegations of opportunism with regard to squatting, and to some, their practice of wearing all black appeared to encourage conformity among the ranks. More serious criticisms, however, regarded contradictions within the movement regarding the use of physical force against their adversaries and cases of domestic violence against women in Autonomen squatter communities (Katsiaficas 2006, 177-9).

Between Anarchism and Autonomist Marxism

Like their Autonomen predecessors, social anarchists generally reject the idea of forming a centralized political organization, but they tend to coalesce according to three key political
organizational principles - préfiguration, anti-authoritarianism, and anticapitalism. Préfiguration really embodies the latter two because it combines anarchists' anticapitalism and anti-authoritarianism into an overarching organizational ethic that aims to balance their desires for freedom with problems of structure, coordination, and mediation. These anarchists believe that movements and their organizations should "prefigure" the political and social relations they seek to establish "[W]hat different anarchist organizations have in common is that they are developed organically from below, not engineered into existence from above. . . . They try to reflect as much as is humanly possible the liberated society they seek to achieve, not slavishly duplicate the prevailing system of hierarchy, class and authority" (Bookchin 1969).

Préfiguration also references the temporal aspects of social change theorized by anti-authoritarian movements. Andrej Grubacic, for example, describes anarchism's emphasis on préfiguration as "life despite capitalism," which includes constructing commons, autonomous spaces, and other forms of sociality in the here and now while foreshadowing what a "Life after capitalism" would look like and, theoretically, moving toward it (Grubacic 2005). Concern for préfiguration was also present in classical Italian autonomism insofar as workerists refused party and union abstractions of workers' lived experience. Their approach, however, was also fraught with contradictions including their machismo culture, their ambiguous relationship to the PCI and the CGIL, the privileging of charismatic leaders and intellectuals, and their lack of recognition of alternative discourses of resistance such as feminism (as antipatriarchal) or Third Worldism (Wright 2002, 113).

Hardt and Negri (2000, 2004) have since offered a new interpretation of contemporary struggles that more closely resembles that of anarchist praxis with regard to the ethic of préfiguration discussed in Grubacic's work. In Multitude, for example, they posit a co-temporality of resistance and organization that involves the ontological multitude "from the standpoint of eternity" - "throughout history humans have refused authority and command, expressed the irreducible difference of singularity, and sought freedom in innumerable revolts and revolutions" - and the historical or "not-yet" multitude, which "will require a political project to bring it into being" (Hardt and Negri 2004, 221). While the ethic of préfiguration uses somehow between the two multitudes, Hardt and Negri's (2000, 207) emphasis on political organization and claim that "Globalization must be met with counter-globalization" and "Empire, with a counter-Empire" has drawn criticism from anarchists. Richard Day, for example, has characterized Empire as an expression of a hegemonic project that runs the risk of eating its own children. To Hardt and Negri's question, "How can all this be organized? Or better, how can it adopt an organizational figure?" Day suggests an "anarchist" response:

you are posing yourself the wrong questions. "All of this" is always already organized, and your "we," whatever that might be, cannot "give" it anything without destroying what it is. You must "be still, and wait without hope/for hope would be hope for the wrong thing." That is, you must trust in non-unified, incoherent, non-hegemonic forces for social change, because hegemonic forces cannot produce anything that will look like change to you at all (Day 2005, 155).

Among anarchists like Day, the ethic of préfiguration runs counter to the notion that today's movements must assimilate to existing power structures in order to challenge them. Rather than
Many of today's anarchists seek to diffuse it.

The second principle, antiauthoritarianism, generally refers to anarchism's antistatist character, which dates back to Mikhail Bakunin in the nineteenth century. The state was at the center of anarchism's break with Marxism, and Bakunin, in particular, warned of the dangers of a Marxist "red bureaucracy." Marx theorized the transition from capitalism to communist society as involving a seizure of state power by the working class, but Bakunin rejected this idea citing "the true despotic and brutal nature of all states" (Bakunin 1950). While Marxists viewed the state as an executive of the ruling class and asserted ruling class control over the means of production as the ultimate relation of oppression, anarchists saw the state as an autonomous entity with its own logic of domination (Mueller 2003; Newman 2004).

Even though Marx and Engels, and later, Lenin, theorized the proletarian state as a key transitional moment in history that would eventually "wither away," anarchists claimed that the seizure of the state by the working class essentially boiled down to another form of tyranny, temporary or not. Moreover, for anarchists and autonomist Marxists, orthodox Marxism's focus on the working class as a "universal class" has not translated well to the mid-twentieth and twenty-first centuries, in part because it ignores the ways in which disaffection and desires for change among women, young people, and racial, ethnic, and sexual minority groups cut across traditional class boundaries. In his famous essay "Listen, Marxist!" Bookchin went so far as to assert that while Marxism may have been liberating a century ago, by the 1970s it had turned into a "straitjacket." According to Bookchin, the working class had been "neutralized as the 'agent of revolutionary change'" and class struggle suffered a "deadening fate by being co-opted into capitalism . . . Our enemies are not only the visibly entrenched bourgeoisie and the state apparatus but also an outlook which finds its support among liberals, social democrats . . . [and] the 'revolutionary' parties of the past, and . . . the worker dominated by the factory hierarchy, by the industrial routine, and by the work ethic" (Bookchin 1971).

Although anarchism is historically antistatist, many of today's anarchists acknowledge that states can play an important role in providing social welfare services and protections against the detrimental effects of unregulated capitalism. Some, like Chomsky, assert that supporting the state sector in contemporary (neoliberal) societies may even constitute a step toward its abolition (Chomsky 2005, 212-20). Instead of a universal rejection of the state, anarchist anti-authoritarianism involves placing the burden of proof on existing authority structures and limiting or dismantling the power of institutions or individuals whose authority proves to be illegitimate (Chomsky 2005, 118-30; Graeber and Grubacic 2004). While anarchists concede that states are oftentimes more well equipped than grassroots movements to ensure a sound infrastructure and social welfare for everyday people, they are critical of the system of coercion that undergirds state authority, which, for them, ultimately limits its potential to serve as an agent of Ubratory change (Graeber 2006). This anarchist critique of authority also extends to other media of social control including the family, educational systems, physical and mental health care facilities, as weU as norms regarding sexuality, religion, and artistic expression (Chomsky 2005, 178).
This critique of authority and emphasis on the ubiquitous nature of control can also be found in the work of Hardt and Negri, who share anarchism's penchant for postmodern thought. In Empire, they build on Deleuze's (1992) concept of societies of control, which represent a new plateau or level of maximization in which the state is understood as both everywhere and nowhere. Rather than disciplining subjects by way of institutional mediations, as Foucault would have, Deleuze identified such institutions as in-crisis: the family, the church, and the trade union were no longer relevant as central devices of domination (and resistance against it). Rather, control involved a pervasive logic (of capitalist production) that extended beyond institutional mediations into the whole of social space. Hardt and Negri apply Deleuze's control society to discuss the new arrangements of sovereignty characteristic of the post-Cold War age of Empire, arguing that institutional mediations had soured, civil society withered, and nation-states no longer operated as the uppermost apparatuses of power. Sovereignty - the power to impose order - wrecks in the hands of multinational corporations and supranational institutions like the IMF and the World Bank that trump the sovereignty of nation-states. Opposition to Empire is achieved via the multitude, a social multiplicity that acts in common while maintaining differences among its constituents, rather than a homogenous class formation or other false unity. Multitude involves an understanding of the expansive nature of exploitation and control in contemporary societies that, paradoxically, offers innumerable opportunities for resistance, not bound to social class, identity politics, or national liberation (Hardt and Negri 2004, 92).

Autonomists Uke Katsiaficas have been critical of previous waves of autonomist theory, especially that associated with workerism, because of its focus on labor and production at the expense of other categories of transformation. Katsiaficas has targeted Negri in particular not only for his allegiance to Marxist categories of analysis but also for his charismatic personal style. Katsiaficas notes that while Negri and his cohort played an important role in theorizing workers' struggles beyond traditional, Old Left categories - to involve unpaid housework and white-collar workers, for example - his work continues to provide only "a partial understanding of the universe of freedom." For Katsiaficas, Negri's theoretical approach "constricts human beings and liberation within the process of production . . . patriarchy (and race) need to be understood in their own right, as autonomously existing, not simply as moments of capital. . . . What occurs between men and women under the name of patriarchy is not the same as what happens between bosses/owners and workers" (Katsiaficas 2006, 223). Katsiaficas's criticism is echoed by Steven Wright, who provides a more sympathetic account of Negri's history as well as that of operiasmo. He too criticizes Italian autonomist Marxism's tendency to flatten the real experiences of people into abstract categories and ignore important differences among them. He veers significantly from Katsiaficas, however, in that he situates such contributions within a highly volatile and revolutionary context in which movement protagonists like Negri could certainly be said to have had a tiger by the tail (Wright 2002, 224). Nonetheless, these criticisms bear strong resemblance to that of autonomist Marxism's anarchist critics like Graeber and Day.

In terms of their anticapitalist orientation, anarchists and autonomist Marxists share Marxism's concern for social inequality and alienation as well as its emphasis on labor as an important concept through which to understand human history and potential. Autonomists, from Tronti to Hardt and Negri, have theorized the ways in which the exploitation they witnessed in the factory extended into the whole of social life. Italian autonomists' concept of the "social factory," for example, enabled them to move beyond traditional, reductionist concepts of class struggle and
toward a theory of the ubiquitous nature of capitalist exploitation that included the recognition of women's work in the household as a critical site of social reproduction. From the basis of these ideas emerged the more contemporary concept of immaterial labor, that is, labor that helps define the creative (cultural, informational) content of commodities, standards of taste, and norms and public opinion, produced on a massive scale, and no longer strictly the domain of the ruling class. At the turn of the twentieth century, theorists of immaterial labor locate an increased tendency toward intellectual and affective labor, even in occupations that were previously limited to manual tasks. Calling into question conceptions of labor (among workerists and other Marxists) as a force in dialectical relation to the forces of capital, they characterize immaterial labor as immanently cooperative because its valorization may occur outside the capital relation: "Today productivity, wealth, and the creation of social surpluses take the form of cooperative interactivity through linguistic, communicational, and affective networks. In the expression of its own creative energies, immaterial labor thus seems to provide the potential for a kind of spontaneous and elementary communism" (Hardt and Negri 2000, 294). Anarchist Richard Day (2005) adds nuance to this analysis, pointing out that in addition to the increased intellectual aspect of even the most mundane physical jobs, such trends have also involved a routinization of artistic and intellectual production. He contends that Hardt and Negri may be overstating this increased intellectualization and its Ubratory effects, however, since the information economy has also required its share of unskilled laborers performing mundane, backbreaking tasks (Day 2005, 146; also see Graeber 2008).

Despite their differences, autonomist Marxists and anarchists alike oppose private property and argue for a direct reappropriation of resources by people and not through the state or any other mediations (Epstein 2001). In this regard, their antiauthoritarianism and anticapitalism are interrelated: anarchism insists on "democratic control over one's Ufe," but it also advocates for social ownership of the means of production, a kind of "stateless socialism" (Chomsky 2005). They use the term "mutual aid," initiaUy theorized by Kropotin, to refer to the voluntary exchange of goods and services for the mutual benefit of members of a given society. Contemporary autonomist groups (and some anarchists) and AGM activists employ a similar ethic in their attempts to reinvigorate commons, a concept that has its roots in the property-sharing practices of medieval Europe but generally refers to any resource that is (or should be) collectively shared. Against the dominant system of private property, commons are "forms of direct access to social wealth, access that is not mediated by competitive market relations" (DeAngelis 2004). In keeping with the antiauthoritarian ethos of anarchist and autonomist thought, "commons" is also used to reference coordinated, cooperative practices that are not directed by a central point of command nor from some "spontaneous harmony." Naomi Klein has located a "reclaiming of the commons" in contemporary anti-advertising campaigns, street and subway raves, open-source software, and other forms of Internet pirating in which people trade commodities like music and film instead of buying them from multinational corporations (Hardt and Negri 2004, 222; Klein 2001, 50).

While some of these practices are reminiscent of Bey's TAZs in terms of their temporality and countercultural character, many anarchists and autonomists engage in antiprivatization efforts more in resistance to neoliberalism and corporate influence over social and cultural Ufe than for the purposes of selfmastery or -aggrandizement. In the ItaUan context, for example, squatting and "self-reduction" in the 1960s and 1970s gave birth to the social center movement,
comprising hundreds of squats in various parts of the country, usually on the outskirts of urban areas or in industrial zones. The first wave of centers emerged amid the shift from industrial to flexible forms of production that left vacant large stretches of cityscape in urban centers around the world. In Milan, industrial production gave way to an economy based on the finance, fashion, and service industries that brought with them high rents and low wages, at least for those lucky enough to still have a job: between 1971 and 1989, 280,000 of the city’s workers joined the ranks of the unemployed (Mudu 2004). By 2004, however, over 250 social centers had been active in Italy, ranging from large complexes like Rivolta in Marghera (outside of Venice) to small spaces in southern Italy, run by two or three people (Mudu 2004). The first social center, Leoncavallo, was occupied in Milan in 1975, but like many centers, it has been closed and reopened over the years because of police pressure.

Social centers involve a diverse array of social subjectivities, and Italy has a long history of geographic specificity with regard to its movement formations and their political legacies. Nonetheless, a common thread among contemporary social centers is their desire and effort to take back what neoliberalism has taken away. To that end, social centers tend to offer an assortment of public services including housing and documentation services for immigrants and homeless people, condom distribution for prostitutes, day care or housing for homeless children, counseling and caregiving for battered women, and many others. They also provide spaces for a variety of activities: concerts by popular bands, nightlife, art installations, theater, political meetings and conferences, radio and TV broadcasting, and activist organizing. While corporate music venues tend to charge high admission fees and the spaces themselves are highly regulated, social centers operate outside the coercive realm of corporations and the state, and inhabitants can essentially do as they please (in good faith) without drug crackdowns, age restrictions, and curfews. The low cost of concert admissions enables participation from a broader audience, and proceeds are fed back into the centers.

About half of the social centers in Italy have acquired some degree of legal status as of this writing, but not without controversy. Rivolta, for example, was occupied in 1996; an empty factory in the industrial town of Marghera, it was owned privately and slated to be sold and transformed into a large commercial area. After the space was squatted, the municipality decided, at the urging of sympathetic government officials in the Green and Democratic parties, to designate most of the space for “social use.” The other half of the centers remain unsanctioned and therefore subject to enclosure. Legal status tends to be more difficult for those located in areas with higher price tags on real estate, and squatters who live and work in those spaces must remain on guard for police infiltration. Moreover, some of them view the sanctioned centers as less authentic in keeping with their antipathy to conventional political entities. Some of the disputes among social centers correspond to the divisions among anarchists and autonomist groups outlined in this article.

U.S. activists tend to be less divided over issues related to political legacy, yet they face their own set of challenges building political and social alternatives in an enormously diverse country without a functional left. Nonetheless, a surprising number of anarchist bookstores, magazines, recording groups and labels, food cooperatives, concert venues, and other social formations continue to flourish. Similar to their Italian counterparts, anti-authoritarian groups in the U.S. also engage in service provision campaigns that are informed by their belief in a reinvigoration of a
commons. The anarchist group Food Not Bombs (FNB), for instance, was founded on an acknowledgement of food "as a right, not privilege." The first FNB was formed in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1980 by antinuclear activists, but the network has grown to include hundreds of local chapters and has links to various groups like EarthFirst!, the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, the Anarchist Black Cross, the Industrial Workers of the World, and several others. FNB chapters are indeed diverse and they do not employ formal leaderships or central apparatuses. They recover food that would otherwise be thrown out and serve fresh, vegetarian meals to hungry people free of charge. For example, FNB served food to survivors of California earthquakes, 9/11 rescue workers, and victims of the Sri Lankan tsunami, as well as residents of New Orleans abandoned by the local and federal government in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Conclusion

Anarchists and autonomists have focused on solving what is perhaps the most important question for egalitarian social movements today: how to balance the organizational requisites for change with movements' desire for freedom and autonomy. To that end, they have operationalized their ethic of autonomy by creating organizational forms that involve decenterUzed, autonomous units interconnected via networks, a term often used by anarchists and autonomists alike to discuss both the theory and practice of their organization. Skeptical of electoral and juridical (rights-based) solutions to social problems, they reject the imposition of national boundaries and other spatial arrangements that deny the autonomy of local communities and fix social relations around artificial borders. These groups understand such boundaries to be "artificial" in the sense that they do not conform to the more organic ways in which communities emerge and reproduce - especially in the context of globaUzation in which freer flows of goods and services are matched by highly regulated and policed immigration systems. Instead, they argue for alternative forms of social organization comprising self-determined and -managed communities and local units that allow for an unbridled flow of people around the globe in lieu of boundaries imposed by states.

Such ideas manifest concretely in the organization of AGM protests by groups like the Direct Action Network (DAN), which was initially founded to coordinate the demonstrations against the WTO in Seattle but remained active in organizing subsequent, large-scale protests and other events. DAN fostered interconnections among a broad variety of groups by way of voluntary association, which meant that groups and individuals were not required to adopt a political line or adhere to any other kind of false unity. DAN fostered interlockings and negotiations, but there was never any overarching subordination, nor was any single entity in the network privileged over another. Groups entered into DAN to fill a basic need (e.g., defend a squat house) or plan an event (e.g., teach-ins, civil disobedience), but the network was never seen as a means or a step toward a defined end. Despite their commitment to party politics, for example, members of various local Green parties participated alongside community organizers, NGO activists, professional journalists, students, and various, unaffiliated others without using the network for electoral gain. At the beginning of each DAN meeting, "Points of Unity" were established via consensus process, and most often, these Points involved an explicit understanding of the network as one "comprised of autonomous agents."
DAN's praxis was less about an enforced movement toward some ideal state of affairs or support for a single project or politician than about linking heterogeneous groups with unique histories and producing stable interactions among them. In this respect, DAN abided by principles shared by both anarchists and autonomists: it was noncoercive, nonhierarchical, decentralized, and interested in maximizing the freedom of all groups involved. It conjoined various social movement struggles and overcame the problem of centralism by developing a principled, action-oriented network that protected the autonomy of its constituents and enabled their participation. This experience may be instructive for movements attempting to solve the age-old problem of "organization versus autonomy" because its constituents found ways to connect disparate groups and tendencies without becoming subsumed in the kind of zero-sum, sectarian maneuvering that continues to divide the left and radical movements around the world.

Footnote

Notes


2. Berkman was allegedly involved in terroristic activities including an assassination effort against John D. Rockefeller. He served fourteen years in prison for his attempted assassination of Henry Clay Frick.

3. In The Manifesto of the Communist Party (1848), Marx and Engels state: "The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all other proletarian parties: Formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat." In Anti-Duhring, Engels (1877) further explains: "The first act by which the state really comes forward as the representative of the whole of society - the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society - is also its last independent act as a state. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies down of itself. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The state is not 'abolished.' It withers away. This gives the measure of the value of the phrase 'a free people's state,' both as to its justifiable use for a long time from an agitational point of view, and as to its ultimate scientific insufficiency; and also of the so-called anarchists' demand that the state be abolished overnight." In State and Revolution, Lenin further discusses the "withering away of the state."


5. Here, "enclosure" refers to a seizure of common lands by the state, reminiscent of the expropriation of peasants from agricultural commons during the eighteenth century, documented in Karl Marx's Capital, volume 1, chapter 27: "The Expropriation of the Agricultural Population from the Land."
References


_____. 2006. Harvey on anarchists and the state. Anarchisms Listserv on riseup.net.


_____. 2006. Harvey on anarchists and the state. Anarchisms Listserv on riseup.net.


Author Affiliation

Heather Gautney is an activist and assistant professor of sociology at Fordham University. She is author of Between Protest and Political Organization (forthcoming, Palgrave). She is also co-editor of Democracy, States and the Struggle for Global Justice (Routledge, 2009) and Implicating Empire (Basic Books, 2003) and serves on the editorial board of Social Text. Address correspondence to Heather Gautney, PhD, Assistant Professor, Fordham University, 113 W 60th Street, Room 923F; New York, NY 10023. Telephone: +011-917-239-2784. E-mail: gautney@fordham.edu.

Copyright Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Sep 2009

Word count: 10608

Indexing (details)

Cite
Subject
Anarchism;
Politics;
Constituents;
Political activism;
Journalists;
Marxism
Title
BETWEEN ANARCHISM AND AUTONOMIST MARXISM
Author
Gautney, Heather
Publication title
Working USA
Volume
12
Issue
3
Pages