

Black flag mapping: emerging themes in anarchist geography

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I first realised that I wanted to become a geographer when I read *Tearing Down the Streets*, by the anarchist Jeff Ferrell (2001). Overlooking the fact that he was a criminologist, not a geographer, the powerful message of the book orbited the contestation of public space and the politics of creating truly public and egalitarian spaces for social change. Using a critique (anarchism) and subject matter (public space) that I had never experienced before, Ferrell interrogated the ways in which the urban environment is shaped by, and constitutive of, all manner of political, social, cultural and economic forces. What gripped me was the way that space is ethereal and elusive – we can't hold a piece of space in our hand, or interview it, or run it through a machine for analysis – but it is also necessarily material and grounded, locked deeply into the core of everyday struggles for survival, expression, wellbeing and social justice. As a disillusioned political science undergraduate who had been taught that the study of politics chiefly involved learning by rote the technocratic systems of Western government, this was an epiphany of considerable magnitude.

It quickly became clear that anarchism and geography could be very happy bedfellows, both offering a view of the world that is holistic, nuanced, insightful and potentially transformative. The powerful tension that inhabits the anarchist critique is that it incorporates a fundamental and unrelenting questioning of the very basis of society as we know it, and yet, identifies situated practices and relationships that take place every day as potentially embodying future emancipatory worlds. The inescapable omnipresence of space as a primary conditioning factor in all human and non-human relationships and processes, thus, easily links us to a mode of political analysis and action like anarchism that gives us the tools to unearth and recast these relationships and processes in a profoundly radical manner. It is therefore not surprising that two of the most influential anarchists of the 19th Century – Elisée Reclus and Peter Kropotkin – were also two of the era's most influential geographers. What *is* surprising, however, is that aside from a short flurry of interest in the mid-to-late 1970s, academic geography has hitherto had very little direct contact with anarchism. Only recently has a small band of anarchist geographers reawakened this tradition.

In this chapter, I outline the nature of the contemporary renaissance of anarchist geography, considering how geographers are increasingly applying anarchist ideas, concepts and analytical tools to the critical study of our complex relationships with the spaces and places we inhabit. First, I briefly introduce the historical connections between anarchism and geography, as well as cognate fields such as architecture and planning. I then move to a discussion of how anarchist thought has emerged in contemporary academic geography, and suggest some possible reasons for this, before exploring three key contemporary themes emerging through anarchist

interventions in Anglophone geographical scholarship: the relationship between anarchism and 'autonomous' practices, thought, and movements; the anarchist critique of authority and statism in relation to broader geographical debates on the spatialities of governance; and anarchist perspectives on the role, nature and politics of 'publics' and public space.

A short history of anarchist geographies

My primary focus in this chapter is the contemporary relationship between anarchism and geography – conceptually, theoretically, and politically – rather than returning to the rich historical accounts of anarchist geography, discussed in depth elsewhere (e.g. Clark and Martin, 2004; Ince, 2010a; Ward, 2010; Springer *et al.*, 2012; Springer 2013a). However, it is worth briefly re-tracing this history in order to understand the intellectual trajectory of anarchist geographies.

We can see both Kropotkin and Reclus as figureheads of a counter-offensive against dominant theories of ecology and human society that variously sought to justify and support colonialism, white supremacy, capitalism, and the state. Both men utilised analysis of the natural world in order to directly counteract the naturalisation of these man-made social and political institutions and practices. For them, the holistic investigation of ecosystems demonstrated the factual inaccuracy of their counterparts' ideas, and through these investigations they sought to politicise the otherwise depoliticised Social Darwinist theories espoused by the likes of Herbert Spencer and Thomas Huxley (Claeys 2000) which worked to support the colonial capitalist state. Kropotkin and Reclus reasoned that if ecological theories that

naturalise competition, white supremacy, and hierarchy are undermined by alternative evidence, then radical political imaginations could flourish with firm scientific backing.

In *La Nouvelle Géographie Universelle* (1876-1894, see Fleming 1987; Ferretti 2013), Reclus outlined in minute detail the myriad ways in which ecological processes, land forms, species, and ecosystems were spatially organised in ways that did not conform to any kind of bordering or territorialisations that resembled modern statist territorial spatialities. Although territories and divisions existed in the natural world, they were not discrete, singular, or definable in an orthodox cartographic sense, always shifting and overlapping, making and remaking themselves and each other over time. Reclus could see no justification in the natural world for the static lines on the map that Western civilisation had imposed, except as mechanisms of social control, and he explained at length the ways in which European colonialism, for example, was not only a moral abomination but also an ecological anomaly.

Although now the more famous of this pair, Peter Kropotkin was by far Reclus' junior when they first met (Ward, 2010). Kropotkin's legendary work, *Mutual Aid*, arguably developed a similar thematic thread to Reclus' *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle*. Identifying the ways in which mainstream ecologists and naturalists were using Darwinism as a means of justifying capitalistic competition and individualism, Kropotkin embarked on a careful analysis of evolution from the perspective not of competition but of co-operation. His conclusions were clear:

[T]he vast majority of species... find in association the best arms for the struggle of life... The mutual protection which is obtained in this case, the possibility of attaining old age and of accumulating experience, the higher intellectual development, and the further growth of sociable habits, secure the maintenance of the species, its extension, and its further progressive evolution. The unsociable species, on the contrary, are doomed to decay. (1972 [1912]: 246)

Following Reclus' early efforts, Kropotkin took a far keener interest in the ecology of human societies, and much of *Mutual Aid* covered practices of tribal societies in such diverse regions as North America, Australia, Southern Africa and the Pacific, as well as Roman and mediaeval European cities. At the time of the publication of this work, he was already moving into the study of Western modernity in *Fields, Factories and Workshops* (1968 [1913]). This volume interrogated the spatial inefficiencies of capitalist production in Britain and its social and intellectual impacts. What we see in Kropotkin's work at this time is the dovetailing of ecology and anthropology – the integrated study of human civilisation and its environment – arguably for the first time in such a detailed and systematic manner. One might argue that *L'homme et la Terre*, the final volume of Reclus' *magnum opus*, beat Kropotkin to the prize (Ferretti 2013), but whichever is correct, there is little doubt that it was an anarchist who heralded the birth of human geography as we now know it.

The inter-war period, and the eventual death of both Reclus and Kropotkin, saw a decline in anarchist geographies. However, in other fields such as planning, anarchist ideas had already been transplanted into efforts to create self-sustainable, communitarian neighbourhoods and cities through modernist projects such as the Garden City Movement, led by Ebenezer Howard (Hall 1988). Although many of the

ideas of these early planning visionaries were appropriated by colonial interests and used to discipline and segregate colonial subjects from their masters, their efforts denoted a shift from anarchist spatial analysis towards material efforts to produce egalitarian, communitarian spaces.

The Spanish Civil War saw arguably the largest experiment in creating anarchist communities in modern history. Led by the CNT, the anarcho-syndicalist union, huge swathes of both rural and urban Spain were voluntarily collectivised along anarchist lines, before their betrayal by the Soviet-backed communists and eventual victory of the fascist forces. The years of collectivisation heralded a considerable shift in the spatialities of everyday life in CNT-controlled Spain, and 1970s geographers' efforts at finding an alternative discourse to the impoverished binary between oppressive state socialism and exploitative market capitalism found inspiration in these highly successful experiments:

Within hours of the Franco assault, anarchist peasants and workers seized direct control over rural land, cities, factories, and social service and transportation networks... Collectivisation encompassed more than one-half of the total land area of Republican [non-Francoist] Spain, directly or indirectly affecting the lives of between seven and eight million people (Breitbart 1978: 60).

Breitbart and others ushered in a new wave of interest in anarchism in geography, reflecting a keenness on the part of geographers to identify structures of authority and recognise the interlocking system of capital and state in a wide range of spatial inequalities. The journal *Antipode* was a key conduit for this, and although principally a Marxist journal, its openness to anarchist ideas began a long anti-authoritarian

tradition in radical geography (cf. Peet, 1975). A smattering of contributions throughout the 1980s and '90s (eg. MacLaughlin 1986; Cook and Pepper 1990) continued the anarchist tradition, but the potential for anarchist geographies was overshadowed by the dominance of Marxist political economy, feminist geographies and, later, the rise of poststructuralism. However, although anarchism had once again faded from the geographic milieu as an explicit political perspective, it had made a sufficiently powerful imprint in the early days of radical geography to have an enduring, if indirect, impact on geographical scholarship and imaginations.

Renewing the anarchist tradition in geography

In order to understand the return of anarchism to contemporary geography, we must look beyond the boundaries of the academy altogether. At this point, it is worth noting that this chapter stems largely from a British tradition, both of anarchism and of geography. As we will see, there is considerable overlap between British and other Anglophone literatures, along with some connections with other languages, but, as I outline in this section, a set of geographical conditions largely specific to the UK was a principal (although certainly not the only) driving force in laying the foundations for the emergence of contemporary anarchist geographies.

In the 1970s and 1980s, anarchism as a political tendency was relatively small but gradually incorporated a range of perspectives: small-scale, everyday transformations of relationships and institutions such as education (Ward 1998 [1973]); anti-authoritarian punk subcultures (Gosling 2004); and working class anarcho-communism (Franks 2006). Proto-anarchist subcultures that followed were

partly a fusion of these currents and a rejection of them, creating their own distinctive brand of creative refusal. The late 1980s and 1990s saw a large and growing counterculture within British youth, orbiting an amorphous 'DIY' political milieu that incorporated a range of cultural and political currents. Anti-roads, hunt-saboteur, and environmental direct action movements were central to this counterculture, alongside a growing radical and experimental arts movement that included huge squatted 'free parties', guerrilla art installations, and occupations of roads, buildings and other structures of capitalist accumulation or state authority (Mckay 1998; St John 2003). A concerted effort by the British state to criminalise this huge, transgressive and richly creative counterculture (Halfacree 1996) contributed to a further politicisation towards a broad anarchistic politics that foregrounded the creation of autonomous zones as a key tactic (eg. McCreery 2002).

Discussion of anarchism within contemporary geographical scholarship begins to grow in the late 1990s and early 2000s, following the emergence of DIY movements and projects epitomised by the likes of Reclaim the Streets, a transgressive, carnivalesque fusion of party and protest that targeted commercialised public spaces (eg. Routledge 1997; Brown 2004). These spaces of creative transgression and radical politics fit perfectly with the growing interest in 'geographies of resistance', which sought to analyse the spatialities of these emergent movements, camps, tendencies and projects (eg. Sharp et al. 2000; Featherstone 2003).

The networked, relational nature and horizontalist patterns of organisation exhibited by the movement shed new light on the way geographers (and many other social sciences) understood the practice of political mobilisation. At the same time, in the

USA and Canada, the meteoric rise of the movements instigating vast anti-summit demonstrations that rocked Seattle in 1999 and Quebec in 2001 appeared to catch geographical scholarship unawares (Fannin et al. 2000). The gradual build-up of UK radical countercultures was thus contrasted sharply with what appeared to be the sudden appearance of a new, powerful North American movement, both of which were inspired to a degree by a nebulous web of emergent anarchisms.

With the rise of the variously-titled anti-capitalist or global justice movement came greater emphasis among radical geographers on the movemental qualities of these politics. Not only were geographers exploring the constellations of place-making and subversion that these movements undertook, but they also embarked on insightful analyses of the movement's horizontalist, networked qualities (Routledge 2000; Mamadouh 2004). It was only a matter of time before geographers were making deeper engagements with the philosophy, as well as the strategy, that underpinned this movement, and with anarchists at the helm, there was a growing interest in anarchist thought and practice.

A watershed moment was the publication of Pickerill and Chatterton's (2006) paper theorising what they term 'autonomous geographies'. Although there had already been some important engagements with the notion of autonomy in geography (eg. Chatterton 2005) this paper drew together existing work into a theoretically and conceptually solid framework – a framework that relied heavily on classical and modern anarchist philosophy. In it, they outlined a manifesto for a new geographical imagination inspired by, and feeding back into, global justice movements. As they explain:

[A]utonomy is a contextually and relationally grounded concept in specific networks of social struggles and ideas across different times and spaces... Autonomous geographies allow us to move beyond the dichotomy of global-bad, local-good. Hence, autonomy can be a tool for understanding how hybrid and interstitial spaces are (re)made and (re)constituted. (2006: 743)

This paper, then, linked activist priorities with geographical scholarship through the concept of autonomy, discussed in more depth below. Yet, the move towards autonomous geographies made little effort to explore the theory and practice of anarchism as a specific political tradition, since a central notion of autonomy (as they theorised it) is its openness to a diversity of ideas, tactics and subjectivities, and a rejection of “the problems of blueprints that plague the contemporary world” (Ibid: 731). However, far from being simply another ideology to follow obediently towards a utopian blueprint, anarchism is distinct from other political philosophies in that it involves an explicit rejection of the absolute blueprints that Pickerill and Chatterton rightly rally against. Nevertheless, in exploring autonomous movements and campaigns, these geographers opened up possibilities within the academy for a deeper exploration of the relevance of anarchist ideas to geographical analysis, methodology and pedagogy.

Anarchy and/or autonomy

With autonomous practices and structures being key means through which anarchists and others have articulated and practiced their prefigurative politics (eg. Pickerill 2007), the notion of autonomy is a central empirical and conceptual focus of

anarchist and related fields of geography. This section thus outlines the intellectual development and contributions of anarchist perspectives in geography through a deeper discussion of notions of autonomy contained within them.

As I have argued elsewhere (eg. Ince, 2012), it is the distinctively prefigurative underpinnings of anarchism that exert potentially the most powerful impact on academic endeavour. The notion that we must organise and relate to one another in ways that are reflective of the kind of future world we wish to create is so anathema to the remainder of the political spectrum that it has vast potential to transform the way we enact research and pedagogy. Exactly *how* and *what* to prefigure, however, has long been a focus of debate among both 'pure' anarchists and the diverse anti-capitalist horizontalist movements out of which autonomous and anarchist geographies have sprung.

Daniel Colson outlines an anarchist conception of autonomy thus:

[A]narchist autonomy refers to the forces constitutive of beings, to the capacity to develop in themselves the totality of resources which they need in order 1) to affirm their existence, and 2) to associate with others, and to thus constitute an ever more powerful force of life. (2001: 47-48)

As such, we can conceive of autonomy, from an anarchist perspective, as an immanent social relationship produced through individual and collective self-governing agency. Enacted alongside the fundamental anarchist principles of mutual aid and voluntary association, autonomy sits on the borderline between individual liberty and collective organisation. It nurtures a delicate tension between these two

qualities, producing complex 'interstitial' (Pickerill and Chatterton 2006) spatialities that may function through a combination of loose networks and formal organisations, and embody an immanent malleability that has the potential to render autonomous spaces and practices near-ungovernable. The majority of geographers, however, have tended to draw less explicitly from the anarchist tradition, also incorporating elements of autonomist Marxism and contemporary anti-capitalist practices of autonomy, to form a hybrid notion of autonomous politics.

Post-autonomism, exemplified by Hardt and Negri's *Empire* (2001), has already been explored by critical geographers (eg. Lepofsky 2009), and their conceptions of autonomy have therefore enjoyed some level of influence. By deploying the idea of a 'multitude' – an amorphous mass of humanity which functions as an unmediated, collective social subject – some geographers have made contributions to the study of geopolitics and migrant politics by exploring the ways in which marginal groups may function as networks of autonomous agents of social change (eg. Merla-Watson 2012).

The strength of the original class-struggle strains of autonomist Marxism, however, is their emphasis on the primacy of working class agency from the outset, where our everyday activities are appropriated by capital and enveloped into a totalising "social factory" (see Thoburn 2003). In this view, all forms of economic, social, and material production and reproduction originate with working class agency. Autonomist Marxists deploy notions such as the "general intellect" (Spence and Carter 2011), which is the sum total of people's ordinary experiences, knowledges, ideas and emotions, through which capital parasitically learns and develops. With the working

class situated as the prime mover of capitalist development, what some geographers have labeled as 'resistance' is transformed into a new phase of class recomposition that elites must respond to, rather than the other way around (Cleaver 1979). As such, the (post-)autonomist approach places agency solely in the hands of the working class, or multitude.

This conception of autonomy challenges established schools of thought in left geography, most notably Regulation Theory (see, for eg. Lee and Wainwright 2010), which seeks to map the structures through which capitalism regulates and perpetuates itself across spaceⁱ. If we follow the autonomists, however, the capitalist classes in business and government become vulnerable and fragile, pitifully dependent on our agency for their survival.

Anarchist geographers have been careful in their use of Marxist ideas, and have the concepts of this tradition by transplanting elements of it into a prefigurative anarchistic framework that seeks to cancel out the potentially authoritarian, linear, and statist baggage that Marxisms risk bringing with them. As Clough and Blumberg note, "[w]e call autonomist Marxist thought a 'trajectory' here because it is not so much a school of theory as it is *a current of theorising* that draws on a series of shared concepts" (2012: 344, my emphasis). Moreover, there is a growing body of postanarchist work in geography, which problematises the notion of class in favour of a poststructuralist perspective, conceiving of capital and state as an interlocking terrain of non-linear power relations that cannot be reduced to dialectical oppositional struggle (Newman 2011; Springer 2013b). Postanarchists are therefore

also wary of the influence of Marxism on anarchist geographies, albeit for slightly different reasons from their non-postanarchist counterparts.

The role of autonomist Marxist concepts and critiques has therefore been an ambiguous one, but one that has also supported considerable progress towards understanding the functioning and political significance of autonomous spaces. Using this fusion of anarchist and autonomist thought, geographers are deepening knowledge on the ways in which social movements co-ordinate, organise and communicate across space and in place-based 'militant particularisms' (Pickerill 2007; Rouhani 2012a); the geographies of militant pedagogy and research methods (Chatterton 2006; Autonomous Geographies Collective 2010); and deconstructing colonial relationships between Settler and Indigenous activists (Barker and Pickerill 2012), among others.

A common theme within these anarchist considerations of autonomy is their emphasis on creating spaces and spatialities of self-management. Autonomy literally means 'self-management' or 'self-government', although as we have seen, it has become much broader than this. Nevertheless, geographers have been particularly interested in the ways in which self-management functions in and across different geographical contexts. A key finding is the messy, contested nature of autonomous space, which means that making meaningful linkages between the local and transnational is far from straightforward (Pickerill and Chatterton 2006; Ince 2010b).

The complex, mundane nature of self-management practices also plays out in the realm of the emotional and experiential 'affective' structures through which activists

build autonomous forms of solidarity in place and across space (Clough 2012). In doing so, activists seek to prevent infiltration by security forces through these 'non-representational' modes of self-managing groups and wider movements. Activist fatigue is a deeply affective element of the practicalities of self-managed spaces, and Rouhani (2012a) illustrates the ways in which the materialities of a space's location, size and spatial configuration can serve to unite or fragment an outwardly 'tight' political collective. However, it is not only in physical spaces that self-management occurs, with online news and information dissemination claiming networked virtual spaces for self-managed media activities (Pickerill 2007).

We can see that autonomy theorises a particular kind of spatiality – one that might incorporate a range of political perspectives and ideas. Anarchism constitutes only one such political school of thought represented as part of autonomous projects, yet it is certainly the principal one. Thus, while autonomy is a toolkit of spatial strategies or tactics, anarchism is a mode of theory and analysis as well as an approach to spatial strategy. One can potentially conceive of authoritarian or capitalist configurations of autonomy, or non-autonomous modes of anarchist praxis. The intersections and affinities between anarchy and autonomy have often been assumed by scholars in geography and throughout the social sciences. Yet, a more critical investigation of their relationship might bring to light alternative spatial strategies available to anarchist groups and projects, especially when it is clear that autonomous spaces can sap energy and resources, divide broader movements, expose projects to state aggression and infiltration, tend only to occupy margins, and are hard to sustain over long periods of time (eg. Ince 2010; Clough 2012; Rouhani 2012a). Autonomy is, without a doubt, a powerful means of forging spaces of

creation and resistance between the cracks in the fabric of state and capital, but these successes can sometimes come at a high price.

Re-theorising governance: statism, authority, and the territorial imagination

There has been a deep antiauthoritarian current within the field of geography for several decades, and geographers have been at the forefront of analysing the nature and dynamics of power and authority within modern societies. Whereas anarchist-oriented scholars in traditionally conservative disciplines such as international relations (Prichard 2011) and law (Finchett-Maddock 2010) have fought hard to promote an anti-statist and anti-colonialist perspective within their respective fields, anarchist geographers have enjoyed not only relative freedom to explore these themes, but also a solid conceptual foundation on which to build their perspectives.

The relatively welcoming environment that has been forged within geography has led to a range of critical perspectives on the spaces of governance, influenced most heavily by feminist, Marxist, and poststructuralist schools of thought (eg. Staeheli and Kofman 2004; Featherstone et al. 2012; Strauss 2013). Since space is such an uneven, contested term, geographers' critical investigations into the geographies of governance have likewise been diverse. Political-economic analyses in geography have often foregrounded the role of economic deregulation in the construction of neoliberal state spaces, not only in terms of the structure of governance itself (Peck 2001), but also localised experiences and negotiations of deregulation processes (Mackinnon and Derickson 2013), and the erosion of state control over internal and external everyday conditions (Flint 2002). The field of geographical political economy

has hitherto focused chiefly on the spatial relationships between economic processes and changing forms of governance at multiple scales, exploring the ways in which capital and (various levels and branches of) the state interweave and operate through one another. However, a greater focus on the institutional structures and practices of the state in the broader field of modern society (Brenner et al. 2008) has problematised some of the more sweeping assumptions about the erosion of the state in the context of globalisation (eg. Peck 2004).

Criticising some of the more supposedly essentialist readings of state governance in geography are poststructuralist scholars, many of whom turn to Foucault and the notion of governmentality as a means of understanding how states govern at a distance through technologies that lead individuals to internalise state authority (Gill 2010; Joronen 2013). Others point to a false dichotomy – the ‘separate spheres’ assumption – between the state and the rest of society, and instead propose understanding ‘stateness’ as a form of socialised being in the world (Painter 2006).

A central element of geography’s ongoing engagements with the structures and processes of governance is therefore its concern with globalisation as a key phenomenon of contemporary economic, political and cultural organisation (Sparke 2006). Although they have made relatively few investigations into the organisation of the politico-institutional spaces of economic globalisation, anarchist and anarchist-influenced geographers have led the field in their analysis of counter-global networks, organisations and practices, themselves a form of ‘grassroots globalisation’. A major facet of their research lies in the everyday constitution of

global, self-governing processes among activist groups and individuals, which links strongly to the literatures discussed in the previous section concerning autonomy.

The anarchist-inspired geographer Paul Routledge, for example, has mapped the geographies of the global resistance networks that emerged around the turn of the millennium, theorising the notions of “terrains of resistance” (1996) and “convergence space” (2003) to explain the uneven ways in which global justice networks function across transnational space and (both through and against) scalar structures of governance. This work, along with other more explicitly anarchist-geographic analyses of horizontalist networks and organisations (eg. Chatterton 2005; Ince 2012; Rouhani 2012a), problematises the hegemony of hierarchical organisational structures, and offers a constructively critical analysis of the possibilities of global, popular, self-governing spatial strategies. An important, if inadvertent, function of this work is the exposure of the ambiguous relationship of other critical geographers to the state, whose critiques of the state-capital nexus do not go so far as to advocate its abolition altogether. Anarchist geographers are yet to take full advantage of this proverbial elephant in the room that has haunted the discipline for some time, although it has been identified as a fruitful avenue to explore further (Ince 2012; Springer 2012).

The topic of colonialism is also an emerging area where anarchist ideas are shaping the way we understand the spatialities of statist-capitalist governance. Barker and Pickerill’s work on Settler-Indigenous relationships in North America has carefully picked apart the different spatio-cultural imaginations of the two, outlining how any project of decolonisation needs to understand the spatial injustices of colonial

power's territorial project in order to provide a genuinely emancipatory programme of change (Barker and Pickerill 2012). Indigenous connections to, and definitions of, land and place in North America are fundamentally different to the spatial imagination of the Settler-colonial project, thus making meaningful communication and shared lexicons very difficult. The failure of Settler-dominated anarchist groups to make this connection in their activist efforts is structured by Settler colonial political (mis)understandings of Indigenous politics that position it as a sub-category of other oppressions such as racism. It is also linked to a process of internalisation, through which the colonialist state becomes a mode of acting and relating to individuals, groups, and institutions in ways that (de)legitimise certain positionalities and forms of governance (Barker 2009). Thus, the distinct geographies contained within the Settler-Indigenous relationships identify the statist-colonialist project as a marker not only of capitalist 'primitive accumulation' but also a certain territorial form of governing space (Barker and Pickerill 2012).

Developing this theme at a more primary level, Springer has argued that "there is no fundamental difference between colonialism and state-making other than the scale upon which these parallel projects operate" (2012: 1607). This re-framing of the state as a colonial exercise in homogenising, governing, and extracting capitalist value from diverse spaces and cultures is a powerful act that opens up geographical scholarship for a deeper critique of the state *per se*. In exploring the statist-colonialist governance of space, scholars are returning to the roots of anarchist geography, echoing the calls of Reclus to "provincialise" Europe and forge a geography "which has its centre everywhere, and its circumference nowhere" (Reclus 1876, quoted in Ferretti 2013: 1351). These initial forays into questions of state governance and

colonialism foreground the role of anarchists in geography to move beyond the mere critique of state practices and towards a deconstruction of the state itself. Already exploring in great depth alternatives to statist and hierarchical human relations, the anarchist perspective has a growing potential to reposition hierarchical statist governance systems as socially produced inventions that were created by humans, and can thus be destroyed by them too.

New publics, new spatialities

We have seen how anarchist perspectives within the field of geography have been pushing beyond the boundaries of established critical geography, not only in terms of their critique of statist, capitalist and authoritarian ways of organising society, but also in their extensive explorations of alternative modes of organising and relating. In this third and final substantive section of the chapter, I draw these, and other, works together in order to explore the various ways in which anarchist geographers have sought to transform notions of *the public*.

Much like the spatialities of governance, the discipline of geography has a long tradition in critical analyses of public space, especially in the urban context. Urban geographers such as Lees (2003) and Smith (1999) have variously sought to interrogate the ways in which the everyday life of the city orbits a struggle for access to various forms of public space and a Lefebvrian “right to the city” (Mitchell 2003). With the neoliberalisation of economies has come a neoliberalisation of public space, carefully stage-managing (non-)public spaces for consumption and capital accumulation through private security forces, surveillance technologies, as well as

designing the very physical structure of spaces such as parks, arcades and malls in such a way as to maximise consumption and minimise the presence of groups and behaviours deemed unacceptable (Mitchell 2003). The contested public spaces of cities are deemed especially central to the politics of public space in general, due to what some have identified as “planetary urbanisation,” with the world’s growing urban population now considerably greater than the population in rural areas (eg. Madden 2012).

Mirroring the critical scholarship concerning the spatialities of governance discussed above, few geographers critical of this enclosure of the public have made steps towards the reconstitution of a liberatory public space free from state and capital (however, see for eg. Pinder 2005). Although there have been numerous studies critiquing the role of state and other institutional actors such as police forces in promoting draconian mechanisms of spatial control, even fewer geographers have taken the logical step to advocate the abolition of, or alternatives to, these authoritarian structures and institutions.

In response, anarchists have made initial progress towards broadening our imaginations of a liberated public-ness, not only with regards to transforming physical public spaces but also our practices and relationships of ‘doing’ and ‘being’ public. The autonomous project of occupation – of land, of buildings, and of existing public spaces – has become a principal theme through the geographies of anarchist publics, yet autonomous geographies have been surprisingly light on direct theorisations of the public through an anarchist lens. Nevertheless, a number of contributions have been made, largely concerned with the tensions and complexities

of creating public spaces of and for liberation. Ferrell (2012), for example, has explored the notion of 'drift' as a conceptual term to unpack the ways in which anarchist praxis links with the spatial practices of marginalised groups such as homeless people and buskers. While sharing some similar spatial practices, the differences inherent in the underlying causes of their practices is a problematic factor for Ferrell. Some level of affinity between drifters may exist, but there is no denying the privileges associated with drift as a political practice. Likewise, dumpster diving, the anarchic practice of taking edible food from rubbish sites, has been identified as actually skirting around structures of power, discipline and waste, rather than confronting them or creating alternative patterns of association (Crane 2012). These studies suggest that the production of truly public spaces and spatialities within ostensibly statist-capitalist space is riddled with contradictions.

We find with anarchic frameworks for constructing public space a number of approaches that variously foreground Mouffian notions of radical democracy (Springer 2010), collective pedagogy (Rouhani 2012b), "affective structures" of collective trust and solidarity (Clough 2012), as well as the appropriation of physical spaces themselves (Pickerill and Chatterton 2006). What unites these diverse approaches is the simple yet powerful anarchist principle of 'voluntary association'; of the collective and democratic, uncoerced being-in-common of groups of people (see Bakunin 1990 [1873]). It implies spatial practices that are contestable from within and without, flexible, and shaped contextually in particular spatio-temporalities (cf. Ince 2012). Voluntary association is a term that is rather out of fashion among anarchists, yet its beauty lies in its simple appeal to the very core of anarchist thought and action.

A key differentiation between anarchist and other critical perspectives on the public orbits the role of state apparatus in the constitution of the public good. Not only do anarchist perspectives critique the monopoly of care claimed by the state as the sovereign order and arbiter of wellbeing, but also the very language of publicness. A recent example is the well-intentioned discussion by critical theorist Judith Butler (2013) on whether we can imagine a citizenship through an anarchist lens. Butler wrestles with how to reconcile anarchism with citizenship as the assumed *sine qua non* of public participation, but fails to come to a solid conclusion. She suggests that

“[a]t issue is whether there can be an anti-statist anarchism that does not mobilise the prerogatives of citizenship at the same time that it reproduces a certain nationalism” (2013: 212).

On the contrary, this is precisely what is *not* at issue. Whether citizenship can be disentangled from nationalism is a moot point. Butler’s problem lies in the fact that, as Springer (2012: 1617) has noted, “alternatives to the state do not arise from the order that they refuse, but from the anarchic profusion of forces that are alien to this order”. In other words, truly anarchistic publics are constructed not through a reappropriation of statist language, nor through simple opposition to statist logics, but by means of the associations that exist *despite* or *beyond* it. Butler will never be able to identify an anarchist citizenship because citizenship is necessarily linked to statism as a way of being in the world and as a mode of connecting people in particular (hierarchical, exploitative) constellations.

This point returns us to a common theme throughout the chapter: the role of social relationships in the production of anarchist space. As I have argued elsewhere in the context of theorising territory (Ince 2012), spatial categories and phenomena are socially produced through everyday relationships – a common thread throughout contemporary anarchist geographical thought on autonomy, governance and the public alike. In the concluding section, I draw together common themes in the chapter and propose some avenues for the further development of anarchist geographies.

Concluding thoughts: for radical reconstruction

With the flourishing of contemporary anarchist geographies, connections to classical anarchism have been pushed aside somewhat, but they still remain the basis of our thought. Ideas still resonate from past waves as fresh as they were in their own periods. Reflecting on a central theme of the chapter – that of the ways in which structures of both domination and liberation are embedded in our social relationships and the spatialities that we create through them – the century-old passage by Gustav Landauer below still rings true:

The state is a social relationship; a certain way of people relating to one another. It can be destroyed by creating new social relationships; i.e., by people relating to one another differently. [...] We, who have imprisoned ourselves in the absolute state, must realise the truth: we are the state! And we will be the state as long as we are nothing different; as long as we have not yet created the institutions necessary for a true community and a true society of human beings. (Landauer 2010 [1910]: 214)

This passage brings us to the first of several concluding observations for the nascent field of anarchist geography. Statism is a power relation that can be as oppressive in its own right as racism, class, patriarchy, and so on. Rooted in a sovereign, illegitimate exercise of power by a privileged minority or elite, statist modes of authority intersect through these relationships in such a deep way that scholars have mistaken them as a factor in these other oppressions, rather than an oppressive relationship in its own right. Statism can be read as the internalisation of state-like authority in everyday practices, socialities and spaces – and it is an area of study that anarchist scholars are perfectly positioned to make their own. In geography especially, the possibilities for investigating everyday statisms through the geographical analysis of institutional and social processes across and between spaces and places are myriad.

Second, and following from this call to interrogate the everyday, banal forms of statism, anarchist geographers have been all-too-easily courted by the spectacular, vibrant and countercultural elements of anarchist movements and initiatives, such as Reclaim the Streets, Occupy, and early 2000s' global anti-capitalist movements. This may take place at the expense of the less 'glamorous' modes of anarchist praxis such as anarcho-syndicalist labour unions or autonomous community groups and support networks whose stories appear superficially far more mundane, but which may offer even more profound insights into future worlds and our paths towards them. Indeed, it is beneficial to take inspiration from Kropotkin's (1972 [1914]) *Mutual Aid*, which considered not anarchist movements but the countless guilds, co-operatives, voluntary associations and everyday grassroots relationships of trust and support that people have enacted and defended throughout history without any direct

reference to political ideologies. The notion that we all 'do anarchy' every day is a revolutionary idea in itself, and one that geographers, and social scientists more generally, are well placed to explore.

With what feels like a critical mass of scholars within geography, another important point to make is more of a strategic one. We find ourselves with great potential to bring anarchist thought and action to the academy, and it is essential to capitalise on this in a number of ways. Collaboration will without a doubt be central to the future flourishing of anarchist geographies, as will be efforts to internationalise the field through translation and forging global connections. Large-scale, transnational research projects could provide the basis for a sustainable and long-term research environment. As Rouhani (2012b) and others (eg. Shukaitis and Graeber 2007) have noted, anarchist approaches to pedagogy are also essential to a vibrant and confrontational culture of anarchist scholarship, as is a healthy relationship of co-operation and feedback loops with social movements and initiatives.

We have seen how anarchist influences on the discipline of geography are on the ascendancy, with a growing body of work and number of scholars making profound contributions to our understandings of the world and ways to change it. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of anarchism from a geographical perspective is the recognition of the tension between present social organisation and the latent possibilities contained within our everyday (inter)actions within that present social order. They play out within and through one another, creating complex socio-spatial relationships that embody tremendous potential for radical social change from the grassroots. While the history of geography since the 1970s has been characterised

by a generalised antiauthoritarianism and a critical gaze on the asymmetrical power relations and uneven patterns of development and wellbeing generated by state and capital, the discipline has fallen frustratingly short of what to anarchist geographers is an obvious conclusion. Geography teaches us, time and time again, the injustices of a statist-capitalist world – a world spatially organised by elites for their own benefit – and it is the anarchist geographer's role to teach the rest of geography that there are paths to a new one.

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ⁱ It is worth mentioning, however, that there are a number of formerly 'traditionalist' Marxist geographers who have recently begun to utilise autonomist Marxism in their studies of political economy and economic restructuring (eg. Cumbers et al. 2010).