WE ARE USING AN ALTERNATIVE:
ANARCHISM'S HIDDEN INFLUENCE ON MANAGEMENT INNOVATION

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ABSTRACT

In this study I explore features of anarchism and their intersection with management and organisation. I show that anarchism is present in modern organisations, particularly those operating with self-managed teams, diffused and democratic decision-making, flat structures, and other similar efforts—features largely seen as contemporary innovation in management. Anarchism's features remain hidden, obscured, and misunderstood however, something heightened by capitalism's neoliberal entrenchment, and anarchism's difficult past. If anarchism is influencing 'mainstream' management, a direct study is an opportunity to show anarchism in a more useful, productive, and practical light. Revealing management's 'hidden anarchism' will be meaningful for an anarchist theory of management and organisations, a theory that could contribute to management and worker emancipation, and refinement of capitalism's lesser features.

DECLARATION

Research conducted for this thesis appears in *A Research Agenda for International Business Management* (Bozkurt and Geppert, 2021) and *Anarchism, Organization and Management* (Parker, Stoborod and Swann, 2020).

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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Tony Hsieh, may he rest in peace.

My very special editor, Stephanie Gillett.

The worker.

CHAPTER 1 // INTRODUCTION

This chapter

In this introductory chapter, I introduce my research questions, provide an overview of my project, highlight an immediate core challenge around 'innovation', position and locate the research inside Critical Management Studies (CMS), describe the study's design, and run the reader through some initial definitions, other tensions, and important framing.

The research question and overview of the research

Anarchism, buried, attenuated, dynamic and hidden, is all around us. It is most certainly a feature of modern management, however suppressed it may be. While anarchism as a feature of modern capitalist organisation is counter-intuitive, in this study I explore and unearth many intersections and interactions. As my research question, I ask if and how much anarchism is present in contemporary organisations, even organisations as seemingly hierarchical as the US Marine Corps, and whether any anarchism might be a new or innovative occurrence, and particularly if it something that would emancipate or improve the lived experience of work.

Whether anarchism influences 'innovation' in modern management is however problematic and deserves an immediate moment of reflection here in the introduction. Influenced by my MBA, Marine Corps upbringing, and curiosity around what appeared to be novel developments in companies around worker-led teams, I set out to 'prove' anarchism was at the root of that novelty. That is, 'advancements' in contemporary management that seek to moderate, for example, the drudgery of corporate life with elegant office spaces and having fun in the workplace, had ties to this aggressive leftist politics. In the course of my study however, I found anarchism is, and generally *always has been*, an element of management and organisations with a long history. I discovered I was right about anarchism's relationship with management, but innovation, whether from anarchism or anywhere for that matter, is more difficult to pin down. Anarchism's relationship with

management and organisation is thus complex. Despite anarchism being a leftist, anti-capitalist, and anti-authority philosophy, it even exists in highly hierarchical organisations, such as the US Marine Corps.

Anarchism however remains a hidden, obscured, dynamic, and misunderstood philosophy. For my purposes here, anarchism is a far ranging philosophy well beyond its more typically narrow casting as nihilist and violent. That is assertion is not without some challenge however, and I will work to unpack this for the reader. For example, anarchism is also localized mutualism, such as what has occurred during COVID-19 when neighborhoods band together to ensure grocery delivery for the elderly or infirm. Anarchism is also a personal expression of autonomy, even if nested inside an oppressive society that regiments, monitors and drives us all to a sort of techno-ordering of our lives. Anarchism is these things, and many more, with its various permutations of decentralised, localised, nonviolent expression. The richness and range of anarchism is what interests me here, and provides the room for a much more thorough analysis of anarchism in extant enterprise and organization.

The nature of our current society and working world is also of course a major factor in uncovering any anarchism. Capitalism's neoliberal entrenchment, where 'the market' is normalised and presented as common sense, presents a narrow view and even consciousness (White and Williams, 2012, 2014, 2016) around other options for managing and organising. Fukuyama termed this the 'end of history' in 1989, when the failing Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc appeared to signal the full validation of western liberal democracy. In 2021, with democracy under assault in Europe and the US, and a rising authoritarian state-capitalist China asserting its regional and perhaps global power, the 'end of history' is less certain. Our modern world seems to also suggest that complex organisations require a specialised set of quantitative-oriented skills to ensure their success. This expertise requires management experts, like those in large consulting houses, but maybe best seen in the American-born and promulgated Master of Business Administration (MBA) and associated

business school degrees. Klikauer has termed this view of organising as 'managerialism' (2015), and at least as early as Hassard (1995), have critical scholars working in sociology and business schools concerned themselves with paradigmatic or overarching structures of thought. Against neoliberal capitalism and mangerialism, the idea that anarchism, that far left radical philosophy, could possibly prosper anywhere but in fringe circles seems quite far-fetched. Anarchism's continued associations with the 'far left', such as with antifa, and indeed its history as the violent and underdeveloped cousin of Marxism, must mean it could not be farther away from modern management.

To uncover anarchism in management and organisations, I take the reader through a series of studies which builds towards a culminating discussion. The first study is anarchism itself, where I review anarchism's historical and contemporary versions. My model is chronological, and I associate features with an epochal construct beginning in the early industrial era (1800) and extend to today. There are other options for arranging a study of anarchism, such as Kinna's thematic approach (2019), but for my purposes here, a chronology provides a straightforward framework for highlighting its evolution and wide range. Anarchism has ancient roots, but I will be primarily concerned with its modern, industrial expressions. In all its versions, anarchism presents a notion of decentralised organisation, diffused decision-making and management, and a skepticism if not outright rejection of unjustified (Chomsky, 2015) or concentrated and coercive power (Kinna, 2005, 2019).

After reviewing anarchism, I engage management and organisational ideas that demonstrate anarchist 'DNA'. Two leading examples are self-managed teams (SMT), the idea that employees or workers can work and organise without managers, and workers' self-management (WSM), which extends SMT to mean employee or worker ownership. Both SMT and WSM have many historical and contemporary examples, with varying degrees of employee or worker control and ownership, such as the kibbutzum movement in early 20th century Israel, and modern-day cooperatives like Mondragon in Spain. The reader will also see I choose two case studies for richer exploration, and to

illustrate the reach of anarchism: the US Marine Corps, and Zappos, an e-commerce outlet owned

by Amazon. These organisations both have varying anarchist 'DNA'.

Positioning the research

Exploring anarchism in management and organisation fits well inside Critical Management Studies

(CMS), a subfield of management that questions common and mainstream notions of management

and organisation and seeks emancipatory ends for members of modern capitalist enterprises (Adler,

Forbes, Willmot, 2007). CMS has explored 'alternative' organisations (Parker, Cheney, Fournier, and

Land, 2014; Reedy, King, and Coupland, 2016; Parker, Swann, and Stoborod, 2020), and includes

anarchism as a source of critique and practical insight. This study will continue this exploration. I

will show that many elements of SMT and WSM illustrate a long history of anarchist

influence. Further exploration of this history, and around current intersections between anarchism,

management and organisation, may begin to yield an anarchist theory of management, explored

rather extensively in Swann and Stoborod's 2014 ePhemera special issue, entitled *Management,*

business and anarchism. Thus, it is my goal to 'find' anarchism outside its historical and current

nihilism and add to growing interest in anarchism as a source of 'alternative' insight into

management and organisation.

I also address, however, the potential for anarchism to be encapsulated in a new 'Spirit of

Capitalism' a phenomenon revealed by Boltanski and Chiapello in 1999 and 2005 where capitalism

co-opts challenges to conjure mirages of concern, assuage social critique and even mobilise radical

ideas as market instruments. This also synchronises closely to CMS critiques of control. It appears

Zappos has mobilised SMT through in a manner rhetorically consistent with anarchism, but

practically deficient and even abusive. This sits in a broad arc of management thought and fads that

claim to improve 'work' through notions of 'fun', 'being yourself', cutting through 'unnecessary' and

dated notions of control and employee manipulation (Bell, 2011; Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005;

Fleming et al, 2009). In these ideas are critiques of hierarchy, owner/worker divide, the typical

'rules' of work, and power dynamics. These trends certainly continue. In this study, I gain some insight into how genuine Zappos' leaders are concerned for their workers' emancipation, but most of my findings suggest the owners, managers and workers are all swept up into Holacracy as a rhetorical device for enhanced value and labor extraction. Critically, the owners and managers appear unaware of their own regulated behavior. Tragically, Tony Hsieh, the CEO and heroic entrepreneur at the center of Zappos' story, passed away in late 2020, and details around his death suggest his work pace and lifestyle eventually broke his spirit (Angel Au-Yeung, 2020).

Thus, my research addresses the meaningfulness of any emancipatory claims operating in and around SMT, WSM, and related themes. The spirit or soul of the study is gauging whether anarchism can be an emancipating philosophy; I believe it can, and as I will illustrate in already-existing cooperative and worker run firms, it already is. The reader will see that anarchism is both helpful and harmful however, operating to assist in improving organisational life, but also as a hijacked idea party to exploitation. Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) point out that not only is the rhetoric of innovation and concern vacuous, but it does real harm. There is evidence of this in both Zappos and the Marines, two groups that are case studies in my thesis. While much is given to concern for workers and Marines, Boltanski and Chiapello would contest it is entirely rhetorical, and used to confuse leaders/owners and workers alike. This exploration complements other CMS currents critical of other 'advancements' in contemporary organisation such as Corporate Social Responsibility (Flammar, Hong and Minor, 2019; Gupta, A., Briscoe, F., & Hambrick, D. C., 2017), or 'fun' workplace design — elements now common in mainstream companies (Warren, S. and Fineman, S., 2013), and the retraining and retention of workers in conditions of precarious financial insecurity brought on by the digital nomad gig economy where much is made of heightened 'freedom' (Aroles and Granter, 2020; Reichenberger, 2018). Klikauer (2016) saw the Swann and Stobordod *ePhemera* special issue as illustrative of CMS' co-opting of critical ideas.

Mainstream co-optation of critical ideas into a new spirit of capitalism can be where anarchism in management may be most obviously 'innovative'. That is, if capitalism' core features of private ownership of capital and worker exploitation persist, but there is a rhetoric of emancipation through 'anarchism', the event may seem or appear innovative and novel, and thus attractive to mainstream managerial thought. Anarchism, self-management, SMT and WSM are all long ideas with rich histories; however, this combined with the challenge Boltanski and Chiapello highlight means CMS must enter into anarchist studies carefully, lest the study of anarchism in a business school castrate the very core of anarchism.

CMS has explored management fads and their cyclical nature, and my study will continue that discussion. A critical perspective may argue that anarchism in management is purely rhetorical, and a common feature of neoliberal 'progressive' capitalism, where 'the market' is totalising, and it pervades and co-opts aspects of life, even ones seen to critique this very phenomenon. Thus capitalism 'borrows' anarchism to continue its consumption and repurposing of any competitive idea. In this sense, anarchism can be an anodyne idea, not at all radical, and another way to keep our status quo just interesting and seemingly vibrant enough to not be more fundamentally challenged.

A related contemporary element I also explore is how new or novel these self-management or freedom-oriented ideas are, particularly in the private sector. The exciting prospect of self-management, where an individual can exist in a broader organisation yet retain their core identity, and even resist (at least some) impersonal capitalist extraction of value, seems like a solution to a variety of persistent tensions in capitalism and organisational life. As cycles of management fads come and go however, many of the ideas share similar notions of 'advancing' capitalism. In a fad's expression, this notion of innovation or novelty is a key element of keeping capitalists and employees mobilised (Abrahamson, 1996), and self-management-in at least its expression in the management approach known as 'Holacracy' at Zappos-could be a complex and paradoxical tool for

a sophisticated heightened exploitation hidden by its freedom and emancipatory rhetoric. In the military, I have found similar evidence that the doctrine of 'mission command', ostensibly the notion that 'junior', 'front-line', or even 'subordinate' soldiers can make important decisions to accelerate the organisation's success, is also complex, used to both motivate and discipline activity. Thus, desires for emancipation, even if well intended, are also hidden and dynamic tools for control and exploitation.

My study will also examine how 'radical' anarchism really is. Did Brian Robertson, Holacracy's founder, rebrand Proudhon and Kropotkin? Colin Ward (1973), argues that anarchism is 'normal' human relations, not violent or radical politics. Perhaps anarchism is simply 'buried' as he suggests. Maybe owners and managers intent on some worker emancipation, even if only to extract further value, might walk into anarchism by virtue of 'simply' trying to improve worker initiative and freedom of action, usually by offering workplace 'perks' like free food, childcare, dog care, and similar items. If Robertson mimicked anarchist ideas without a deeper knowledge of the philosophy, this might confirm anarchism as a natural habit, truth and logic on its own as Colin Ward suggests ('anarchism is seeds beneath the snow of the state' [1973: 11]); it is only a matter of time for social justice writ large to work itself out.

Lastly, CMS work to unearth 'alternatives' is well developed. A recent 2020 book (Parker, Swann, and Stoborod) features a book chapter from me and my thesis supervisors, where we and other authors explore anarchism as at least an option to inform organisational and management design. Additionally, some scholarship in the early 1990s (DiBella, 1992), and other work by Martin Parker (2018, 2016, 2002) in the UK, Kostera (2019), a 2014 edition of the journal *ephemera* (Swann et al, 2014) and Patrick Reedy's *Keeping the Black Flag flying: Anarchy, utopia and the politics of nostalgia* (2002) indicate periods of interest in anarchism and alternatives. Mats Alvesson (2012), Peter Fleming (2015), Catherine Casey (1995), John Hassard (2009), Leo McCann (2008), Edward Granter (2009), and many others have operated in areas addressing authenticity at work, the nature

of work in today's knowledge-driven world, and the effect of work upon the self and identity. These studies share common threads of critical inquiry into justice and fairness in work and beyond. At their core, SMT, WSM, and anarchism all trade in the currency of justice and fairness; thus, this study, and even anarchism in a larger sense, can lay claim to these currents.

The opportunity to build upon this momentum, and potentially unearth an anarchist theory of management and organisation is exciting. I intend for this thesis to expand awareness of anarchism's nuance and large landscape, but also reduce its complexity to remove it from obscurity and novelty. It is an 'ism' like other isms and could at least be a useful analytical tool for refining managerial behavior and organisational structure, if only modestly.

Study design

My study consists of eight chapters. The first is this introduction, which frames the anarchism and management question, and introduces the main topics which I will discuss in further detail in the following chapters. In chapter 2, I address methods of inquiry as well as fundamental academic questions, such as the epistemological and ontological nature of my study, methods, and bias. In chapter 3, I review and define what is meant by 'anarchism', and I introduce a novel model of anarchism that 'maps' the idea as an epochal/chronological construct. In chapter 4, I review self-managed teams, worker self-management and related issues in modern management. This chapter reviews what could be meant by 'management innovation' oriented on workers and members of an organisation managing their own affairs and explores how these ideas work in theory and practice, using some historical examples to indicate the depth and history of concepts familiar to anarchism, such as minimal or no hierarchy, or diffused decision-making. In Chapter 5, I detail my MFE/A ethnography. It is the longest chapter and contains the richest anthropological data. In Chapter 6, I look at Zappos, which became a mixed-methods case where I used interviews, internet sources and secondary source readings to build a coherent picture of the organisation. In Chapter 7, I expand the discussion of the two case studies, and seek to identify common themes around anarchism and

management innovation. The goal is to firmly 'answer' the thesis question of anarchism and

management innovation's interaction. I conclude the study in Chapter 8, addressing its 'success,'

and positioning future work.

Methods of inquiry and critical theories

Paul Adler, Linda Forbes, and Hugh Willmott (2007) discuss CMS as:

> [offering] a range of alternatives to mainstream management theory with a view to
>
> radically transforming management practice. The common core is deep
>
> skepticism regarding the moral defensibility and the social and ecological
>
> sustainability of prevailing conceptions and forms of management and organisation.
>
> CMS's motivating concern is neither the personal failures of individual managers nor
>
> the poor management of specific firms, but the social injustice and environmental
>
> destructiveness of the broader social and economic systems that these managers and
>
> firms serve and reproduce.

The 'critical' component of CMS requires elaboration. CMS aims to incorporate the critical theory of

the Frankfurt School into management through '[modes] of reflection that [look] critically at

processes of social development from the point of view of the obstacles they pose for human

flourishing' (Cooke, 2004). In my study, CMS is both an approach and disciplinary location. I

critically review anarchism, SMT, WSM, Holacracy, mission command, and other related concepts. I

also review the history and contemporary, sometimes represented as 'innovative' nature, of these

ideas. The goal is to describe, reveal or unearth hidden or otherwise hard to see phenomena that

could improve conditions at work. By implication thus current social order is problematic, and

CMS/critical theory here are needed to unearth oppression, and to identify ways to progress and

improve. In other words, the purpose of the study is two-fold: it seeks to academically explore the

relationships between anarchism and management, but also position anarchism as a possible means to worker emancipation.

What is meant by 'anarchism'?

Thus far, I have introduced my research question, broached the study's design and the critical theory lens, and addressed the chronological framework for my approach to anarchism. In this section I will elaborate a bit further by describing thinkers and concepts important to my overall thesis.

Peter Kropotkin, an early canonical writer, described anarchism as 'rejecting the state' or conceiving a society 'without centralised government' (1910). Ruth Kinna, who leads various anarchist studies efforts in the UK and is the editor of *Anarchist Studies*, defines anarchism '[as] a doctrine that aims at the liberation of peoples from political and economic exploitation by the encouragement of direct or non-governmental action' (2005: 3). Noam Chomsky, in introducing Dan Guerin's 1970 *Anarchism*, noted the difficulty in defining a philosophy that eschews dogma and even definition. Chomsky has stated in various interviews that 'anarchism is, broadly, a system of thought that seeks to question and dismantle systems and authority that are no longer useful' (Chomsky, 2015). Armed with these preliminary ideas about anarchism, the study here can concern itself with notions of centralised and coercive authority in organisations of various styles and sectors. The model I introduce in chapter 3 will elaborate on this, and note that when engaging 'anarchism,' one naturally must choose, 'which type?'

Regarding anarchism's potential as an emancipatory vehicle, what anarchism does for us in organisations is likely to be twofold. First, it places authority under suspicion. As Chomsky describes, '[the burden is on authority to justify its position]' (2013). Second, from a practical lens, anarchism would promote filling the void of arbitrary hierarchy and authority with democratic organisation and shared ownership, and operations aligned with philosophies of non-aggression and voluntary action (Kropotkin, 1910). Only the management necessary for the coherent function of the organisation would be needed and accepted. Anarchism rejects common power in modern

organisations, especially that of an exploitative or dominating nature observed through a

Foucauldian lens (Foucault, 1984).

What is meant by 'management innovation'?

'Innovation' in management is a refinement or advance of 'management' and 'organisation'. The

tendency in what we may term 'mainstream' management studies, that like what any current MBA

students would receive, asserts ideas like SMT as 'management innovation' (see Hamel references

below). This sits inside a broad and recurrent entire industry of self-help, 'do it better', and even

'radical' ideas for doing things 'new.' One prominent example comes from management guru, Gary

Hamel, an American who teaches at Michigan and London Business School. Since the 2000s, he has

espoused 'radical' ideas, such as 'firing all of the managers' (Hamel, 2011) and 'Management

2.0'. Hamel's (2000, 2006, 2007, 2012, 2014, 2015) notion of how to improve organisation life, by

removing bureaucracy and encouraging workers to manage themselves, operates in the same

zeitgeist or milieu as Holacracy (2015), the management system at Zappos, which is today's best,

clearest, and latest version of SMT. While 'Holacracy' is new, the actual mechanics are essentially

the same as other Weberian hierarchical management. I will argue that the practice of management

itself, that of directing, guiding, controlling, and otherwise ordering the affairs of a given

organisation, has not evolved, but the rhetoric of change 'resets' common and lingering concerns in

capitalism, mostly found in Marxist descriptions of capital.

Mainstream thinkers like Hamel and Robertson (Holacracy founder) do not acknowledge their

versions of self-management having roots in socialist or anarchist ideas, but they sometimes invoke

language or even the word 'anarchism' or 'anarchy' to describe their visions. Hamel said the

following in a 2014 interview posted to their own *London Business School Review*:

> Probably, the biggest barrier to [people taking initiative in the workplace] is
>
> that most of us have grown up in and around a traditional
>
> organisation. When it comes to changing something your first impulse is to

look up and ask for permission. I think with the generation coming, the first

impulse is to look sideways and build a coalition and enough influence that

then you start to make something happen. That doesn't mean you're an

anarchist, it means you're an activist. You can love your organisation, you

want it to do well, but you're not sitting around for somebody to give you

permission.

That Hamel would associate a definition of anarchist as being negative and problematic is

unsurprising. That he senses (or perhaps knows directly) that his ideas could associate with

anarchism is certainly interesting.

By way of counterargument and further analysis, there are what we may term minor innovations in

Zappos' use of Holacracy. And it is these innovations upon which MBA curricula and mainstream

treatments validate and discuss Zappos' methods as 'disruptive' and 'innovative' (Sampere and

Bienenstock, 2016).   Holacracy has two technological features which are indeed novel, that of

crowd-sourced revisions to its 'constitution', and an artificial intelligence system that users enter

data to help them resolve managerial or organisational 'tensions'. Thus, the mechanics of

organisation and management are not fundamentally changed, owners still direct managers to direct

workers, but the expression of this is technological and attractive. My critical review will suggest it

also obfuscates the labour process (Braverman, 1974), thus making owners, managers, and

employees alike unclear about the capitalistic exploitative harm they are both perpetuating and

enduring.

Pitfalls, dangers, and further opportunities

Some personal considerations are germane to my study, which I elaborate on throughout the thesis,

particularly in chapters 2 and 5 (methodology and the MFE/A case respectively). My personal

interest in anarchism and the desire to see its ideas advanced is a bias; I bring this bias to apologise

for anarchism writ large and 'prove' its utility. Also, as a Marine officer in the US military, the study

is potentially eyebrow raising. My experiences in the military lead to two related insights; one, many

of my fellow soldiers and Marines are concerned with social and workplace justice (and indeed their

own role in violence, imperialism, and other harms), and two, institutions are complex and wrapped

in culture and myth. I have found that many of my fellow Marines are concerned about the

direction of US policy and militarism. CMS and related themes, as well as anarchism specifically, may

hold emancipatory, ethically improving and other related societal insights; there is a natural desire

to investigate peacefully what these ideas and concepts entail.

Despite exceptions in CMS, the specific connection of management to anarchism can seem faddish

and unserious, and the danger of playing party to Boltanski and Chiapello's new spirit is a

concern. Anarchism already features in 'rebel' discourse and marketing. An American corporate

events and keynote speaking team, *Talent Anarchy,* uses 'anarchy' to suggest a rejection of the

mainstream and a new perspective on corporate life, but then offers common insight like, 'it's not

what you know, it's who you know' (talentanarchy.com, 2019). While they appear sincere in their

desire to help people succeed inside the drudgery of corporate life, their website and materials have

the look and flavor of many boutique consulting practices offering the typical kind of services on

'leadership', 'culture' and 'process improvement.' Their work is an illustration of Heath and Potter's

discussion in *The Rebel Sell* (2014), closely related to Boltanski and Chiapello's ideas. Heath and

Potter argue that 'radical' and counter-culture ideas are simply another manifestation of the main

tenets of capitalism and modern life; 'rebel' is consumed by the mainstream to make a consumer

feel unique. The working world is filled with this. A Danish consulting firm, 'Corporate Rebels,' aims

to 'make work fun,' and regularly blogs about 'redoing the role of business in society' (2020). Its

members are from big tier consulting, and the founders, 'grew dissatisfied with the way things are

always done…' Anarchy Brew Company in Newcastle, UK has a 'Fun Shack' on its corporate grounds,

which is simply a bar; the local pub moves inside corporate, negating the need to ever leave.

Lastly, while the meaningfulness of anarchism in extant organisation is complex, the possibility of finding anarchism inside a variety of organisations is encouraging, especially if awareness could mean it is more ethically harnessed. I can personally attest to a variety of democratic and self-organizing currents in the US military, and I explore this extensively in chapter 5. If an organisation known for its rigidity and hierarchy exhibits anarchism, however hidden and attenuated, what does that suggest for anarchism and its prospects as an agent or concept of emancipation? If anarchism could mimic WSM, reviewed in detail in chapter 4, then this emancipation need not be oppositional to senior leadership; indeed, senior leadership may also see their experience improved, and the very notion of class divide vaporises rather than is destroyed (as perhaps in a Marxist reconciliation).

Awareness and prospects are ultimately what this thesis is about. In chapter 5, a key figure of my study is one of the senior generals under whom I worked. He was both an agent of exploitation, but also subject to it. He spent more hours in the building toiling away at work than almost everyone else. He was unhappy. My findings suggest he was unaware that he was an agent in his own discipline and exploitation (Foucault, 1984), and viewed himself more narrowly as completely 'in charge'. The reader will see that anarchism, particularly its 'post' variant, which I call third epoch anarchism, is individually emancipatory, but it requires awareness and careful thought (and patience) with concepts like Foucauldian power. His experience sits alongside the theoretical 'DNA' of mission command, with its diffused and egalitarian decision-making. Mission command has a long history, dating back to Prussian era German military thinking in '*Auftragstaktik*' or 'Mission Type Orders and Command' (Marine Corps, 1999). These concepts theoretically enfranchise units to operate without micromanagement in a decentralised manner. The 'what' of a mission is given; the 'how' is left to the team. The sum of this arrangement was a dynamic combination of obvious and hidden tensions.

While the above issues illustrate the tenuous ground on which anarchism lies, I aim for the study to be a useful and conventional exploration of ideas in organisations and management. The structure and approach to the topics at hand are universal thesis mechanics, even if some of the themes appear aggressive. The reader will no doubt find various shortcomings, and the size and scope of 'anarchism' alone is daunting, but I hope for the study to be a useful attempt at understanding anarchism and management. Its success hinges initially on an earnest suspension of judgement around 'anarchism,' and joining with me the author to engage the ideas at hand with sincerity.

CHAPTER 2 // METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter details my methodological approach. It contains two main parts. The first is an exploration and discussion of my personal relationship with the topic and its broader effect on the study, and the second is a more conventional methodological discussion. My goal is to arm the reader with clear knowledge of my bias and thoughts ahead of the main material. I wrote this in the spirit of a phenomenological bracketing (Creswell, 2007; Chang, Fung, Chien, 2013; Hamill, Sinclair, 2011), where an author accounts for their bias before engaging a topic in earnest.

Arriving at anarchism

I arrived at anarchism from my experiences in the military and corporate America. When I began my study, I was just coming off a period of active duty in my reserve Marine Corps life.[1] My experience in the Marine Corps is the most significant and affective part of my professional upbringing, and its ups and downs, in concert with time in corporate America as a leadership and strategy consultant, form the foundation of my personal bias and perspective. I have spent much of my most recent time in the Marines assigned to senior staffs. I was with US Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa (MFE/A), a 200-man higher military staff that resembles a corporate headquarters, from 2010 to 2013, and again from 2015 to 2018. The MFE/A experience forms the basis of chapter 5's case study, where I worked on a team of five officers 'doing strategy'. I mobilised for a year in this role; 'mobilisation' entails full time daily work, as opposed to 'regular' reserve work, the two weeks a year, two weekends a month piece. During this year, I spent about six months sitting and working with other planners, the other six months I was 'downstairs' and sat right outside MajGen Niel 'Rick'

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[1] I am still an active reserve US Marine Corps officer. I participate in 60 to 120 days a year of military service. My current role is as a strategic planner at the Joint Staff in Washington, DC. I was commissioned in 2001. I have served two combat tours in Iraq in 2003 and 2004/5, and two strategy/corporate tours in Germany from 2010 to 2013, and again in 2015/16. At the time of this writing, my total active-duty time across my 19 years in service is 12 years.

Bilson's office.[2] It was a privileged year of sorts; it was also taxing. This organisation manages European and Africa portfolios of US Marine Corps plans. We build the Marine Corps contribution to various war scenarios that could occur in these areas. In the creation of these plans, we are expected to know world affairs, US military and government law, international treaties and agreements, potential adversary strengths and weaknesses, and a host of other related information and phenomena. We are experts.

I got to this position by attending the US Naval War College and receiving a master's degree in 'National Security Studies', something which qualifies me for specialised duty as a 'Joint Planner'. Joint Planners are something of an elite crew, all expected to be experts who can lead the deeper intellectual work of the military. The hardest problems, like how to win a war, usually come down to planners' design, and planners usually work very closely with their commanders. This concept dates to the Napoleonic and Prussian general staffs, where various staff officers assisted commanders with the organisation of their units. As war has become more complex, staffs have grown. In the 21st century, staffs also 'conduct' or 'execute' war or war-like 'competition short of armed conflict' through their various edicts, writings, decrees, and other artifacts.[3] Adversaries most certainly do the same thing, and one can easily see the political tensions and actions I am describing here play out almost daily in the media. For example, the US Joint Staff, the senior-most staff in the US military, and where I work at the time I'm finishing up my thesis in mid-2020, has a website, publishes videos, writes and publishes papers, and many of its officers write essays for professional journals and media.

Planners and staff therefore are central to modern warfighting. They are largely responsible for the military's successes and failures, although the official nature of that is debatable and usually redirected to senior generals and policy makers. The environment at the Naval War College was an

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[2] I have anonymised all my research subjects.
[3] These are all terms of art in the US military.

odd but interesting merging of academics and military professionals unique in the academic cosmos, all intent on training mid-career military officers on being an effective staff officer. The Naval War College is perhaps best known as the place where *War Plan Orange* formed. This was the grand design of the WWII US Pacific Campaign, where as early as the 1920s, US military planners began writing how to engage and defeat the Japanese in an eventuality between the two nations. I leave it to the reader to think on whether the creation of a war plan contributed to the nations eventually clashing, or if the building of such contingency plans is simply responsible statecraft.[4]

'The War College is a place of original research on all questions relating to war and to statesmanship connected with war, or the prevention of war' (Luce, 1975). This quote features on the homepage of the Naval War College's website. With this lens, and recalling to my experience there, I felt there to be limited room for substantive dissent outside narrow topics, this despite most professors seeking 'earnest discussion' and 'critical thinking' (field notes, 2014). Given the shortcomings of so many post-WWII US war outcomes, dissent to drive new approaches might be useful. Some dissent is accepted, but only if it exists inside the more broadly accepted framework; the 'narrow' confines might be about whom to strike first and when or what type of platforms and weapon systems might be most useful. It was common to discuss things like whether 'the F-35 is a good platform for close air support', or if 'our munitions output was enough to meet a China/US war'. Deeper dissent around US policy, for example, would probably be viewed as one's distant opinion. As professional officers, these informed opinions are welcome to some degree, but their deeper application would be, 'the job of the policymakers, not us' (field notes, 2014). In other words, it is possible that oathed officers abdicate their higher and broader moral decisions about war to others, while still retaining their own morality for tactical actions, such as whether to pull the trigger and fire on a building

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[4] Overall, my Naval War College experience was excellent. The professors, officers, and students there were generally of high quality and character. My main concern or critique however was the imbalance at times between a critical review of American power (and when to use it), and how courses and events often devolved into a non-critical celebration of historical victories, the US Navy's victory over Japan via *War Plan Orange* being the most common.

suspected of having insurgents. If that is true, the unfortunate tie to 'just following orders' arguments made by Nazis at Nuremberg is haunting. What is maybe more difficult for me to reconcile, is that most of the military professionals I have met are absolutely outstanding individuals, whose moral fibre and integrity are second to none. I am not sure how to balance these conflicting items. Certainly, avoiding more open discussion is an ethical failure; driving more discussion in a thesis and academic career is thus appropriate, professional, and morally correct.

The tension here led to a search for those critical of US policy, if only to develop a more balanced experience. This is where I discovered Noam Chomsky. I had heard of him before certainly, but I had never studied him in earnest. When I asked War College professors about the lack of dissenting or critical voices in our curriculum, they pointed to limits in time, and the few voices in the mix. All of them admitted to Chomsky, and even one or two hinted they agreed we did not do anywhere near enough critical reflection. A deeper read of him while at the War College became a difficult but mentally good thing. Chomsky admonished intellectuals in the late 1960s over their role in violent statecraft (1967, 1969), and his critiques led me to his overall politics, the politics of anarchism. I cover Chomsky in greater detail in chapter 3, but here I will mention that his anarchism is one of a constructive positive expression, and as critical as he is of US foreign policy, the most fundamental current in his anarchism strikes me as quite anodyne, that is, leadership and authority must justify themselves to their constituents. In this, the root word 'just' is central.

The reserve officer's experience

As a reservist, I am only partially an expert, and the experience of doing full time work with less knowledge can be quite odd. It has a perpetually detached quality to it, and I always feel a bit set apart. This affects my perspective on the military and my own experience, and I offer it now for the reader's knowledge. This detachment is in my own head to a point, and I have had enough success in the military that some onlookers might not be able to tell I am a reservist. Nevertheless, it is a

factor, and the reader will also find in chapter 5 on MFE/A, that the mini or sub-culture of reservists in that headquarters plays a key role in its anarchism.

Reservists exist in all military's roles, but often in 'shadow' or slightly diminished capacities. There are two types of reservists: one who 'drills' regularly with a reserve unit. That reserve unit, composed entirely of other reservists, can deploy like a standard unit. Second, the type of reserve work I have mostly done is called an Individual Mobilization Augmentee or 'IMA'. IMAs mobilise for short periods to help on regular staffs. I suppose you could say that 'good' IMAs find work regularly, but all staffs have augmentees when needed. I can support full time planners certainly, but their depth of knowledge is understandably better.

In addition to my depth of knowledge being lower than regular active-duty military members, I harbor serious doubts about American policy and defence, formed no doubt because of my combat experience in Iraq. No doubt this is enhanced by my reading of Chomsky, and now an essentially anarchist worldview, which for me, means striving for less coercion and hierarchy in life, and certainly for more justice and peace. When I am on duty, I do my duty and conduct myself professionally, but it can be challenging to engage the work enthusiastically. At the War College I always felt a bit detached from the career professionals who did nothing else but military work, but I have come to find, and I discuss this at length in chapters 5 and 7, that many Marines and other military members harbor serious doubts. Nevertheless, many dyed-in-the-wool military members remain, and I struggle to respect their worldviews, ones appearing to be too often insulated by things like Game Theory and Realpolitik. The coldness of their security paradigm affects most of their thinking. Everything is termed in zero sum notions; there is little collaboration, and there is most certainly a dim view of human nature, and the 'reality' of the world.

In my current reserve duty at the Joint Staff, it is similar to when I was at MFE/A. When I show up for duty once a month for a few days, I am an interloper of sorts, one whose actual value to the

team is debatable. What is worse, they often must pause their busy schedules and think about 'work' to give me. The work of military plans is tedious to begin with, and the value of various activities is dubious. The lack of boundaries and clear mandate can at times lead planners to, 'start dreaming s--- up to do' (field notes, 2016). This was (and remains) a common gripe that more operationally oriented people have throughout the military. The US commander of the Afghanistan joint command (the multinational agency charged to conduct the military campaign) famously fired Army reserve colonel Lawrence Sellin for his spirited rant about the tension between planning and operations, and the drudgery of staff life, even when stationed abroad in a combat zone (Ackerman, 2010).[5]

When going on active duty, it can be difficult to 'jump right in' and have all the context and insight required to do a topic justice. 'Work' in a command like the Joint Staff or MFE/A is typically the building of slide presentations on a problem, attending various meetings, writing essays and 'point' papers arguing certain ideas and the like. This intellectual work is often disrupted by various meetings within the enormous constellation of stakeholders interested in related items. Many of the stakeholders appear angry and disconcerted most of the time, usually because a decision somewhere in the constellation will affect a product they recently developed, thus requiring them to go back and update a variety of items and inform a collection of other also annoyed military members. Like any organisation, some ideas simply become aligned with a person's ego; the ability to stay on point and exchange constructive arguments is difficult. In theory, the overall work produces a myriad of inputs and analysis to aid decision and policy makers, not unlike private and corporate counterparts. My sense is the sheer mass of it all means neither friend nor foe could ever

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[5] Specifically, Sellin had critiqued the 'endless tinkering with PowerPoint slides to conform with the idiosyncrasies of cognitively challenged generals in order to spoon-feed them information' (also from Ackerman, 2010).

really understand it; maybe this puzzles a potential adversary to such an extent, that inaction and status quo persist. There is evidence that suggests exactly this (picture below).[6]
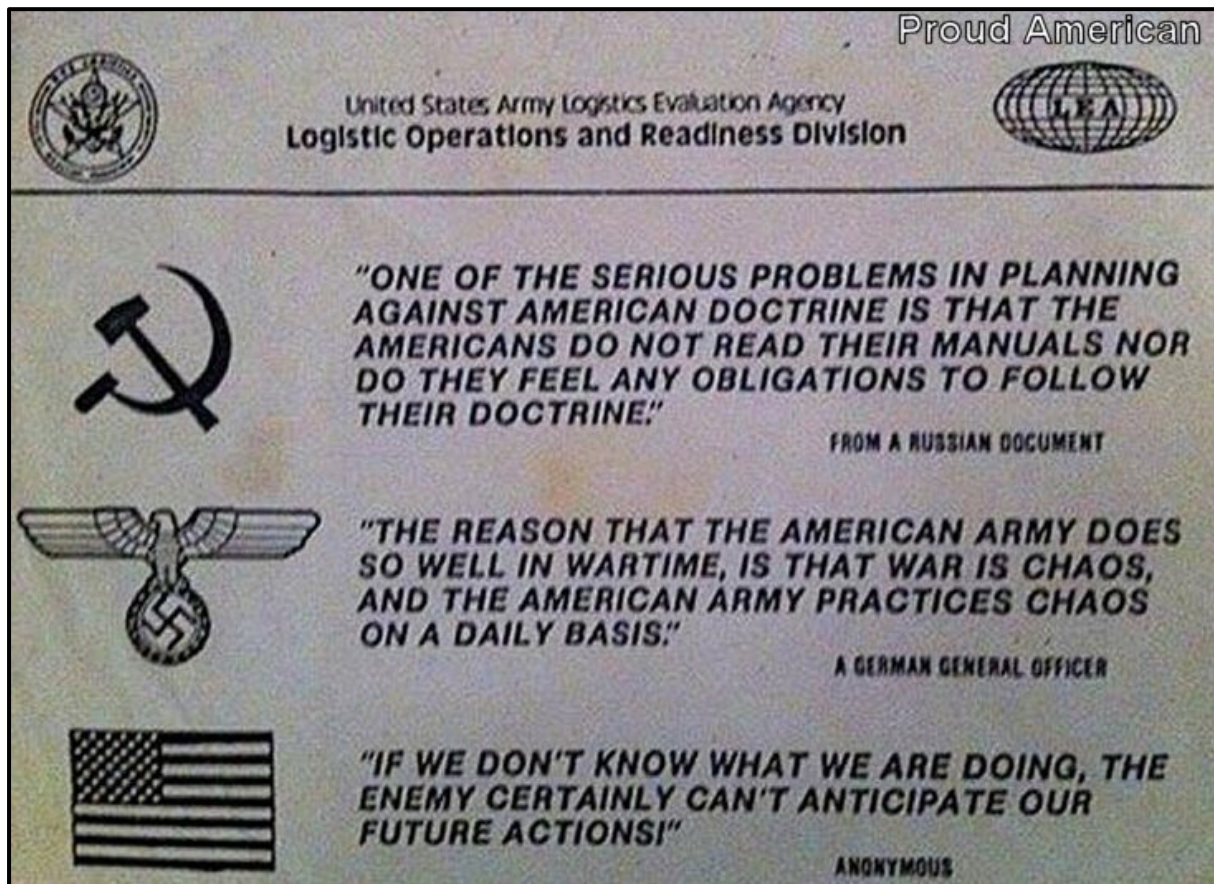
Working inside the subject of study

While the 'work' of a senior military headquarters is difficult to pin down, when I showed up at MFE/A from 2016-2018, my colleagues knew I was studying them. By that time, I transitioned from a full-time year, to a more 'regular' reserve work while working and living in the UK for my PhD. When I would fly from the UK to Germany for duty, my colleagues knew I was working on my doctoral thesis, and they knew I was using 'the Command' as a case study. In reality, because of

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[6] When I searched for the source/attribution of this, I found little; it is entirely possible this is folklore out of the mass that is US defence. Maybe more interestingly, many strategy and defence bloggers and writers quote it however, and use it often to argue that the US needs to be more organised. For example, Steven Leanard, 'a co-founder of Divergent Options, a former senior military strategist, and the creative force behind *Doctrine Man!* quotes it in his 2017 blog entry for The Modern War Institute, a West Point internal think tank or academic Center, titled, *Broken And Unreadable: Our Unbearable Aversion To Doctrine.* West Point is the US Army's bachelors-level college.

access and what my time really looks like when in Stuttgart, I was not doing a case on 'the Command', but rather those closest to me, the full-time strategic planners and a handful of senior leaders and operations folks at the center of MFE/A's work.

In this context, many various research problems arose. A conventional quantitative researcher may have attempted to control for the personal proximity to the work and object of study. Maybe that would work; but it may also simply leave all parties with a confused reality, that despite all efforts, the researcher was bothersome, and affected the data. My gut, and what became a sort of 'backing in' to an ethnographic approach was to be much more honest, to admit and go 'all in' on the various ways I affected, obstructed, engaged, interacted, biased, nudged, gauged, and bugged the team with whom I interacted and studied. This is, of course, a well-honed strategy in various ethnographic studies. Moskos (2009), took this approach when studying police in beaten down Baltimore in his excellent *Cop in the Hood*; to gain enhanced access and understanding, he joined the police force. Loïc Waquant (2004), in seeking to study poverty in southside Chicago, became a boxing student, and even competed in professional matches.

In taking cues from Moskos and Waquant, integrating into the study, especially the MFE/A case, became normal, and the lines between researcher/researched blurred. Who I am as a researcher, what I am hoping to activate in others with a study on anarchism, my related views on positivism, social science, and related themes are all germane? Style also matters. To assert a level of agency, I wrote this thesis mostly in the first person, somewhat of a deviation from 'conventional' British academic decorum. I am certainly mindful this can simply seem upstart, but it can also be a healthy expression of 'nouveau' or progressive forms of writing. Martin Parker (2014, 2005) encourages 'alternative' or lively writing with such agency, and Gilmore, Harding Helin and Pullen (2019), discuss 'resistance to 'scientific' norms of academic writing…norms are restrictive, inhibit the development of knowledge and excise much of what it is to be human from our learning, teaching and research'.

So, as a call to arms—probably just to motivate myself through this study! —let us break through these 'walls' of voice, authorship, readership, and other identities and get to the material; more importantly, let me arm you as best as possible with everything I am able in your pursuit of engaging my work here. Perhaps appropriately, I will end this section with a reference to Paul Feyerband, who developed in his 1975 text, *Against Method*, an *epistemological anarchism*, where he viewed the scientific method as problematically homogenising and limited science.   His slogan 'Anything Goes', meant to open science to various ways of knowing provided a researcher could plausibly argue their position, was quite controversial. Lloyd (1997: 397) reread and argued the slogan to mean '[a reductio [attack] against a certain form of rationalism...specifically, his defence of the value of a proliferation of views and methods, and his insistence on the tolerance that must accompany such proliferation'.

Capitalism and critical theory

Reserve Marines have other civilian careers. In my professional pursuits outside of the military, I have worked extensively in the American private sector, 'Corporate America'. My first experience was in a large family-owned and operated trucking company based in Utah. This firm makes $2 billion US dollars in revenue a year and has over 5000 employees. While working there from 2006-2009, I completed an MBA at Westminster College in Salt Lake City, UT, and have worked there as an adjunct since 2015. After leaving the trucking firm, I branched into consulting, helping small technology companies in Utah with their strategy and leadership. My 'highest' or most senior corporate role was as a 'Chief Strategy Officer' of a growing education startup.

A dominant feeling and output of these experiences is around the inadequacy of management theory and practice to create meaningful existences for people in the working world. Beginning with the trucking firm, I noticed what is commonsensical and all around us - Corporate America is a terrible place to exist. A key impression for me was the owners of the firm, a respectable Utah family with deep Mormon roots, hated their experience just as much as the rest of their

staff. Marxist theory would perhaps miss this point and depict the owners as happy extractors of wealth. The family was certainly materially well-off, but the reality of their experience was more like a monarchical court, complete with the drama and spectacle, versus something fun and glamourous. Many of the family members distanced themselves from the firm, and you would often hear of 'so and so starting their own thing…just to get away from here'.

The MBA experience was probably the first time I noticed that knowledge around leadership is presented as scientific fact but seemed entirely off or deficient in accounting for the actual experience of people in organisations. In other words, the MBA was an ideological celebration and finishing school, not a serious academic event. The very well-intentioned staff and academics at my school seemed mildly aware of this but were perhaps socialised into their experience regardless. Moreover, we studied large top-brand firms like Apple and Amazon and their heroic leaders much more than we studied Utah or Intermountain West USA business. Of my graduating class, no one went on to a large global firm, many started their own companies, or returned to work in mid-sized western US organisations. It is very likely that Utah companies are staffed with many members continually frustrated by their inability to repeat or fully embody heroic leadership traits.

While at the trucking firm, I 'cut my teeth' on training, development, and consulting. As an 'internal consultant', my charge was to identify problems and create solutions for the company. I had a large free reign of the entire firm, to include access to the senior family members. This is the first time I was truly confronted with the paradoxes of organisational life. Even if a senior leader directed me to study and develop, for example, a training module on 'conflict resolution', the senior leader did not really want me to press too hard on the tensions in the company. These tensions—indeed any tension—inevitably indicted the leadership of the firm, and quickly unearthed what was already common knowledge, that the family was dysfunctional and toxic. It also pointed to deeper structural issues of the business, like that of the family always being in opposition to their employees. In one sad vignette, on a Monday following a dreary Friday of layoffs, two senior family

members showed up in brand new high-end luxury cars. I heard in the hallway later, 'we have to send the employees a message that the company overall is okay…'

I was let go from that job in late 2009, about a year into the Great Recession. I had long since worn out my welcome, and no doubt my attitude about their poor leadership was evident. I had, however, been exposed to consulting, and with that experience and my MBA now in hand, I felt like I could help organisations with leadership and strategy. The timing was a bit off though, and the best job opportunity I had was back with the Marines. 2009 was certainly not a time to start a boutique consulting business. It would not be until 2015, after the War College experience, that I would have consistent consulting business. The key piece for the reader here is my time in private sector organisation presented similarly puzzling inconsistencies like my time in the Marines. Quite simply, the leadership and management world was filled with a lot of bulls---, but the faculty with which to address said BS seemed lacking, even seeming to unwittingly promote said vacuousness as a normalised part of 'doing business' as Spicer (2017) and Pfeffer (2015) suggest.

The War College experience, with an initial focus on political theory and anarchism, branched into a broader pursuit of alternatives in leadership, management and surrounding organisational thought. Starting with Chomsky and anarchism, I discovered the vast array of radical thought in modern history. Anarchism has particularly close cousins (or more) with the Frankfurt School and the New Left. It was unsurprising but frustrating that, in my late 30s, I realised my American education, even with degrees in humanities, had not really included these rich traditions. The last piece was finding where and how anything 'critical' was addressing business, leadership, and management. I discovered CMS shortly thereafter, and of course, noticed its non-American roots. Apart from Paul Adler at the University of Southern California, and his work in the Academy of Management, CMS remains a vastly British and Scandinavian affair, with some Australians and notable Global South scholars and institutions in the mix (Parker, 2020). CMS (Adler, Forbes, and Wilmott, 2007), 'offers a range of alternatives to mainstream management theory with a view to

radically transforming management practice [, and the] common core is deep skepticism regarding the moral defensibility and the social and ecological sustainability of prevailing conceptions and forms of management and organization' (2007: 1). CMS arose from, 'Well-established critiques of the fundamental features of contemporary capitalism [had] been undercut by the decline and fragmentation of the Left since around 1970 (Hassard, Hogan, and Rowlinson, 2001 cited in Adler et al, 2007: 2).

This background is to situate the reader inside the main themes of the study, that of anarchism, organisation, management and CMS. Yet even though this study exists in the critical tradition, one with ties to a Marxist critique of capitalism, I must ask if our collective view of capitalism is too narrow. Surely something as vast as our current economic reality cannot be all good or bad. CMS suggests there remains a form of capitalism less extractive, manipulative, and exploitative than it may currently seem. When I first read about Zappos' approach to management, I thought I was seeing that manifest. A part of me wants very much to find a 'conscientious capitalism' (Bouras, 2019), however dripping with manipulation and BS that term implies. Variants of capitalism is not a novel concept (D'Onofrio, 2020; Fink, 2019; Uno, 2019), and some of the notion is intuitive. A Fortune 100 company is very different from a restaurant in Des Moines, Iowa, just as a brick making company in India is different from an agricultural firm in Indonesia. The point is that this variance must create such a range of experience, that a homogenous view of it is inherently flawed. The origin of this flaw might be Marx himself (Jaeggi, 2016), or the idea that since most criticism of capitalism runs through his ideas, all capitalism must therefore be something like what we find with large organisations of industrial scale. I remain hopeful that somewhere in the vastness of the broadly market-based world in which we live, there must be areas of organisation and commerce that are less flawed, less hierarchical, and contain less or even no corporate drudgery, or worse, straight environmental and human abuse.

This is where I circle back to anarchism. So what do anarchists say about capitalism? I will address this in detail in chapter 3 and throughout the thesis, but here I will say that I read anarchists as broadly interested in possibilities. They are also concerned with narrow discourse, discourse that positions 'us' as watchful members of our respective elite leadership. If I am not a capitalist, surely I must be a Marxist, intent on knowing what the leaders of contemporary Marxist thought are saying. If I am not a Marxist, then I must be a capitalist, intent also on elite knowledge. Obviously, anarchists have their own elites, and this is one of the great paradoxes of a philosophy that at equal times places itself as a coherent set of knowledge and thought, but also rejects any notion of expertise and centralised theory. This typically vaporises anarchism and renders it too strange to engage. I hope the reader will at least sit in wait on this note and remain patient enough to see if I can address this enough in the coming text.

So by way of emotional worldview, this study, written largely in a critical Marxist tradition, will explore if society is short of understanding gradations of capitalism. Anarchism might be able to find and locate these gradations and represent less contentious ways of reforming management and organisation.

Chosen methodology

Chapters 3 and 4 are literature reviews. Chapter 3 is a comprehensive review of anarchism, and chapter 4 covers the related management themes, namely self-managed teams (SMT), workers self-management (WSM) and control. Chapter 5 and 6 are case studies (Yin, 2014) with varying internal methods. The MFE/A case is primarily an ethnography (van Maanen, 2006). The Zappos case is a mixed qualitative methods review, with interviews, secondary source review, participation in training seminars, and netnography (Kozinets, 2016, 2012 and 2007). Both studies are ontologically and epistemologically constructivist (Rodwell, 2018; Becerra and Castorina, 2018; Spicer and Fleming, 2001).

The MFE/A ethnography was also a sum of various times in that organisation, first in 2010 to 2013, then again from 2015 to 2018. There are varying and different degrees of intentional data collection and refinement. I have long since taken professional notes, and these notebooks provided much data when I returned to various memories. The first period was before my doctoral studies, the second one had a period of active duty before my doctorate began, then two years of affiliation with periods of duty while studying at Manchester. Thus, I built my impressions of MFE/A, and the surrounding anarchism during and after the fact. I crafted the case. Richard Sennett (2009) describes ethnography as a rewarding 'craft'; it is something one moulds, carves, etches, and builds.

Given all the various organisations one could choose to find anarchism, explaining the choice of my military command to study is necessary. First, being a member of the Marines provided excellent access to MFE/A and other similar Marine experiences. For example, MFE/A is the focus of chapter 5, but I also discuss my personal experiences in Iraq in 2003 to 2005 where I had a very high degree of professional autonomy (in a combat theater no less). These experiences are related; the reader will see both venues illustrate degrees of mission command, the central idea presenting Marine Corps anarchism. Second, as mentioned before, I have a broad interest in studying and addressing management issues in the Marine Corps. I would naturally like them to improve. This study represents a sort of auto-critical performativity (Spicer, Alvesson, Kärreman, 2009; Alvesson, Spicer, 2012; Cabantous, Gond, Harding, 2012; Parker and Parker, 2018), where an ethnographer, me in this case, takes on activist role seeking change (Reedy, King, 2019). Third, the choice of a military organisation is one way to 'break' free from 'only' studying larger Fortune 500 private enterprises; CMS concerns itself with organisation more broadly than just for-profit enterprise. Anarchism could be universal; looking at an organisation known for its strong hierarchy might mean the prospects of anarchy in less hierarchical organisations, nonprofits maybe, is quite hopeful. Lastly, to be sure, the military and private or other-sector management theory and practice interaction has a long history, with pronounced examples in strategy, ranging from Michael Porter's work (numerous items,

namely 1996 and 1999) and leadership (Drucker, also numerous examples, perhaps best seen in his 2001 anthology) and vice versa (Sinek, 2013).

To know and understand anarchism in extant organisation, one solid case study may have been enough, expanding the thesis to include two organisations helps 'triangulate' any anarchy. The mainstream management media, such as *Forbes Online*, *Harvard Business Review* and others, has discussed Zappos' management innovation extensively (Ferenstein, 2014; Gelles, 2015; Greenfield, 2015; Sampere, 2015; Task, 2015). To manage and drive this attention, Zappos developed a dedicated cultural marketing arm, Zappos Insights, which holds regularly scheduled events, training sessions, webinars, and other mechanisms for spreading its management story. By most measures, the company is highly successful, and a large part of its success appears linked to its strongly expressed internal management philosophies, which are oriented on self-management and self-managed teams expressed through 'Holacracy'.

I sought out to do an embedded ethnography with Zappos, but given various access restrictions, the study became a mixed methods review of several types of data. First, I attended Zappos Insights and Holacracy.org webinars, which featured a presenter giving a lecture and then taking questions on how Holacracy works. Second, I analysed secondary source material from key figures in the Zappos world for their insights and experience with Holacracy. Third, I interviewed a handful of mainly Zappos Insights members, but also had some exchange with previous Zappos employees via LinkedIn, the corporate networking social media platform. Lastly, I reviewed various other social media material, primarily on Reddit and Glassdoor. Both outlets featured exposed and related material from former employees.

With both the Marine Corps and Zappos case studies, I developed two sets of data that suggested varying degrees of anarchy. The reader will discover in the following chapters how anarchist these organisations are, and what that means for their mission and their members.

Access, ethics, and Karl Popper

The natural flow of the thesis lends itself to a comparison of findings between the Marine Corps and Zappos cases. Access and proximity challenges also demonstrate that the 'real' cases are not the whole organisations themselves, but rather more narrow teams and members with whom I had close access. For example, at MFE/A, my best and most consistent interaction was with the Plans Division (known as the 'G-5') where I worked from 2015 to 2018, my closer friends and colleagues at MFE/A, and the Zappos Insights group, which was helpful in at least presenting their rhetorical description of Holacracy at Zappos. My data naturally arise from these interactions, and the thesis must naturally be qualified in terms of how generalisable it can be in the broader scientific sense. However, a quick defense is this: if anarchism exists in any form in both the US Marine Corps and a Las Vegas tech e-commerce outlet, it is plausible it exists elsewhere in similarly attenuated and dynamic ways, ways on which I expand in detail in the following chapters.

There are two main ethical concerns. The first is awareness of the power dynamic that comes with being a researcher. Experienced ethnographers (Fetterman, 2019; Comoroff, 2019; Van Maanen, 1995; McCann, Granter, Hyde, 2013; Hassard, McCann, Morris, 2007; Rabinow, 1985), generally share agreement on how privileged the researcher is in telling the story they want told. I have endeavoured to qualify the entire thesis for the reader, noting that I want anarchism to succeed as a mode of management and organisational improvement. The reader could expect tension certainly around if I chose data and ways of seeing that 'granted' me anarchism. Broadly, Karl Popper's epistemological challenge around induction (Sharreff, 2018) also looms; surely a capable and intentional researcher could plausibly claim no anarchy exists at MFE/A or Zappos, and that abundant data exist to suggest other philosophies or modes of thinking and organising preside. Combined with the power of crafting and constructing data, is a natural reservation and critical eye the reader must have. In all cases, I worked hard to be reflexive (James, George, 1986) to mitigate this problem.

Privacy and the studying of human subjects is the second ethical consideration. The reader will notice I openly declared the organisations in the prefaces. Both organisations are strong enough to withstand critique; and as they both promulgate their philosophies extensively for recruiting and other organisational success, they should be openly researched. MajGen Bilson, MFE/A's commander for most of my recent time at the command, understood he ran a complex and difficult organisation. He also understood that while he was 'responsible for all MFE/A does or fails to do', this is a Marine Corps leadership mantra, he also sits inside a broader architecture of laws, titles, authorities, and structures that require a tremendous amount of compromise.[7] The complexity of MFE/A meant satisfying all stakeholders was simply impossible. MajGen Bilson's choice was thus to determine who would be prioritised. The Zappos story is similar. As progressive as Tony Hsieh may want to be, he still must run a solvent for-profit enterprise, one that must extract labour value from its members through whatever (hopefully legal and ethical) means it can. Lastly, while I kept the organisations open, I anonymised all members save Tony Hseih (Zappos CEO) and Brian Robertson (Holacracy founder).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have worked to show the reader how I arrived at anarchism, and how my background and worldview affected the study. I designed the personal background to give the reader as complete a perspective into my emotions and biases as possible. This is akin to phenomenological bracketing and ethnographic reflexivity. I endeavoured to have the data 'bend back on' (Leary, Minichiello, Kottler, 2010) me as the researcher. I have also tried to illustrate awareness into the ethical, ontological, and epistemological challenges resident in this type of thesis, located in CMS, and largely being qualitative and ethnographic. I admit in transparency that I

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[7] Marine Corps officer training impresses upon its officers early in their training that we are 'responsible for everything [our unit or team] does or fails to do'. The reader can reference the USMC Leadership Principles at http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/usmc/leadership.htm.

inductively went searching for anarchism. Bearing in mind that the concerns in this chapter require

constant attention, I look forward to discussing the details in earnest, and hopefully guiding the

reader an interesting and plausible argument.

CHAPTER 3 // ON ANARCHISM

Introduction

This chapter explores and describes anarchism. My goal is to identify a reasonable 'centre' of the philosophy, but also understand how it has evolved in the modern era (1800 to today). To help illustrate nuanced differences among various writers and periods, I assert that anarchism has three epochs, or generally discernible chapters, each with distinct features but operating around a core anarchism identity or tradition. The three epochs are classical, practical, and postanarchism. Classical anarchism runs broadly from 1800 to the end of World War II, second epoch or practical anarchism runs from WWII to 1990, and third epoch anarchism, postanarchism, runs from 1990 to today.

The framework is informed by a reading of secondary authors described in detail below. Most prominent is Ruth Kinna (2019 and 2005), who uses the terms to organize a history and development of the idea. This working definition, or model, that incorporates the primary elements of the three epochs, frames the rest of the study. As a result, I constructed the chapter in the following sections: this introduction; a review of secondary authors and how they describe anarchism; classical anarchism and its primary thinkers; a review of second epoch practical anarchism and its primary thinkers; a review of postanarchism or third epoch anarchism and its primary thinkers; my key learning, and implications for further anarchist studies.

Etymology and secondary source authors

Anarchism encompasses a long current of free association and voluntary relationships throughout the ancient, medieval, and pre-industrial worlds. Merriam-Webster's (2020) definition is, threefold: 'a: absence of government; b: a state of lawlessness or political disorder due to the absence of governmental authority (the city's descent into anarchy); c: a utopian society of individuals who enjoy complete freedom without government'. *Anarchos*, the Greek origin of the

term, translates to 'without' (an) 'ruler' (*archos*). The Latin *anarchia* and Medieval French *anarchie* similarly translate. *Anarchism*, Merriam-Webster defines as the '1: [the] political theory holding all forms of governmental authority to be unnecessary and undesirable and advocating a society based on voluntary cooperation and free association of individuals and groups; 2: the advocacy or practice of *anarchistic* principles'. Anarchistic links to 'anarchist'; an *anarchist* is, '1: a person who rebels against any authority, established order, or ruling power; 2: a person who believes in, advocates, or promotes anarchism or anarchy, especially: one who uses violent means to overthrow the established order'. Merriam-Webster indicates that the first English use of 'anarchy' was in 1539.

When I researched the 1539 origin of the word use in English, the best reference was Raymond Williams' book *Keywords*, who makes use of the 1539 reference. Williams was an English Marxist and social critic of the New Left. He wrote: 'Anarchy came into English in the [the mid-16th Century] from [its forerunner word] anarchie [and] anarchia – a state without a leader. Its earliest uses are not too far from the early hostile uses of democracy: "this unleful lyberty or lycence of the multytude is called an Anarchie" (1539)'. The 1539 reference is from Richard Taverner's translation of Erasmus' *Proverbs*. *Proverbs* or *Adagia*, was a 1500 collection of Latin and Greek humanist wisdom. These early texts reassert humanist thought and were part of the Renaissance. Erasmus sought to (re)assert knowledge gained through science versus divine authority. Knowledge was, of course, released by the power centre of the day, the Catholic Church. Erasmus was not alone in his concern for Catholic domination; Thomas More published *Utopia* in 1516, and Martin Luther would write and post his *95 Theses* in 1517. If anarchism is truth and critique to and of power, it can lay some claim to these texts.

Williams also states, 'But [anarchism] came through primarily as a description of any kind of disorder or chaos'. This is meaningful, as the tension around violence, disorder, and chaos are fulcrums or contested terrain for the term, and of course continue to today. Anarchist writers offer a broad apology, seeking to define anarchism as something orderly, functional, and natural, first with

Proudhon's, 'Anarchy is order without power!' (Marshall, 1991: 558, originally Proudhon, 1849), whereas certainly the dominant notion of anarchism was, and remains, its chaotic opposite.

The complexity of anarchism is not assuaged by anarchism's continued Industrial and Modern era development. In anarchist studies, authors like Leonard Williams (2011) demonstrate that arguing over its content and purpose is common to anarchist studies, and most secondary texts spend ample time discussing what is meant by 'anarchism'. Ruth Kinna is arguably the most active contemporary anarchist scholar, and her 2019 text, *The Government of No One, the Theory and Practice of Anarchism* along with her prior work (2005) *A Beginner's Guide to Anarchism* both elaborate on previous frameworks of anarchism, and her own choices. From the 2019 text:

> While I am interested to show how anarchism was constructed in the late
> nineteenth century, I do not attempt to demarcate the boundaries of anarchism as
> some later historians have done. I do not believe [however] that anarchism is
> endlessly porous and inevitably there are some 'anarchisms' that I ignore (notably
> 'market anarchism', 'anarcho-capitalism', and 'national anarchism') (2019: 8).

Thus anarchism, perhaps like any political ideology or 'ism', continues to evolve to today, and importantly, the choices authors make to frame out its evolution remain tenuous. Additionally, anarchism as a politics of antipolitics, a dogma of antidogma, and a secular irreligiosity to many, further degrades its ease of definition. Some anarchist scholarly literature exists (Wolff, 1998, Kinna 2019 and 2005, May 1994, Newman, 2015 and 2011), but most of the literature is located in more fringe activist and revolutionary circles. The reader will see most of the primary and secondary authors I review here are clearly anarchists, seeking to advocate and propel their activism, versus maybe 'simply' understanding the concept. In this sense, a study of anarchism deviates some from a typical academic literature review; many of the philosophy's leading thinkers are self-proclaimed anarchists, biased towards advancing the idea.

Defining an idea or thing that does not want definition is something Peter Marshall's 1991,

Demanding the Impossible, saw very well in his title. The title is both a play on a phrase from 1968's

turbulent and electrified Paris, aimed at revolutionary zeal, but also the entendre of scoping and

shaping the history of this anti-idea. An anti-idea has its opposite physics, and intellectually justifies

the existence of its opposite. For anarchists, a system of anarchism might be an incoherent

thing. One/us/society does not need a system at all, we simply must be purged of the very notion

we are incapable of organizing our own affairs as a matter of course. On the walls of many a Paris

structure were, 'Be realistic: demand the impossible! Under the cobbles, the beach! It is forbidden to

forbid'! To continue exploring the definition of anarchism, I will now present secondary source

discussions from five scholars that each have their unique and nuanced take: George Woodcock,

Daniel Guerin, Ruth Kinna, Noam Chomsky, and Peter Marshall.

George Woodcock's description

George Woodcock first published his survey, *Anarchism*, in 1962. He updated it in 1986, with an

addendum taking into account the turbulent 1960s. Woodcock is perhaps best known for this

volume, but he also wrote over 120 works, to include travel essays, fiction, and poetry. Famous and

revered in his home country of Canada, he had a public dispute with George Orwell over the proper

role of pacifism during WWII (Woodcock contrasted with Orwell's insistence they resist

fascism). Woodcock's volume features as the 13th 'anarchism' book entry on Amazon.com, and the

9th secondary review.[1] Google Scholar notes 494 times cited.[2] When published in 1962, it was the

first major and well-known review of anarchism (Woodcock, 1962: 10).

Woodcock organized the volume as an historical review, tracing anarchist ideas from inception in

Greece all the way through to a major nation-state/geographical binning of ideas and actors. He

considered the following authors as the canonical writers:

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[1] Amazon search engine data taken July 2016.
[2] Taken 16 Dec 2016.

- William Godwin, 1756-1836, England

- Max Stirner, 1806-1856, Germany (Bavaria)

- Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, 1809-1865, France

- Mikhail Bakunin, 1814-1876, Russia

- Peter Kropotkin, 1842-1921, Russia

- Leo Tolstoy, 1828-1910, Russia

For Woodcock, Godwin was the link between the 16th and 17th century anarchism of Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), Taverner's translation of Erasmus in 1539, and Cudsworth's 1678 pieces mentioned above around anarchism as a rejection of ecclesiastical power (indeed the dominant power of the day, before the Westphalian state system and commerce secularize Europe).

In the problematic and difficult work of defining anarchism, Woodcock wrote the following:

> ...I shall treat anarchism, despite its many variations: as a system of social thought, aiming at fundamental changes in the structure of society and particularly—for this the common element uniting all its forms—at the replacement of authoritarian state by some form of non-governmental cooperation between free individuals (Woodcock, 1962: 14).

Woodcock spends many of his opening pages critiquing the early and still persistent notions of anarchism as chaos and disorder. 'Anarchism, nihilism, and terrorism are often mistakenly equated, and in most dictionaries will be found at least two definitions of the anarchist. One presents him as a man who believes that government must die before freedom can live. The other dismisses him as a mere promoter of disorder who offers nothing in place of the order he destroys' (1962: 11). The segue to Godwin runs through this argument for Woodcock, as he continues, 'Yet malign intent is clearly very far from the intent of men like Tolstoy and Godwin, Thoreau and Kropotkin' (1962: 12).

Godwin's 18th century anarchism did not make specific use of anarchy or similar terms. Anarchism makes its first return to prominent political usage in the 1840s as a response to industrialization from Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, a Frenchman, who argued that order, not disorder, was what is meant by anarchism. This is the apologetic shift I mention above, which Raymond Williams signalled in his *Keywords* entry. 'The seeming paradox of order in anarchy—here we have the change in connotation of this whole group of words. Proudhon, conceiving a natural law of balance operating within society, rejects authority as an enemy and not a friend of order, and so throws back at the authoritarians the accusations levelled at the anarchists; in the process he adopts the title he hopes to have cleared of obloquy' (1962: 14).

Daniel Guerin's description

Daniel Guerin's 1970, *Anarchism*, opens with an introduction from Noam Chomsky. *Anarchism* is the 4th entry on Amazon's book list under 'anarchism'.[3] Google Scholar notes 332 times cited.[4] My section here focuses on Guerin's 1970 book, but AK Press also published, *No Gods, No Masters*, a compendium of his works, in 2005.

Chomsky's introduction quickly brings out how vast and changing anarchism can be, quoting anarcho-syndicalist Rudolf Rocker in his intro, on page vii:

'[Anarchism is not] a fixed, self-enclosed social system, but rather a definite trend in the historic development of mankind…[it] strives for the free unhindered unfolding of all the individual and social forces in life'. The notion of freedom, and a natural 'unfolding' of things is a common theme in anarchism.

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[3] Robot Check (Amazon search engine).
[4] Taken 16 Dec 2016.

Chomsky and Guerin here note a central challenge of anarchism: as difficult as it is to define the ideology, the practical nature of what it might actually be often remains even more elusive. This introduces the notion of prefiguration or prefigurative politics. Prefiguration is an alignment of means and ends in politics, and comes from Carl Boggs (1977), a New Left writer who noted the long tension between means and ends in Marxist revolution. One way that anarchism is typically distinct from Marxism is around the immediacy of means to immediately realize an anarchist end. Marxist historical dialectic, where the communist ends can justify sometimes violent means, and a dictatorship of the proletariat, stand in direct contrast, despite both seeking eventual communism. This tension stems from a long standing 'feud' between the two close cousins of the ardent revolutionary left, one which may still play out to this day.

Guerin himself was a prominent French anarchist and activist. In addition to his 1970 text, Guerin is perhaps best known for his criticisms of French suppression and reaction to homosexuality. David Berry at Loughborough University is a leading biographer of Guerin. He is an editor of danielguerin.info and has written several texts on Guerin's life. In 2013, Berry wrote '[Guerin] was also regarded by 1968 as the grandfather of the gay liberation movement in France' (Berry, 2014: 285). Guerin came to anarchism from his sexuality and its confrontation with largely conservative and traditional French sensibilities. Thus, in Guerin as both an anarchist and secondary expert himself, anarchism illustrates resistant and assertive qualities, opposing oppression and seeking freedom wherever they may lie, in this case around sexuality.

Guerin's 1970 work scopes the anarchist canon first by insisting that anarchism is actually quite simple. 'In spite of the variety and richness of anarchist thinking, in spite of the contradictions and doctrinal disputes which were often centred on false problems, anarchism presents a fairly homogenous body of idea' (Guerin, 1970: 4). The 'false problems' would be around the means to realize an anarchist society, but also if said society should be organized collectively or individually. This nuance around social or collectivist anarchism, that of largely Proudhon, Bakunin,

and Kropotkin versus the individualist anarchism of Stirner, gives anarchism its richness. The writers Guerin cites (given in the order they appear in his introduction) are Stirner, Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Malatesta.

While he provides the above names, he does critique 'the masters of libertarian thought' for not necessarily being the best examples, given that '[many] of these masters were not anarchists throughout their lives, and their complete works include passages which have nothing to do with anarchism' (1970: 4). He attempts nevertheless to focus on the ideas of anarchism versus the personalities themselves. '...the reader will be presented in turn with the main constructive themes of anarchism, and not with the personalities' (1970: 4).

For Guerin, anarchism can be a version of Marxism which eschews authoritarianism. Certainly, Marxism and anarchism share common ends and vision, and anarchism's analysis of capitalism and power (probably Kropotkin's works, see discussion later in this chapter) mimic much of Marx's. So what might a libertarian Marxism be? For Guerin, '[a]narchism is really a synonym for socialism' and '[the anarchist] is primarily a socialist whose aim is to abolish the exploitation of man by man' (1970: 12). This contrasts with Marx, however, as there is no anarchist use of the state. '[The] anarchist regards the State as the most deadly...' (1970: 14).

To illustrate the anarchist concern for the state, he leverages Proudhon's famous quote: ...to be governed is to be watched over, inspected, spied on, directed, legislated, regimented, closed in, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled...' ...the quote goes on for some length, describing the operation of a modern 19th century state (Guerin, 1970: 15). The state is thus anathema to anarchism, and in seeking an organizational mechanism to replace it, Geurin notes, '[the most original] creation of anarchism: workers' self-management'. In chapter 4, I explore workers' self-management, cooperatives, employee stock ownership plans and contemporary self-management seen in Zappos and elsewhere. A key question for contemporary anarchism is whether it remains

anti-capitalist. That is, if a firm is successful, solvent, and owned by its members, exhibiting a high

mode of freedom and fulfilment, is that not a realization of a communist end of sorts? Is that

'enough', even if the state and other forms of oppression persist?

Ruth Kinna's description

Ruth Kinna is currently a professor of Political Theory at Loughborough University in the UK, and is

the senior editor of *Anarchist Studies*, a bi-annually published political science journal. Her 2005

Anarchism: A Beginner's Guide and her 2019 *A Government of No One* present holistic surveys with

an emphasis on thematic historical review. Kinna is perhaps best known in the UK; her 2005 guide is

ranked 35th on amazon.com, but 3rd on amazon.co.uk—Google Scholar lists 67 citations.[5]

Kinna describes anarchism as, '...a doctrine that aims at the liberation of peoples from political

domination and economic exploitation by the encouragement of direct or non-governmental action'

(2005: 7). For Kinna, anarchism is more than an anti-state politics, but rather a philosophy of anti-

domination and anti-coercive power. This widens the scope of anarchism. This perspective is rooted

in her review of Paul Eltzbacher (1868-1928), a German judge and scholar. In 1900, he wrote *Der

Anarchismus* and identified seven 'sages' of anarchism (Kinna, 2005: 12):

- William Godwin, 1756-1836, England

- Max Stirner, 1806-1856, Germany (Bavaria)

- Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, 1809-1865, France

- Mikhail Bakunin, 1814-1876, Russia

- Peter Kropotkin, 1842-1921, Russia

- Leo Tolstoy, 1828-1910, Russia

- Benjamin Tucker, 1854-1939, United States

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[5] Robot Check (Amazon search engine; .com and .co.uk); Google Scholar citation rank/number taken on 16 Dec 2016.

For Kinna, Eltzbacher's approach is '[a popular] approach…[is] to trace a history of anarchist ideas through the analysis of key texts or the writings of important thinkers' (2005: 12). She does however also include, 'Eltzbacher's list has rarely been treated as definitive, though George Woodcock's *Anarchism*, which remains a standard reference work, largely [followed] Eltzbacher's selection…' (2005: 12).

Lastly, Kinna's 2019 (241) text has a key statement that features in other chapters. It reads, 'I want to suggest the possibilities of anarchism should not be evaluated by the spread or reach of anarchist groups but by the adjustments anarchists can foster in non-anarchist organizations'. I ask the reader to keep this quote in mind while reading the overall thesis. Her point operates in two important ways: 1. anarchism's 'advance' or development in contemporary organization and society can be hidden, attenuated, but also dynamic and seeking to flourish as a natural expression of human creativity and cooperation; 2. an organization need not loudly declare itself anarchist to be or have anarchist features. Both will be important elements of the MFE/A and Zappos case studies, and indeed in the interpretation of the overall thesis.

Noam Chomsky's description

Noam Chomsky's, *On Anarchism* (2013 [originally 2005]) is the number one listing on amazon.com under 'anarchism' and is cited 107 times. *On Anarchism* is a collection of essays, interviews and related material that demonstrate Chomsky's anarchist thought. Recognized for his linguistics and political thought, I include him here because of his global stature, notoriety, and associations with anarchism; he is arguably the world's most well-known and prominent anarchist.

While Chomsky may place himself within anarchism, George Woodcock contested this. Criticizing the introduction Chomsky wrote for Guerin's 1970 *Anarchism*, Woodcock said, '[Chomsky was/is] a left-wing Marxist (as was Guerin) who wished to use anarchism to soften and clarify his own Marxism' (Woodcock, 1962: 7). Chomsky draws criticism wherever he goes however, and the

critique from Woodcock probably just illustrates the vibrancy of internal debates in

anarchism. Chomsky's criticism of other intellectuals is well known, and his sometimes counter-

intuitive insights strike me as a broad effort throughout his career to eschew dogmatism. Chomsky's

anarchism is not an immutable set of rules fixed to negate something, but rather a sensibility that

power in any form must 'justify itself, and if that justification is lacking, which it often is, it must be

demolished, removed' (2015). This is a much more approachable anarchism, and useful as an

analytical tool. I argue it is a proper reduction of the vast milieu of anarchism to an understandable

and relatively nondogmatic notion.

Chomsky's third and fourth essays in *On Anarchism,* entitled 'Notes on Anarchism' and 'The

Relevance of Anarcho-Syndicalism'*,* are his clearest descriptions of anarchism. In 'Notes on

Anarchism', Chomsky highlights only one writer seen in the other surveys, Bakunin. The central

thinker in his essay is Rudolf Rocker. Rocker is probably the most well-known anarcho-syndicalist,

which emphasizes the same anti-state, anti-coercion, and anti-hierarchical elements of all

anarchism, but shows a way some anarchist thinkers started to design how an anarchist society

could work. In Rocker's case, he felt an assortment of federated workers' councils could organize

around barter trade. Anarcho-syndicalism emphasizes direct action and democracy, a form of

organization that eschews representational structures. Born in Mainz, Germany in 1873, Rocker was

a contemporary of Kropotkin and others in the heyday of classical anarchism from around 1890 to

1920. This period saw much emphasis on how an anarchist society could work, and Rocker's

response was a well-known practical design. Syndicalist design is not a far cry from what was at

least the soviet (Russian for 'council') design of the early USSR.

Why no mention of Rocker as a canonical writer in the other surveys? While this question could

hinge on Chomsky's own nuanced perspectives, it probably comes down to when Rocker wrote and

operated; he came later and after many of the other canonical writers (Rocker was born in 1873 and

died in 1959. Most of the other writers so far mentioned were born and died in the early to late

19th century). Additionally, Chomsky tends to focus his discussions on anarchism as practical means (and thus prefigured ends, although he does not use the term); Rocker's anarcho-syndicalism is a system of practical realization of anarchist theory, thus he focuses on praxis. In 'The Relevance of Anarcho-Syndicalism', chapter of *On Anarchism*, Chomsky mentions Bakunin and Kropotkin as the core philosophical roots but celebrates Rocker as a practical and possible manifestation or realization. '...anarchism is used to cover quite a range of political ideas, but I would prefer to think of it as the libertarian left, and from that point of view of anarchism can be conceived as a kind of voluntary socialism, that is, libertarian socialist or anarcho-syndicalist or communist anarchist, in the tradition of, say, Bakunin and Kropotkin, and others' (2005: 133).

Peter Marshall's description

Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism, first published in 1992 and later updated in 2008, is possibly the broadest, deepest, and best survey of anarchism. The cover art includes a quote from Chomsky, that '*Demanding the Impossible* is the book I always recommend when asked, as I often am, for something on the history and ideas of anarchism' (1992). Woodcock reviewed the book, and said, 'Large, labyrinthine, tentative: for me these are all adjectives of praise when applied to works of history, and [this book] meets all of them' (2008: 10). Amazon.com lists Marshall as the number 5 entry; Google Scholar shows 580 citations.[6]

Marshall spends three chapters shaping and scoping his definition of anarchism. Among the leading secondary authors writing in the last several decades, this is the most significant effort and exploration of the canon. While discussing whether to start with Godwin or Proudhon, he writes, 'In general, I define an anarchist as one who rejects all forms of external government and the State and believes that society and individuals would function well without them' (2008: 14). Marshall laments, 'I have primarily restricted myself to thinkers; poets like Shelley and novelists like Franz

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[6] Robot Check (Amazon search engine); Google Scholar citation rank/number taken on 16 Dec 2016.

Kafka, B. Traven and Ursula K. LeGuin who express a profound anarchist sensibility have been reluctantly left out…' (2008: 15). He further states 'A study of anarchism will show that the drive for freedom is not only a central part of our collective experience but responds to a deeply felt human need' (2008: 16).

This brings to light an important point somewhat missing from the other surveys, that of a rich liberating or emancipatory tradition in a variety of human expression. In this, Marshall 'claims' much of human interaction or sensibility as 'anarchist'. This broader concept of anarchism could provide more theoretical room to define management activity in modern society as anarchist.

Marshall's volume first surveys anarchist oriented thought all the way back to ancient Greece and China. He then surveys various thinkers organized geographically, with a focus on Europe. In his fourth section, he lists the following as the 'Classical Anarchist Thinkers'

- William Godwin

- Max Stirner

- Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

- Michael Bakunin

- Peter Kropotkin

- Elisee Reclus

- Errico Malatesta

- Leo Tolstoy

- Emma Goldman

- Mohandas Gandhi

A survey of surveys

Of the five authors, Figure 1 shows the density of canonical thinkers featured. Leveraging their expertise, I have tried to build a plausible scope of the canonical writers. While I noted the times

cited for each key thinker, moving forward I simply use the entire list — indeed all the thinkers listed are worthy and deserving of a review. That said, I take some liberties with length or attention to each writer. I attempt to justify any variance there by either citing the density noted in Figure 1, or simply acknowledging my own bias as it develops or has developed. With this insight and approach, I define and scope the classical anarchist canon in the next section of this chapter.

Figure 1. Survey of the canonical writers

	Woodcock	Guerin	Chomsky	Kinna	Marshall	Total
Bakunin	1	1	1	1	1	5
Kropotkin	1	1	1	1	1	5
Stirner	1	1		1	1	4
Proudhon	1	1		1	1	4
Godwin	1			1	1	3
Tolstoy	1			1	1	3
Malatesta		1			1	2
Reclus					1	1
Tucker				1		1
Rocker			1			1
Goldman					1	1
Gandhi					1	1

Classical anarchists

Like Kinna (2016), I characterize the canonical writers as 'classical anarchism'. My goal is to identify and understand common themes and features that comprise classical anarchism. The following is in chronological order by birth.

William Godwin (England, 1756-1836)

William Godwin was born in England in 1756. He rose to prominence by the 1790s with his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, and *Influence on General Virtue and Happiness*, both published in 1793. At the time, England was under extreme political pressure that traced through the American Revolution, a global conflict against France, Spain, and the Dutch, and was greatly heightened by the revolution in France. In this mix, Godwin penned what *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* characterizes as the, 'the first modern discussion of anarchism' (Honderich, 2005). Godwin's ideas critiqued English political institutions and government itself, in what Kinna describes as, 'rooted in scientific reason' (2005: 100). He conceptualized government as a thing that has an unnatural power over others to manipulate their affairs and harm man's ability to rise to his natural potential. This is a response and rejection of the over 100-year perspective Hobbes developed in *Leviathan* (1651) during the English Civil War. In *Leviathan*, man is unfortunately evil at heart, existing in a 'state of nature', unreliable if left to his own devices, and therefore requiring a heavy sovereign — the Leviathan, or encroaching state — to keep peace and order and avoid the 'war of all against all'. Hobbes admitted this was not ideal, but it was simply necessary. Godwin's critique of government and citing it as a barrier to a positive sense of human nature, would continue to feature prominently in anarchist studies. Arguably Godwin was the first modern writer to create momentum with this idea, despite interestingly never using the labels 'anarchist' or 'anarchism' to describe himself or his writings.

Max Stirner (Bavaria, 1806-1856)

Max Stirner was born in 1806, in Bavaria. His main work is *The Ego and Its Own* or the original Der *Einzige und sein Eigentum*. Written and published in 1845, its core ideas focused on what Stirner considered was a more rational and reasonable, and ultimately more practical, form of personal politics, that of the individual creating and carving out freedom for himself in his own immediate life. Stirner hid his radical perspectives from most during his life, and the promulgation of his ideas have ebbed and flowed through the decades. His individualist anarchism has appealed to both the radical right and left, further complicating the 'clean' definition of anarchism, particularly as something 'owned' by leftist politics.

For Stirner, anarchism was a natural extension of the complexity of a person. As a person is infinitely complex, no philosophy, science, or other way of claiming knowledge of humankind was possible, and moreover, political causes, with parties, groups and (by definition) collective ideals, were against or negated his notion of personal flourishing and liberty. Allowing the individual to experiment, learn and grow was thus the result of his anarchism. Society, the state and other power centres interfered with this process. Guerin (1970) characterized Stirner as the start of individualist anarchism, an anarchism less concerned with remaking all of society, but rather focused more on intense personal freedom, ostensibly acknowledged by all. This would sum to an anarchist society, described as a 'union of egoists' (Stirner, 2014: 165).

Stirner may be considered utopian and impractical.   The metaphysical component of Stirner's work and influence was central to his approach however, and many of his arguments about human nature and personal liberty resonate as key components of overall anarchist thought. This perspective would greatly influence later anarchism, particularly third epoch or postanarchism (see below), where Saul Newman (2015) drew heavily on Stirner.

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (France, 1809-1865)

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon was the first modern writer to label himself an 'anarchist'. His 1840, *What is Property?* is generally regarded as his leading text. In *Property*, he asserts his philosophy of mutualism, beginning collectivist anarchism as the political focus is on realizing mass and organized anarchism. Proudhon both critiqued extant society and sought to develop a replacement system with councils and workers' associations. Rudolf Rocker, in his anarcho-syndicalism, essentially offered an expansion and greater precision of specific types of exchanges. In this, anarchism to Proudhon was a coherent body of politics addressing, deconstructing, and destroying industrialized capitalism and its necessary state mechanism of support, but also a practical system of worker-owned and run organizations interacting for mutual benefit. A free market was unnecessary and antithetical to this arrangement, and herein does anarchism take a hard anticapitalist stance. To the mutualist, capitalism begets the state and vice versa; these devices are how the bourgeoisie effectively liberalized society beyond aristocracy.

Mikhail Bakunin (Russia, 1814-1867)

The fiery, toothless Russian revolutionary entered life in 1814. Bakunin is the central figure responsible for anarchism characterized as revolutionary and activist politics. His *Statism and Anarchy* (1873) and *God and the State* (written in the 1870s, posthumously published unfinished in 1882) describe a sometimes-violent activism, intent on vaporizing the state and replacing it with council- and worker-led local communes. In many ways, Bakunin's vision synchronised with other socialists of his day, particularly Marx. They were, however, spectacularly at odds over how to realize this possibly utopian vision of society, and they, too, had a major falling out in 1871 at the First International, the first strident effort to meet and unite leftist parties and figures across Europe and beyond.

This schism was that of Bakunin's anti-authoritarian socialism versus Marx' ultimately realized authoritarian or vanguard/party socialism which came to pass in the Soviet Union, China and

elsewhere. Today, anti-authoritarian socialism is generally simply 'anarchism', and sometimes 'libertarian socialism'. Our main learning from Bakunin is around the firebrand activism and revolutionary zeal associated with an anti-authoritarian anarchism.

Leo Tolstoy (Russia, 1828-1910)

Tolstoy was born in 1828. World-renowned for his novels, poems and plays, his nonfiction is relatively obscure and even suppressed. Tolstoy's contribution to anarchism is its nonviolent, Christian, and pacifist angle seen in texts like 1894's, *The Kingdom of God Is Within You,* which asserts a personal and autonomous relationship with a Christian god. In this text, he describes a pacifist 'turn the other cheek' lifestyle and interprets it as an autonomous pacifism. Kinna (2005: 113) wrote, 'Tolstoy's reasoned spiritual justification for nonresistance and pacifism affected critical religious rebels, such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Thoreau'. Kemmerer (2009: 208 detailing a passage from Tolstoy's 1885 (20-21) *My Religion*) wrote, 'Christianity requires disobedience to the state in preference for Christian ideals. Kemmerer continues with a vignette Tolstoy described about interviewing various Russian soldiers and constables in Moscow. When pursuing a beggar, he asked a Russian soldier, 'if he had read the Gospels. "I have," the guard boldly [stated] to which Tolstoy inquired if he had read the portion about feeding the hungry. The government official [looked] pained, recognizing the conflict of interest...and [could] only reply, "Have you read Military Regulation?"'

Tolstoy introduces us to the idea that perhaps Jesus Christ himself is the ultimate example of an anarchism; one of compassion, love, nonviolence, and acceptance, even an acknowledgement and seeking of pain and humble circumstances. Primitivists, Gandhi, and others use Tolstoy's impressions to focus an anarchist philosophy on its ethics and illustrated how the state's desire for order often stood apart from higher moral expression.

Elisee Reclus (France, 1830-1905)

Reclus was born in 1830, in Gironde, France. Reclus is relatively well known in geography, where his notions of space and the physical interaction with politics is a prominent sub-subject, and an interesting intersection between political science and geography. Reclus was a precursor to Kropotkin, and a bridging function of sorts for collectivism and ethics with Proudhon. Reclus influenced Tolstoy and Gandhi as well with his vegetarianism, lifestyle choices and advocacies, which included what may be regarded as early forms of sexual independence and critiques of traditional marriage. Reclus' main text was the 19-volume *La Nouvelle Géographie universelle, la terre et les hommes*, which he compiled over 19 years (1875-1894). Reducing Reclus' contribution to simple pieces is deeply problematic given his overall body of work, but he situates in the anarchist milieu usually in discussions on human nature, social ecology, and what is typically referred to as anarcho-primitivism.

Human nature features in most political philosophy, and indeed is a current topic in mainstream management. A well and good nature can be trusted to do good and requires little management. A poor nature and even man's tendency towards evil and selfishness requires a rule of law, management, and centralized authority. A tie-in to contemporary management could be Theory X and Y from Douglas McGregor's work at MIT in the 1950s and 60s (Bass, 2015). Reclus' argument was a precursor to Kropotkin's later work in Siberia around peasant living, and arguments he made around a generally cooperative human nature, at odds with Darwin's view of life as competitive/for survival. Reclus saw human nature being directly tied to the ecological environment; relatively abundant land and food lent itself to an agreeable human nature, one which required little control and organization. Reclus somewhat shaved into scarcity discussions from mainstream economics in this regard, and his arguments could be broadly viewed in today's world as commonsensical. Nevertheless, his illustrations suggest contemporary views of persistent competition-as-life as problematic.

Peter Kropotkin (Russia, 1842-1921)

Peter Kropotkin was born in 1842, in Moscow. The son of a Russian nobleman, Kropotkin served as a page to Tsar Nicholas II himself. The Russian Corps of Pages was an exclusive education and grooming corps, which included military service and training. Hazing and other strong experiences left an indelible mark on the young Kropotkin. He grew an interest in the conditions of the peasants, and was curious about the organization of Russian society, how it came to be, and why power appeared so disproportionately arranged. Kropotkin's interests in the order of things, geography, and related subjects eventually led him to political philosophy, particularly Proudhon's writings. By 1872, Kropotkin used 'anarchist' to describe himself, a serious act of defiance, and something that led to both a break with his noble family and eventually more activism in Russia and abroad.

Kropotkin's main contributions tend to build on Proudhon's collectivist and anti-authoritarian perspectives and notions of human nature. In 1902's *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, Kropotkin used observations and conventional Cartesian scientific methods to refute Social Darwinism. *Mutual Aid* argues that man is cooperative by nature, not necessarily competitive. The importance of this anarchist perspective on human nature cannot be understated; if man is cooperative, authority to manage him may not be necessary at all. Kropotkin's writings would influence many other anarchist writers, of note are 1960s (and later) era writers like Paul Goodman, Ivan Illich and Colin Ward.

Errico Malatesta (Italy [Two Sicilies], 1853-1932)

Born in 1853, in Sicily, Errico Malatesta is probably the most well-known Italian canonical anarchist. His main ideas revolve around direct action revolution. For Malatesta, reformism in any sense was counterproductive and ineffective. True revolution was needed to advance society and reach a non-authoritarian communism. Malatesta wrote several essays and corresponded with Bakunin; these generally represent the tension inside anarchist philosophy about violence. Probably his most influential and best work was 1891's essay, 'Anarchy'. In 'Anarchy', Malatesta discusses the word itself, and rejects the 'philological discussion' in which anarchism tends to mire itself. He also

explores human nature, and why many seem to accept rule despite what he argues is against their interests. Malatesta offers a further refinement of Bakunin's tendencies: a focus on direct action, revolution, and a fundamental rejection of working within any system that divides society into rulers and ruled.

Benjamin Tucker (United States, 1854-1939)

American anarchism is largely synonymous with Benjamin Tucker. Tucker was born in Massachusetts in 1854. His anarchist journal, *Liberty*, ran from 1881 to 1908. Tucker translated Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own* and, as such, is probably the most influential American anarchist in the individualist tradition, something which would evolve and splinter over time to contemporary American anarcho-capitalism (argued by some not be anarchist at all), and American libertarianism. His own 'Anarchist-Socialism', declares an individualist bent. Anti-authoritarian, he expressed great concern about Marxism and other authoritarian or 'state' socialisms: 'Education is a slow process and may not come too quickly. Anarchists who endeavour to hasten it by joining in the propaganda of State Socialism or revolution make a sad mistake indeed' (Tucker, 1926).

This is a good example of the long standing in-fighting inside anarchism to arrest and manage terms. In Tucker's view, much like Stirner's, anarchism works when employed along an individualist economy and means. Tucker recognized this problem, and even went so far as to reject a notion of utopianism inside his anarchism, thereby possibly acknowledging that in an anarchist society, coercion and violence would persist. To manage this, Tucker spent time discussing privatization of 'defence forces'. In his view, violence and coercion were not necessarily a problem, but rather the monopolization the government claimed and abused was a misuse of 'tools for effective reform'. (Tucker, 1887).

Emma Goldman (Lithuania, 1869-1940)

European and North American classical anarchism struggles to incorporate women and minorities. Illustrative of the times, politics and power were the province of men. However, in 1869, the world received its first prominent female anarchist, Emma Goldman. Born in present-day Lithuania, but at the time part of Russia, she later moved abroad and integrated into western politics. Her expressions predated free love, women's sexual freedom, birth control and feminism. Goldman was famously implicated in McKinley's assassination, and later exonerated. Her life would feature multiple runs-ins with American and other authorities.

She would later return to Russia to eulogize at Kropotkin's funeral, all under great tension with Lenin and other Bolsheviks. While there, she witnessed the Bolshevik rise to power, and in her 1923, *My Disillusionment in Russia*, she castigated Lenin and others for overly centralizing their socialism, and simply replacing one elite power centre for another. This characterization of the Soviet Union would influence many movements and be a key feature of both the Frankfurt School and the 1960s New Left (and associated practical anarchists like Ward and Goodman).

Mohandas Gandhi (India, 1869-1948)

1869 also witnessed Gandhi's birth in Porbandar, India. Gandhi sits firmly in the mind of the westerner because of his nonviolent resistance to British rule in the 1940s. His 1909, *Hind Swaraj*, describes how the political reality of India was the responsibility of Indians. That is, the Indians' own allowance of British domination was the main reason for their circumstance. If Indians would disallow this, British rule in India would end, regardless of British power and efforts to retain political control. This might be a particularly good broad example of anarchist direct action — the idea that the people themselves are responsible for their own political reality, and if they want it changed, they need only take action. Gandhi would inspire multiple anti-colonial and anti-imperialist movements, and usher in a long post-WWII period of decolonization across Africa and the developing world.

In 1948, Nathuram Godse, a fellow Indian concerned with religious partition and power movement in India, assassinated Gandhi. Gandhi's is probably the best example of a nonviolent lifestyle, and even a spiritual and primitivist manifestation of anarchism. Anarchism as a spiritual mentality, and as a primitive rejection of modern life, are certainly in the anarchist constellation of ideas. Tolstoy heavily influenced Gandhi, and the two famously exchanged letters early in Gandhi's career (1908). Gandhi wrote to Tolstoy after reading Tolsoy's *A Letter to a Hindu* (1908; sometimes written *Hindoo*), which discussed how India would break from English rule through non-violence. Gandhi wrote of Tolstoy: 'the greatest apostle of non-violence that the present age has produced' (Gandhi, 1927).

Rudolf Rocker (Germany, 1873-1958)

Rudolf Rocker was born in 1873 in Mainz, Germany. Rocker's main work, *Anarcho-Syndicalism* (originally 1938, widespread publication 1947), focuses on anarchist praxis in workers' syndicates. Rocker and Goldman were contemporaries, and she encouraged him to collect and draft his insights. His philosophy shows a tension between anarchism as an ethics that one can realize even in certain current moments, or something that needs to happen and then becomes the state of being once certain economic realities are changed, adjusted, manipulated, and rearranged. Demonstrated here are the long challenge of means and ends, and prefigurative politics in anarchism. Rocker insisted that a utopian socialist end might happen with a direct-action, worker-syndicalist, political economy. Today's self-managed teams do indeed have features of Rocker's philosophy that I explore later. Rocker probably signals the end of classical anarchism, and he was influential in Depression- and WWII-era America and Europe, which would, of course, change the entire social and political landscape of the globe. The Spanish CNT (discussed at length in chapter 4), arguably the best example of an anarchist movement, claimed to be an anarcho-syndicalist manifestation. Anarchism would need a rebirth and rebranding in the turbulent 1960s to resurface.

Second epoch anarchism; practical and New Left anarchism

The 1960s and the New Left were a fertile renaissance of anarchist thought and action. The New Left can trace its origin to the Frankfurt School of the 1930s, beatnik and counter-culture Western '50s and '60s expression, and thinkers working to reframe anarchism as a politics of now and of action (and not reliant on a societal revolution). Anarchism, post-WWII, provided an alternative to the authoritarian and now brutal Marxism of Stalin and China. This mix of political energy illustrates the often-confusing radical landscape, where 'libertarian socialism' is 'anarchism' is 'left-libertarianism' is 'autonomist Marxism' and so on. Marshall notes that Herbert Marcuse, author of *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) a member of the Frankfurt School and generally considered to be more 'Marxist' than anarchist, 'offered a highly libertarian analysis of the failings of Soviet Marxism [in Eros and Civilization (1955)]' (1991: 540). In the New Left, affection seemingly returns between Marxism and anarchism; as Marxists struggled to reconcile Stalinist brutality, anti-authoritarian socialism—anarchism—retained a certain lustre.

To scope second epoch practical anarchism, I return to secondary authors, Kinna (2019, 2005), Woodcock (1962, but updated in 1984 to include a discussion of the New Left) and Marshall (1991). Marshall wrote of the New Left: '[With the disillusionment of the Spanish CNT in the 1930s, the] resurgence of anarchism in the sixties [came] as a great surprise. [It is possible] to trace a gradual disillusionment on the Left with authoritarian socialism, especially in the Soviet form, after the invasion of Hungary in 1956' (1991: 539). 'In the United States, the Civil Rights Movement and the Students for a Democratic Society made a new generation wary of the power of the State' (1991: 540).

New Left anarchism took many turns, some material, others more social. It sprouted a variety of sentiments, all aimed at countering or addressing various forms of oppression and power. For example, early feminism, inspired by Goldman, took firm root in the 1960s with birth control and the Sexual Revolution. Anarchism could lay claim to Gloria Steinem and Second Wave

Feminism. Steinem said at the first National Women's Political Caucus in 1971, 'This is no simple reform. It really is a revolution. Sex and race, because they are easy and visible differences, have been the primary ways of organizing human beings into superior and inferior groups and into the cheap labour on which this system still depends. We are talking about a society in which there will be no roles other than those chosen or those earned. We are really talking about humanism'.

New Left anarchism thus broadens well beyond the classic canon, and perhaps even questions authors as the agent on which to build a framework, or the locus around which to discuss the movement of ideas. In curating the texts from Kinna, Woodcock and Marshall, a nexus of sorts occurs where mentions, ideas and generally accepted prominence merge and give us insight into our leading thinkers, but there is a shift from the author-driven construct of classical or first epoch anarchism to a more thematic and wider spread sense of the anarchist landscape post-WWII. Nevertheless, I select anarchist thinkers from the New Left and practical anarchists of repute and note their main ideas.

When I started reading anarchism, I entered with Chomsky, found Michel Foucault, and Ruth Kinna helpfully directed me to Paul Goodman and Colin Ward (field notes, 2017). Chomsky is here because he is Chomsky, the heavy-hitting intellectual that he is, and tied to my time at the Naval War College. Foucault is similarly claimed, although he skirted labels and investigation into his own personal sensibilities (for which he was famous). Goodman because he embodied, for Kinna especially in her advice, 'a practical anarchist whose ideas were enough to agitate everyone, and who argued for more local and decentralized control...this might have something for your notion of anarchy and self-management you're pursuing' (field notes, 2017). Kinna also recommended Colin Ward. Woodcock had this to say about Colin Ward in his 1982 (p. 421) edition of *Anarchism*, 'In *Anarchy in Action* Colin Ward [develops] an effective criticism for pie-in-the-sky anarchism, of the argument that we have to wait for fundamental social changes before we can begin the liberation of society'. *Anarchy in Action* (1973) is Ward's main anarchist text. Goodman and Ward embody

practical action for the modern era and set the conditions (again) for immediate prefigurative

anarchism. Lastly, Murray Bookchin represents a prominent American stream of anarchism, where

concern for the environment and technology's effect on humanity begins to emerge.

If Proudhon, in his declaration of, 'I am an anarchist', and Bakunin, the revolutionary lurking in the

shadows, give us classical anarchism with its focus on revolution and destruction of the state, the

New Left and practical anarchists are concerned with identifying and expanding space and current

realities that are roughly 'anarchist'. Their concept of 'the state' becomes more nuanced and

complex. While the classical anarchists focused on the main government apparatus of their day, the

most obvious area of concentrated power, the second epoch anarchists began to discuss how power

manifests in life, even inside a revolutionary apparatus, features found in Soviet and other Marxist

revolutions. For example, Chomsky, Foucault, Goodman, Ward and Bookchin all discuss the history

of mass education, and synchronise this with a critique of conformity, militarism, and the

homogenization of modern life.

Paul Goodman (United States, 1911-1972)

'Among anarcho-communists in the United States, Paul Goodman has undoubtedly had the widest

influence since the Second World War' (Marshall, 1991: 597). 'His main concern was to avoid war

and apply anarchist principles to the problems of urban America, [and] like Colin Ward in Britain was

keen to show in concrete ways the practical ability of anarchist ideas' (1991: 597). Paul Goodman,

the beatnik American Jew from San Francisco, rose to prominence with *Growing Up Absurd* (1960)

which critiqued the immediate post-war monotony and conformity of American life. In the 1950s,

the 'juvenile delinquent' was a concern. Goodman argued mass education aggressively ordered and

made American life vacuous, without depth, primed for mass consumption, and without

soul. 'Those of the disaffected youth who are articulate—for instance the Beat or Angry young

men— [the 'System' is the problem] with which they refuse to cooperate' (1960: 1) Writing for *The

New York Review of Books* in 2012 after a re-release, Adam Kirsch said, 'G*rowing Up Absurd*

brilliantly evokes the adolescent's private sense of being misunderstood by a heartless and empty world'.

Post-war America was a bit of a Maslowian dilemma — the economic boom, and the sheer wealth of American society made 'searching for meaning' hilarious to the older generations who weathered the Great Depression and war. And indeed, anarchism of this sort can appear utopian, unnecessary, a luxury elite parlour game. Kirsh: 'Indeed [the]liberalization of the economy in America and Britain in the 1980s solved the problem of the need for 'man's work'. As Goodman writes: 'To produce necessary food and shelter is man's work. During most of economic history most men have done this grudging work, secure that it was justified and worthy of a man to do it'. Today, when many men – and many women, too – must work several jobs just to provide 'necessary food and shelter', the luxury of worrying about meaning has been priced out of reach'.

Nevertheless, Goodman points out, like Marcuse, to whom Kirsh compares, how capitalist success still leaves society soulless. In an earlier writing, 1947's *Communitas: Means and Livelihood and Ways of Life*, Marshall describes Goodman's work as, 'a libertarian restoration of the community as face-to-face voluntary association of individuals united by common needs and interests. Goodman identified and spoke about a main concern of industrial life, that of the distance or 'quarantining' of work and home life. '[He] further advocated like Kropotkin the integration of factory and farm, town and country, as well as decentralization and regional autonomy' (1991: 597).

While Goodman is perhaps best known for *Growing Up Absur*d, he wrote many other works, and like many other intellectuals of his day, the Vietnam War and the revolutionary 1960s provoked more intense writings. Of note is *A Causerie at the Military Industrial* (1967), which critiqued the Vietnam War and the merging of capitalist 'success' with American foreign policy. Amazingly, the National Security Industrial Association, founded in 1944 by James Forrestal, the first US Secretary of Defense, 'to maintain and enhance the beautiful wartime communication between the armaments

industries and government', invited Goodman to speak at an annual symposium (Goodman, 1967). The causerie text is his speech to them, in which he pulls no punches:

> You people are unfitted by your commitments, your experience, your customary
>
> methods, your recruitment, and your moral disposition. You are the military-
>
> industrial of the United States, the most dangerous body of men at present in the
>
> world, for you not only implement our disastrous policies but are an overwhelming
>
> lobby for them, and you expand and rigidify the wrong use of brains, resources and
>
> labor so that change becomes difficult (1967).

'Goodman described himself as a "community anarchist who believes that coercive sovereign power is always a poor expedient" (Marshall, 1991: 597). Goodman offers broad anarchism, one which is certainly anti-state — if the state's is war (Goodman quoted Randolph Bourne's WWI-era proclamation and concern — but also a recognition of humanity's natural tendencies to organize and work regardless of the oppressive and conforming ordering of mass society.

Murray Bookchin (United States, 1921-2006)

'Bookchin was a left-libertarian autodidact, advocate of decentralized federalism and communalist democracy' (Kinna, 2019: 320). Marshall described Bookchin as '[undoubtedly] one of the most influential thinkers to have renewed anarchism since the Second World War (1991: 602) and devotes an entire chapter of his text to Bookchin's social ecology and communalism notions of anarchism.

Bookchin was incredibly open about his movement through various leftist political circles, starting initially as a Stalinist, and like many other New Left contemporaries, became disillusioned with the brutality and suffering of Soviet and Chinese-style Marxism. 'His main achievement is to have combined traditional anarchist insights with modern ecological thinking' (Marshall, 1991: 602). Like Goodman and Ward, Bookchin was very interested in the urban space, and in *Limits of the City*

(1973), 'he attacked the modern megalopolis and centralized planning and tried to bring a human and democratic dimension [back to city life]' (Marshall, 1991: 602).

Additionally, like the other New Left thinkers, Bookchin grew dissatisfied with traditional Marxist and classical anarchist analyses and terms of art for revolutionary change. 'He goes beyond a rather simplistic denunciation of the state and capitalism found in the class anarchist thinkers and prefers to talk in terms of "hierarchy" rather than class, "domination" rather than exploitation' (1991: 604). Moreover, the 'state' as the focus of anarchist concern is something Bookchin elaborated as much more complex and multi-faceted than generally found in the classic anarchists. 'The state [is] not merely a constellation of bureaucratic and coercive institutions but also a state of mind, [and it] emerged with the gradual politicization of certain social functions and it has become meshed with society to such an extent that it is difficult to distinguish the two: 'It not only manages the economy but politicizes it; it not only colonizes social life but absorbs it' (Marshall, 1991: 604 and in Marshall's text, Bookchin, 1967: 94).

Bookchin provides several key second epoch anarchisms. First, the broadening of the 'state' to mean power in various ways — ways for which I will later need and engage Michel Foucault; and second, a disillusionment with 'traditional' leftist politics that were now passé, too narrow, impossible given the complexity of society, or revolting given their association with Soviet and Chinese Marxism.

Colin Ward (United Kingdom, 1924-2010)

Colin Ward is Britain's 'best known anarchist' (Woodcock, 2018: xvi). Ward focused his work on urban design, education, and civil society. He was well schooled in classical anarchism, and his *Anarchy in Action* (1973) is filled with references to Kropotkin in particular. The lineage of thought and action from Kropotkin to Ward is noticeable, but he makes a distinct second epoch turn. '[*Anarchy in Action*] is not about strategies for revolution and it is not involved with

speculation on the way an anarchist society would function. It is about the ways in which people organize themselves in any kind of human society…' (1973: 10). He continues, 'In this sense the book is simply an extended, updated footnote to Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*' (1973: 10). Ward thus felt that Kropotkin was, in a sense, a practical anarchist. While 'revolution' was of interest to Kropotkin certainly, Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* (1902) is less a blueprint for a remaking of society and more a critique of Social Darwinism, and the premise that humans are simply doomed to angry competition. Kropotkin tried to show that the premise upon which much of society runs is flawed, and that 'man' is much more trustworthy and cooperative. Ward also rejected competition as man's natural tendency.

Marshall (1991: 679) felt that Ward, '[held] Paul Goodman's belief that a free society is not a new order but an expression of existing spheres of free action'. Ward's most famous quote illustrates practical or second epoch anarchism. A revolution or classic remaking of society is unnecessary, because 'A society which organizes itself without authority, is always in existence, like a seed beneath the snow, buried under the weight of the state and its bureaucracy, capitalism and its waste, privilege and its injustices, nationalism and suicidal loyalties, religious differences with their superstitious separatism' (Ward, 1973: 11). In this Marshall (1991: 680) felt that, '[Ward anticipated] post-left anarchy', and 'rather than speculating about a distant future, or waiting for the revolution to occur, anarchist alternatives are already present in the interstices of the existing State'.

Like Goodman, Ward reminds readers of man's real nature, and that the burdensome state is unnecessary and in the way of natural organizing. Their precise contribution of articulating second epoch practical anarchism is the essential piece for my study: anarchism exists all around us, it just needs to be unearthed and given space to articulate and enact itself.

The second epoch anarchist writers show how an interested Western populace in the 1960s reasserted and rethought anarchism. Hearkening to a 1930s Frankfurt School critique of both capitalism and Soviet-style Marxism, radical leftists of the New Left crafted an anarchism of the here and now that skirts or avoids the state. The main shift is from the revolutionary anarchism of Bakunin to a fuller realization of Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* through Ward and Goodman's rereading of anarchism in urban spaces, education, and the natural everyday interactions of life. Man's nature is cooperative, and voluntary cooperative interactions exist all around us, even as the dominant form of interaction.

Third epoch anarchism; postanarchism and post-left anarchy

Third epoch takes second epoch anarchism's broader anti-authoritarian and freedom-seeking system of thought, applies learning and insight from postmodernism and a complete rejection of conventional or traditional politics. I read third epoch anarchism as having two equal halves, both of which assert themselves as new and distinct epochs. Its first half is postanarchism, which can mean 'post' in the 'after' sense, but more importantly, 'post' in the postmodern and poststructuralist sense. I explain both further below. Third epoch's other half is post-left anarchy or post-left anarchism. There are naturally writers, thinkers, and activists operating in their distinct areas, but the common glue is that of moving beyond or skirting traditional power structures and ways of thinking and acting, which in a way, evaporates (at least some of) their effect, meaningfulness, and control. This is our contemporary view of anarchism, and its development continues.

Postanarchism

Postanarchism takes a contemporary description of modern life, one which is consumed in the neoliberal sense by 'working', that is, the wholeness of a person's offering to themselves and the world is their economic value, and by extension it rejects the commodification of a person and suggests a productive way forward to reassert the individual and their freedom. Therefore, a review of

postanarchism is a discussion in some part of how people are commodified in modern life, and how writers like Todd May (1994), Hakim Bey (1994) and Saul Newman (2015, 2011) feel people can, at least individually, find a way through this.

Todd May (United States, b. 1955)

Postanarchism is a merging of anarchist ethics with poststructuralism. Todd May's 1994 text, *The political philosophy of poststructuralist anarchism,* was the first to discuss this merging, where he, '[sketched] a framework of an alternative political philosophy, one that differs from its dominant predecessors, especially free-market liberalism and Marxism', in that its 'Poststructuralist political thought has offered, though not precisely in these terms, an alternative vision of political intervention that articulates the tension between the world as it is and the world as it could be, particularly since the collapse of the Marxist project' (1994: 3). Poststructuralism, according to Michel Foucault, a central figure in postmodern thought, is, 'an approach [that] argues that to understand an object (e.g., a text), it is necessary to study both the object itself and the systems of knowledge that produced the object' (Raulet, 1983). Thus, May is attempting to assert this 'new' anarchism as a break from previous politics by leveraging the insight from Foucault and others around the layers of meaning in life — both things that are obvious in their presentation to the world, but also the underlying structures or origin that produced them.

To elaborate his position, May encouraged in his 1994 text that individuals operate in the 'tactical' realm of politics. Here he argues that there are three 'levels' of politics, each of which has its own dynamics and features. May's description of levels in political thought is meant to illustrate possibilities around personal control. The complexity of 'the state' (formal level) is so severe in the contemporary era, and the nature of its power so complete and totalizing, that to hope, in liberal or Marxist terms, to make sense of it and remake it effectively only yields too firm a reaction. Witness violent police response to protests; May would likely argue the protests encouraged this reification

of state power. There is a better way. Overt violence in fact strengthens the state (strategic). Thus, traditional approaches to even revolutionary politics are unwise and ineffective.

To regain effective political autonomy and control, it is better to adjust one's efforts to local tactical efforts. The 'tactical' — is where power is still complex, but more easily understood and rearranged. Examples could be as mundane as the contemporary who reads little media day to day, thus limiting the literal effect on their consciousness of this power. Or the off the grid family who homeschools versus sending their children to the conforming halls of public mass education. To the postanarchist, these are effective anarchist acts that skirt state power, and in doing so render it less offensive or strong. The actions are also nonviolent, often subtle, and do not provoke the angry response of dominating power.

Tactical insurrection of this sort can sum to a remaking of society. It can scale. Postanarchism hearkens to the individual anarchists like Stirner of the classical or first epoch, who spoke of this with his 'union of egoists' (Stirner, 2014). Postanarchists, acting as the above examples acknowledge, avoid some power against them (or power in which they must operate) to assert a bit more personal freedom while still living in the broader state-run apparatus around them. Interestingly, and certainly controversial to more traditional anarchists (Franks, 2007), they may benefit from certain aspects of the state if they are able to engage one's beneficial interests and avoid others that are more harmful. Thus, the postanarchist avoids viewing 'the state' as a dogmatically monolithic negative. All of life is a diverse phenomenon, from which one can select features good to the self and avoid ones that are bad or harmful. What is harmful or helpful would clearly be a very personal analysis and decision and not collectively dogmatic or universal, as some anarchism can certainly be.

Hakim Bey aka Peter Lamborn Wilson (United States, b. 1945)
While May was probably the most pivotal in starting and elaborating postanarchism, others have written or advanced the idea in various related forms. Hakim Bey has written numerous pieces on

postanarchism (1994) where he used the term, 'ontological anarchy', to indicate the immediacy (he also uses 'immediatism') of a free lived experience. His 'temporary autonomous zone' is also a notable concept, designed around the idea of individuals asserting independent mental and literal control, at least for a period. Bey is controversial for his writings on pedophilia (Richard, 2012), where he takes his immediate and ontological arguments to further critique societal norms around sexuality.

Saul Newman (United Kingdom, b. 1972)

Saul Newman (2015, 2011) is the most recent active and notable postanarchist writer, and his 2015 book *Postanarchism* is the most thorough account of postanarchism to date. Kinna (2016) reviewed *Postanarchism*, and said the text, '*Postanarchism* describes a "form of thinking and acting without arché" – alternatively, 'a way of acting and thinking anarchistically in the here and now' (pp. xi–xii, 12). Derived from the ontological anarchism of Reiner Schürmann and Michel Foucault, *Postanarchism* espouses politics and ethics that can also be found in the writings of La Boétie, Stirner and Sorel.

Newman, like May and Bey, leverages Stirner to assert an individual anarchism of the here and now, an anarchism that avoids power structures rather than fighting them. An addition Newman notes in his 2015 text is an elaboration of violence, where he suggests that two forms, one overt and physical, is unhelpful; another, mental and assertive, is helpful and useful. Anarchists today should be mentally aggressive, always analysing and addressing nodes of power and oppression, and identifying ways to avoid it, and thus render it less of an obstacle or effect on one's personal freedom.

Postleft anarchism

Post-left anarchy, or postleft anarchism, complements postanarchism, and, as suggested above, forms the other half of contemporary, third epoch anarchism. While postanarchism encourages the

individual to identify and skirt power, postleft anarchism encourages the skirting of traditional politics altogether, and perhaps represents the most complete anarchist sensibility, that of anti-politics. There are no slogans, key texts, platforms, parties, or grand projects, save an acknowledgement that all politics subjugates, therefore a central tenet is to seek in all ways to avoid identifying with and promoting the building of one's own subjugation by adherence to any dogma. Anarchism has long since viewed itself not as a replacement system to be put in place of existing politics, but the withering away of politics in any conventional sense.

Kinna (2005: 78) wrote that postleft anarchism is a sort of 'anti-anarch[ism]'. Like postanarchism, it is anarchism with a critique of ineffective modes of resistance and activism; resistance to ideology itself is featured. This concept looks to Chiapello's and Boltanski's (2005) description of capitalism's ability to absorb radical and revolutionary ideas, repurpose them as commodities, and remove their real ability to change. Even revolution is a marketed capitalist commodity; there is no substance to even radical 'leftist' politics. The ability of modern life to subsume radical revolutionary thinking, and thus render any semblance of real change moot, is a prominent feature of capitalism and contemporary politics. Postleft anarchists espouse doing and thinking individually without party or system. There is a general sense that 'the left' is anachronistic and empty in its ability to provide change; the failed New Left of the 1960s, Occupy's vaporization, and usual liberal representative politics, are all hijacked by special interests, meaningless response, or results, or worse, a strengthening of the state in response. Appealing to these ideas of entities to usher change is passe and simply ineffective.

Postleft anarchism's two most prominent authors are arguably Bob Black and Jason McQuinn.

Bob Black (United States, b. 1951)

Black's approach to anarchism and others in the milieu indicates his approach to politics; many anarchists are the subject of his critique, largely because of their dated approaches to change. For

example, in a 2014 essay, '*Chomsky on the Nod*', he argues, 'Noam Chomsky is not only the world's most famous anarchist. He's the world's most famous anarchist who isn't one'. He continues, '[outside of anarchist circles, many are unaware of Chomsky's anarchism because] he kept those roots buried. Chomsky, whose first linguistics book was published in 1957, and whose first left-wing political book was published in 1969, has never written for an American anarchist newspaper or magazine, although he writes for rags with titles like *International Socialist*. His 1997 piece, *Anarchy after Leftism,* is '[nothing] more than a critique of another small book, Murray Bookchin's *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm* (1995)', in which he critiques Bookchin and others for their dated politics.

While the 1997 piece indicates his response and repartee with Murray Bookchin, 'The Abolition of Work' (1995) is arguably his most well-known and effective piece. Only a pamphlet, itself an indication of postleft sensibility against large volumes, Black shows a separation with classical anarchism by redefining work (labour) itself as coercive. Work is not something hijacked by capitalists, or something to be reclaimed, but rather it is in its nature something to reject. Only things that a person would choose to do in total enjoyment are justified. He writes, 'No one should ever work. Work is the source of nearly all the misery in the world. Almost any evil you'd care to name comes from working or from living in a world designed for work. To stop suffering, one must stop working. That doesn't mean one must stop doing things. It does mean creating a new way of life based on play; in other words, a ludic conviviality, commensality, and maybe even art'. Black connects with CMS perspectives on work, notably Granter (2016) and David Graeber's critique of much of corporate reality in *Bullshit Jobs* (2018).

Jason McQuinn (United States, b.?)

Jason McQuinn is an active postleft anarchist. He writes on 'subjectivity' and 'ideologies being false consciousness' (2020, [2009]). In his view, most of us are born free and clear, but naturally become indoctrinated to norms and modes of thinking. A life worth living is one where one frees oneself of

all ideology to the fullest extent possible. The only ideology or dogma worth engaging is one that

rejects all others and helps shield or move one away from various modes of subjugation and

bondage. McQuinn notes that individuals quite consciously choose their systems and modes of

thought, all ways that capture and harm our freedom. To keep this from becoming a challenge, one

must constantly reflect on the systems and acts around themself to identify oppression, and if

helpful overall, emancipate oneself from any issues. We could discern McQuinn's postleft anarchism

as that which is constantly self-reflective, always auditing for imposing on others, and imposition on

the self.

A theoretical model of anarchism

Anarchism is clearly a rich and diverse concept. To map its landscape, a conceptual model can be

helpful albeit reductive. The goal here is to illustrate nuance inside anarchism, not necessarily

provide a model that accommodates all of anarchism. The chronological construct of first, second,

and third epoch anarchism illustrates a movement of thinking seen through influential authors and

thinkers across time. The epochal 'anchor' illustrates the general origin of the idea, but anarchists

from various times might be classic, practical or post. We could argue, for example, that today's

antifa protestors are classic anarchists, while free love utopianists from America's 1830s were a

nascent practical expression. First epoch anarchism is classical anarchism, revolutionary like

Marxism, and seeks to replace or remove the state from power. It focuses and defines power as the

state, and is commonly associated with the Industrial Era, or the 19th century. Second epoch

anarchism, or practical anarchism, is a largely post-WWII construct that identifies power and

oppression as more complex than 'the state', argues that revolution in a classic Marxist sense is

problematic, and forwards a notion of local control and avoidance of power. Third epoch anarchism

is contemporary and has two equal related parts. It uses postmodern and poststructuralist notions

to identify and skirt oppression, and it sees ideology itself, and the organization of political power

and structures, as against personal freedom.

Chronological construct

- First Epoch or Classic(al) Anarchism — 19th Century to WWII: classic authors such as Bakunin, Kropotkin; revolutionary tone and possibly acceptance of violence as means

- Second Epoch or Practical Anarchism — Post WWII to 1970s: practical authors such as Paul Goodman and Colin Ward; a rejection of violent revolution and a focus on local collective organization

- Third Epoch or Postanarchism — 1980s to today: Todd May, Hakim Bey, Saul Newman, Bob Black, and Jason McQuinn; a turn back to the individual, skirting power, avoiding reifying power through party, ideology, and one's actions

What features of anarchism are universal, what features come and go?

Regardless of epoch, I argue that anarchism has three core elements: decentralised organisation, which could also be called diffused decision-making, hostility to centralised and coercive power, and opposition to the status quo. This assortment is primarily taken from Chomsky, who might be best positioned to synthesize the mass of anarchism, given his long life, his interest in the topic for several decades, the clear awareness of history, and the consistency of his views since he first started talking specifically about anarchism in the 1960s (Chomsky, 1968) and corroborated by Kinna (2019, 2011, 2005). A key element of Chomsky's approach to anarchism is that situations must be taken on a case-by-case basis, not argued in generalizations. He is aware that anarchism can be oddly dogmatic. An anarchist that insists that anarchy is anti-state and not, possibly, more broadly anti-coercive power overall, is paradoxically failing anarchism. Zerzan (2009: 1), a well-known 'green' contemporary anarchist of the post-left flavor (who just missed making this chapter…) illustrates Chomsky's views are simply not anarchist however, 'Noam Chomsky is probably the most well-known American anarchist, somewhat curious given the fact that he is a liberal-leftist politically, and downright reactionary in his academic specialty, linguistic theory. Chomsky is also, by all accounts, a generous, sincere, tireless activist — which does not, unfortunately, ensure his thinking

has liberatory value'. Acknowledging that anarchism happily but tenuously fights itself, a tradition and hallmark since its earlier days, I feel I can safely take forward the above three elements as essential anarchism.

While the above elements are 'core' to the ideology, there are other elements very much worth mentioning. These elements are less essential but do exist in various forms or notions in most anarchist thinking. Power and emancipation could take many forms, especially given that power and oppression happen beyond 'simply' the government of one's nation, or closely aligned institutions. Thus, anarchism is not only around 'the state' as being 'required' for defining anarchism. This opens up 'organisation' in general — companies, military headquarters, teams, nonprofits, churches — as all being potentially coercive power structures from which an anarchist response can occur.

Additionally, anarchism seeks to reconcile how to solve its ever-ready critiques of society. In this, anarchism toils away still in whether it is 'simply' a violent and nihilist brutality against the status quo. For Bakunin, violence was a necessary means to an end, and one only need look at the window for something to be in opposition to. For Ward and Goodman, only prefigured politics can be anarchist; means can never be violent if one seeks peaceful ends. Ideological 'movement' and variance around violence is evident. How to organize, and usually the term 'hierarchy', is also a common tension. Kinna (2019 and 2005) and Marshall (1991) note that anarchism can seem broadly against organising in any sense, but many anarchists, of all epochs, offer prescriptions for organizing in an alternative society or group. Kropotkin (2019, [1892]) argued for a communal society, Rocker (2004, [1937]) for a collection of syndicates, which would replace the current capitalist structure with federated workers councils not immediately or obviously dissimilar to the Soviet Union's stated design ('soviet' is Russian for 'council'; the literal translation of the Soviet Union was, 'union of councils'). As anarchism moved along its epochs, however, generalizations about organizing became more complex. One major complexity is the collective versus the individual as the unit of concern

around which a society or group would be organized. A collective, by definition, suggests some

subjugation of the individual; indeed, a collection of egos, to reference Stirner, must eventually need

some type of arbitration, but from whom? These tensions continue and form a common crux of

contemporary anarchist studies.

Lastly, just as I have had to leave out a section on Zerzan, a prominent contemporary green

anarchist, I must mention I have unfortunately had to leave out many other important anarchisms,

such as: anarcho-feminism, anarcho-primitivism (a type of Luddite sensibility), queer anarchism,

Christian anarchism, and others. The graphic below illustrates just a few of the various ways people

interpret anarchism. They share interest in anarchism core ideas, but they would all have varying

degrees of foci, have a different sense around party, voting, violence, collection, leadership, and

many other nuances.
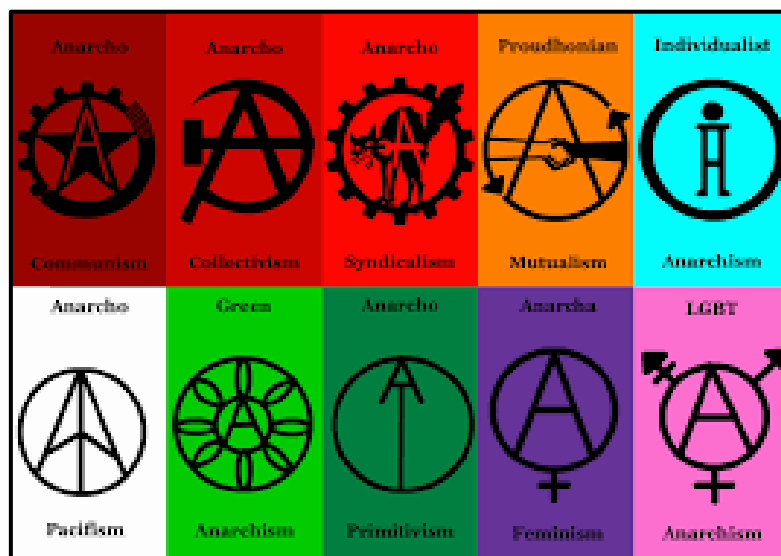
Conclusion

My goal with this description of anarchism was to identify a reasonable 'center' of the philosophy

and trace the ideology from its industrial roots to today. Anarchism is a difficult philosophy to

scope, but if I accomplished my goal, the reader is now armed to take this understanding of

anarchism forward to a discussion of modern management and organisation, particularly

management that resembles or has features of anarchism. In the next chapter, I explore self-

managed teams (SMT), workers self-management (WSM), and proximal notions of control and

management in both contemporary and historical examples. The reader will find that SMT invokes,

for example, democratic decision-making. WSM, reaching a step forward, distributes decision-

making and ownership. These features imply less coercion, hierarchy, and concentration of power,

illustrating anarchism in extant organization.

CHAPTER 4 // MANAGEMENT AND ANARCHISM

'So one of the leading anarchist thinkers, Bakunin in the 19th century, pointed out that it's quite possible to build the institutions of a future society within the present one. And he was thinking about far more autocratic societies than ours. And that's being done. So for example, Worker- and community-controlled enterprises are germs of a future society within the present one'. — Noam Chomsky, 2013[1]

Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss two currents which involve claims of worker emancipation. First, I will review literature and examples of self-managed teams (SMT), which contemporary management positions as an innovation in the sociology and function of management. The forthcoming Zappos case study in chapter 6 ties to SMT. Second, I will explore workers' self-management (WSM), often called cooperatives or employee run firms. WSM, with its at least theoretical spreading of decision-making, ownership and power throughout an organisation, is probably the most anarchist of structures existing in contemporary capitalism, and has a long history since at least the 1840s in Rochdale England. In SMT, ownership is usually reserved for founders, the public (through stock) or a select few. As such, access to meaningful decision-making is usually reserved to the minority with larger ownership stakes and associated risk. Both systems or notions of managerial control are germane to relationships between anarchism and management.

Self-Managed Teams (SMT)

The SMT 'theme' of management for my purposes here operates in four distinct areas. Namely, the definition and background of self-managed teams, how sincere or durable the idea is (is it just

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[1] The reader may find this quote at https://chomsky.info/20130528/

another 'fad'?), and how control works in SMTs. Lastly, I will address if SMT is indeed anarchism, when judged against chapter 3's model.

SMT, definition and background

If the definition of SMTs includes any notion of decision-making being delegated or diffused to incorporate 'labour's' views, then the term begins to lose its fidelity; it is of course common to delegate a variety of supervisory or management-oriented tasks and functions to labor as a common manner of organising. The nature of that delegation is an immediate concern, and the substance of decision-making and autonomy 'granted' in a given owner, manager, and labor relation. For my purposes here, I want to define SMT in a perhaps narrow manner, one that is quite contemporary, and positions itself as a 'new' innovative way of managing. This SMT manifests as 'Management 2.0' (Birkenshaw and Hamel, 2008; Hamel, 2016) or 'Teal Management', (Laloux, 2015) and 'Holacracy' (Robertson, 2007 and 2015) among other varieties of other fad-oriented veneers of delegation. While these manifestations are 'new', their lineage and connection to various ways the line between owners, managers and labor is arguably quite clear. The 'newness' of these ideas is itself an important topic, suggesting and highlighting the penchant for capitalism to adopt and co-opt challenges to it (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005).

Perhaps the loudest articulation of this type of SMT as 'something new' is inside organisations using Brian Robertson's Holacracy. Though Hamel ('Management 2.0' and 'The Future of Management' [2007]) and Laloux ('Teal Management') have some similar features around self-management, Holacracy is the most developed, largely due to Zappos' adoption and continued use. Holacracy uses software and artificial intelligence to help knowledge workers 'self-organise'. It claims to limit hierarchy (Robertson, 2015), but as one might suspect, the lived experience of Holacratic organisations suggests otherwise (Groth, 2015). Zappos, which will feature later as one of my case studies, is perhaps the most-well known and largest Holacratic organisation.

Brian Robertson, Holacracy's 'founder', would likely not acknowledge any lineage and direct links to previous ideas. 'In traditional companies, managers make decisions, and workers execute the plan. But Holacracy is a revolutionary and tried-and-tested new system which turns everyone into a leader. The organisation looks like a nest of circles, not a pyramid - but it's not anarchy. It's finally clear who should make each decision - the person on the frontline has that authority - and the organisation succeeds by adapting swiftly to pursue its purpose' (Robertson, 2016). While the reference to anarchy is clear, its rejection is fascinating. Holacracy arguably aligns quite clearly with anarchist, left or libertarian socialism, and communal notions. This suggests at least two somewhat-curious pieces when making sense of Holacracy:

1. Robertson directly 'read' radical philosophy and worked to incorporate as much of it as possible into a capitalist framework. This would represent a sort of reformist compromise that acknowledges the universal allure of anarchism or similarly related philosophy, while also denying and working to obscure the connection, and/or;

2. Perhaps more 'forward thinking' versions of managerialism seek out forms of 'innovation' that attend to the ethical and moral problems of capitalist managerialism. The 'values' of philosophical anarchism and socialism, particularly its non-violent features, are indeed universal in the way Noam Chomsky, Colin Ward, Peter Kropotkin, and Paul Goodman argue.

The Zappos case study chapter will explore the above themes further, but it is sufficient to say here that manifestations of anarchism inside Holacracy create an interesting vignette in the meaning of modern management and work experience. Something about Tony Hsieh, the founder of Zappos, and Brian Robertson's experience in tech and 'younger' organisation life, has prompted them to explore alternatives to traditional hierarchical management— if only to make creative recruiting and 'the day-to-day experience is good here' arguments to themselves and their labour force.

In narrowing 'SMT' to mean 'Holacracy' in my thesis, it is useful to briefly describe how Holacracy works. Using Brian Robertson's 'Holacracy Constitution', (2015) the system is theoretically supposed to enfranchise the 'front line' of an organisation to give others the best 'ground truth' about its processes and customer service/product delivery. Holacracy puts people in 'Circles' that have 'Lead Links' who organise people in the circle around a given set of tasks. Circles are typically thematically organised, such as 'marketing' or other common business functions. Rather than a marketing circle, for example, having a day-to-day firm hierarchy with a VP or other senior marketing professional, the Circle is composed of anyone in the organisation choosing an interest in the goings-on of marketing. In this sense, Circles can be quite large, and people not necessarily 'doing' marketing can influence what marketing is in their company. Because functions are at least theoretically prised above person-oriented rank and title, this tends to look like a 'matrix organisation' (Stuckenbruck, 1979). Central to the conduct of a Circle are various meetings, where circle members resolve 'tensions'—overlapping interests or problems identified with the help of software based on member inputs. There is a constant cycle of doing, meeting, and updating the Holacratic software. In a sense, the software 'manages' the organisation by providing insight into supervisory needs, such as escalated issues and things requiring 'managing' or solving. The most common type of Holacratic software is GlassFrog, something Robertson invented and sells to support Holacracy. The market for AI-oriented managerial help is growing, evidenced by new entrants like Maptio. The broader inclusion or relationship of similar software to data science, predictive analytics, and other related tools to quantify and 'improve' the sense-making of human interaction in organisational life is no doubt a ripe area for continued study.

As stated above, the novelty or innovation of Holacracy is problematic. Relatively clear examples of SMTs have existed for years to include Brazil's famous Semco, which was notably celebrated in the 1980s in mainstream business and management journals such as *Harvard Business Review*. Semco practices 'shop floor democracy' (Rayton, 1972), where workers share decision-making and rotate

management positions. In their model, managers are not a full-time role separate from the front-line employees, but rather collateral duties shared amongst the group. Things like timekeeping, budget, division of work, how a project might be planned, and the overall work experience itself, are all democratically managed by the team.

Robertson published and released Holacracy as a baked idea in 2007 (Robertson, 2007), which was contemporary with pieces like, 'Are We Ready for Self-Management?' published inside Harvard Business School's 'Working Knowledge' blog in 2006. Other similarly timed pieces launched in the years leading up to Robertson's 2007 Holacracy piece include Fast Company's 'Whole Foods is all Teams' (1996) and 'Engines of Democracy' (1999), MIT Sloan Management Review, 'How to Lead a Self-Managing Team' (2004), Feifer et al, (2003), 'Self-managing teams: a strategy for quality improvement', and Chang and Curtain's (1999), 'Succeeding as a Self-Managed Team: A Practical Guide to Operating as a Self-Managed Work Team'.

The above practical texts are cited heavily in the early 2000's blogosphere and suggest tears in Robertson's assertion of novelty and innovation. In his defence, the key additions to Holacracy are arguably its Constitution (Robertson, 2015), which does delineate details about self-management in a relatively straightforward albeit long — Version 4 is 41 pages—manner and the use of machine learning/AI software noted above (GlassFrog). One could build somewhat of a defence of Holacracy as new/innovative self-management through its use of a rules set and software, but the further indictments of SMT below hasten a general scepticism; the 'innovation' would not be beyond a perhaps more effective way to obscure Owner and Manager exploitation of Labour.

SMT as managerial fad

Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) argue that capitalism co-opts challenges to reconfigure and strengthen its ideological and economic hold. Others like Robertson, Hamel, Birkenshaw and Hsieh argue that SMT is both novel and a meaningful way forward to the reform and refinement of

management. Amid this conversation are the phenomenon of recurring and cyclical managerial fads (Abrahamson, 1996), and as discussed above, the reality 'self-management' and similar ideas are far from novel. The reality is SMT sits in a cycle of 'advancements' and 'growth' in managerial ideas tied to the proliferation of technical systems, personal and group psychology, and the use of social science to make bureaucracies more productive. I will highlight here some of the most notable examples.

Industrialisation writ large has prompted regimentation, standards, and a notion of science entering organising and managing. Scoping the start and progression of this is challenging, and there are reasonable options to begin with the giants in social science like Marx and Durkheim, or focus more on the 'management science' of Frederick Winslow Taylor. To frame fads however, I will begin in the Interwar Period in the US and UK, where things like the business school and analytics moved from the assembly line and into social science. The "Whiz Kids" of 1930s Harvard extraction led to the incorporation of statistics, analytics, graphs, damage estimates, and scheduling of US Army Air Force bombing over Germany and Japan. Robert McNamara, the U.S. Secretary of Defense during the Vietnam War, featured in the Whiz Kids. He is much maligned for his overly mechanistic approach to Vietnam with body counts. The British Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, a nonprofit quasi-academic organisation founded in London in the 1920s (formally 1947), has its roots also in the military, both world wars, and its interaction with the British Army, particularly in the mental health and selection of its officers. The Institute still exists, and 'its mission applies social science to contemporary issues and problems' and, 'is engaged with evaluation and action research, organisational development and change consultancy, executive coaching and professional development, all in service of supporting sustainable change and ongoing learning' (2021). Kurt Lewin, notable German American psychoanalyst from the mid-20th century, created action research and influenced its use at the Institute and beyond. He described action research as, '[research] which will help the practitioner' (1946: 34) where a sensitivity towards a theretofore lack of

objective standards in psychoanalysis, group dynamics and related themes, was a major component. Lewin arguably set the conditions for large management consulting we see today such as McKinsey and Company (Kipping and Engwall, 2002).

Eric Trist, influenced by Lewin, was a core founder of Tavistock, and started the Sage journal, *Human Relations*, which still operates today (Weatherburn, 2020). The most read article from *Human Relations is '*Unfreezing change as three steps: Rethinking Kurt Lewin's legacy for change management' (Cummings, Bridgeman and Brown, 2016), which incidentally, sits in the critical management studies milieu. Trist and other contemporaries of his like Albert Kenneth Rice and Elliot Jacques, further brought together psychology, corporate culture and organisational dynamics. A notable Trist creation was the concept of the sociotechnical or STS, which studied the relationship between humans and their work environments, all with an eye towards productivity and optimization. STS featured 'autonomous work teams' a precursor to self-managed teams, where industrial plant workers would manufacture an item from beginning to end rather than be dispersed along an assembly line (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). Its logic was both to improve the workers' productivity and their well-being, possibly forecasting and tying into discussion on alienation and deskilling (Fromm, 1962; Braverman, 1974) common to assembly line work.

Since at least Peters and Waterman 's (1982) *In Search of Excellence*, it has been fashionable to discuss 'the latest' in management thinking. This text has an air of novelty, and ushers in the boom of popular managerial and business books. With the exception of Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936), all texts on 'the 55 most influential management books' list from Business Insider (2021), a popular management website, are from 1982 forward. These texts serve to normalize capitalism, present it as common sense, and through a continued narrative of discovering new ideas, entrench managerialism (Klikauer, 2015; McCann, 2015, 2017). Sewell and Wilkinson's seminal 1992 article, 'Someone to Watch Over Me: Surveillance, Discipline and the Just-in-Time Labor Process' problematises 'advancements' in 'freedom at work. Their discussion of a

Total Quality Management and Just-in-Time organisation showed that (then, but still very relevant) contemporary notions of advancements in control and empowerment as managerial fad at best, and a tightening of control through surreptitious means at worst. Sewell and Wilkinson argued that members of their studied organisation internalised their own management through 'effective' and 'efficient' surveillance, primarily that of Foucault's discussion of Bentham's Panopticon (1992: 273). Viewing Holacracy through a Sewell and Wilkinson lens could suggest that Holacracy is an extremely sophisticated blurring of managerial control and manipulation. The Zappos case study (chapter 6) illustrates this blurring exists alongside strong narratives that Holacracy is emancipatory, freeing, empowering, and is a morally ideal way to manage an organisation (Alton, 2016; Merts, 2015).

Sewell and Wilkinson are far from the only scholars who have identified the ill-effects of 'advancements' and 'innovation' in management along SMT lines. Barker's (1993) 'Tightening the iron cage: Concertive control in self-managing teams', discussed how an SMT tech company in the early '90s witnessed almost cult-like social control. Barker's 'Concertive Control' (1993: 408) is articulated through social and cultural norms versus 'traditional' managerial power in a given hierarchy. Rather than managers managing in a Weberian hierarchy, members 'responsibilised' their own management in a Foucauldian sense like what Sewell and Wilkinson discussed; members watched each other and themselves regardless of formally assigned supervisory roles. In Barker's studied organisation, 'culture' as an assemblage of artifacts and notions of doing business (Schein, 1984, 1990) was the presiding sense of how to organise and function. Edgell and Granter (2020: 106) described the role of culture as, 'particularly important since strong values (a key part of culture) provide a framework which means that employees can be given autonomy'. Barker witnessed a variety of negative consequences inside this autonomy however, to include a tightening of on-time/tardiness policies, long-time employees being pushed out, and business decisions being based on the will of well-tenured— but not necessarily talented— popular extroverted

individuals. Barker viewed this negative reality as a counter-intuitive expression of Weber's iron

cage of rational control; this despite a sense that Barker's case organisation was 'doing something

progressive' and innovative through self-management.

Knights and McCabe (2003, 2002, 2000a, 2000b) discuss 'teamwork', 'Business Process Re-

engineering', 'Total Quality Management', all having similar features of control and exploitation. In

particular, their 2003 (1587), *Governing through Teamwork: Reconstituting Subjectivity in a Call

Centre* describes, 'teamworking as a form of governmentality whereby management seeks to govern

by distance. This involves mobilising the support and commitment of employees to teamworking

and organisational goals by appealing to their autonomy, unity, sociability, and desire for a more

enriched work experience. It is the struggle over subjectivity that is of concern here, for

teamworking can be seen as a technology that aims to transform individuals into subjects that

secure their sense of meaning and significance through working as a team'. Here, Knights and

McCabe use Foucault's 'governmentality', and 'subjectivity' concepts to describe how employees

self-impose control and discipline (i.e., power), lessening the need for 'conventional'

management. Governmentality is 'a concept that refers to the way in which the lives of individuals

are rationally administered and regulated at a distance' (2003: 1588). 'Subject' and subjectivity here

mean, 'individuals [that] secure their own meaning, identity and reality through identifying with or

resisting the discursive practices that power evokes' (2003: 1593); 'power' in the Foucauldian sense

here is a neutral (not necessarily coercive) feature of life and organisation that manifests in their

various relationships and interactions/transactions. Knights and McCabe's primary concern here is

that a person may willfully subjugate themselves, making them ripe for exploitation, all in the

context of something seen to be positive or innovative: teamwork, a quality or fun culture, distance

from conventional management and perceived but false notions of freedom.

In addition to the examples above, there are several other notable critiques of 'advancements' and

'innovation' in managerial practice. Bain and Taylor (2000) describe resistance in UK call centres,

this despite what Fernie and Metcalf (1998) detailed as '[an electronic panopticon rendered perfect]' (cited from Bain and Taylor, 2000). In this case management innovation is meant to mean perfect surveillance of the labour force, thus lowering management costs. The extension of Sewell and Wilkinson, and Barker, is clear; 'innovation' is often meant to simply mean tightened, yet obscured, control. Interestingly, Bain and Taylor show that, regardless of the systems and tools used to surveil call centre worker behaviour, workers still resisted, often in the form of whining, moaning, and manufacturing behaviour to manipulate key performance indicators (KPIs)—that ever-present hallmark of technocratic managerialism (Klikauer, 2015; McCann, 2015, 2017)—and even leaving work all together while pretending to be on calls. It is debatable how meaningful this resistance is, however; as Contu (2008) pointed out, surreptitious or obscured resistance is 'decaffeinated', and thus not a true confrontation to capitalism or managerialism.

In other words, the 'schtick' of resisting, whining, bitching, or moaning about work is simply a tool used by management to further control the workforce. It is fashionable and even encouraged to convey an 'anti-something' attitude, especially one which is simply a vacuous style of being, versus a meaningful activity. Unless a worker truly threatens to not work or leave, no meaningful challenge to management's hold occurs. Contu's point is damning to a variety of contemporary workplace and perhaps millennial generation sensibilities. Resist the man yet take pictures of the event on a Foxconn-created iPhone powered by a lithium battery from an impoverished and pillaged Congo.

Operating in the same vein of critique are accounts of surveillance and personal responsibilisation of management in Lean and Japanese systems of manufacturing. This further illustrates the breadth and reach of 'advancements', or 'innovations', as a wide project of labour subversion and managerial reach. McCann (2016) outlines that '[the] much-vaunted Toyota Production System, or simply 'Lean' – so strongly marketed by management gurus such as Womack et al. (2007 [1990]) – also relies heavily on standardisation, routinisation and work intensification. Many have suggested that it is simply a much more advanced form of Taylorism' (Tamura, 2006). Tamura noted that

'[modifications to conventional management] are only partial, and firm control of standard operations is made possible by retention of managerial authority at the team leader level'. (2006: 407) In other words, delegation of authority and control at 'lower levels' is granted, but real control is reified by the 'granting' of said minimal delegation from owners and managers, and a notion that any meaningful decisions or risks clearly remain outside the purview of anything on the front line. Sandberg's (as editor) seminal 1995 work on Volvo outlined similar findings and tensions inside Lean / Toyota Production System. Inside this text, Shumusi (1995: 389) wrote '['Lean production'] should not be applied to production workers. Otherwise, work will continue to be detested by the younger generation and will continue to tire production workers and supervisors. Hence the committee proposed to modify the management of costs'. This quote comes from Shumusi's broader description of Lean's effect on the experience of work: while Lean felt initially like innovation, it manifested as a degraded experience, one that would make it ultimately difficult to attract quality labour scrutinous perhaps of any over exploitation.

In further glaring illustrations of SMT as a cycling managerial fad, a 2014 Forbes article describes, 'The Secret to Self-Management and Organisational Success' (Efron, 2014), Efron, no doubt well-meaning enough, is part of a seemingly endless group of 'thought leaders' whose innovative insights keep offering up SMTs as groundbreaking. Efron's blurb at the close of the Forbes article reads, 'Louis Efron (LouisEfron.com) is a globally recognised thought leader, speaker, writer and Fortune 200 HR Executive'. Matyszczyk (2018) wrote in 'I Tried to Find Out How Many Thought Leaders Are on LinkedIn. I'm Still in Shock', that over 300k people on LinkedIn (out of 250 million total active users [Darrow, 2017], a thought leadership percentage of .0001, so maybe reasonable) list 'thought leader' as a trait, skill, or general adjective on their profile. Efron's insight, suggests that owners and managers should liken their people to ants:

> Did you know highly organised ant colonies – sometimes numbering in the billions –
>
> have no leadership? Despite this, ant colony organisation is so advanced, effective

and purpose-driven that notable companies like Southwest Airlines, Air Liquide and others have used their pattern of behavior to solve complex business challenges.

Ants are self-managed. They use triggers and interactions in their local environments to independently guide their work decisions. This is possible because all ants embrace a common purpose and follow a few, simple rules.

In perhaps the most popular business book of all time, *In Search of Excellence* (1982), Peters and Waterman have in their Eight Characteristics of Excellent Companies 'loose-tight properties', which suggest core rules that offer 'tight control where it mattered, [but] loose where they gave people autonomy' (Handy, n.d.: 3). In other words, contemporary management likely sees self-management as a form of control where notions or versions of autonomy are allowed. I elaborate on this in the next section. Given the cycling of the fad, its (most recent or now) demise is clearly forthcoming. In a Jump-the-Shark moment in 2017, Huffington Post proclaimed 'The Dangers of Self-managed Teams' (Hirsch, 2017).

SMT as control

Anarchism confronts managerialism around control. That is, anarchism, with its assertion of emancipation and liberation in a given space, meets contemporary management's insistence on retaining (if not growing) control to (ostensibly) guarantee quality, reinforce worker effort and maintain competitiveness in their marketplace or landscape. Assuming managerialism is 'aware' of anarchism—something suggested by at least Brian Robertson and Tony Hsieh's design of Holacracy at Zappos—managerialism attempts to 'manage' anarchism's confrontation by absorbing some of its features and cycling elements into fads and fashionable manifestations of workplace expression (fun, be yourself, no managers, we're all bosses). As noted in the previous sections, many (particularly Boltanksi and Chiapello, 2005; Chenhall, 2003; Spicer, 2007) have found that these absorptions represent a tightening, not a weakening, of managerial control. This might be their

underlying appeal as a managerial fad. The control moves from a traditional hierarchy to one where

culture (Concertive Control, see again Barker, 1993) and social dynamics, also known as normative

and neo-normative control (Fleming, 2009) perform the role of management, or perhaps worse, as

Sewell and Wilkinson's (1992) and Barker (1993) also noted, the Foucauldian sense of surveillance

internalises management; the person manages themself as (perhaps) degraded inner-self longings

are kept in check by a constant worry of never really knowing when one is watching.

Despite the critical assertions around tightening control, mainstream managerialism, particularly

through the handful of well-respected and sought-after gurus like Gary Hamel, Stephen Denning and

Frederick Laloux (mentioned earlier), describe SMT as freeing and liberating. Denning (2014), was

careful to point out, however, that:

> In networked organisations, where work is self-managed, there are still managers.
>
> The managers have become enablers of self-managing teams and networks rather
>
> than controllers of individuals. In those organisations, someone has to sign checks.
>
> Someone has to sign legal documents on behalf of the organisation. Someone is
>
> legally responsible for what is done by the organisation. That someone is a manager.
>
> A manager after all is simply someone who is responsible for getting things done. If
>
> anything is to get done, an organisation has to have managers.

This illustrates the valorisation of 'manager' to be a servant of the people, one who enables rather

than oppresses. No doubt the check-writer and legal buck stopper would also be the hatchet person

in a 'right-sizing' circumstance. And at Zappos, if one cannot hold onto life in a given Circle, they are

placed on 'The Beach', where if they cannot find a (social) group to take them back on, they are

simply terminated (Feloni, 2015). Naturally, everyone at Zappos is aware of this, and it is important

to flag for further discussion what this persistent insecurity – among even well established and

accomplished professionals who might otherwise be 'advanced' enough in their careers to be more

secure in their jobs (Hassard and Morris, 2018) – must mean. It is possible that in this process, given

the obscuration of who controls what, a Zapponian would not know to whom to turn for recompense in an unclear or unfair circumstance. In this sense, 'managers' are those who can pick and choose when they would like to leverage control or power over others. Accountability, and indeed protection and support as well, are greyed into the backdrop of a 'cool' culture and progressive system.

A striking contrast exists between the mainstream managerial presentation of SMT as freeing and emancipatory, versus the critical notion of SMT as subterfuge, a ruse, and 'business bullshit' (Spicer, 2018) used to tighten control. The polarity of this circumstance is arguably one of the more extreme in management studies, critical or otherwise. Which one is true?

This tension is ultimately about power and control in an organisation, capitalism's normalisation of stratified social structures, and the manipulation inherent in any given hierarchy. It is clear that formal and informal realities exist in contemporary organisations (Pielstick, 2000); from a CMS perspective, the core problem with SMT is probably that conventional control becomes obscured or hidden by the infusion of cultural and structural sleight of hand (Fleming, 2009). The superstructure of business education, gurus, and power consulting all support this or play a part in its construction and proliferation (Klikauer, 2015). In so doing, the obvious negatives of managerialism and the perhaps enlightening and ultimately emancipating insights from seeing the labour process (Braverman, 1974) clearly are both obscured, made confusing, and are harder to pin down.

The effect is a 'greying' of the 'normal' stratification of capitalism's experience between owners, managers and labour. This could create a sense that all members of capitalism's arrangement, and 'watchers' in society, 'feel' that an SMT organisation is fairer and more just than perhaps a conventional hierarchical organisation. While not at Zappos, Julia Culen (2016) experienced Holacracy as something, 'not safe enough to try'. She relayed that in her organisation, 'Holacracy would have worked if we were machines [not people]', and that, '[Holacracy] busies the organisation

with organising itself [instead of really working]'. She went on to describe the obscuration of focus that Holacracy delivered: 'Holacracy was a perfect distraction from what we really should have talked about. As it mainly focuses on the operating model, not on [beliefs], culture, strategy, behavior, or anything else that really matters and could possibly have made a positive difference for our future, the old patterns survived'.

If Klikauer's (2015) assessment of present day 'management' as an ideology is accepted as truth, the above manipulation is an elegant way of doing things that seems interesting, nouveau, and progressive. On a personal note, I started this project very much in that area of thought. Therefore SMTs, in an effort to create fairer organisations, actually confuse clarity around the very interaction that requires a coherent perspective in order to make it more just. In plain terms, would one rather exist in an SMT where the locus of power and control was ever shifting and hard to understand, or would one rather have a good boss who was fair and well-meaning? The best option might be, of course, to meaningfully merge the two, something I explore in the next section on workers' self-management.

How anarchist is SMT?

I will expand on this in chapter 7, but briefly here I will foreshadow if SMT is a form of anarchism. The reader will recall that anarchism rejection of coercive and concentrated power, and desire for non-hierarchical organisation. Given SMT's array of managerial features—its faddish recurrent nature, which obscures and belies any genuine or integral notion it seeks to emancipate, and its seemingly deliberate desire to obscure and confuse the labour process and control—SMT is generally not anarchism. Moreover, its obscuring nature suggests something beyond 'simply' not being anarchist; it is actually a more harmful form of managerialism in that it invokes the language and guise of emancipation to further stifle and thwart justice in the workplace. What remains, however, is a notion of degrees of anarchism, which may represent opportunity for a positive turn. This turn would require SMT practitioners to become aware of SMT's nature. Additionally,

postanarchism may assert itself inside SMT at the individual or local team level if this awareness occurs, something I key into during the Zappos study in chapter 6, despite the broader enterprise and its higher levels remaining conventionally exploitative. Future study would ask whether a personal or local team expression of a postanarchist experience inside a contemporary organisation using SMT 'innovations' could allow 'enough' anarchism to eventually flourish.

Workers' Self-Management (WSM)

WSM, which here I equate with synonyms like workplace democracy, worker self-directed enterprise, worker cooperatives, industrial democracy, worker self-management and cooperatives, has a long history dating well before industrialisation. Parker et al, (2007 and 2012) define WSM as, 'the idea that those who produce should control their workplaces'. Indeed, its long history suggests second epoch anarchism; Paul Goodman's (1965, 1966, 2010) and Colin Ward's (1975) notion of anarchism is not a radical political movement, but rather the most common way of organising throughout history; capitalist hierarchy is a new outlier. Think of the ancient merchant in Rome, or the shoemaker in the High Middle Ages. WSM shows up everywhere today as well, but awareness of it is suppressed, or in open competition with the totalising features of neoliberalism (Monbiot, 2016) and its managerial ideology (Klikauer, 2015; McCann, 2017 and 2015).

Cooperatives, and the inclination that work should be mutually beneficial to the self and others, is certainly not new. Perhaps the longest tradition is from the United Kingdom, where in 1844, the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers organised and wrote guiding principles for cooperative, worker-led organisations. Their principles would be adopted by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) in 1937. The ICA is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, and publishes a yearly ICA Global 300, a list of the largest cooperatives in the world. The ICA website cites the Rochdale Pioneers as, '[founding] the modern cooperative movement in Lancashire, England, to provide an affordable alternative to poor-quality and unadulterated food and provisions, using any surplus to benefit the community.' The history of cooperatives with an area or nation's food supply is also well

established, with today's contemporary Co-Op in England featuring, along with less obvious groups like Associated Food Stores in Salt Lake City, Utah, my hometown.

Superficially, it might appear like a very reasonable axiom for organisational life: why shouldn't the people that work in an organisation own it? Only in recent memory, with the advent of investor-driven organisation and Market Capitalism, is there a deviation from this historical norm (Atseni, 2012; Parker et al., 2014). Now, perhaps as Marx illustrated, people are alienated from their own work, and now also alienated from decisions about how their labour might be used (Edgell and Granter, 2020: 35). A review of WSM through the lens of CMS (Parker, 2012), its (re)assertion suggests WSM is arguably the most anarchist type of organisation. That it could exist inside current capitalism without necessarily challenging or changing it on a total or societal level is noteworthy; indeed, cooperatives and various forms of 'employee-owned' organisations have never left the capitalist landscape. Monbiot (2016) notes that capitalism affects our consciousness, but White and Williams (2016) suggest looking past the fact that most human transactions are anarchistic— they are free, voluntary, equanimous, and exist outside or alongside the dominant neoliberal paradigm. WSM, as an expression of equal interaction inside an organisation, is a strong manifestation of this. As a manifestation of 'alternatives', WSMs democratise and spread decision making and control throughout the organisation, and in so doing, make at least a form of anarchism immediate.

In this section, I will examine criteria for defining WSM informed by a literature review. In reviewing the literature on WSM, there are several sets or themes oriented historically or geographically; the vastness of the literature suggests an extant phenomenon receiving relatively little attention in mainstream management studies and CMS alike.

- Historical and Contemporary American (Brodwin, 2013; Dudley, 2017; Ellerman, 2015; Gunn, 1984; Herring, 2015)

- Contemporary Greece (Kokkinidis, 2015)

- Historical Yugoslavian (Estrin, 2010; Obradovic and Dunn, 1978; Prychitko, 1991; Sacks, 2017; Zwerdling, 1984)

- Contemporary Argentina (Atseni, 2007; Ozarow, 2014; Ruggeri, 2012)

- Israeli Kibbutz (Avrahami, 2000; Cheng and Sun, 2015)

- Civil War Spain (Dolgoff, 1974; Mints, 2013)

- Mondragon Cooperative (Errasti et al, 2017, Flecha, 2014)

- As part of a survey of organisational design (Cheney, 2014; Galbraith, 1977; Harley et al, 2005; Mellor et al, 1988; Parker, 2012 and 2002;)

To pin down a theoretical definition of WSM, I highlight two of the above sources: Gunn (1984) and Ruggeri (2012). Both provide a set of theoretical criteria identifying and defending what a WSM is. Supporting these are the surveys of organisational design, particularly Cheney, 2014, and Parker et al, 2012. Later in the section, I will discuss contemporary and historical WSM cases.

Christopher Gunn's *The History of Workers' Self-Management in the United States* (1984) gives a broad history of WSM in the US, and most importantly, defines a set of criteria for WSM (1984: 33). Andres Ruggeri is an Argentine scholar who has worked extensively with the Facultad Abierta (Open Faculty) in Buenos Aires, studying and supporting the recent Argentine experience with WSM. The Facultad Abierta is a WSM think tank with close ties to the University of Buenos Aires; both were pivotal in the support of WSM in the recent early-2000s Argentine economic crisis. He also has laid out criteria for WSM (2012: 17), and even writes 'sines' (very much in the spirit of AK Press, ZNet and other 'radical' presses) to promote and educate on WSM. These criteria are quite similar; however, Gunn's are more elaborately defined.

Gunn's criteria capture that '[theorists have] defined WSM as a collective process' (1984: 17). The theorists from which he crafted his criteria are notable economists and thinkers operating in a non-authoritarian Marxist tradition, especially Jaroslav Vanek, the Csech who emigrated to the US in the

1950s, and Branko Horvat, the Yugoslavian economist who supported Yugoslavian efforts to socialise in ways opposed to centralised Soviet-style Communism. That is, they attempted to think of a Marxist economics without the centralising and oppressive features developed in the Soviet experience. On page 217, Gunn describes how he built his criteria:

> The conditions presented [are] a synthesis of the firm specific elements of Jaroslav Vanek's 'necessary conditions of an optimal and viable self-managed economy (or implicity, of an isolated self-managed firm)'. (Vanek, 1975a: 33); Paul Bernstein's 'minimally necessary components' for workplace democratisation (Bernstein, 1976: 45); and Branko Horvat's 'general principles of an adequate distribution policy' for the Labor managed enterprise (Horvat, 1976c: 187).

Gunn's criteria/description of a WSM:

1. Control and management of the enterprise is the right of the people who work in it.
2. Income earned by the enterprise belongs to those who work in it.
3. Funding of capital assets can be obtained from a number of sources, notably members' loans or other social or national funding.
4. Private or institutional sources of capital do not command any control but are entitled to interest ROI.
5. WSM firms should use excess capital to grow the organisation or help other WSM firms.
6. All information concerning the firm must be available to all members at all times.
7. Members assure each other basic political liberties.
8. An internal judiciary, with a rotating membership, acts to settle any internal disputes.
9. A democratic and participatory consciousness is essential to the firm; the firm promotes educational efforts to develop and grow the philosophy.
10. Support other like-minded advocacy and assistance organisations.

Andres Ruggeri's (2015 and 2012) WSM has a historical component of 'reasserting' worker control. The 'worker recuperated company' or the empresas recuperadas por sus trabajadores or 'ERTs' (Vieta, 2007) are Argentine firms whose employees, when facing job loss and personal financial peril during the early 2000s crisis, took over their firms. Interestingly this happened with some government backing, backing which has since receded or been altered (Ozarow, 2014). 'Over 95% of Worker-recuperated firms in Argentina, as in other countries in Latin America, are converted to Worker cooperatives (Atseni, 2007, Ruggeri, 2010; Vieta, 2014a)'.

Ruggeri's criteria/definition of WSM:

1. Gestión colectiva (collective management)

2. Democracia interna (internal democracy)

3. Igualdad entre los miembros o asociados (equality between members and associates)

4. Utilisación mayoritaria de la forma cooperativa de trabajo (cooperative work)

5. Dinámica autogestionaria, no formal (self-managed, non-formal dynamics)

6. No explota otros trabajadores (does not exploit workers)

7. Solidaridad social (social solidarity)

Their ideas can be organised in terms of control, personal freedom and emancipation, and WSM's use of capital. Anarchism is certainly interested in all of these. Perhaps because they are more specific, I will concentrate here on Gunn. Gunn's items 1, 6 and 8 are arguably situated around control. Here, it is useful to suggest that, at least theoretically, WSM according to Gunn would place control of the firm with the employees. Items 7, 9 and 10 appear to operate around personal freedom, and if adhered to, would yield a measure of emancipation. Interestingly, and surely under tension, are the collective versus individualistic notions of emancipation. Certainly, anarchists are just as confronted by this difficult dichotomy as is the rest of political economy and philosophy (Nosick, 1974). It might be sufficient to say, especially along postanarchist (May, 1984; Newman, 2015) lines, that an organisation trying to identify, understand, and promote the autonomy of its

employees is manifesting a freer, if not completely free, form of organisation. Later, in my case studies, one notion of emancipation might revolve around clear policies that generate political freedom, but there are also poststructuralist and hidden axes at play; indeed, even if a company had certain 'open' policies, they might actually be less free than those with more conventional policies and hierarchies. Unpacking all of this will be the domain of the empirical chapters, however it is worth noting here that the complexities exist. An organisation that has a democratic policy cannot simply be called anarchist. To understand what is happening, one must interrogate that 'lived experience'. In this, the WSM theory as explained by Gunn and Ruggeri must also be scrutinised. This notion of anarchism does not insist on a political (possibly utopian) end to justify its anarchist perspectives, those around the means. David Graeber's discussion of anarchism as, '[the] basic principles of anarchism—self-organisation, voluntary association, mutual aid, the opposition to all forms of coercive authority—are essentially moral and organisational' (2009: 211) may support this notion.

WSM and our anarchism model

WSM is substantially more anarchist than SMT. Chomsky highlights WSM as a modern and historical notion of Bakunin's ideas (2005). With a background in WSM, it is appropriate to compare its specific features to my model of anarchism developed in chapter 3. To recall the model:

First, an emphasis on humankind's capacity for cooperation/good, but also that cooperation is the 'default' nature— this as opposed to the Social Darwinist concept of an aggressive, angry, and competitive spirit. This comes from the Classical epoch, most clearly studied and described by Peter Kropotkin (1902). We may argue that underpinning both Gunn's and Ruggeri's criteria is at least a neutral notion of human nature; certainly, one that need not be contained or arrested by law or force at every turn. Interestingly, a human nature discussion is absent from Gunn, and he argues WSM's case largely around conventional neoclassical economic lines, lines which suggest a dominant, rational self-interest; in this he cites Vanek (1970) and writes, 'Vanek argued that Workers

in the Labor managed firm could most fundamentally seek to maximise net revenue per Worker'
(Gunn, 224).

Second, anarchism positions a critique and rejection of unnecessary coercion, organisation, rules,
and hierarchy. It is not necessarily a dogmatic rejection of these in all cases, but rather a goal at a
local level to limit these features of human interaction to only that which is totally necessary for
coherent function. As Chomsky states (2018)[2]:

> [Anarchism] seeks structures of hierarchy and domination in human life over the
> whole range, extending from, say, patriarchal families to, say, imperial systems, and
> it asks whether those systems are justified. It assumes that the burden of proof for
> anyone in a position of power and authority lies on them. Their authority is not self-
> justifying. They have to give a reason for it, a justification. And if they can't justify
> that authority and power and control, which is the usual case, then the authority
> ought to be dismantled and replaced by something more free and just.

There is a relationship with safety and justification. Bridge building requires higher degrees of
control and organisation for the bridges to be safe, libraries and schools need much less
organisation, for their very functions are expressions of liberal and open thought. Externally caused
crisis or duress is problematic. Anarchists may struggle with Game Theory (Newdick, n.d.;
Roughgarden, 2005); a central protective group like a military or a police force may be permanently
necessary to some degree to promote 'order', but broadly speaking, these groups should be limited
or erased whenever possible; Chomsky's 'rule' quoted above about self-evident justification is
germane.

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[2] Found online at https://chomsky.info/20130528/

Third, expressions of anarchist thought need not manifest in large society wide revolutions or reform, and conversely, policies protecting 'freedom' or 'expression' (i.e., possibly anarchist things) might work against these stated goals in irrational ways. Goodman and Ward (the Practical epoch) support this. Witness a local community-centre-type organisation, a family's food plan, a non-profit's thoughtful leadership and management of volunteers, and even a military group's effectiveness when given more freedom of action/choice in their respective areas. Gunn's notion of equality and democratic decision-making certainly align here. Also, the act of doing democratic decision-making is an immediately realised anarchist phenomenon.

Lastly, and akin or like our third item, the expression or manifestation of anarchism is not necessarily a political end or circumstance only achieved when openly declared to the world, perhaps in a violent way. Rather it is a deeply personal manifestation in the sense of self, and in perhaps its most practical sense, an embrace of a local sense of freedom. The personal manifestations 'matryoshka' and mutually support (or mutualism, or mutual aid, as shown in Proudhon [1840/2012] and Kropotkin [1902]). Postanarchism broadly characterises this anarchism. Recall that it refers to the power dynamics of the self being more diffuse and localised than perhaps the 'conventional' or 'classical' notions of anarchism may infer (with their emphasis on the State itself withering somehow away). A firm operating with Gunn's criteria would theoretically allow the individual to manifest a sense of freedom.

WSMs clearly share thematic relationships with the above description of anarchism. I would suggest that WSM is anarchism, or at least an organisational expression of it. If anarchism is not violence and chaos, but rather it is defined as the model/selection of organising to diffuse and democratise decision-making and access to capital, then its kinship with WSM is clear. Indeed, Ward, in his seminal *Anarchy in Action* (1973), devotes an entire chapter to 'A Self-Employed Society'. In this chapter, he opens with a discussion around man's nature to align work with life; 'The desire to be your own boss is common indeed' (1973: 94).

WSM's politics certainly appear socialist or communist. The murky waters and lines between the Left's 'radical' politics are difficult to wade through. WSM's relationship with Marxism is something Gunn identifies when he argues that '[the] study of WSM is based on an older and more political understanding of class, one that derives people's relationship to the means of production' (1984: 16). Indeed, in Volume I of *Das Kapital*, Marx essentially describes WSM, when he makes the point around how much work is required to meet someone's needs: 'If this labourer were in possession of his own means of production, and was satisfied to live as a labourer, he need not work beyond the time necessary for the reproduction of his means of subsistence, say 8 hours a day'. (Marx, 1867: 336). Marx, at least in the spirit of this writing, may have been more anarchist here than his later vanguardist ideas seemed to suggest. This is something Chomksy described in 2003: 'My impression, for what it is worth, is that the early Marx was very much a figure of the late Enlightenment, and the later Marx was a highly authoritarian activist, and a critical analyst of Market Capitalism, who had little to say about socialist alternatives. But those are impressions'.

The vast milieu of related politics and economics requires some mentioning. Even if I assert WSM as essentially an anarchist expression, the connections to related concepts are clear. Perhaps happily for critically minded scholars and global citizens, there are many. One prominent example would be Robin Hahnel and Michael Albert's Participatory Economics ('Parecon'), which emphasises 'participatory decision-making' as the core emphasis of an economics without coercion or excesses of power. In their analysis, a Parecon arrangement reduces inequality, spreads emancipation, and removes the deskilling of modern work (Albert, 2004; Hahnel and Wright, 2016). Many of their concepts appear like WSM, anarchism and variants of socialism emphasising decentralisation, autonomy— really any version of Marxism does not manifest in the (largely failed) 20th century experiments. Addressing the same politics along the keyword 'participatory', Spannos (2008) edited *Real Utopia, Participatory Society for the 21st Century* published by AK Press, the anarchist outfit out

of Oakland, California. The text includes chapters from Hahnel, Albert, Chomsky, and others in the anarchist press and related scenes.

The notion of 'alternatives' and 'utopia' as described by Martin Parker, Valerie Fournier and Patrick Reedy (2007) also deserves attention. Parker describes WSM as a potential '[utopian] expression of what Ernst Bloch (1986) called the 'principle of hope' (Parker et al, 2007: x). 'In short, for us utopia is the expression of alternative organisation, [contrary to] common pieces of common sense nowadays that there is no real alternative to market managerialism' (Parker et al, 2007: ix). This sentiment would partially echo the previously cited work by White and Williams (2016). However, despite the totalising consciousness of neoliberal managerialism (Klikauer, 2015) that would lead to Parker's statement that alternatives do not exist, society not only operates more in the 'alternative' sphere than in the neoliberal one, WSM gives us a strong and defined example.

While I may excitedly position WSM as a 'silver bullet' of economic and political expression that would in fact 'wither away' oppressive capitalism or simply show its limitations, Ramsay (1977) is at least sceptical of its real role. He discussed WSM as a '[cyclical]' response of capital to 'periods when management authority is felt to be facing challenge' (1977: 481). This would certainly be echoed in Ruggeri's studies of the recent experiences of the Argentine recuperated organisations. ERTs arose out of crisis, but once broader societal economic conditions improved—some of which could certainly be credited to ERTs' success—the Argentine government and society's support for WSM waned (Gutierres D., 2004; Ozarow, 2014; Ruggeri, 2005 and 2009; Vieta, 2009). Ramsay (1977: 481) continues that '[participation] is thus best understood as a means of attempting to secure Labour's compliance', which, at least in the Argentine experience, has meant to socially stabilise the country.   While Ramsay is sceptical of WSM's staying power, perhaps Gunn's attempts to show WSM through the lens of neoclassical economics provides a useful rebuttal. Surely workers saving and re-establishing the competitiveness of a firm is something interesting and worthy to a

variety of economic and political sensibilities, even if it represents something of a compromise to 'conventional' notions of leadership and ownership.

The discussion, however, may show a sliding scale around control, arguably the most easily discernible barrier to a realisation of anarchist values inside an organisation. Later in the chapter, I will review the critical literature in the sociology of work, much of which focuses on forms of control, particularly in firms that are claiming to give employees more autonomy. Full workers' management would be the best possible environment for realising a democratically organised firm, while participation, in the sense that Ramsay describes, would be a manipulation to assuage worker contest to management.

Ramsay's critique is certainly not the only problem with WSM. WSM is also at odds with labor movements inside the progressive left. Ward (1973:96) quotes Yugoslav scholar Branko Pribicevic, '[who] in his history of the shop-stewards' movement in Britain, [emphasised the] point in criticising the reliance on the idea of control by industrial unions: "Control of industry is largely incompatible with a union's character as a voluntary association of the Workers, formed primarily to protect and represent their interests. Even in the most democratic industrial system, i.e., a system in which the Workers would have a share in control, there would still be a need for unions."'

Gunn (1984) also describes the history of WSM in the US as having an interesting competition with organised Labour. This is echoed by Oxenbridge and Brown (2004). Notions from labour suggest many have viewed cooperatives as some sort of cop out and a way to make peace with capitalism. 'When unions with socialist objectives were active in the United States, Workers' co-ops were criticised as a form of Labor Market Capitalism — an attempt at 'socialism in one firm' before the conditions for its survival had been worn through traditional objectives of public ownership of the means of production and Workers' control of the state' (1984: 202). Gunn describes how

'[unions viewed] Workers' co-ops to be utopian experiments that, at best, threatened to interfere with the unified working-class strategy for political change' (1984: 203).

As an important aside, it is difficult to not see this circumstance as akin to the notorious tension between Bakunin and Marx around the First International, and emblematic of the schism between a notion of local expression of democratic organisation (anarchism) versus a broader more organised and regimented class movement (Marxist socialism/communism). Is a durable form or expression of WSM indeed anarchism in existing practice? And to what degree is it a political expression of emancipation for workers?

Contemporary examples

Morck (2003) and the University of St. Gallen's Family Business Research Center (2015) estimate that the majority of global enterprise consists of small businesses, owned and operated by an extended family. Their research suggests ownership and work is distributed in ways that would meet some of Gunn's criteria. If true, WSM is not as suppressed, new, innovative, or otherwise unknown or radical as perhaps mainstream literature and general knowledge of business suggest. Logically this plays out as well, perhaps simply by thinking on the nature of business in the developing world. Judging by the number of enterprises — not by capital controlled, or employee headcount necessarily, but rather the raw number of discrete entities — the earlier assertion that WSM was simply how most business was before shareholder capitalism may be true, and furthermore, it might still be true.

Interestingly, in 2012, the United Nations celebrated the 'Year of Cooperatives' (2012). In 2009, the UN released its plan to label 2012 this way, and stated on its website:

> A cooperative is an autonomous voluntary association of people who unite to meet
>
> common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations, through a jointly
>
> owned and democratically controlled enterprise. In general, they contribute to
>
> socio-economic development.

Furthermore, it states, '[the] cooperative sector worldwide has about 800 million members in over 100 countries and is estimated to account for more than 100 million jobs around the world' (2009). In a supporting website, the 'official' International Year of the Cooperatives 2012 (social.un.org/coopsyear) then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon claimed, 'Cooperatives are a reminder to the international community that it is possible to pursue both economic viability and social responsibility' (2012). This website links to the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) and the World Council of Credit Unions. Both have extensive resources for 'How Cooperatives Work' and 'What is a Co-operative?' (2018). The ICA states on their 'What is a Co-operative?' page that 'Cooperatives are people-centred enterprises owned and run by and for their members to realise their common dreams. Profits generated are either reinvested in the enterprise or returned to the members' (2018).

In addition to the Spanish Civil War CNT experience (covered later), Spain continues to have a rich cooperative tradition. The largest cooperative in the world is Basque Country's Mondragon, started in 1956. Mikel Lesamis, in a company video posted on YouTube, described Mondragon in Gunn's WSM terms: 'Humanise the company. Not everyone on top of everyone else, but people in charge of themselves'. Scale and growth appear to have not troubled Mondragon; over 100,000 total workers (full- and part-time) have varying shares of voting power and interest. As the largest employer in the Basque region, Lesamis however talks in neoclassical terms. '[We're not] a utopia. Sometimes we have to tighten the belt'.

The belt-tightening suggests at least partial confirmation of Ramsay's concern, and the reality that cooperatives move along a dynamic continuum of control and crisis. Fagor, their noted appliance company which 'formed the root of the cooperative experience' (Errasti et al, 2017), notably failed in 2013. After peaking in 2007 at 11k workers and over $2 billion US

dollars in revenue, the company was struck hard by the global economic crisis. Even with

financial support from the overall group and the Basque government, the company declared

bankruptcy. Cata, another Spanish company, but with a conventional hierarchy and

arrangement, purchased Fagor in 2014, and continues use of the brand (Catalan News,

2014). Bretos et al (2017), Cheney et al (2014), Errasti et al (2017), and Flecha (2014) have

all highlighted the tensions around cooperative viability. The British firm Co-op grew out of

the Rochdale scene, and has seen its share of ups and downs, notably becoming

overextended in the banking crisis. What may be unclear is whether cooperatives are more

or less durable than 'conventional' firms. Certainly, the global crisis in 2007-8 affected more

than just Fagor, and while Fagor's failure is notable, the rest of the Mondragon group is still

very much solvent and prospering. Errasti et al (2017: 183) focus on this problem:

> [Evidence] on the comparative efficiency for cooperatives and conventional
>
> firms, referenced in [Bonin et al (1993) and] in Pencavel (2014), reaches
>
> conclusions that give a more positive view of the performance of Worker
>
> cooperatives. The literature also suggests that democratic organisations
>
> survive better than conventional firms (Burdin, 2014; Olsen, 2013; Perotin,
>
> 2006).

The recent Argentine experience around WSM is also filled with theoretical and practical

tensions. Built to encourage economic recovery and coming on the heels of de la Rua's resignation

in December of 2001, the Argentine government enacted policies to help businesses survive their

2000-1 debt crisis. Facultad Abierta has studied and promoted WSM, and in an interesting

commentary on the relationship between the Academy and the State, has largely helped Argentine

society understand and operationalise WSM. Several scholars have chronicled the experience, most

notably Ruggeri mentioned before (2017, 2016, 2015a and 2015b, 2012); Kent, 2015; Messova,

2015; Ozarow, 2014a and 2014b; Ranis, 2014; Rebón, 2016; Rossi, 2015; Vieta, 2016, 2015 and 2014.

Arguably Ozarow (2014a) is the most accessible. He draws on Ruggeri's Facultad Abierta work in Spanish and reinforces the themes and tensions I have discussed. His 2014a piece was in a special issue of *Organisation*, which focused on cooperatives. Perhaps most interesting is his citation of Halford and Strangleman, 2009, where he notes their concern for the sociology of work's connection to broader social theory. Ozarow argues that the Argentine experience, '[offers] transformatory potential as a sustainable alternative production model that fosters new non-capitalist subjectivities among Workers involved [; providing a] pathway that indeed reweaves the study of work into the fabric of wider social theory'. I read this to mean that WSM, validated as durable through the Argentine experience, remakes not only the experience of work, but the lived identities of those involved. Herein lies another anarchist— in this case more specifically postanarchist— layer to the Argentine (and overall WSM) experience.

Historical examples

WSM has a long historical tradition, meaning worker-control, ownership and decision-making in enterprise is certainly not novel. These organisations are also not without their tensions. Here I will look briefly at the Israeli Kibbutzim of the 19th and 20th centuries, and perhaps the most famous example of historical anarchism, the Spanish Civil War (and still existing) experience of the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo or CNT.

Certainly, some of Gunn's (1984) criteria, particularly the ideas around democratised decision-making, equality, and reinvestment of resources in the organisation itself, feature in Kibbutz. Oved (2017), Dotan (2015), Cheng and Sun (2015), Leviatan (2013), Blasi (2017) and Warhurst (1999a and 1999b, 1998, 1996) have all studied the Kibbutz movement in depth; the flavour of their research broadly echoes Gunn's criteria.

Perhaps the most fascinating characterisation of the Kibbutz comes from Cheng and Sun (2015) published in the *World Review of Political Economy*. This written-in-English journal and

'groundbreaking project is the first of its kind: a pioneering collaboration between Chinese academics and a Western left publisher to produce a serious periodical of Marxist political economy' (Website, 2018). Cheng and Sun write in their abstract that:

Kibbutz is a social organisation established on the principle of equality, public ownership, and voluntariness. Based on the principle of state ownership of land, collective ownership of means of production, and democratic management, such social organisation implements the system of each according to his ability, to each according to his need and distribution based on one's performance. Kibbutz is a socialist economic organisation based on collective ownership, in which all members are totally equal.

Perhaps glaring, 'based on the principle of state ownership of land' (Chinese) nuance notwithstanding, the text is broadly socialist, perhaps anarchist. While Cheng and Sun describe phases of the Kibbutz movement— a movement that started very much devoid of any state sanction— they also acknowledge the complicated, and even failing history of the Kibbutz (2015: 164-167). Since the 1980s, membership has fallen significantly, however since 2010, the number of new members is giving the 143k+ element, 0.016% of the total 8.57mil Israeli population, positive growth (Ibid: 166). Cheng and Sun attribute changes in the overall population to a variety of phenomena in Israeli society, namely the initial need for communal living has waned as the Israeli nation/state has overall prospered. This gives some insight into the pressure now potentially on the Argentine ERTs and echoes Ramsay's concerns around WSM being simply a way to wade through an economic crisis. Cheng and Sun also reference Leviatan (2013, cited on page 166), when noting, however, that maintaining the ideology of the kibbutz is difficult and central to the experience: '[Leviatan] showed that values that commensurate with kibbutz formal ideology are the strongest contributors to the level of organisation in kibbutz life'.

From the anarchist perspective, there is perhaps no better example of 'real' anarchism as WSM than the Spanish CNT. The literature is vast, and most of it is highly politicised. Peer-reviewed scholarship oriented on the work and lived experience of anarchist Spain comes mainly from Peirats (2011), Mints (2013; he has 'Workers Self-Management' in the title of his book); Kenwood, 1994; van der Linden (1998) and Dolgoff (1974). Like Cheng and Sun, Mints and Peirats both suggest outside pressures affect the viability over time of egalitarian and communal living, and immediate security issues, certainly undermined notions of decentralised organisation. However, this seems to somehow conflict with Ramsay (1977), where crisis can be a driving and uniting, albeit ephemeral, force for WSM. Still, the nature of a crisis deserves attention. The CNT sought to assert itself in time of open civil war in Spanish society, where radical leftism had certainly not yet addressed its centralising and more regimented notions.

Without overplaying the history, it is fair to say, and well documented, that the fascists, Communists, and Republicans combined their efforts against the anarchists, and wiped them out (before wiping out each other). This situation was not unlike the experience in the early Soviet Union during their atrocious civil war, where various sides and sensibilities around Marxism and anarchism (such as the Ukrainian Makhnovist experience) warred just as much with one another as they did the Whites or Allied forces from Britain, the US or France (Mawdsley, 2011). Why the unholy alliance between seemingly opposed forces in Spain, is a worthy question. Something about both sides requiring and benefitting from centralised and elite control being anathema to the (theoretical) vaporisation and 'withering away' of the state in CNT's section of Spain seems obvious. Anarchism, perhaps like WSM, challenges the very notion of leadership and control being the station of a privileged few.

How anarchist is WSM?

WSM is arguably the most anarchist type of organisation in presently existing capitalism. Indeed, the mainstream colonisation of WSM may lead us to self-managed teams (SMT), where there is a

sense of diffused control, but ownership does not expand or change hands. The key learning from

WSM is that, if its theory (Gunn, 1984 and Ruggeri, 2012) is equated with anarchism (note the model

outlined in chapter 3 and again in the SMT section above), then anarchism plausibly exists in society

now. Its practical manifestations are not without tensions, however, as Ramsay and others

indicated. This may demonstrate what Graeber (2009) discusses around means versus ends;

anarchism is not an end to suddenly achieve, one that would be a shaky and incoherent utopia, but

rather an immediately plausible set of actions and consciousness, perhaps calibrated as Gunn and

Ruggeri have discussed, and then adhered to as much possible despite pressures constantly felt or

realised elsewhere.

The extent of anarchism in SMT and WSM, concluding comments

Anarchism challenges, integrates, and interacts with contemporary management and

organisation. It informs aspects of SMT, and manifests more completely in WSM. In this chapter, I

reviewed literature and examples of SMT, which contemporary management positions as an

innovation in the sociology and function of management, primarily through its most en vogue

expression, 'Holacracy'. I also explored workers' self-management (WSM), a much more 'pure'

expression of anarchism, with its spreading of decision-making and power throughout an

organisation. In WSM, the employees own equal or significant portions of their organisation; this

usually entails input into strategic or existential matters, regardless of the employee's daily work

role. In SMT, there might be some equity distribution involved, but substantial decision-making

authority remains reserved to a minority group distanced from 'front-line' work. Thus, the key

difference between SMT and WSM is ownership.

These insights, combined with the anarchism model built in chapter 3, enable me to study and

discuss my two case studies in subsequent chapters. The reader will discover that in the next

chapter, the Marine Corps headquarters I study is neither SMT or WSM, but it borrows and interacts

with many contemporary and historical aspects of management. In chapter 6 on Zappos, the reader

will see Zappos is an SMT organisation running Holacracy, and much of their continued managerial

efforts are to retain extensive control of their employees, even if the rhetoric and consciousness of

'Zapponians' appears emancipating.

CHAPTER 5 // MFE/A

'You tell me what our mission is, Brian, you're one of our planners. I don't mean to be difficult, but one day I know it's the one in the Campaign Plan, another day I'm told something different, or told that whatever I'm doing isn't in my lane. It's a corporate s--- show and has been for as long as I can remember'. — a Marine officer at US Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa (MFE/A) in 2016

Organisation of this chapter

This chapter is the first of two case studies (Yin, 1994) exploring anarchism inside contemporary organisations. This case focuses on US Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa (MFE/A), a senior US military headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany.[1] I chose this case primarily because of my excellent access, and the rich examples of organisational life it provides. I was a member of MFE/A in two separate periods, 2010-2013 and again from 2015-2018.

This case study is primarily an ethnography (Fetterman, 2019; Madden, 2017; Taylor, 2017; Reedy and King, 2019) focused on the members of MFE/A close to my own work area in the plans and policy area or section. Perhaps inevitably given I was studying my own organisation, it includes some elements of autoethnography (Chang, 2016; Orbe and Boylorn, 2016; Parry and Boyle, 2009; Reed-Danahay, 2017). Quotes throughout the chapter without a named book or other reference are from my various field notes, logged in various work notebooks. To enhance readability, I do not make a parenthetical reference to every quote. The data are mainly from my observations, complemented with semi-structured individual and group interviews. The interviews were more

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[1] 'Senior' here means the headquarters sits 'high' in the overall military infrastructure. MFE/A reports to US European Command, which reports directly to the Joint Staff and the Secretary of Defense. The Joint Staff makes recommendations to US civilian leadership for employment of the US military overall, the Secretary of Defense runs the US military, builds and maintains policy, and manages its actions. The Secretary of Defense reports directly to the US President, who is the 'Commander in Chief'. Thus, MFE/A is four degrees from the US President.

running dialogues I had with various proximal coworkers versus a more formal sit down. I did

apprise all participants in this chapter that they made my study. I anonymised all names.

I built the chapter through a series of sections, ideally each providing a thick description (Geertz,

1973) of MFE/A, which weave a variety of participant observations and quotations into commentary

on both structural anarchist 'DNA' and personal or small team 'localised' anarchism. The reader will

find that anarchism exists in dynamic, pulsing, and varied expressions. My interpretation, which I

begin here and expand in chapter 7, is that MFE/A's anarchism is largely second and third

epoch. MFE/A fits Ward's (1973) 'seeds beneath the snow' formulation. The freedom and

expression many seek in life in general, was evident at MFE/A, a corporate headquarters of the

strong culture and hierarchical Marine Corps. Also, personal expressions, desire for freedom, and

protecting one's mental and physical health manifest as third epoch anarchism. Thus, I argue a

common feature of organisational life, that of protecting the self, comports with third epoch

anarchism; herein third epoch anarchism becomes a possible feature of everyday life, not a distant

and esoteric postmodern concept.

The discussion may seem paradoxical—that the Marine Corps could be anarchist—but it is accord

with cultural discussions elsewhere about the Marines. The Marine Corps prides itself on a

'maverick' culture (Connable, 2016) which places mission command and initiative at its center, and

values servant leadership. MFE/A, as a headquarters in the Marine Corps however, that resembles

more of a hospital or even for-profit corporation, has a fundamentally corporate hierarchy and

existence, and the reader will see this stifles its core mission command and servant leadership

ethos. It creates the conditions for MFE/A to exist in daily tension, one which manifested in personal

angst for many of its members, to include its own commanders, the 'CEOs' of the organisation. I

begin next with a brief rehash of methodology, work through the various observation and interview

sections, and end with a brief conclusion to tee up further discussion and elaboration of anarchism

and MFE/A in chapter 7.

Methodology

The reader will recall my personal experience in the Marines, 19 years at the time of this writing, with six of those at MFE/A, created the interest in anarchism. In my 2010-2013 period at MFE/A, all of which on active duty (in uniform, 8-12-hour workdays, usually Monday to Friday), I made notes on how, 'this corporate experience sits opposed to the mission command and commander's intent orientation of most of our training'. The experience of being at MFE/A, 'is not the real Marine Corps', said one senior staff officer to me in 2013, and '[hated] it here; can't wait to get back to the real military'.

After my 2010-2013 time at MFE/A, I went for a one-year resident master's at the Naval War College. While the Naval War College experience overall was excellent, I was expecting more reflection, and a more balanced critique of American war fighting; it was largely celebratory, despite many of the professors' and instructors' efforts to create a 'true' academic experience. Professors covered all topics, such as lessons from the Vietnam War, but the general focus was on the naval victories in WWII and carrying those lessons forward to 'Great Power Competition' with China, the new nemesis. The narrowness of the experience led me to seek out critical voices left out of the curriculum; this is when I discovered Chomsky, and his politics led me to anarchism. When I discovered that anarchism entailed decentralised control, lower or no coercion in group dynamics, and a general freedom of action to pursue personal or organisational ends, I noticed the connection to the mission command ethos of the Marines. This formed the kernel for this thesis. In this chapter, I introduce this connection as anarchist 'DNA' in the Marine Corps.

The MFE/A experience was formative in many ways, and the challenge of reconciling unsavoury (or worse) American policy, and the violence of the Marine Corps as a vanguard military force, is a difficult one for me. The Marines are one of the more overtly violent institutions the world has ever seen, yet it is filled with some of the finest, bravest, and best men and women I have ever known. I would suspect contemporary anarchists would jettison any notion the Marine Corps could be

anarchist in any way. Yet, both the behaviour of the Marines at M/FEA and elsewhere in the Marine

Corps, along with the structural 'DNA' I will expand on, creates a paradox and tension. I am not sure

how this kind of thing happens, or what it really means. I often think, 'what if these individuals were

working in charities or social enterprises?' The reader will see that the various key characters in this

chapter, such as Major General Bilson, MFE/A's commander, LtCol Martin, Riley, Nathan, Granger,

and others introduced in this chapter, are not bad or simple people—far from it. They are bright,

engaged, moral and fit. This might be where and how anarchism and the military, security or

violence interact, something Arendt (1964), Weber (2004) and Bourne (1946) in their writings about

men and evil, spirituality and beyond, may mean, and many others have tried to understand. There

is a rich dialogue to be had, and this chapter and its further discussion in chapter 7 is a mere

scratching of the surface.

Lastly, the reader will also recall from chapter 2 how my access and the nature of the study affected

the data. Many at MFE/A were aware I was studying the organisation, and they were interested in

being a part of the project; this created a mini celebrity air to the activity. This, combined with my

role as an enterprise-wide planner, gave me truly unfettered access that my mentors and writings on

ethnography describe as fairly unique.

MFE/A sits aboard Panzer Kaserne

MFE/A is a 'Service Component' headquarters (HQ), responsible for managing the US Marine Corps

'contribution' to US and allied security affairs in Europe and Africa. The global nature of the force is

unquestioned; that alone is a ripe discussion for anarchists. 'Contribution' here is meant to be the

provision of trained Marines in organised units to conduct the military affairs of the US in a given

global region.

During my two different tours at MFE/A, I worked under six different commanders. The majority of

my data is from 2015-16, when MFE/A was under the command of Major General Rick

Bilson. MFE/A is a 200-person HQ. MFE/A resides in Stuttgart, Germany, 'aboard' *Panzer Kaserne*, or 'Tank Barracks'. While Erwin Rommel is rumoured to have once presided over the *Kaserne*— constituting somewhat of a 'won't die', false rumour around the US military community there—the barracks were originally home to a different tank command, the 8th *Panzer* Regiment (later Division). The 8th served in many notable campaigns, to include the invasion of France in May 1940, and the encirclement of Leningrad in 1941. The US affinity for the base's history is not lost in the grandeur and design of this very polished location. As a logical place to help manage the Stuttgart area's now-80+-year-long US presence— 'It's an occupation, Brian...what else would you call it?' one of my colleagues reminded me—the base boasts a new 300-room hotel, a bowling alley, cobblestone streets, an Irish bar, a commissary, and scores of updated modern interiors inside clean alabaster 1930s shells. A few buildings bear some markings from their Nazi lineage, often in the form of the old Nazi Eagle, who used to hold a swastika with its talons while proudly holding its head high— the area where the swastika once was is sand-blasted, however the eagle remains.

About 400 meters from the 'Main Gate' of the base, is a Teutonic-looking Officer Club where the US hosts many different events, like 'Daddy-Daughter Dances'. I attended one in full Dress Blues, one of our grander uniforms, with my daughter, Sophie. Adorning a whole wall measuring 20' wide by 20' high is a tour de force painting of German military history. In one corner are Knights Templar, in another the Luftwaffe supporting 8th Regiment tank manoeuvers. Adolf Hitler is rumoured to have once given a rousing speech to 8th *Panzer* leadership in the same hall.

*Panzer Kasern*e, which is run by the US Army, are US Marine and US Navy 'tenants'. MFE/A 'owns' three main buildings in the vicinity of the 'Exchange' or 'PX', which is a sort of Walmart for the US (and allies) military community in the area. Fundraisers for various clubs and high school events, and all manner of other enduring 'normal' American (military) life happen in and around the PX. The Stuttgart military community slogan is, 'We Love Living Here!' and can be found on posters and pamphlets with information about upcoming movies at the movie theatre or high school science

fairs. The area of Holzgerlingen, a beautiful German village 5 miles to the south of the base where

my family lived from 2010 to 2013, is often called, 'Little America'. Granger, one of my closest

friends and peers from MFE/A, lives there with his wife and two dogs.

Being in the PX feels like being home in America. Posters about loving to live in Germany are

juxtaposed against those suggesting to 'Eat right!' These are a bit belied by the limited choices at

the food court of Burger King, Popeye's, and Charlie's, all-American fast-food franchises who have

long-standing contracts with the US Department of Defense. The tension between 'eating right' and

the corporate fast-food options is a perfect metaphor for US military life. Programs and interests are

in open conflict with one another, which, to be fair, is like any other large organisation. 'Get Fit!' and

the 'Eat Right!' programs lead the good fight, but many a soldier and Marine shuffle in for Burger

King fries. The tension around fitness and diet is unfortunately met with many other tensions in

military life. The most serious tension, around suicide for example, and the many programs

designed to combat mental health issues, sits in stark reality to the plain fact that we're a killing

business that asks its members to work 60-hour+ weeks creating a variety of products that often

have little use or value, or their value is unknown or fleeting.

Many MFE/A members can be found haunting the PX and its food court at all hours of the workday,

sometimes—and I fell into this category—bordering on malingering. Overweight Marines with poor

diets fall victim to the BK and Popeyes, while very fit Marines can be heard snickering and judging

their poor behaviour; 'Man, we're not no Army...PT or go home...terrible', has been overheard in

various forms many times. The line for a Starbucks is always about 10 people deep. It sits right

outside the PX main shopping area; military wives in various forms of fitness attire wait for a latte,

usually with young ones in tow.

The scenes aboard *Panzer* are striking. The fit military wife with latte and children are just a few

hundred yards away from Marines at MFE/A shuffling about with various tasks, some of them very

close to the ongoing terrorism conflicts, and other still-kinetic or 'real' combat events. The US Navy unit aboard *Panzer* is a SEAL team; they continue to see a variety of intense War on Terror action, and many of the ones on *Panzer* are coming and going from violent combat tours in Africa and elsewhere. The SEALs, who are quite fawned upon with everything from personal trainers to chefs, and large stipends for them to rent high-end cars while in Stuttgart between assignments abroad, mill about the place in dishevelled hair and dress. They are annoying in their Praetorian entitlement and flagrant disregard for normal military life. 'Do you have any idea what we do for this country?' one once responded to me when I asked him why he didn't salute me.[2] 'That was not very anarchist of you, Brian', was a natural jab from a friend who witnessed the scene. Riley, who led a 150-man company of infantry in Iraq, pointed out that he, 'had less equipment and training for weeks of open urban combat in Ramadi than this f---ing 12-man SEAL team guy did for their night-time surgical raids where all the bad guys are sleeping or drunk'.

There is a persistent tension in military life between mundane and innocent, and that of aggression and its design. Hannah Arendt (1964) would have had a field day with MFE/A and *Panzer*; these are all largely very well-meaning and even great people, all shuffling about supporting a global war machine with layers of seemingly anodyne bureaucratic distance severing many ties between actions, decisions and the violence perpetrated by the overall US military. Many a SEAL, disheveled and tired from a recent tour abroad, can be seen driving around in an upscale Mercedes. Their (lack of) adherence to general military decorum and grooming standards belies their fabled warrior status.

MFE/A and Auftragstaktik

'Your study is about our culture?' asked a lieutenant colonel, 'Mark Bistro', whom I interviewed and observed in many meetings. He and I worked relatively closely together in 2015-16.

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[2] On *Panzer*, me stopping the SEAL and asking this was a bit ridiculous, but I was angry at the flagrant disregard for basic military custom.

'Yes, well...primarily I am trying to determine how decentralised we are, how non-coercive in our day-to-day duties and overall.… There was very little room at MFE/A to simply say, 'I'm doing a study about anarchism and the Marines.

'Like with Mission Command and Mission type orders? Well, as an O5, I am both oppressively monitored by the colonels, but also given wide latitude, it really depends on the mood of the Commander.[3] The oppression and monitoring are functions of their trust in me certainly, but really my observation is that the colonels are so focused on pleasing him, that their own perspectives on things fade into the background. These are good men, but they're company men. I am certainly one as well. We do what the Commander wants. Unless the Command has shifted the microscope, much of what I do in day-to-day operations receives little attention from the Commander'. 'Shifting the microscope' was a commonly coded phrase in many observations and interviews; Bistro is hinting at how the organisation performs to the commander's focus; many interviewees discussed cynically how, 'this moves all the (f—-ing) time…'

As a career active-duty lieutenant colonel, Mark has been in about 20 years, has extensive experience in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, and has rotated to various headquarters like MFE/A and elsewhere at least two or three times. While MFE/A is legally and ethically bound to operate a certain way and achieve certain missions, the daily sense and tone of the Command, especially in matters of morale, general productivity, and overall sense of accomplishment, are greatly tied to the current commander's sense of doing things.[4]

MFE/A, like the rest of the Marine Corps, has 'DNA', or ethos, that is anarchist in nature however—Mission Type Orders or Command. Mission type orders, command, *Auftragstaktik* for purposes here, are basically synonymous with Marines taking an intent, usually discussed as, 'the Commander's Intent', or the goal of a unit or headquarters' commander for a given operation, or the

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[3] An 'O5' or 'Officer 5' in the Marines is a lieutenant colonel.
[4] 'The Command', is MFE/A, and used extensively by Marines at MFE/A to reference the entire organisation.

broader goal of the organisation. A commander's goal is usually clear in their 'Campaign Plan'. Most major commands throughout the military have campaign plans; these link to legal and policy goals, 'nesting' all the way to 'National guidance', such as the US' 'National Defense Strategy', 'National Military Strategy', and other documents developed and managed by the White House, the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Staff. MFE/A 'works for' European and Africa commands. Both EUCOM and AFRICOM have their respective campaign plans that establish their commanders' goals. Theoretically, provided a subordinate organisation like MFE/A operates 'in accordance with' EUCOM or AFRICOM's campaign plans, it has wide latitude to interpret and 'operationalise' these plans. MajGen Bilson's main stated goal was to, 'return the Marines to Norway', where the Marines had a Cold War history. Most of EUCOM was concerned with a, 'revanchist Russia', and Bilson argued that the obvious role of the Marine Corps in the near future was to essentially resume 'guard' and 'manoeuver' of 'the Northern Flank' (MFE/A Campaign Plan, 2016).

Bistro's point about the local influence of the current commander is a strong aspect of how mission command DNA is suppressed, or at least dynamic. MFE/A is not unlike the rest of the US military in this regard, and there is a near constant tension between mission command, an ethos long prized throughout the US and other western militaries, and rigid command and control hierarchy. Whether a military organisation is 'anarchistic' in the sense that it honours Mission Command, is largely contingent on its commander's sense of what Mission Command means and the nature of his or her personal leadership style. At MFE/A, this played out in dynamic ways, and hinged on Bilson's temperament, with almost daily fluctuations.

While Bilson did not speak to it often, I could tell in my planner role, one which afforded me relatively close access and proximity to him, that he was often frustrated and pressured by senior leaders and stakeholders around him. He expressed once in a relatively open moment, 'we'll see how long they keep me, Brian. Sometimes I think they don't like the Norway idea. They sure as s--- debate it a lot'. 'He gets 20-30 emails a day from senior leaders throughout the Marine Corps,

EUCOM and AFRICOM beating him up for his Norway idea...it's the right thing to do', said a similarly close planner with whom I worked. Indeed, Bilson was often in every morning by 5.30am and spent much of his time alone in his office thinking and managing correspondence. 'He never gets out...we never see him', uttered several interviewees, and corroborated with scores of observation notes. The limited planner cadre, a few others, and I, along with the senior colonels in the unit, all about maybe 15 total out of the 200-man headquarters, were the only ones to see and interact with him regularly. When I pressed him once, carefully, about his interaction with the Command, he entered into 'systems theory' discourse that distanced him further. 'MFE/A is a system like any other. We have to pressurize this system to get the right results. We need to lubricate certain efforts but allow others to do their thing most of the time. My goal here is to return us to Norway, but most of what MFE/A does, even the important SPMAGTF mission, is on a certain type of auto-pilot'.[5]

When I asked a handful of Marines at MFE/A about Mission Command and a possible lineage or connection to anarchism, it was generally met with sincere, piqued interest. Mission Command is a critique of hierarchy, and moreover a critique of hierarchical meddling, interfering, or harming 'front line' action and agility. In George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* (1938, 1980), he details a thick description of his time in the CNT militia, which the reader will recall from Chapter 4, the CNT or Confederación Nacional del Trabajo was the Spanish anarchist movement during the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s. Orwell makes much of the practical abandonment of reducing some hierarchies—the CNT militia has officers and enlisted like most other militaries, but there was an emphasis on equal rations and treatment. The CNT had a notion of equality that guided much of their activities, and they certainly strove for, discussed, and laboured towards living these egalitarian ideals.

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[5] In 2016, the two main MFE/A efforts were to manage a Marine Corps security force stationed in Moron, Spain of about 150 Marines, and design the Marine Corps role in a new plan for any Russian aggression in Europe. This contingent was the 'Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force — Africa' or 'SPMAGTF-AF'. MajGen Bilson's answer to the Marine Corps role in Europe was to redesign and push the Norway plan. It called for about 100 Marines to be stationed around Trondheim, to rekindle relationships and training with the Norwegian military. Norway is a NATO partner of the US.

One could argue the pragmatic security challenge faced by the CNT drove the need for a conventional military of sorts; herein lies a common critique of anarchism around escalated security and conflict. In other words, how does anarchism address internal irreconcilable differences, or external existential confrontations? The CNT experience highlights gradations or notions of anarchism found in a militant group, and then points out the dissonance between extant or theoretical existence of anarchism. If anarchism means pacifism, the CNT, and most certainly the US Marines, are not anarchist. If it means an attention to decentralised execution of duties, an attention to equality, and an attention to non-coercive relationships, both the CNT and the Marines have a connection to anarchism. It is worthwhile to further explore the two most concrete pieces of anarchist 'DNA' and then move back to MFE/A to gauge the extant versus theoretical tension.

The history of *Auftragstaktik*

The main 'anarchism' of the Marine Corps is its mission command ethos. It is important here to examine mission command in greater detail. The Marines have long prided themselves on two key organisational and leadership ethos, that of Mission Tactics or Command[6] and servant leadership. Mission Tactics has its roots in 19th century Prussia, where von Moltke the Elder built a system of centralised planning but decentralised execution/action that allowed the Prussian military to outfox the French in the Franco Prussian War of 1871 (Shamir, 2011). The reader may envision most vividly the American Civil War or other 18th and 19th century depictions of rows upon rows of soldiers firing into one another's ranks. The futility and sheer lunacy of that situation is hard to understand from a modern perspective, where today's war is one of firepower and positioning, complete with distance allowed by modern communications and enhanced range of weapons. These 'advancements' in effective state violence can be attributed in great part to von Moltke's tactics.

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[6] Mission Tactics, Mission Command, Command by Negation, and Mission Type Orders are all essentially synonymous terms.

Imagine a marching regiment of Prussian infantry receiving an order from the central headquarters in von Moltke's military. Just years earlier in North America, a similar regimental order, issued perhaps by the famous Robert E. Lee, would be done via flags, bugle, or messenger. These orders would carry specifics that would be quite prescriptive: be at place x by a prescribed time, manoeuver a certain way, and carry out a specific type of attack. The local commander's role was primarily to execute the order in the way prescribed, and the tactics of the fight itself were essentially designed elsewhere.

While the orders and execution process were centralised, the reality of war meant that the battlefield was always chaotic and required on-site rapid decision-making to adjust for enemy actions, weather, terrain, time, and other variables. In other words, there was a way that a senior leader wanted the battle to go, and there was the way it actually did go. This difference was not well understood or accounted for prior to von Moltke. His doctrinal adjustments captured this difference and explained it as something in which local commanders, if well enfranchised to act with their own initiative, could move more quickly than their enemy. 'Tempo' is a term used in Marine Corps warfighting doctrine (USMC, 2007) that discusses what Mission Command does for a military unit. Rather than wait repeatedly for new orders from a central command, Mission Command provides a local commander with 'the why' and goals of a given military event. Note the very simple comparison with en vogue business-speak like Simon Sinek's Start with Why (2009).[7] If a local

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[7] Modern Marine Corps commanders, officers like MajGen Bilson chosen to lead large units, are given a multi-week 'Commander's Course' prior to their command tour. The instructors at this school are often civilians from 'top' business schools like Wharton and Harvard. Many of these instructors bring in well-known gurus to motivate and liven up the course. Sinek has given his *Start with Why* talk at this course several times; I have seen his celebrated text on the desks or bookcases of many senior Marine Corps leaders. I find the book and its celebration a bit nauseating, and yet another example of fashionable platitude and generalisms penetrating 'higher' thought and bounding back and forth between the military and the business world. Sinek is well-meaning, but his 'start with why' is about as useful and novel as Admiral McCraven's well celebrated 'make your bed' speech, where life's complexity is reduced to a series of makeable challenges, 'and even if you have a rotten day, you will come home to a made bed….' McCraven is a central figure in the expansive role of US special operations missions abroad post 9/11.

commander had poor weather or other variables affect his circumstance, they could adjust their

activities accordingly to still meet the mission.

This case study is focused on MFE/A, but mission command affects the entire US and various other

Western militaries. There is also evidence that even the Chinese military is democratic, especially at

'lower' levels, and their national security apparatus also struggles with a dynamic push/pull around

centralised policy and decentralised execution and freedom of action (Sun, 2011). 'A fundamental

challenge for China's national security decision-making system lies in the conflict between the need

for centralisation and the diffusion of power (collective leadership) at the top level' (Sun,

2011: 4). Thoma (2016: 5) in *Moltke meets Confucius, The Possibility of Mission Command in China*,

writes that, 'the global business environment is becoming more complex and business activities are

increasing in speed...in this volatile environment, companies will need to review and most likely

adjust their approach to strategy, their organisational setup and leadership model'. This text on

exploring the Chinese military's contemporary relationship with mission command also hearkens to

business competition, suggesting awareness both across cultures, but also sectors. 'What makes

mission command interesting is that it is one of the first well documented approaches to creating a

scalable system of empowerment and independence granted to the majority of members in a large

and complex organisation' (Bungay, 2010 cited in Thoma, 2016: 6). In other words, democratic and

diffused decision-making or mission command is a hallmark of modern military, even across various

seemingly different cultures. Thoma is a chief financial officer of a large German firm and wrote his

book as a joint MBA program at Mannheim Business School in Germany, and Tongji University in

Shanghai.

My own experience with *Auftragstaktik* in Iraq

The way mission command works in today's military is often lost in the broad media and general

focus on policy and strategy, which are generally much more centralised. Various entities make

policy or are responsible for universal logistics, such as types of ammo used across the US military,

but local execution of military operations is largely decentralised. In Iraq, particularly after the initial 'March Up' to Baghdad in early 2003, various 'senior' headquarters elements, some like MFE/A, gave units as small as a platoon (~20-30 Marines or soldiers) entire towns to 'run'. This meant something like being a police force, a civil engineering management entity, and a conventional fighting force when necessary. The orders issued to a given small unit were quite broad: 'Pacify region x'. 'Maintain security in town y'. 'Make reconnaissance of human terrain in town a'. I experienced this first-hand on my first tour in Iraq in 2003, where I 'led' an entire region south of Baghdad of over 50 square kilometres, which had a population in excess of 100,000. I had no training in civic engagement, town politics, Iraqi tribal relationships, water and power engineering, police dynamics, and so on. I relied almost entirely on Iraqi professors at a local college, where many spoke English and had reasonably effective local connections.

My mission was, 'to maintain the peace and work to establish conditions for democratic rule, voting, maintenance of civic utilities, and protection of food and water resources' (personal journal, 2003). My captain's (my immediate supervisor) intent, the key element that enables mission command, was, 'protect the population and be very restrained in the use of force. The primary element is reconnaissance, or data collection and learning. If in doubt, egress or retrograde to base, report findings, and reconstruct or refine the plan for a given person, entity, group, team, facility, etc.' (personal journal, 2003). The captain was naturally concerned his infantry Marines would respond to any challenge with force and incite retribution or foment unrest in the already-very-tense Iraqi populace. The key element of his intent was the word, 'reconnaissance', which implies physical restraint; 'A mission undertaken to obtain, by visual observation or other detection methods, information…' (US Army, 2019: 1-85). In other words, commit no violence if possible.

My captain's 'Commander's Intent' was the mechanism to help me operate in accordance with the broader enterprise, but also achieve that goal through a variety of ways; it was my choice how to proceed, provided I did not fail the mission, or violate his intent. Commander's intent is an

important concept, and when the private or other sectors 'borrow' military leadership concepts, it tends to feature, as a 2010 *Harvard Business Review* special edition (Storlie) on *Lessons from the Military* shows.

> Does everyone seem to know what to do or is there confusion, a lack of meaningful activity, or people standing around waiting to be told what to do next? Planning is difficult whether in business or the military. Military planners use Commander's Intent, a key element to help a plan maintain relevancy and applicability in a chaotic, dynamic, and resource-constrained environment.

A well-written Commander's Intent has a task, purpose, method, and endstate. The importance of commander's intent to the Marine Corps is hard to overstate: 'In a decentralised command and control system, without a common vision there can be no unity of effort; the various actions will lack cohesion. Without a commander's intent to express that common vision, there simply can be no mission command and control' (Marine Corps, 1996: 112-113) 'A commander's intent, expressed clearly before the evolution begins, is an essential part of command and control' (1996: 38). Further, commander's intent is a mechanism for trust and efficiency, and a recognition that freedom to operate, provided it nests inside the broader enterprise is highly valued as an instrumental end:

> 'The aim is not to increase our capacity to perform command and control. It is not more command and control that we are after. Instead, we seek to decrease the amount of command and control that we need. We do this by replacing coercive command and control methods with spontaneous, self-disciplined cooperation based on low-level initiative, a commonly understood commander's intent, mutual trust, and implicit understanding and communications' (1996: 110).

The elements of a well-written/conveyed commander's intent are all equally important, as is the precision and standard for their expression. 'Reconnaissance' meant a specific agreed-upon thing in my experience in Iraq, and military lingo is filled with doctrinal terms. A key publication is *Operational Terms and Graphics*, published jointly by the US Army and Marine Corps, but used throughout the US military and NATO. Recall commander's intent has a task, purpose, method and endstate. A task is usually a tactical word, such as 'seize' or 'destroy'. A 'purpose' is the 'why' of the event. If there is any prescription of method, it is likely very broad and somewhat self-evident, such as 'take the bridge by incorporating close air support'. In the 'Long War' of post 9/11, sometimes endstate is referred to as 'future state'. Indeed, this nuance indicates the shifting nature of doctrine to attend to a given conflict. An endstate should clearly suggest an ending circumstance brought about by a military event, a future state is much less clear, but 'success' could be drawn out possibly more obviously.

A full Commander's Intent for a tactical event in Iraq might read: 'Your platoon will seize the Euphrates bridge in order to secure the battalion's position in Nasiriyah. Incorporate close air support and battalion mortars into your manoeuver. Secure the bridge no later than 2359 Zulu Tuesday night. Endstate desired is freedom of movement for the battalion'. I could not locate in my notes my captain's full intent for me in my security and reconnaissance mission, but I did find the reference to 'reconnaissance' I mentioned above, and his overall guidance to be as peaceful and restrained as possible. In the full nine-month deployment to Iraq from Feb to September 2003, outside of the initial march on Baghdad in March and April, which featured open combat with Iraqi forces, my platoon only had one other combat engagement from May to September.

Other anarchist 'DNA'

Servant Leadership is another Marine Corps 'DNA' item found in MFE/A and beyond that has some shades of anarchist ethics and philosophy. The concept has a rich history, perhaps dating back in the

Western tradition at least as far back as Jesus. The idea that a leader serves rather than directs implies quite a lot about those the leader is serving, namely their very nature is such that a) they are trustworthy to be supported rather than directed; b) if their nature is suspect, the act of serving them will influence their behaviour for the better.

The modern concept is generally given to originate with Robert Greenleaf (2008, 1971), who described in a 1971 essay, the 'Leader as a Servant'. The discussion of a values driven person, where service to others in a selfless manner, is evident in a variety of US military artifacts (see figures 1 and 2 below) in the Marine Corps and other US branches, like the US Army.

Figure 1 US Army Recruiting Poster
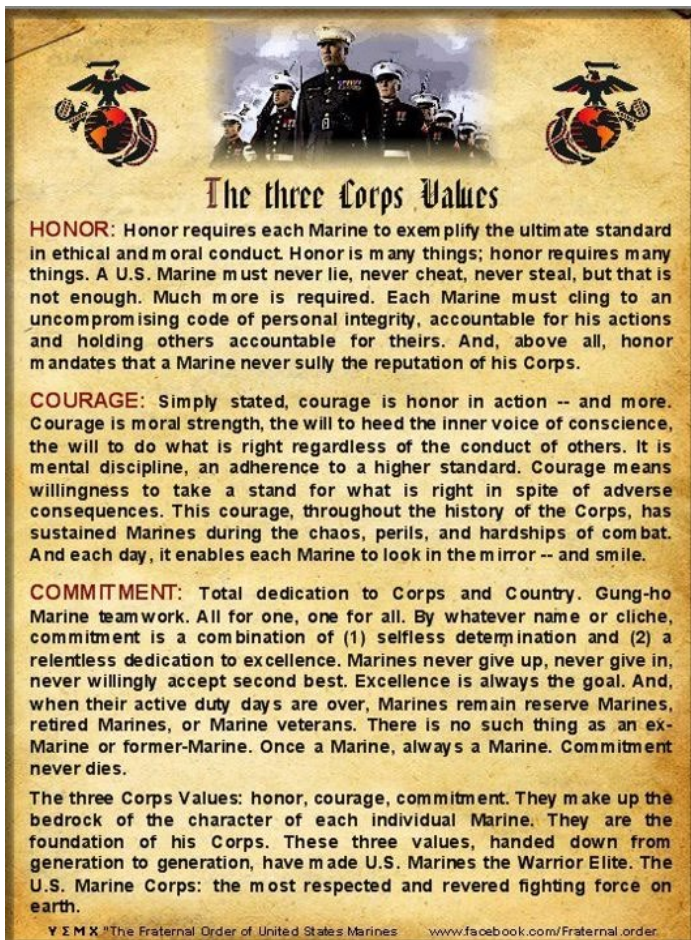
Figure 2 US Marine Corps 'Core Values' of Honor, Courage and Commitment

'Values driven organisations' are common today, where notions of cultural identification drive group affinity. That is, managers need to manage less because employees adhere to values and goals, ostensibly universal throughout an organisation (Barrett, 2017; Gilbert and Balik, 2017; Painter, Pouryousefi, Hibbert and Rousson, 2019). Additionally, if a person is well screened prior to entry into the organisation, the amount of managing required will lessen; and this is further enhanced by the 'hire slow, fire fast' adage, suggesting adherence and violations of organisational values and culture are of paramount importance (not necessarily work output) (Gregory and Clark, 2019). As discussed in chapter 4 (Knights and McCabe, 2003), this is a form of Foucault's governmentality. The individual will likely manage themselves to a degree, particularly if surrounded by a strong conforming culture, complete with a variety of signifiers indicating appropriate and acceptable behaviour. The Marine Corps has one of the strongest cultures in organisational life, if not in military life altogether.

Servant leadership most certainly exists at MFE/A, but not in a meaningful static way. Some leaders displayed servant leadership some of the time. Most of the displays were during strong cultural events, such as a retirement ceremony, where Marines are typically in full-service uniforms (the ones that look like a suit, green with a tan shirt and tie), complete with young Marines escorting wives of senior officers to their chairs, handing them flowers, all with a narrator speaking in appropriately strong tones. At an MFE/A retirement ceremony, a visiting four-star general (the military's highest rank) gave a short speech congratulating the retiring Marine: 'I would like to thank you all for being here today. John is the model Marine. While he got the mission done every time, he always took care of his Marines, serving and supporting them. He exemplifies leadership'.

MFE/A seemed to break with servant leadership often in real day-to-day tasks, however. When senior leaders would interact with their Marines, it was primarily directive, with some service and concern added at the end. Common utterances were, 'take care of xyz task...by the way, how's your family doing? Is there anything we can do for you?' When pressed in interviews or settings where

my study surfaced, discussions of leadership very much drifted into philosophical sanction and a 'talking up' of taking care of Marines, however. This contrasted strongly with many vignettes of Marines feeling 'f—ed over', particularly the reserve Marines, who numbered around 20-30% of the Command. The reservists generally complained of inadequate administrative care, and a general number of screwball ideas coming from a largely disinterested and somewhat detached active-duty leadership core.

'Brian, I get it, you're a reservist. You have to network to get here. You have to arrange the orders. But you reservists—well, not you—are always scheming for good deals, cool orders here, etc. When you're here, just get to work. Why don't you all just get to work?' This was from a senior mentor whom I hold in high regard. An active-duty colonel, his leadership was amongst the strongest in the Command by far. Many Marines regularly expressed their admiration for him. It was not without its own tensions though, which would arguably be the case with any senior leader. He generally disliked reservists, which theoretically meant he disliked 20-30% of his own unit.

'Colonel Smith needs to act like a colonel. Hold these guys by the neck and tell them what to do'! This was from Will, my peer, who was also a planner. Will was very well trained and professional, but often expressed, in weaker moments of frustration, things discordant with servant leadership ethos. Here is the humanity-old question around democracy, consensus, and the ever-attractive notion of speed and efficiency perhaps granted by well-informed dictation.

Nick and Nathan, anarchist Marines

Many of the reserve Marines at MFE/A were leading colourful and varied careers; chief among them was 'Nick', a former scout/sniper platoon commander I served with in Iraq. Their unconventional lives are a postanarchist expression, where they give much attention to personal freedom, and carve emancipation into and away from 'regular' modern organisation, in this case, MFE/A. 'Brian, most of

the Marines I know, well...they're anarchists, libertarians at least. They sure as hell think they're

some type of conservative, but really they want to be left alone, which is a strange thing to be when

one chooses the massively conformist cult we find ourselves in'. Nick's scout sniper platoon

supported our entire battalion in 2003 during the Iraq invasion; many of his snipers, and him

personally, interacted with me and my Marines often. This is a man I hold in the highest possible

regard. 'Nick' is overweight, balding, poetic, and brilliant. The below conversation is from my 2016

field notes.

'Well, why did you join, Nick?'

'You know...it's the same reason you joined. To kill people. Said in nicer terms, there's something

deep down in Marines that's carnal, violent, and loathsome. In today's post-war liberal society, one

can only find that in crime, or in our case, state-sanctioned murder'.

Nick's opinion of MFE/A is not a high one. 'This place takes everything that's violent and pure right

out of the Marine. If you're really studying us here, study that. It's not about mission type orders;

you could talk around that, sure...what's really at play is the caging of violent animals. You want this

place to work better? Remove the Marines from Marine Corps higher corporate HQs. Let the Navy

do all of this higher headquarters BS'. Nick is also a reservist. He and his wife spend their summers

sailing around the world while funding it with his Marine Corps reserve work, her occasional defence

contract (she is a Johns Hopkins trained political scientist), and a few CrossFit gyms they own in the

Stuttgart area. Nick is not in shape per se, but he could run circles around most civilians at the gym.

'This place makes us conform to something we didn't sign up for. Look around, most of the brightest

ones have long since left. Think of Larry, Jeremy, and others from our battalion...'— he's referring to

the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, the unit in which we and the others he's mentioning all served while

in Iraq in 2003—'...they all left. They're lawyers, doctors and big business people now. Or they sail

the world'. He winks. 'Us two douchebags just need the occasional money. Look at our active-duty

peers who stayed in. They're bright and energetic certainly, but they're institutional men. They are

not free thinkers. They didn't make great options for themselves. That, or they're straight

cultists. They honestly think—and care...for f--- sake, Brian, they really care—they're going to be a

general one day. What is it, like .025% of a cohort makes general officer?'

The Chief of Staff colonel (Colonel Smith) mentioned earlier is a career Marine who has been in the

Service for over 25 years. This is a dedicated and talented person. He also completely embodies

everything that's against Nick's worldview. Careerist, institutionalised, maybe didn't have great

options earlier in his life for other professional work— which is a euphemistic way of saying he lacks

talent— these are all things that Nick thinks of this senior Marine. Some of this cannot be fair, but

Nick is not alone in these opinions, however. Another major tension at MFE/A alluded to earlier in

the chapter is that of active duty versus reserve Marines. Just as the Chief of Staff resented the

networking and manoeuvering of reservists, most reservists resented his notion of uprightness—

rigidity to them no doubt—and his myopic and careerist sensibilities commonly found in their active-

duty peers and leaders.

'All three of the senior leaders are difficult', says 'Nathan, another peer of mine, also a

reservist. 'They're good men. They're not bad people, but they're also pretty damn

institutionalised. They arrive early, not for any good reason. They put people on edge to manipulate

them. They bully, at least just a bit. I don't think they mean to; it's how they're raised here'. Nathan

is a reserve major with a Johns Hopkins master's in international studies. While not on reserve duty,

he writes for RAND Corporation.

'You're no Danny Ellsberg, Nathan', I mock him a bit.

'Hah, well, we all need the money; we're all here on orders for some reason. What whistle is here to

be blown? That we still keep bombing brown people? Dude...we'll be bombing brown people long

after you and I are gone from this Rommel HQ'.

Nick and Nathan contested my working hypothesis (discussed in greater detail in chapter 7) that

MFE/A's main tension was its anarchist DNA around mission command and servant leadership was

belied by its corporate day-to-day routines and stupidity. Nick's perspective was any environment

that wasn't 'real' combat was antithetical to 'being a Marine'. 'F---, Brian...even Iraq wasn't real. Tell

a Vietnam vet that we had it hard with our internet cafes, gyms and brown people from Nepal

serving us warm chow everyday...'

Nathan's insight was, 'you're probably right about some of that (that MFE/A's main problem or

organisational challenge was its Mission Command being destroyed by corporate BS), but it's a bit

unfair to simply say the Marines don't do Mission Command or Mission-Type Orders here. I just

issued an order for something not directly asked of me. I just held a meeting. I didn't ask any

direction or permission to run. I'm a major in the Marines. It's expected I hunt a bit inside the

organisation. Provided I do that in accordance with my billet description, I am acting with initiative

and very much in line with mission command'.

The tension around my notion of anarchism and decentralisation at MFE/A was then a contested

one based on personal experience; it was an ontological and epistemological tension to be sure. The

most relevant notion of 'nailing down' a perspective would no doubt be about density of themes or

perspectives. How many of the observations and interviews were more like Nick's versus

Nathan's? Were there other perspectives? Who had them, why? How did this correlate to other

demographics and issues?

Hatred for 'staff work' as anarchism

The densest theme at MFE/A was the disdain for 'staff work'. 'Staff work' in the military is generally

regarded as terrible, and a painful part of one's career. It is always 'away from the real military' as

many an interviewee or observation yielded. Staff work is corporate, bureaucratic and sits away

from combat. While the uniforms are still on, it is not the 'real Marine Corps' as Nick put it. The

resistance to staff work, combined with the begrudging, but at times excellent or composed

'knowledge work', suggests an anarchism at MFE/A. The members are broadly aware of the

paradoxes, lunacy, and ironies of their work, while they also perform it admirably day-to-day, largely

to suit their own financial and career ends. The degree of mental resistance and a personal

'protecting' of the self, were high. In this regard, work at MFE/A is not all that different from much

corporate work, where Graeber (2019) describes '*Bulls--- Jobs*' and their effect on mental health and

wellbeing, and Bloom (2020) argues individuals are wise to resist many features of organisational life

to protect their mental health.

'We join to fight, we join to slay that dragon', referenced Riley, another Marine at M/FEA. Riley is an

active-duty major, and fellow planner. 'Here culture eats strategy for breakfast'. He grinned. He

had written that Peter Drucker quote on the large whiteboard he prominently had on the wall

behind his open cubicle desk area. The Planners, a group of five majors that I sit with, are a

vanguard and elite trained group of staff officers. All of us have attended 'resident PME' and

'advanced resident PME', which means we took time from 'regular' Marine Corps work to attend one

of the US military war colleges and a follow-on finishing school that teaches strategy, critical

thinking, and military history. Of the group of five planners, we all attended different schools. This

led to some well-mannered harassment.

'Did you guys read Scharnhorst at your school, Brian?' Riley says, his voice having a slightly higher

tone than during his normal utterances. It was clear from the start, Riley and the others are very

well educated, very sharp, very fit, and will all be generals one day if they want to be. ...No, we

didn't read Scharnhorst at my school....[8]

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[8] Gerhard von Scharnhorst was a Prussian general in the early 1800s contemporary with Carl von Clausewitz. Scharnhorst and Clausewitz are widely regarded as overhauling military doctrine during the Napoleonic Wars; their main innovation being the design and function of a centralised staff.

Planners do not have the best reputation, and the elite education—a full two years of resident education while other Marines are doing similar schools on the side, often at night, online, and with their regular busy military jobs during the day—tends to promote arrogance and elitism. At the Joint Staff, where I worked at the time of completing my thesis, several of the planners have doctorates and multiple master's degrees.

 'You guys are pricks', uttered Nathan.

'I went to Hopkins, did my main military education online, which is way harder to do; you have daily access to the Commander, I struggle to get a point paper past my boss's boss'. Nathan says all this with a type of mixed grin and grimace, the corners of his mouth belied a bit by the earnestness of his eyes. Nathan's office is in the attic of the building, and actually has male and female latrines— both regularly used by many in the upper levels of the building as 'safe' places to conduct lengthier personal bathroom work. 'If the location of my office is not a metaphor for the give a s--- factor the Command has for what we do, I don't know what is'.

His senior enlisted assistant, a Marine Gunnery Sergeant with extensive staff experience adds: 'Well, sir, actually the Command gives many s---s'. He waves his hand towards the latrines as he also gives the same sort of half grin, half grimace look.

'No one wants to feel like they don't matter...staff work sucks and really isn't what we signed up for. Sitting next to the s---ters makes it simply hilarious and totally ridiculous. You f---ing get to talk to the boss everyday about big blue arrow stuff. You get to be Marines, at least a little bit'. Big blue arrow stuff is strategy, the kind done over maps, with markers, and with a lot of discussing 'the enemy' or 'the adversary', which in Europe, is almost always Russia.

Nathan and I talk regularly over coffee at the Starbucks close by at the PX. We're often joined by the Planners, most commonly Granger. In many ways, the ethnography of MFE/A is largely captured by

their views, and since we're friends, I naturally tried to be aware of their influence on the study. Regardless, our conversations ranged over most of the themes I found, and discussions with others in MFE/A quite quickly reached saturation. Nick, Nathan, and Granger are my closest friends at MFE/A.

Granger said something like this at least once or twice a month, if not more often: 'No one joins to push paper and build PowerPoints. What's fascinating is we all know this, we all wish it were different, yet we still all do it. That's gotta be something insane. We're in Germany, with access to all of Europe, great beer, my wife is happy, but I hate this place, and so does everyone else. The Commander's arrival at 0430 everyday, a statement obviously about his life overall, couldn't be more illustrative. He is a monk of sorts, like most Marine Corps generals. He has some power, but I can't say that man is happy or self-actualised'.

Nathan may seem particularly colourful. He is in fact a fairly conservative, khaki-wearing father. 'I don't like to be pinned down to any group though'. He mentions this over dinner one night, away from the Command itself. He does not drink or smoke. He is extremely bright, and while at times he may seem strait-laced, there are many fits of poetic insight. He, Granger, and Nick have a lot to say about many things. I interpret their general approach to life, one where they assert and protect their core self against the Marine Corps, as postanarchist.

'Boston has the worst people in the world, Brian. Boston. Oysters, Sam Adams, and the Red Sox. Loud. Patriots. Self-absorbed and self-important East coast. The country is run by these people. The Command is run by these types. Little awareness of West Coast innovation. Little awareness of Rocky Mountain ruggedness. No awareness at all about the Great Plains. The Midwest is a sea of unrefined bumpkins. The South simply doesn't exist beyond Atlanta airport. People in Massachusetts, all the way down to those in DC...they are the worst people in the

world. They run our country, our world. Violent, self-absorbed, self-important and completely

stupid'. Granger says this with absolute seriousness; he is from Tennessee.

A common topic between Nathan and I was Seth Moulton, the Massachusetts Congressman and

former Marine. I served with Seth in 2004 and 2005 in Iraq. Seth was and is brilliant. Seth was and

is from Boston and educated several times over at Harvard. 'We could do a lot worse than Seth',

Nathan notes.

'Yes, we could…' I sigh. I really do not like Seth and never did, but it is probably totally unfair, and

much more a commentary about how I feel about myself and my accomplishments (or lack of

them). Seth did appear to arrive in the Marines with a checklist. Every great American politician,

and every great politician before him, was and is just like Seth. Great politicians have served in the

military. A part of me feels bad for him; is he the way he is because of how and where he was

born? Is he the way he is because those around him, to include his closest family, have pruned,

pressured, primped, and designed him from his earliest days? Is Seth his own man? Now, at the

time of this writing, I just learned Seth is running for president in 2020. His running is a metaphor

for me; America is contrived, a performance of itself in order to conduct massive violence

abroad. We think and view ourselves as something the Founding Fathers built, but in reality, we're a

checklist of ideas and events.

Granger builds the most in-depth spreadsheets I have ever seen; he adds, 'The Commander is here

at 0430 because ultimately the only thing we can really throw at this staff life is our hours in the

day. If I get here earlier than you, I must be more important, have more s--- to do, and simply want

it more. It's the most obvious statement of a contrived dedication there is...arriving early and

leaving late. It's stupid, it's George Costanza of Seinfeld's 'look serious means you're working'

BS'. While we respected Will, it was hard not to be critical of his comings and goings, which were

similar to the Commander's. Will always 'beat us in to the office' and was always the last to

leave. When harassed about this, he would say, '...it's just because my time management is terrible'!

Granger's desk has three computer screens. When he works, he puts on headphones and plays Danish death metal often loud enough for everyone else to hear through the headphones. He does not appear aware of how loud the music is. There is a rhythm to his finger tapping and work; he has mastered the keystrokes to switch between windows on the three screens quite quickly.

Riley had mentioned in one of our many BS sessions in the office that 'if you want a seriously deep f---ing product that simply overwhelms senior leaders and others with its sheer brilliant mass, you talk to Granger'.

'Yeah, baffle them with bulls---; you think I don't know that no one ever reads any of this? We just need to appear like we have our s--- together. It's a total f---ing circus'.

Senior leader anarchists

Being a planner afforded a variety of access across the enterprise, much of which meant time with the senior leadership. One particular billet with whom I interacted regularly was the Chief of Staff (CoS). This was Colonel Smith's billet. It is the number three senior person in the Command, is almost always a Marine Corps colonel (one step below a general) and is charged with integrating staff actions to meet the Commander's direction. In a perfect world, the CoS or 'the Chief', simply knows everything that is going on in MFE/A. In some ways, this billet can be more important than the commander, especially in the day-to-day conduct of the staff, everyone's morale, the pace of the work, and the meetings scheduled (known as the 'Battle Rhythm'). The Chief assigns and manages workspaces, work gear like computers, chairs, and air conditioning units.

In one vignette, I am with one of the three Chiefs under whom I served. This one's office is filled with New England Patriots regalia, and various models of the older and now out-of-service CH-46

double blade iconic Marine Corps helicopter. 'Those were the days', the Chief says. 'This work blows. You know it, and I know it. You're good at it though. A real nerd. Thankfully, there are a few of you around. All of you planners think you're smarter than everyone else though...and YOU, you're the worst, a reservist. Why don't you just work? Why all the constant networking? Now that you're here again, I am instituting the Brian Wierman rule. You're just here to move all your s--- to Europe for your fancy PhD you're about to do'. Big smile, big shoulders, forward lean and a lot of energy. This Chief, Col Blake, has a slight belly and small hands. He is by far the most normal person I have ever met from Boston.

'Sir, we do what we can. Reservists have to network to find these gigs. Yes, I'll be doing the PhD, but I'll stick around and drill here while I'm over in England'. I try to add a big grin as well. His whiteboard, a large one which sits between posters of helicopters and football, has an organisation chart on it. Beside the chart are various names with sections of 'shops' written beside them.

'Ah, you're checking out my latest design. You know, we've never really gotten it right. We have to keep tweaking here and there'. Col Blake is referencing the overall organisation of MFE/A. MFE/A is structured into 'sections' and 'shops'. The sections have their roots in 18th century Austrian and Prussian general staff organisation, later expanded under Napoleon and during the early 19th century Napoleonic wars. The modern sections are:

— the '1' is administration, pay and personnel tracking

— the '2' is intelligence

— the '3' is operations

— the '4' is logistic

— the '5' is plans

— the '6' is communications

— sometimes there is a '7' that is exercises and training, often this is subsumed into the 3, whereby it's named the '37' ('three-seven' not thirty-seven…)

— the '8' is financial control, accounting, budgets

— the '9' is often civil affairs, special programs, or newer programs like cyber warfare

The various sections are referred to as 'S' if they are in a regiment or battalion, a 'G' if they are a senior staff like MFE/A or a division or corps, and 'J' if they are joint, such as in the Pentagon's Joint Staff. Therefore, my section at MFE/A was the 'G-5' or the Plans Division. It was among the smaller organisations inside MFE/A, and responsible for developing the direction of the Marine Corps in Europe and Africa. We handled building war plans, such as how the US might respond to Russian aggression against NATO in Europe, and also humanitarian and counterterrorism interventions in Africa. To be in the '5', one must have an advanced resident degree, have a plan, attaché, or foreign area expertise. In some sense, the smart guys reside in the '5'.

This was Nathan's point about our arrogance. Nathan was just as educated, perhaps better than us, but he didn't have foreign area or plans expertise. His billet, the always very scattered and ambiguous 'Information Operations Officer', was often staffed by very bright people, who would be quickly frustrated by the ambiguity of the role. 'The Marine Corps has no idea what it is doing there, nor does it really care to. We are an infantry organisation. Info Ops is just the appearance of higher-level warfare'.

The section organisation has a certain logical division of labour, but in reality, the lines between the sections are as fraught with peril, silo-like behaviour, and boundary issues as in any bureaucracy attempting something at large scale. Col Blake's reference to 'we've never really gotten in right' is meant to be something around the tensions between the G-3 and G-5. 'Transition' is the notion of military plans, something done in the 5, handing off baked ideas and preparation to the 3 for execution. As one might suspect, how well baked something is (and often isn't), creates tremendous

tension. If the G-5 hands off something that is only half done—which is common unfortunately in

military affairs given the complexity of interaction with allies, other governments, money, resources

available and a myriad of several other important factors, each of which has its own group of

interested stakeholders—then probability of the 5 and 3 not liking and not working well with one

another is high.

'I imagine it's something like when a large company does R&D, dreams up big stuff, then hands it to

operational people with a flippant, 'make it happen' attitude. We do that all the time'. Col Blake

elaborates. 'In this new design', he points to his whiteboard, 'we're accepting that the 3 needs to do

most of the real work, while the 5 shop guys...you f---ers...gets to sit in the military equivalent of the

ivory tower dreaming up weird s--- to do. You and the Commander excel at pinky-out, gonna-do-this

stuff, meanwhile, I have to keep it all together with bubble gum and duct tape'.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented MFE/A data that illustrate gradations of anarchism; greater analysis

will follow in chapter 7. It is warranted here however to provide a brief conclusion to clarify the

connection between anarchism and MFE/A and set up the discussion later. The reader will recall the

research question as asking how much anarchism is present in contemporary organisation life, even

organisations as seemingly hierarchical as the US Marine Corps, and whether any anarchism might

be a new or innovative managerial occurrence, particularly something that would emancipate or

improve the lived experience of work.

Chapter 3 presented anarchism as having three epochs: classical, practical, and postanarchism. The

degree of anarchism at MFE/A must be run through the lens of each epoch. Classical anarchism

authors, such as Proudhon and Bakunin, would almost certainly reject the notion of MFE/A as being

in any way anarchistic. There is too much coercion and hierarchy built into the Marine Corps, the

military as the security apparatus of the state, and the corporate oppression of MFE/A itself, both

structurally and in the lived experience of most MFE/A members. Classical anarchists, both past and

present, would likely argue any coercion and/or hierarchy as a violation of anarchism, and any

affiliation with the 'official' security apparatus of the State as the height of violating anarchism. The

role of physical violence espoused by some Classical anarchists perhaps belies the clarity of this

assertion or makes the critique of the violent state apparatus along moral lines problematic. Most

assuredly, the precision of these terms and their meaning, as Chomsky and others have rightly

pointed out many times, is contested and unclear (Chomsky, 1996).

Second or Practical Epoch anarchists, such as Goodman (1965) and Ward (1973), would likely argue

MFE/A is anarchistic in various spaces and ways, specifically four key practical 'spaces' where

anarchism exists: first, in that of the middle manager, primarily the planners, running various

programs, meetings and events with little direction and even disinterest from senior MFE/A

leadership; second, in that of the personal experiences like those of Nick, who 'use' money and

resources from time at MFE/A to pay for other life freedoms; third, in the 'DNA' of MFE/A and the

post-von Moltke military that prizes *Auftragstaktik*; fourth, that of servant leadership, or a desire

(and hopefully real manifestation) to interact in non-coercive ways.

The line between the Practical second epoch and the third, Postanarchist epoch is somewhat

grey. In practical anarchism, anarchy exists in the literal 'spaces' of freedom where coercion and

hierarchy are visibly lessened or non-existent, or clear theory, as is found in *Auftragstaktik* or

Mission Tactics; in postanarchism, one might look for mental, spiritual, and internally voiced

occurrences of freedom, conventional power dynamics being placed on their head or under

duress. For the postanarchist, the act of resisting, even if decaffeinated (Contu, 2008) or hidden, is

meaningful. At MFE/A, provided mine and the planner's activities broadly met an institutional

requirement or intent from the MFE/A leadership, our layer had a great deal of non-coercive

autonomy, both practical and hidden or personal. This autonomy could allow for a relatively

peaceful and non-coercive personal experience at MFE/A, paradoxically while participating in the

most violent of coercive impositions (state violence/war). Also, while MajGen Bilson dictated the affairs of MFE/A on some level, the planners and senior leaders charged to execute the orders could—and often did—resist, slow roll, change, deliberately mis-hear, not undertake certain things with zeal, and a host and myriad of other decaf resistance, much of it perhaps hidden or obscure to even the individual enacting the resistance.

Nick's experience and sentiments are emblematic of a 'sliding scale' or spectrum and complex assortment of anarchism and what might be defined as conventional mainstream life. Nick also manifests a cross and relationship between practical and postanarchism. Nick views himself as something other than a conventional or regular Marine, but he also joined 'to kill people', while 'hating the corporate s--- we do at MFE/A'. Nick lives half his life on a sailboat, and is, perhaps surprisingly, amongst a great deal of reserve Marines at MFE/A who vagabond between a variety of life experiences, most of which are simply funded by their time at MFE/A. He is aware of the paradoxes, ironies, and failures of his own goals for freedom, while also pleased and quick to note he has a higher degree of freedom and autonomy than most. While he existed and participated in all the violence and coercion that is MFE/A as a military organisation, he also used the experience as a means to a greater freeing end. Most importantly for asserting the meaningfulness of a postanarchism at MFE/A, his mentality illustrates a desire and pursuit of finding ways wherever possible to resist or non-conform. The portion of life conforming is a means to an emancipated end elsewhere. While at MFE/A, Granger and his wife visited no less than 20 European countries, and his attention to planning and forecasting his travels rivalled his detailed MFE/A spreadsheets; 'we'd likely never have the opportunity to do this at any other time in our lives'.

The story of MFE/A is of course much deeper than what I have presented here, and many data and themes remain for future work. For example, I was not able to feature MFE/A themes like that command being a relative backwater to the rest of the Marine Corps, something that harmed many active-duty members' psychology, or that regardless of the commander, MFE/A has consistently

poor morale (as indicated by recurring poor performance in Marine Corps 'Command Climate'

surveys centrally run from Marine Corps headquarters in Quantico, Virginia. In chapter 7, I will

interrogate the data from MFE/A and the next chapter (chapter 6) Zappos case study further. In the

concluding chapter 8, I will return to some of the themes below and position them for further

research and development.

CHAPTER 6 // ZAPPOS

'I live in the Managerial Age, in a world of "Admin." The greatest evil is not now done in those sordid "dens of crime" that Dickens loved to paint. It is not done even in concentration camps and labour camps. In those we see its result. But it is conceived and ordered (moved, seconded, carried, and minuted) in clean, carpeted, warmed and well-lighted offices, by quiet men with white collars and cut fingernails and smooth-shaven cheeks who do not need to raise their voices. Hence, naturally enough, my symbol for Hell is something like the bureaucracy of a police state or the office of a thoroughly nasty business concern'. — C.S. Lewis (1996: xxxvii.)

'Culture is everything. We're fun here. We sell management ethos'. — 'Zeb', a senior HR manager at Zappos Insights Group

Tony Hsieh, 1973-2020, CEO of Zappos[1]

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[1] Tony Hsieh, the CEO of Zappos, features heavily in my chapter. I wrote the text from 2016-2019. Tragically, Hsieh passed away in late 2020. In reflection, I think my chapter does him proper academic justice; he was a charismatic and eccentric figure, whose many successes eventually caught up with him. As the reader will see, I interpret the data around him to suggest he was just as taken in by his own ideas and charisma as were those around him.

Tyler Williams, 'Chief Fungineer' at Zappos. Members of Zappos often choose their own titles. Williams' is relatively well-known in the 'progressive' business scene. A blogger interviewed him in 2019 for a piece in Medium (Weiner, 2019). In the piece, Williams wrote how for his job application to Zappos, he wrote a song and made a movie of him playing various instruments. Williams primary role at Zappos is to improve the work experience for Zapponians, Zappos employees.

This chapter

This chapter will position data from a variety of sources on Zappos, the Las Vegas, US e-commerce

outlet wholly owned by Amazon. It will set up further discussion in chapter 7, that will ultimately

review the anarchism at Zappos. While I initially hoped to do an ethnography similar in part to my

experience with MFE/A, access was a standing challenge. As a result, this case study is

fundamentally different from MFE/A. What I present here is a synthesis of various data curated

from several main groupings: several interviews and email exchanges with a group of human

resources and marketing professionals from 'Zappos Insights' conducted in 2016-17; primary

sources, such as Hsieh's *Delivering Happiness* (2010), and Brian Robertson's *Holacracy Constitution*

(2015); secondary sources commenting on Zappos; and lastly, social media data from Glassdoor,

Reddit and LinkedIn. From a 'saturation' perspective, much of the data corroborates itself, and

'triangulates' a plausible picture of Zappos.[2]

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[2]Like chapter 5, to enhance readability, I do not make a parenthetical reference to every quote. Most of the quotes in this chapter are from field notes taken during various interviews, webinars, or related interactions with Zappos members.

The interest in Zappos came from my 'discovery' of anarchism at the Naval War College, and the search for private sector enterprises using 'alternative' or 'more humane' management systems and structures. While at the War College, a common trope in our leadership courses was a sense that the private sector, 'the world', must be doing 'it' for real and better than the military. This combined with my eye towards learning more about anarchism itself, brought on by Chomsky as the lone voice of critique of American post-WWII foreign policy. I looked for organisations managing 'differently', hoping to find authenticity and humanity. I discovered Gary Hamel's 'Management 2.0' (2009), Frederick Laloux's work in 'Teal' (2015) and later Zappos' 'Holacracy', which seemed to be the holy grail of alternative and even humane capitalist enterprise. At first glance, through popular media like *Fast Company*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Forbes* (referenced below and throughout the chapter) and others, Holacracy appeared like a 21st Century anarchism.

So, the interest in private sector organisations claiming progressive management, where profit and people were considered, at least nominally, to be equal concerns, grew very quickly. What organisations were doing the best work while assuaging the lesser features of capitalism? What organisations had done away with hierarchy, especially unjustified ones?

With the knowledge I would leave active duty after my year at the Naval War College and return home to Utah to do consulting and teaching, I felt I had found an anchor and relief in the private sector. Finally, an organisation doing it right. Who cares if they 'just' sell shoes; they take care of their people, they are innovative, they are anarchists!

Herein of course was the need to explore Zappos in detail. The data I have found largely suggest that their intentions and design, articulated by a variety of artifacts I will discuss, are anarchistic. The 'DNA' of Zappos (through Holacracy) is anarchist. They try. The theory of Zappos, and the way they speak about the theory are second and third epoch anarchism. Their behaviour and lived experience, also similarly to the MFE/A case, show the manifestation of their goals as,

however, deeply problematic. Not only is the realisation of anarchism fluid and dynamic, the lack of structure at Zappos may even harm and manipulate its members, akin to most every other form of capitalism, intent on the extraction of labor-value through talent and work of any organisation's members.

Brief anarchism review

The reader will recall chapter 3's anarchism epochal model. To delineate a framework, I reviewed canonical and secondary complimentary writing in anarchism. Classical or first epoch anarchism is primarily hallmarked by Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin. It asserts the State, the assemblage of institutions run by the elite of society, justify violence and aggression against its own citizens and beyond, and needs to wither away (or be destroyed). The State, which purports to be a necessary Leviathan to protect society, actually does more harm than good. Practical anarchism, illustrated best by Paul Goodman and Colin Ward, described spaces and instances of liberation existing in suppressed and episodic ways all around us. Man's general nature is anarchist. The State need not wither away—indeed we can in many instances simply ignore it—but rather people need to better identify and assert their freedom whenever they can, moving and shaking oppression and coercion in a dynamic dance of sorts. Locals could get together and fill their own potholes, as has been done in Portland, Oregon, USA, and perhaps in the vaguely dystopic but useful way Domino's Pizza also fills potholes to 'ensure your pizza doesn't arrive a mess!' (Herron, 2020).

Postanarchism is third epoch anarchism, led by Todd May, Saul Newman, Bob Black, Jason McQuinn, and Murray Bookchin. It emphasises an individual's personal interpretation of power, self, and its expression. The manifestation of this is very local and individualised. For Bob Black, for example, postanarchism is a rejection of work. For Bookchin, it is a rejection of leftist politics, communal living, and a mindset of freedom. Third epoch anarchism's central distinguishing feature is the focus on the individual and their interpretation of their own oppression. While first and second epoch anarchism emphasise a collected attitude around groups and the whole of society, postanarchism

emphasises personal 'insurrection', and, according to Newman, a focus on Max Stirner's individual anarchism. To conduct a personal insurrection, one must first identify and unearth instances of personal oppression, then work against them in ways that will not undermine the whole of the individual's experience. The association with postmodernism and poststructuralism is meant to indicate postanarchism's method and realisation of rejecting many forms of oppression, not 'just' ones that are obvious through laws and violence.

The vibe and culture of Zappos, 'Simon and Tony are soooo fun'!

Tony Hsieh, CEO of Zappos, stands on stage, walking around a large box. He opens the doors on the front, and out escapes Simon Sinek. 'Please welcome Simon Sinek'! Applause and cheers. There are no chairs on the stage, just that large steamer-trunk-looking-thing in the center. The audience is laughing that laugh that usually comes with a low level of embarrassment or awkwardness. This is from an August 2019 YouTube video[3] from Zappos, where Simon Sinek of 'Know your Why' fame, and Tony Hsieh, interview one another and 'talk about leadership and people', in front of a Zappos audience. Zappos, like Google, Apple, and others, holds regular 'thought leadership' seminars—Google's 'Talks at Google', for example, are all available on YouTube (their wholly owned subsidiary).

Sinek and Hsieh operate seemingly off-script, and for some reason, have foregone normal chairs or stools. Or, from an en vogue TED talk vibe, they don't just stand and talk. Instead, that large box in the center of the stage, the giant steamer trunk from ages past on its side, may appear like a mountain or challenge for them to climb together. The two, emanating authenticity and relatability, sort of push one another up on top of the box, then sit there, almost on top of one another. The audience laughs and claps enthusiastically throughout it all. There is a bit too much group enthusiasm.

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[3] Find this clip at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqUx4BJ1ENY

When 'leaders' like Hsieh and Sinek impress upon a group that what they are doing is 'right and perhaps even needed' and possibly also a 'necessarily evil', the group is quite pliable. In some ways, the story of Zappos is the story of benign yet pernicious corporate culture, one in which 'being yourself' manifests as conforming to a notion of individuality that is itself conforming. The twisting of this appears to leave many, even Tony Hsieh himself, in a strange world of well-intended ideas around organised human interaction, but manifests as a bizarre environment of groupthink. Much of this is reliant on the personality and will of its CEO, Tony Hsieh.

The Tony Hsieh and Simon Sinek conversation, now a few minutes into not much being said, but much being made of getting on top of the box, ambles into Hsieh saying things like, 'we're just really into talking about people here, and we love you so much Simon, because, you know, you get it'. Massive applause continues. Where Apple and Google have product launches with quasi-religious enthusiasm, Zappos presents Sinek as an artifact of a 'woke' management. The algebra of the event is clear; Sinek, with his insightful, 'know your why', and 'leaders eat last', wouldn't come here to Zappos if they didn't also embody this altruistic and purposeful and enlightened capitalism. Seriously though, it's awesome here.

The primary texts and Tony Hsieh

Tony Hsieh is Zappos' very well regarded, progressive, millennial-vibe CEO. It would be hard to imagine a Zappos without Hsieh. His 2009 text, *Delivering Happiness, A Path to Profits, Passion, and Purpose*, details his account of Zappos' rise from original founder Nick Swinmurn's shoesite.com to a $1.2 billion US dollar Amazon acquisition. His deal with Amazon, something quite enviable in tech and investment circles, both for the sheer dollar amount, but also for the way Amazon still (it appears) gives Zappos a wide berth. Hsieh's own words, in a memo to his company right after finalising the sale, details the arrangement:

Over the next few days, you will probably read headlines that say, Amazon acquires

Zappos or Zappos sells to Amazon. While those headlines are technically correct,

they don't really properly convey the spirit of the transaction. (I personally would

prefer the headline Zappos and Amazon sitting in a tree…)

We plan to continue to run Zappos the way we have always run Zappos —

continuing to do what we believe is best for our brand, our culture, and our

business. From a practical point of view, it will be as if we are switching out our

current shareholders and board of directors for a new one, even though the

technical legal structure may be different. (2009: 245)

Auditing the financials of Amazon's relationship with Zappos is beyond the scope of my study, but it

is interesting and probably sufficient to say that the image of Zappos as a free entity, able to make

large adjustments like 2015's jump to Holacracy, had been preserved through the sale. Zappos had

built a very strong position; it had transferred its risk to big Amazon without having to be culturally

absorbed. Many acquired firms would be so blessed.

The study would clearly have benefitted from direct interaction with Hsieh. When I reached out to

him directly in late 2016 for an interview, or even to embed with him at work, I initially received a

reasonably warm response from his 'Chief of Staff Communications'. The texts below are my email

and the response I received.

Tony,

PhD candidate here writing on anarchism and management. Setting up my

fieldwork for mid to late 2017. What are the chances you'd:

// let me interview you several times over a 1-3 month period

// let me shadow you a bit as you work

// do the same with maybe 10 or so employees (randomly chosen all over the

company)

// be open to this going in my dissertation (proposal I submitted to my

school attached)

// be open to the study potentially yielding very critical results (i.e.,

there's a gap between what Zappos says it does [management-wise] and what

is really going on)

Seriously, what do you think? Would you go for this?

me: linkedin.com/in/brianwierman

school: Alliance Manchester Business School at Univ of Manchester, UK

Whatever your thoughts and decision, thank you!

Best,

Brian

Tony is humbled by your interest in working with us here at Zappos. Currently, he is

busy focusing on the revitalization of Downtown, reinventing Zappos, and traveling

for speaking engagements, which makes his schedule quite unpredictable.

Regretfully, because of his busy schedule, he won't be able to participate. We

apologies if this causes any inconvenience for you and if anything changes, we'll be

happy to reach out and let you know.

I followed up this email with another hard ask for interviews; that email yielded no response, leading

me to pivot my study of Hsieh to primary and secondary text materials. I focus here on a few key

extractions from his 2009 book, and a handful of articles and items from mainstream, tech- and

business-friendly sources such as *Fast Company*. The discourse he uses could be its own fascinating

study in heroic entrepreneurship and leadership, and a notion of corporate and capitalist existence

that is still somehow set apart from the mainstream. Featured in the opening of the 2009 book is a quote from Morpheus, the 1999 character from *The Matrix* who guides Neo, the chosen one, but who is also innocent and unlearned in the harsh world. The quote: 'There's a difference between knowing the path and walking the path'. The back cover bits read: 'Pay brand new employees $2k to quit; Make customer service the responsibility of the entire company; Focus on company culture as the #1 priority; Seek to change the world; Oh, and make money too… Sound crazy? It's all standard procedure at Zappos…'.

The 2009 text reads like an autobiography, where the story of his initial business success with LinkExchange, a company he founded and ultimately sold in 1998 to Microsoft for $265 million US dollars, flows into the challenges of initially advising, then ultimately taking over the reins of Zappos. It culminates with the 2009 sale to Amazon. It contains many descriptions of Zappos' philosophy, to include samplings of its Pipeline Team classes, which are offered to all Zappos employees. Some of the classes are quite normal corporate affairs: Communication 1-3; Public Speaking; while others are very Zappos, such as: Delivering Happiness; Science of Happiness 101; WOWing through Tours and Tribal Leadership (2009: 226).

The text suggests a recurrent anti-capitalism, or at least an anti-mainstream tone. 'We had a tough time convincing our board (who were also investors) to embrace many of our activities that we believed would ultimately help build the Zappos brand and make the world a better place' (2009: 238). Hsieh positions the 2009 sale to Amazon as a way to achieve alignment (2009: 237), which he describes in a passage where he, '[realized] he was relearning another version of the same lesson from LinkExchange, when our company culture went downhill: the importance of alignment. A strong culture and committable core values are important because they create alignment among employees. I was now learning that alignment with shareholders and the board of directors was just as important' (2009: 239). He discusses how, 'For the most part, our board of directors wanted us to just focus on the financial performance that was driving our ecommerce

success' (2009: 238). 'But I saw the potential for us to make a much bigger impact beyond just Zappos' (2009: 239). Hsieh saw himself as a champion of a higher-level capitalism. The chapter in which the above quotes reside positions the Amazon sale as a sort of rebellion against the usual pressures of big investment in tech. Given Jeff Bezos' deep pockets and apparent appreciation for Hsieh's perspectives, the sale allowed Hsieh to buy out his initial board, many of them from Sequoia Capital, the well-known US tech investor, and reinsulate the organisation in the manner he saw fit, one which continues to today.

The memo he released to his employees in 2009 on the Amazon sale speaks volumes. For example, most of the memo, several pages in length, contains discussions of Amazon, '[wanting] us to continue to build the Zappos brand and culture in our own unique way. I think unique was their way of saying, fun and a little weird' (2009: 248). Later in the memo, he suggests a continued rejection of mainstream business in a Q&A section and he writes the following:

> Q: I'm a business/financial reporter. Can you talk like a banker and use fancy-
> sounding language that we can print in a business publication?
>
> A: Zappos is an online footwear category leader and Amazon believes Zappos is the
> right team with a unique culture, proven track record, and the experience to
> become a leading soft goods company; Zappos' customer service obsession
> reinforces Amazon's mission to be the earth's most customer-centric company;
> Great brand, strong vendor relationships, broad selection, large active and repeat
> customer base; Amazon believes Zappos is a great business— growing, profitable
> and positive cash flow; Accelerate combined companies' scale and growth trajectory
> in the shoe, apparel and accessories space; Significant synergy opportunities,
> including technology, marketing, and possible international expansion. (2009: 248)

Interviews with Zappos Insights, lack of formal access, and the 'LinkedIn Heisman'

I regularly interviewed three Insights members over 20 times through 2016-17. The interviews were semi-structured, usually couched as a 'follow-up' to online webinar 'Student Q&A' sessions that anyone could sign up for, 'to meet and interact with Insights members and learn more about Zappos and Holacracy'. The webinars and interviews usually lasted an hour. Most of the time I asked about Zappos and Holacracy mechanics; occasionally, I would ask about the lived experience of working at Zappos. The answers were almost always theoretical and broad, and aligned very strongly with marketing material on the Zappos website, such as a common return to their '10 Core Values'.

1. Deliver WOW Through Service

2. Embrace and Drive Change

3. Create Fun and A Little Weirdness

4. Be Adventurous, Creative, and Open-Minded

5. Pursue Growth and Learning

6. Build Open and Honest Relationships with Communication

7. Build a Positive Team and Family Spirit

8. Do More with Less

9. Be Passionate and Determined

10. Be Humble

It was rare to get a straight answer that did not strike me as vague promotional language. The general tone was one of being very proud to work at Zappos, and very intent on promoting its strong feelings about Holacracy and culture.

'Samantha' 'is the 'Senior Director of Brand and Vision'; I interacted with her the most. 'Ben', is the 'Employee Experience Specialist', and 'Zeb', is the 'Culture Evangelist'. The three Insights members had been at Zappos several years, Samantha having been there the longest through the early 2000s. Ben and Zeb each had greater than 5 years. All three had worked in both the pre- and post-

Holacracy time periods (the shift was in 2015). By the time of this writing, both Ben and Zeb now worked for themselves doing largely what they were doing for Zappos.

I tried to gain a mode of consistent tone in my interaction in the webinars and interviews by saying I was 'simply working to determine the lived experience of being an employee or member of Zappos'. This seems very anodyne to me. However, as mentioned above, none of them would help snowball to 'regular' line Zappos employees—'Zapponians'—and when I reached out via LinkedIn and other social media to line employees, every response (30 inquiries from 2016-17, with 15 responses), directed me back to Insights. 'That's what they do'. 'We've been studied a lot; it's not a problem or anything, but what you're after is what they do'.

When I asked the three Insights members about this and tried to light-heartedly couch it as the 'LinkedIn Heisman', their reply was uniform (given individually at various times), and basically was, 'it's not any effort to hide the truth, but rather that outward reach and culture discussion, Holacracy and its related concepts is all Insights. They don't want to get into our circle or business. That would be a tension'. The reader may recall the Heisman Trophy in US collegiate football, where the statue shows the best college American football player in the country 'stiff-arming' (stopping) a tackle. To be 'Heismanned' is to be stiff-armed from doing something...

The interaction was generally positive, but I had to do a lot of prompting. Having an affable 'on the level' truthful conversation about Zappos was elusive. It was as if I was a reporter talking to the White House Press Correspondent. 'We're reviewing this and will provide answers when appropriate. I'd like to direct your attention to the website or brochure which has a robust Q&A section for your reference'. After speaking for 10-20 minutes, I had a general feel that 'being studied' was not very well received, and I had to prod them to speak more about their experiences. 'Most inquiries come from organisations wanting to copy or emulate what we're doing. They want to learn the mechanics of a great culture or discuss our core values. You are

fundamentally critiquing the system rather than simply asking about how we do it. This is uncomfortable. We make no claims about being perfect— far from it, but it's probably better to work here than many other places. We take great pride in that', Samantha said.

This theme, that of 'work being a drag', but 'it's probably better here than elsewhere' played out for all three of them several times. 'Of course, it's not for everyone. We work very hard at being unique and respectful. More conventional types, maybe if I can phrase it that way, don't care for how we do things. They often don't want to be here, and if they are hired and stay for the onboarding, they can take the two grand and leave'. This is reference to an onboarding routine all new Zappos employees attend. If new employees feel it is not a fit, they can take a $2,000 US dollar severance. But, 'If they do decide to say, they almost always fit right in'.

Zappos' cultural onboarding is a ten-day course in Zappos business and culture. Members 'graduate', and then celebrate with a parade through the Zappos headquarters building in Las Vegas. New employees are the parade members, and the current employees line the hallways clapping and congratulating them on their onboarding success. In a moment of candour, Zeb relayed the parade is, 'A bit intense. There still are times, where it seems a bit contrived or over the top, but they're trying. I mean, work is work, but at least here, people try to have it suck less. There is real intention around fairness, respect, enjoyment, and fun. How is that wrong'? While subtle, I chose not to probe Zeb on why he said 'they're' when he most certainly must have meant, 'we're'.

When I asked Ben about the 'heaviness' of the culture, and that some on Glassdoor and Reddit (detailed later) described the environment as 'oppressive', 'cult-like', and 'not what it seems', I got the usual, 'it's better here than elsewhere. If you ask people that left though, I am sure they're less kind to Zappos'. Samantha, when I asked her about the same, was a bit more defensive, perhaps because she had, 'been dealing with this type of critique and inquiry for the entire lifetime of the company'. 'Look, Brian, it's totally reasonable to consider a strong culture as problematic, but show

me a company that performs well these days, that hires well, that retains top talent, that produces good outcomes from a strong bottom line all the way to sustainable business practices, that doesn't have a strong emphasis on culture. Culture is everything'. When I got the, 'Look, Brian' lead as part of one of her answers, I knew I was starting to wear on her; there's only so many times the lead culture engineer at Zappos can be asked if it is really real and genuine or not and tolerate the continued prodding.

In the main, the interviews were all cordial and positive, but the 'being studied' angle did appear to put the three on a sort of edge. 'Insights' main goal and role is to evangelise our culture. We do management and culture right at Zappos. Tony's vision, Brian's (Robertson) system, and the sheer willpower of everyone to see it through, are all remarkable. It's a great story'.

Zeb was perhaps the most adroit and least defensive over the course of our interviews. 'I say study and write and tinker all the time. There will be no real change to culture and the experience of work without it', was something Zeb said in an interview when I asked about 'critical' views of Zappos and organisational life in general. 'Zappos is far from perfect, but if you have to work, you might as well try to do the things they encourage. You can't fault them too much for working hard on fun, respect, being yourself, and other themes. Of course, not everyone fits, but for the most part, I thought the leadership and team were doing what they could. It's not a charity. Lastly, Holacracy is not meant to be a prescribed system. It's meant to be a way of managing that opens up processes more to everyone. It still is work'. The 'being yourself' piece of Zeb's quote hearkens to Fleming and Sturdy's (2011 and 2009) pieces on neo-normative control.

Ben, who had been with the team almost as long as Samantha, was a bit more 'religious' than Zeb. Whereas Zeb came across as aware of how the rhetoric of Zappos leadership could be different from the real experience, Ben felt there was very little divide. Zappos is a culture exporter. 'Yes, we

sell shoes, but that is just a means to an end. The end is a better world through better organizations. We take words like "evangelize" quite seriously.'

Ben left Zappos in the middle of my studies and formed his own consulting and motivational speaking firm. When I asked him why he left Zappos, he said, 'There is nothing wrong with Zappos per se, it's just that I really love doing things on my own. Striking out on my own allows me to do that full time with no distractions.' I inquired and pressed him on the distractions piece: 'Well, not to be difficult, but a lot of people like to study Zappos, Zappos gets written on all the time; I just want to work. I want to motivate myself about how a great culture means everything. You spend all your time at work, it shouldn't suck.'

Ben is very likable and personable. He is a high school educated American that rose to high ranks in Zappos without any university background. 'I am proof positive that anyone can start at Zappos on the phone and eventually be doing public speaking and organizational design'. His personality is indeed contagious, and in our discussions, I often felt myself fairly convinced of his nuanced take on culture and Zappos.

> Imagine you're an early 20s Millennial in post-recession Vegas. You can't find s---
> for work. Along comes Zappos with decent pay, room for advancement,
> opportunity to express yourself, and they're actually working and headquartered in
> your town. From that perspective, Zappos is truly awesome. I get what you're
> saying about things possibly going too far. Of course, there's a bit of a personality
> cult with Tony. So what? Show me any other high performing organization who
> doesn't have a great culture that doesn't also have strong visionaries driving
> things. Tony is required for Zappos. There is no Zappos without Tony. When we
> sold to Amazon, Tony insisted on being set apart from Big Amazon. He's a

genius. We have all the financial backing and support of Amazon yet get to tinker

and do our thing. If you buy shoes from anywhere else, that's just stupid.

More from Samantha, the Zapponian true believer

Having interacted with Samantha the most, she provided an abundance of content and

data. 'There's two stories here, truth be told. One is that this place is the best that work can be. Of

course, working with others is hard. Humans are hard. But here you can be yourself. You're

expected to be yourself'. Zappos Insights Group, marketing and HR arm of Zappos, is actually a

separate legal entity from Zappos, Inc. proper, itself a wholly owned subsidiary of Amazon since

2009. She's in her 40s and has been with Zappos, 'from the beginning. I love it here' (field notes,

2017).

'...the other story is of course the one that your critical studies piece raises...that we're using culture

to extract more value at less cost. To be honest, you're not wrong. But so what? ...a place like

Zappos is still the best option if you have to work. We treat people fairly, and we respect one

another. Respect for the individual is a core ethos at Zappos. At the end of the day, what else can

you do?' (field notes, 2017).

Zappos Insights runs Holacracy and related training seminars and other similar events all over the

world. Most of their 'fellow Zapponians' in Insights Group work from home, whereas 'regular

Zapponians' in the 'core regular business' work on site in the Las Vegas office complex. That this

contrasts with the online retail entity itself, which houses its famed customer service reps, and a

host of project managers and administrators is interesting—the Zappos Insights group is supposed to

represent the company. A little prodding during interviews revealed they are quite detached. I

could never get a straight answer on Insights' total manning, but I estimated it hovered at around

20, with most employed in planning and running the training events. Samantha and other senior

Insights leaders are easy to spot on social media like LinkedIn and are the 'face' of Zappos writ large.

'Insights works from home, yes, but we interact with core Zappos all the time', said Samantha when I challenged her on the connection (field notes, 2017).

'I really can't get into how we do what we do', said Sara, a lead I developed via LinkedIn.

'You've been instructed not to'? I asked.

'Not really, it's just that we've gotten so much media attention the last few years… We're all sort of done with it. Of course, we're not perfect here, but this is still a really cool place to work, and the pay isn't too bad; it's reasonably competitive, especially for Vegas. That's about all I can say, really, I do wish you good luck in your studies. Talk more to Insights; this is what they do! Okay, thanks, bye'!

Her response was similar to the leads I primed on LinkedIn:

'It's not that we've been explicitly told not to talk to anyone, it's just that this is what Insights does. Their circle is in charge of outward facing asks about us, Holacracy, our culture, how much fun we have'!

'Everyone's tired of being asked if the culture is real or not. Of course, there's hypocrisy and tensions, but that's not Zappos, that's people. This is a great place to work. Talk to Insights'!

'Is this place a cult? I mean, that's the root word of culture, which is something we talk about all the time here. Talk more to Insights though, this is really their bag. Good luck'!

When I told Samantha about these responses, she indicated that '[she wasn't] surprised. They are trying to adhere to a core principle of Holacracy, that a given circle is responsible for their area or function, and we all strive not to harm or work in another circle. Insights is the circle responsible for external messaging and cultural evangelism...they're not trying to be secretive or anything. We have

had so much interest in Holacracy and what we do however that most core Zapponians are a bit over

[the media and other attention]' (field notes, 2017).

Samantha's answer indicated an interesting feature of Zappos use of Holacracy, something I will

explore more in chapter 7, that of Holacracy possibly harming transparency or freedom and

movement of information for fear of overstepping one's role. The text of the quotes above suggests

no formal directive from Zappos leadership to direct all inquiries to Insights, but rather a shared

interpretation of Zappos structure, which vaguely yet universally directed certain behaviour. This

raises various themes around control, items explored in chapter 4. Control at Zappos is exerted

through culture and interpretation, not necessarily from overt or explicit authority; because of a

desire to diffuse control and be more egalitarian, at least in theory, control at Zappos is firm but

ambiguous.

Holacracy, Brian Robertson, and Zappos

Zappos formally embraced Holacracy in 2015. The move was well documented and somewhat

controversial in mainstream business circles. The second core group of texts are from Holocracy's

founder, Brian Robertson. These texts illustrate at least a theoretical realisation of anarchism at

Zappos: by adopting Holacracy, Zappos embraced/embraces its theoretical underpinnings. The

extent of anarchism at Zappos is then how anarchist is Holacracy? A review of Robertson's 2015 (a),

Holacracy, the Revolutionary Management System that Abolishes Hierarchy, and the Holacracy

Constitution (Holacracy One, Robertson's company, released the latest formal version, 4.1, in 2015,

b) provide rich data to illustrate the theoretical components.

The 2015a text, which Penguin published contemporaneously with Zappos' well-publicised shift to

Holacracy, describes the system in detail. Holacracy's key goal is to, '[move] beyond bolting on

changes (to Weberian bureaucracy; this note is my addition) and instead focus on upgrading the

most foundational aspects of the way the organization functions' (2015a: 10). Robertson's

metaphor for the 'upgrade' is that of the operating system, and certainly this system seems to have its most ardent adopters inside tech and related e-companies like Zappos. Holacracy One, Robertson's current organisation which promotes the philosophy, reports (as of September 2019), 169 organisations using the system.

Robertson presents another metaphor, that of the 'corporate antibodies [which] come out and reject' evolution and tinkering with management systems and thinking. He suggests this is common in modern life and happens any time an organisation attempts to innovate. Holacracy, however fundamentally reworks:

> ...the way power and authority are formally defined and exercised, the way the organization is structured, and the way we establish who can expect what, and from whom— or who can make which decisions, and within what limits. When we change things at this level, we are effectively installing a new organizational operating system, infusing new capacities into the core of how the organization functions, so that we can move beyond applying changes to a system that's fundamentally at odds with the process of change itself. (2015a: 11)

Robertson's text describes Holacracy as having the following key components: The Constitution itself, which, 'describes the rules of the game'; 'a new way to structure' organizations and people's roles; a 'unique decision-making process for updating those roles and authorities'; and 'a meeting process for keeping teams [synchronized] and getting work done together' (2015a: 12). Robertson's book is primarily about, '[unpacking] how Holacracy distributes authority' (2015a: 13).

The lead chapter of the text has the headline quote from Thomas Babington Macauley's Milton, 'A good constitution is infinitely better than the best despot'. While maybe a bit ironic— Macauley was British Secretary of War and Paymaster General in the mid-19th Century largely responsible for British Imperialism in India— Robertson's lead assertion around Holacracy is it should have a clear

playbook. Chapter 7 will explore the relationship between 'constitution-like' texts and

anarchism. Ruth Kinna, Alex Prichard and Thomas Swann, all prominent anarchist scholars, formed

in 2016, a UK ESRC grant-award project studying, 'Anarchy as a constitutional principle:

constitutionalising in anarchist politics' (2016). Their first paper (2019a) explores the Occupy

movement, and its crowd-sourced leaflets and other guiding documents.

Version 4.1 (2015b) of the constitution is a 41-page PDF. It is presented as a set of 'core rules,

structure, and processes' but not as 'a complete set of bylaws or a formal operating agreement'

(2015b: Introduction). A link to a GitHub area has an under-development version 5.0 that indicates

it is a crowd-sourced item with scores of authors/contributors. The licensing page on GitHub reads,

'Like Linux®, Wikipedia®, and Java®, Holacracy® is a registered trademark; in this case, of

HolacracyOne LLC. And like other stewards of open platforms, HolacracyOne aims to maintain the

integrity of its brand and the quality of what it represents'.

Mechanically, Holacracy creates work 'Circles' that are ostensibly egalitarian. There is a 'Lead Link',

who, '[inherits] the Purpose and any Accountabilities on the Circle itself, and controls any Domains

defined on the Circle, just as if the Circle were only a Role and the Lead Link filled that Role'

(2015b: 5). Circles are comprised of varying 'Roles', which suggests a division of labour. All of these

terms are defined in the Constitution. For example, 'Accountabilities' are '[ongoing] activities of the

Organization that the [a given] Role will enact'.

The Holacracy Constitution works hard to say Holacracy is neither dogmatic nor

legalistic. '[Holacracy is not] a set of ideas, principles, or philosophies, but as a guide to a new

practice, which you may choose to use if it works for you better than whatever you are currently

doing. This is where Holacracy really comes alive' (Robertson, 2015a: 14). Kinna (2019b: 248),

when describing a 'typical' anarchist 'conundrum', writes that specific responses to how anarchist

systems may actually work are often met with, 'these kinds of questions cannot be answered precisely, because the people must be left to decide and act for themselves'.

Holacracy leverages artificial intelligence to some degree to work. Glassfrog is a software system and is '[the] official software to support and advance your Holacracy practice' (Glassfrog, 2020). The software's website claims it will help Holacratic organisations 'gain transparency, simplify meetings and master self-management'. The basic mechanics require a fair amount of data entry to work. In theory, a Holacracy organisation member would enter a variety of data on their roles, accountabilities, and other descriptors specific to the type of work they do. If everyone enters good data, the software will assist in identifying 'tensions', which are areas where roles, accountabilities, and other pieces of the organisation may overlap or otherwise conflict. Resolving tensions becomes the main reason for meetings; meetings in Holacracy are conducted to resolve 'tactical' tensions, or sometimes, solve or address 'strategic governance' issues (Robertson, 2015a). As of late summer 2019, there were two new entrants into the Holacracy software market, Maptio and Holaspirit. Neither are 'official' Holacracy One products, but they do use the Holacracy name and are clearly marketed as a Glassfrog alternative.

Although the rhetoric of Holacracy may suggest egalitarian decision-making, there are clear elements in its constitution that reveal hierarchy. For example, Circles may have Sub-Circles, which indicates growth and refinement around division of labour. All of this will reside in the Super-Circle. Leaders in the organisation labelled as, 'Partners', who appear to mean owners or senior executives, have a variety of authority and status in the Super-Circle to 'use your reasonable judgment to interpret this Constitution and any Governance within the Organization, including how these apply within a specific situation, and then act based on your interpretation' (Robertson, 2015b: 24). Another section offers additional information: 'As a Partner assigned to a Role, you have the authority to control and regulate each Domain of your Role. You may do this on a case-by-

case basis when others request permission to impact one of your Domains, by considering the request and allowing or withholding permission' (2015b: 3).

The rhetoric and discussion around Holacracy leverage notions of diffused decision-making and egalitarian arrangements. The 'How to start' website on Holacracy One reads: 'Holacracy is an overhaul to the way your organization works—how decisions are made, work gets done, and power is distributed. It's a full-scale replacement for the management hierarchy'. However, the constitution itself, with its terse and direct language, appears like an alternative to, perhaps, something like *Robert's Rules of Order*. The reader will recognise *Robert's Rules from* 'all in favor say aye', 'any opposed?' language seen in British Parliament, the US Congress and beyond. In other words, the actual text itself reads more like a manner of conducting what might be more efficient meetings and work interactions. The idea that hierarchy or coercion fades is unclear. During 2015, when Robertson's two main texts were published, and Zappos officially switched its entire organisation to Holacracy, Robertson appeared in a variety of areas to promote and detail Holacracy. In a notable interview with Yahoo! Finance on June 5, 2015, he proclaimed, 'Holacracy at Zappos: 'It's not anarchy!'.

Secondary texts of note

In the milieu of secondary texts, Aimee Groth's 2017, *Kingdom of Happiness: Inside Tony Hsieh's Zapponian Utopia* features as a central item. The book, written in a self-admitted 'Gonzo' style, chronicles Groth's time as an embedded journalist and quasi-anthropologist (her words) with Hsieh and Zappos. The story is quite compelling; she joins Hsieh's downtown Las Vegas renovation plan in 2012, which from the start appears to be part Zappos job, part urban enthusiast. The plan was Hsieh's brainchild and outlet of creativity right after sealing the Amazon deal in 2009. Hsieh even formally moved Zappos HQ from San Francisco to Las Vegas in 2013.

Groth initially details her interest in Hsieh, Zappos, and the downtown project with enthusiasm, but as the book proceeds her direct criticism of Hsieh grows. Zoe Henry, writing for *Inc.* magazine, references Groth in her blog, and wrote in 2017, 'Groth [points] out that Hsieh tends to hire employees with little experience, but positive attitudes. That may also be symptomatic of a cult leadership style'. Henry also wrote that, 'What's more, employees at both Zappos and the Downtown Project are encouraged to spend most of their time together—thus, in theory, making them easier to manage and control'. The title of her piece was, 'How Tony Hsieh Has Built a Cult of Personality' with the tagline of 'The Zappos CEO wants to create a self-managing work environment, but his leadership style is far more authoritarian in practice'. The fine line between 'heroic insightful leader with energy and vision' to 'cult-like demagogue who even abuses and won't listen', is striking. A clear counterargument or defence of Hsieh would naturally be around how any visionary history from history was likely controversial in their day. At least Hsieh is trying, right? Have you put up $350 million of your own money for downtown Las Vegas redevelopment? I have imagined Samantha giving this type of response if pressed.

In addition to Groth and Henry, many articles (well over 50) from various mainstream magazines like *Fast Company,* more from *Inc.* and *Forbes*, have watched and commented on Zappos. *Harvard Business Review*'s online hbr.org yields 267 results if you search for 'Zappos'. The most prominent is 2013's *Lessons from Top-Tier Companies: Apple, Google, Starbucks, and Zappos*, 2016's Tony Hsieh at *Zappos: Structure, Culture and Radical Change*, and 2017's *The Zappos Holacracy Experiment*. The latter is from Ethan Bernstein, a Harvard Business School professor who wrote HBR's *Beyond the Holacracy Hype* (2016) and Zappos' own *Holacracy Implementation Lead* by John Bunch. Bunch's official title on the Zappos website is, 'Lead Organizational Designer/Adviser to CEO'.

The majority of the mainstream press are 'quick-hitting' bits either promoting Holacracy and Zappos as innovative or castigating them for Hsieh's cult of personality or bizarre ideas. For example, in Workforce, an online Human Resources blog, Bethany Tomasian (2019) has a Q&A with John

Bunch. She asks, 'What advice would you offer other companies and even start-ups that are thinking about evolving the workplace hierarchy dynamic'? To which he replies, 'Start small...It is easy to go with the status quo and the traditional methods of organization. However, there is a growing amount of evidence of the fundamental flaws with that line of thinking. If you want to have an organization that is inspiring and resilient then it is important to think about these changes'. In a 2016 article from *Fortune*, Jennifer Reingold asks, 'A move to "self-management" has shaken the online shoe retailer. Can it regain its mojo'? The article does not detail any financial loss or gain, but does report that in a large company meeting in 2016, Hsieh '[announced] that [Zappos'] scores on *Fortune*'s Best Companies to Work For survey have tumbled on 48 of 58 questions. Indeed, Zappos has fallen off the overall list for the first time in eight years'.

Holacracy seminars

During 2017 and 2018, I participated in a series of Holacracy webinars held by Holacracy.org. Usually, Brian Robertson himself was the presenter. I again omit specific citations in each area to afford the reader a better flow. These are all from my field notes.

'Okay, many thanks...can you all see and hear me? Great! Okay, well, Holacracy, right? I mean, that's why we're all here, and we're going to get right into it'! This is Brian Robertson himself, his voice over the webinar chat link. 'I'm in Amsterdam right now; you'll have to forgive me if anything goes sideways with this tech'! Laughs and giggles from some unmuted voices across the globe. 'Can we just very quickly, maybe in the chat box, list where in the world you're all coming in from? We typically have 10-20 a session, and usually we are quite spread out. Okay, great...yes, I see people from Indonesia, Australia, here's a France, okay great, Brian in Manchester, UK. Awesome'.

Robertson is a very personable and affable guy. His demeanour and tone in the webinar is quite polished. 'I've done this a few hundred times now, but it's always great to meet new people and tell

the story of Holacracy. When I was a private pilot years ago, I made a key mistake. Thankfully, I

didn't lose my life…' This type of verbiage is repeated over the five sessions I attended. It is the

general text from chapter 1 of the 2015 book. In the story, Robertson details how not looking at his

various gauges almost led to an in-flight disaster. His goal in the seminar and text is to liken listening

to your gauges to listening to your people throughout the organisation. Like airplane gauges can

protect you in flight, listening to your people can protect your company.

The TEDtalk intensity and by-the-book attention-gainer impact notwithstanding, I find Robertson to

be very genuine. As deep as my bias is to try to find anarchism somewhere, combined with a now-

heavy degree of CMS induced scepticism, his attitude is productive. He is still very much a dyed-in-

the-wool capitalist. Corporate leaders equating drippy capitalism with extreme and dangerous

things elsewhere in life, is something I see a lot in the Utah business community (my home in the

States). It seems particularly common among the tech culture, where business 'leaders' take on an

air of adventure and personal risk. Anecdotally, it seems to correlate to boredom and extreme

wealth; where some seem to seek an outlet in philanthropy, others become x-treme sports fanatics,

pilots or other things that produce adrenalin. In Utah, there is an entire subculture of mountain

biking, skiing, and extreme sports populated with this crowd. This and related ideas are well-

explored in CMS literature, particularly Granter, et al (2015). Robertson certainly seems to think of

himself as an aggressive pioneer.

In the seminars, Robertson details the need for management to evolve, and the clumsiness and

ineffectiveness of Weberian bureaucracy. 'Clearly, we all hate bureaucracy, I mean, am I right? The

tools of previous generations are simply not agile enough for the contemporary workplace, where

innovation and speed are critical to competitive strategy and success. A diffusion of decision-

making, clear and prompt insight from the front line and throughout the organization...these are the

new management. Holacracy'. This type of language was consistent in each of the five seminars, all

of them were led by Robertson, whose job at Holacracy One, 'is to be the CEO, sure, but my main

role is the Lead Link of the Evangelical and Sharing Circle, which spreads the message about

Holacracy'.

In five Holacracy One seminars and mixers I attended over a two-year period from 2016-2018,

Robertson ran each one. They were all about an hour, detailed the start and backstory of Holacracy,

and Robertson's vision to craft a, 'more equitable and humane type of organizational structure. It's

all about structure'.

Social media data

Social media in various forms presented many rich data on Zappos. TripAdvisor's listing for the

'Zappos Tour Experience', number 141 of 390 options in Las Vegas as of late September 2019, details

an impressive event.

> Discover the wonderful world of Zappos company culture and let one of our fun
>
> Culture Guides take you on a 90-minute journey through our fabulous new
>
> headquarters in downtown Fremont! Learn about the Zappos Family, our history,
>
> our 10 core values, how we create the 'WOW' experience for our customers, and
>
> even meet a few of our amazing Zapponians! Tour times are: Monday - Thursday at
>
> 9am, 11am, 1pm, and 3pm. Friday: 11am & 1pm only. We recommend you sign up
>
> to reserve your spot as we are not able to accommodate walk-in requests.
>
> Reservations are processed through the web link on this page. Hope to see you
>
> soon!

Glassdoor, which has company and employee reviews, and even gives metrics on items like, 'CEO

Approval', is a treasure trove of employee insights. Bearing in mind that social media ratings tend

towards negative reviews, the Zappos data are quite rich, and using Glassdoor for cultural and

wellness research is established (Luo, Zhou, Shon, 2016; DeKay, 2013; Das Swain, Saha, Reedy, 2020). The 'Zappos Family of Companies' had a 3.5 out of 5 (see Figure 1) rating in 2017, with a total of surveyed reviews being unknown, but 359 statements being recorded. The '999999' figure for 'Recommend to a Friend' appeared to be a fluke/error. The reviews were notably trending downward between 2017 to mid-2019, with an uptick through 2020 (even with COVID-19). Confidence in senior management was the lowest score, or area that appeared to be the greatest concern to Zapponians.
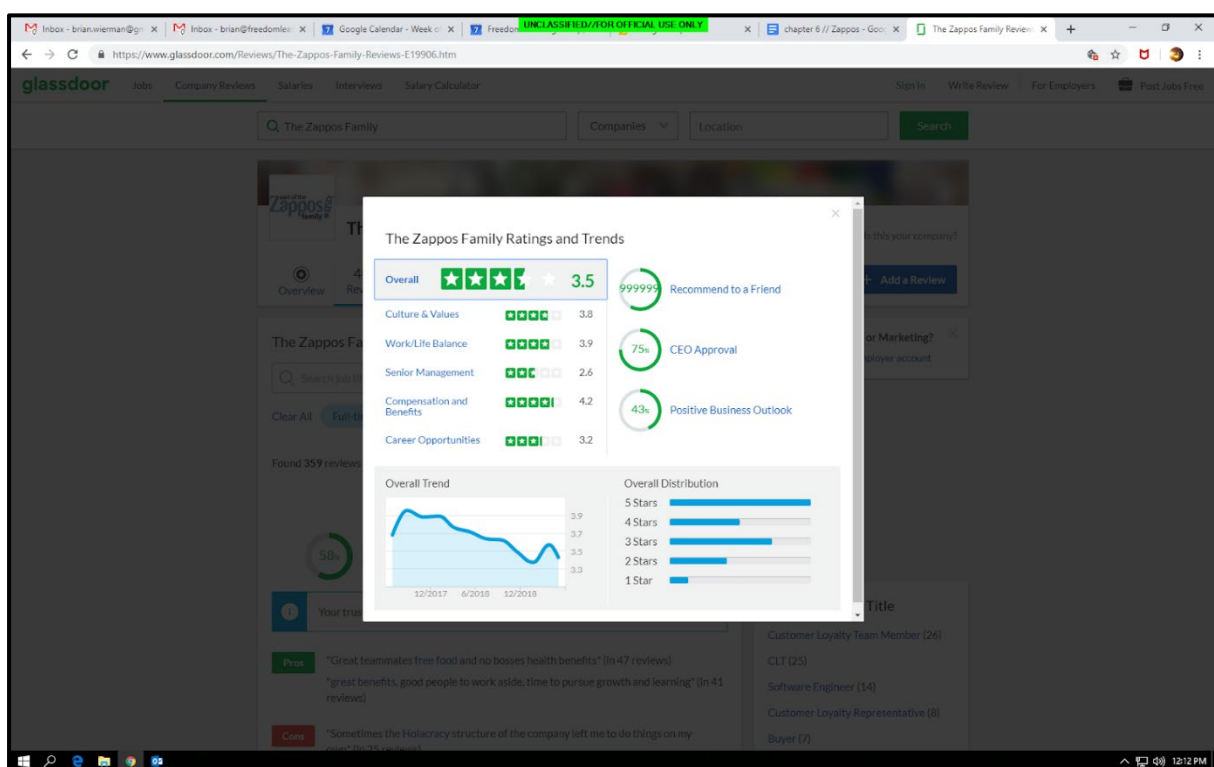
Figure 1, a screenshot of Zappos Glassdoor information (taken March 12, 2019)

The text of the reviews could be very mixed. One review dated 6 April 2019, read:

Where to begin....the CEO checked out in about 2011 or 2012 when he started

getting involved in the downtown project and it was shoved down our throats. Then

we move from a great office in henderson to skid row downtown. Homeless

EVERYWHERE. Felt very unsafe. Then they rolled out holocracy which was some type

of management system with no managers. Wasn't well thought out. Engineering was

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in the middle of a project with amazon and people were leaving in droves. Everyone could create their own job titles like code monkey, which was encouraged but which doesnt really wash with the people here on Visas who need any actual specific title to stay in this country to work. So no one had titles. No one knew how or what they were going to get paid. If you couldnt find a project to work on you would be put 'on the beach' and if for two weeks or so while you were on the beach if you couldnt find something you were let go. And you had to earn 'badges' like you were in the scouts in order to earn any type of pay bump. So many more meetings due to Holacracy and a lead link is just a manager with a different name. Just things that make working more petty and confusing and ridiculous. Also, the vacation/sick policy was different for the phone reps as it was for hourly workers which was also different for salaried workers. People were not treated equally. I got 1 week of sick time a year (accrued) and 2 weeks vacation (accrued). For a company such as this this was unacceptable. You have people with no sick time left coming in sick and getting other people sick. This company has fallen SO far from what it was when I started. Very few people liked this new management style and so many people were unhappy by the time i left so many in my department had gone. And then contractors are brought it and it affects the culture b/c these people are just there to work, not really have any investment in the company.

(text, spelling, and grammar are the reviewer's)

The headline text for the above passage reads, 'Fake...not what it seems'. The reviewer gives the company an overall 2 of 5 stars and provides the following 'Advice to Management': 'Get experienced people to run things and bring in professional people. It's like high school. You have some terrible terrible people working there. Esp in HR and Tech'.

When watching Glassdoor's Zappos page through the course of my thesis writing, the metrics

changed very little. In late 2020, the overall approval was 3.6, up .1, and Hsieh's personal approval

as CEO stayed at 75%. Zappos, Amazon or other senior leaders in their corporate governance

structure fired Hsieh in mid-2020; I assume the CEO-approval stat reflects this change. Extensive

quotes about the state of Holacracy at Zappos however indicated overall continued

concern. 'Amazing team, but don't believe all you hear on tours, Holacracy isn't practiced at all like

they show you in the videos,' and 'Zappos operates under the Holocracy system of leadership which

may not appeal to everyone' sit alongside continued compliments of, 'It pays the bills with great

benefits,' and 'Be yourself at work, no dress code,' and '[there are] benefits, flexibility, [and a]

funnish work environment.' The following list indicates the 'tension' that Zappos exits in regularly,

something not very different from other 'quality' and 'great places to work.' 'Coworkers', 'being

yourself', and 'benefits' ranked high or featured consistently in reviews as pros, but 'favoritism', and

'lack of advancement' were regular cons. One reviewer said, 'the excitement of the company

dwindles away when the real colors show through'.

Conclusion

This chapter presented curated data from my Zappos research. There were a handful of expository

discussions, but those will primarily come in chapter 7, which I designed to provide my interpretative

overview of both case study chapters. There, I will first ask to what extent is Zappos theoretically

anarchist, and second, to what extent is the lived experience at Zappos a practical manifestation of

anarchism. Like MFE/A, the 'DNA' of Zappos is anarchist, but the experience of being and working at

Zappos is an attenuated and dynamic anarchism. Second and third epoch anarchism reveal

themselves at times, particularly in the attitudes and energy of employees, but this anarchism meets

capitalist imperatives and serves to confuse the experience. This is made more complex by Zappos'

relatively unique energy towards how it manages – the way it perceives itself – and the culture it

promotes internally. It thinks of itself as having a 'humane' capitalism that rejects mainstream

approaches to organisation and capitalism, but its embrace of non-coercive egalitarian interaction and decision-making is consistently belied by Hsieh's cult of personality, favoritism, and weak adherence to Holacracy.

What appeared plausible from these data is however the theoretical utility of anarchism to mainstream business practitioners in the roughly millennial mix. In a desire to be 'woke', fair and socially minded, the language and essence of non-coercion is clearly of interest and woven into much of Zappos' and Robertson's rhetoric and narratives. What is also evident is how problematic the realisation of these goals can be. Is it simply a capitalism problem? Hsieh's cult of personality might be a barrier to his own goals of an advanced corporate climate, but he has clearly been necessary in erecting what freedom and flexibility Zappos employees do have, over, for example, other similar e-commerce organisations and call-centers. Control issues, discussed in chapter 4, suggest an underbelly to the circumstance; there is a hijacking of any ethical improvement by groupthink, heroic cult of personality leadership, a general lack of self-awareness and reflection on the lived experience in Zappos, and a somewhat blind adherence to corporate speak and platitudes. Zappos culture appears oppressive in a weird, flipped way, possibly, in that it inverts what it means to truly be open and respectful. In a desire to be progressive, any non-conformity to a defined and localised notion of the two comes across as, 'not being part of the team'. In a 2017 *Fast Company* piece, entitled, 'Zappos CEO Tony Hsieh: Adopt Holacracy or Leave', Hsieh is quoted in his now famous memo about Holacracy as saying:

> As previously stated, self-management and self-organization is not for everyone, and not everyone will necessarily want to move forward in the direction of the Best Customers Strategy and the strategy statements that were recently rolled out. Therefore, there will be a special version of 'the offer' on a company-wide scale, in which each employee will be offered at least 3 months' severance (and up to 3 months of COBRA reimbursement for benefits) if he/she feels that self-

management, self-organization, and our Best Customers Strategy and strategy

statements as published in Glass Frog are not the right fit. (For employees that have

been with Zappos for 4 or more years, the offer will be 1 month for every year

worked at Zappos, along with up to 3 months of COBRA reimbursement for

benefits.)

Thus, overall, we have a seemingly progressive technology firm ultimately falling back to a familiar managerial control, one that clearly utters, 'if you cannot handle the way things are done around here, you can simply leave'. Zappos made mainstream management press (Brin, 2014) when it, 'created a stir recently by abolishing its job postings and instead inviting potential job seekers to become Zappos Insiders'. Zappos Insiders (Zappos, 2020), 'are simply people who might want to work for Zappos someday… now, tomorrow or sometime down the road.' Thus, a Zapponian would have multiple and consistent messaging of how lucky they are to remain in their job; certainly many an Insider would be waiting in the wings.

 A 2015 Glassdoor listing suggested high turnover and as first mentioned in chapter 4, there is persistent fear of being fired, even for established professionals (Hassard and Morris, 2018) particularly if one does not 'fit in'. 'The job is stressful, the turnover is high, and the company is only surviving on its once-great reputation.' Further, 'Employees are in constant fear of losing their jobs for saying or doing something that proves to management that they aren't a "culture fit."' The listing continues, 'There are too many stories of people being called to a meeting and never coming back. People are fired for giving their honest opinions just because they are perceived as "negative", and then upper management wonders why nobody wants to bring up problems when they have the "opportunity to be honest"'. This former employee even gave 'advice to management' in their listing:

When you build a company culture around the assumption that employees should

enjoy a fundamentally unenjoyable job (customer service), you only end up hiring

two kinds of employees: (1) ones that are skilled at acting, lying, and personal

politics; or (2) ones that are too good-natured and trusting to realize they are being

manipulated and lied to. The second type of employee doesn't last long after they

become disillusioned.

The anarchism at Zappos remains attenuated, dynamic, and largely suppressed. One is free to have

purple hair, funky titles, and other mild self-expressions, but one's behavior must ultimately conform

to the money-making paradigm at hand. This suggests that one serves the other, which is very much

what concepts like, for example, Fleming and Sturdy's (2009) neo-normative control entails. That

said, there is ample evidence that Hsieh wishes it were otherwise; he projects at least, an image of a

business leader trying to create as much freedom and meaningfulness, even if organisational and

capitalist principles and actions harm his efforts. Hsieh himself, like his employees, sits in a dynamic,

uneasy, and contested space. Deeper analysis of how Zappos - and MFE/A - connect with the models

of anarchism developed in this thesis appears in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 7 // DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter, I expand on the various findings throughout the thesis by analysing data from both

MFE/A and Zappos through the anarchism model developed in chapter 3. I also tie in insight from

chapter 4, where I described self-managed teams (SMT), workers self-management (WSM), and

related issues of innovation and control. This chapter represents the intersection of all ideas

explored in the thesis and positions the opportunities for a possible anarchist theory of

management.

The problem with 'innovation'

In reflecting on the data and overall experience of writing this thesis, I can see now that self-

management, or organising without managers, is not an innovation. Given the prominence of

'innovation' in my title, and how I first arrived at the idea of anarchism and what was happening at

Zappos, I wanted to call this out specifically in the discussion chapter. Chapter 4 showed that

worker-self management (WSM) has been a feature of industrial capitalist organisation since the

1840s; it presents both a challenge to 'conventional' hierarchical organisation and unionised

labor. Self-managed teams (SMT), particularly that witnessed in Holacracy at Zappos, is only an

innovation inasmuch as it repositions seemingly less hierarchical organising inside neoliberal

capitalism. In reality, this 'innovation' buries any relatively superficial emancipatory gains, such as

personal self-expression in clothing, titles, fun at work, or hair color, through new forms of

encroaching managerial control internalised by workers themselves. This 'progress' is also

internalised by owners and leaders, as evidenced by Hsieh and Robertson's experience with

Zappos. The data suggest they meaningfully thought they had done something novel and socially

good. This therefore sums to a regression in management and organisation; this circumstance

oppresses workers even further, and worse, makes even socially minded leaders like Hsieh, feel like they have done something useful.

MFE/A and first epoch anarchism

As a component of the military apparatus of the United States, MFE/A appears antithetical to anarchism. Since the state asserts centralised use of violent authority around Weber's monopoly on violence (1919) through its military, police and related devices, organs of the military cannot, by definition, be anarchist. This requires a precise definition of anarchism however as specifically against a state's security apparatus. Thomson (2016), writing for the Institute of Anarchist Studies said, 'Rooted in an anti-state analysis, the anarchist position on geopolitical power struggles between nation-states is unequivocal opposition, especially in reference to international interventions by the US military'. Thomson goes on to say that

> However, through my involvement in anti-war movements and anarchist circles over the last ten years, I have encountered a surprising number of anarchists opposed to the US military who are themselves US veterans. For many of them, their experience...played a significant role in forming and developing their anti-authoritarian and anarchist analysis.

The point here is to illustrate nuances inside military and classical anarchism; indeed, in the classical epoch area of anarchism, where one might expect to find no nuance, there are rich gradations. As the modern era unfolded, the military as the mechanism of overt control from a state's sovereign evolved into a constabulary, and of course, to modern police, and the overall legal and prison apparatus seen today. For anarchists, this apparatus *is* the authoritarian state, but the members themselves, especially veterans with the scars of war, are a likely source of a critical mindset. Hear, hear. In 1999's Battle of Seattle, where Black Bloc anarchists, police, green activists, truck unions, and many others disaffected by globalisation met and toiled, some of the most adversely affected were police who dissented from how various authorities responded. Police chief Norm Stamper

detailed this in his own memoirs (2016 and 2006) and has built a second career after his resignation

in 2000 on better policing. He appears regularly on Democracy Now!, a leftist media non-profit. The

2020 Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone/Capitol Hill Organized Protest event in Seattle is an extension of

similar angst (Burns, 2020 and Wallace, 2020).

Semantic nuance and veteran experience feature in the ways one could argue MFE/A as classically

anarchist. First, anarchist societies or experiments often have or have had an element, team, or

faction oriented on guarding or defending the broader group. How a group defined this or regarded

this security entity are likely the only features that would differentiate it from the military of a

nation-state. Second, the Marines and the broader US military have had visible dissenters, many of

whom participated in war, only to later disavow their participation or support for US policy in what

could be viewed as an anarchist expression. There are many examples of this, particularly after the

Vietnam War. Here, I will look briefly at the CNT of Civil War Spain and a key dissenting figure in

Marine Corps history, that of Major General Smedley Butler (1881-1940).

The CNT of Revolutionary and Civil War Spain, or the National Guard of the Paris Commune, or

possibly the militia of the Makhnovists, were the security apparati of their respective nation or

people or group. These are groups that clearly proclaimed their anarchism, but also had armed

elements, even ones which incorporated hierarchical control, however unwillingly or

restrained. These groups all operated with some elements of 'conventional' military-like control and

'order'. Seattle's CHOP had armed security as well, often checking identification (Jennings, 2020).

> It's not our intent to try to create any paradox to try to incite violence or have that
>
> be a motif', said demonstrator Maurice Cola. 'We're not trying to use our guns to
>
> flash around — it's for defense'. Cola said that people are welcome to come and go
>
> freely, without being stopped; the guns are only to guard against violent white
>
> supremacist groups. 'There's local groups of white supremacists who facilitated in

trying to give us threats by marching up with their own weaponry, so we are

utilizing our rights and bearing arms', Cola said. 'There are a few people who are

monitoring the gate just for our safety, as we already had an active shooter on site'.

Anarchist groups throughout history have thus had 'regular' militaries, and their justification is their defence. Having a security entity in one's anarchist enclave is not anti-anarchist, nor is one that may take on hierarchical features, such as was common in each of the three historical examples. In each case, the ranks of the militia were made up of the men and women of the anarchist movement itself. The best account is Orwell's 1938 *Homage to Catalonia*, where Orwell saw a degree of egalitarian tone in its militia. Modern day Rojava, the Kurdish enclave in northern Syria, has a variety of anarchist elements in its ethos and practice. Women are involved in leadership and organisation, and the writings and thinking of Abdullah Ocalan feature as the movement's intellectual roots. Kinna (2019: 246) describes Ocalan as, 'raising anarchism...to new heights'. Ocalan is quoted as describing social organisation as, '...free life [that is] neither a form of production nor a society but life that can be constructed daily by communities' (Kinna, 2019: 247). It is, then, perhaps how these elements are thought of that most define their anarchism, not necessarily their adherence to 'perfect' non-coercive and non-hierarchical organisation.

Veterans of wars dissenting and critiquing their governments is perhaps a relatively common phenomenon. In Marine Corps history, the strongest example is that of Major General Smedley Butler, a two-time Medal of Honor winner, who critiqued and rejected the Marine Corps and his own personal role in US state violence throughout the US 'Banana Wars' of the Interwar Period (1920s). Their slippery title indicates the challenge Butler had in pinning down what he was doing in the Caribbean for US interests. Butler took issue with US policy he saw as expansionist and aggressive and, given the lack of any existential threat to the US during the Interwar Period, motivated entirely by economic greed. Butler saw the complex alignment of state, wealth, and

ruling class interests, and concluded his actions in the service of this were immoral and corrupt. He explained his perspectives in his 1935 essay *War is a Racket!*

> WAR is a racket. It always has been.

> It is possibly the oldest, easily the most profitable, surely the most vicious. It is the only one international in scope. It is the only one in which the profits are reckoned in dollars and the losses in lives.

> A racket is best described, I believe, as something that is not what it seems to the majority of the people. Only a small 'inside' group knows what it is about. It is conducted for the benefit of the very few, at the expense of the very many. Out of war a few people make huge fortunes (1935: 1).

MFE/A and second epoch anarchism

The second epoch anarchism of Colin Ward and Paul Goodman positions the expression of freedom in 'practical' ways, ways that circumvent or escape the anti-state paradigm of classical anarchism while still maneuvering against coercion and hierarchy. In other words, this anarchism 'drops' fixation on 'the state' as the locus of power in society against which to work, agitate, and revolutionise. There are two ways MFE/A showed second epoch anarchism. The first is the mentality and doctrinal ethos of *Auftragstaktik* or Mission-Command. The second is how the corporate nature of MFE/A suppresses Mission Command and initiative, but the thinking and design nature of much of the work seeks a creative outlet and expression.

I covered *Auftragstaktik* at length in chapter 5, but I will highlight its anarchist features here. I observed ample initiative and Mission Command at MFE/A, but I also witnessed equally ample times where MFE/A members suppressed their own or others' initiative and freedom. This back-and-forth is a feature of modern life. Many MFE/A members who were 'freer' in practical terms, such as less

interactions with senior leadership, probably through ownership of an important but relatively mundane program or process, felt oppressed, coerced, or otherwise put out by their experience. Much of this hinged on one's personal experience at MFE/A. White and Williams (2014, 2012) describe how modern life makes us feel, think, and focus on the time we are coerced, missing the innumerable ways we express and realise our own freedom. White and Williams' perspective is very much in keeping with both second and third epoch anarchism, and the realisation of 'bits' of freedom wherever possible, and for some, even in very hierarchical organisations, they can 'hide' or otherwise exist with minimal coercion.

Suppression of Mission Command suggests a physics to organisational life at MFE/A. From Ward's perspective, anarchism is the natural state of being, a suppressive structure over the top of this confirms anarchism's existence; power in coercive form by definition suppresses something, this 'something' to Ward and Goodman was, 'the experience of everyday life, which operates side by side with, and in spite of, the dominant trends of authoritarianism in our society (Ward, 1973: 23). Recall LtCol Mark Bistro's discussion of his oppression, monitoring, and freedom. 'Well, as an O5, I am both oppressively monitored by the colonels, but also given wide latitude, it really depends on the mood of the Commander'.[1] While Bistro's point emphasised the Commander's role, my observation was the sheer volume of activity at MFE/A meant the Commander relied on others (decentralisation) to accomplish most tasks. Most of the operational work, compliance with the Department of Defense, Department of the Navy, and the broader US Marine Corps, were all done without much fanfare. The Commander would receive 'briefs' where he was given ample opportunity to decide on matters or at least provide guidance, but the staff itself, a diffuse mix of 50-120 different officers, made key decisions often, and indeed 'served up' the briefs MajGen Bilson reviewed. MajGen Bilson of course made requirements on the staff to produce a variety of briefs, but far more things came his way that were decided elsewhere in the staff or broader Marine Corps

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[1] An 'O5' or 'Officer 5' in the Marines is a lieutenant colonel.

and Department of Defense. The central item here is the relationship between the amount of work at hand, the varying latitude each officer had at MFE/A, and the moving 'microscope' of the Commander.

'Unless the Command has shifted the microscope, much of what we do receives little attention from the Commander'. This 'microscope' was a metaphor for close attention. Close attention crystallised the formal hierarchy of MFE/A around a given item as the structure between the Commander and an 'Action Officer' expected reports and insight into the work at hand. As is compatible with anarchist thinking, a tightening of hierarchy was accompanied almost always with heightened coercion, or forceful or directive leadership.

'The Boss wants it done this way. We get it done that way', was a common type of utterance. '...but most of the time, I just do my thing…' was a common phrase that followed.

When the microscope shifted however, this re-crystallised the hierarchy in other areas. Previously micro- or intensely managed features or processes would continue, but the hierarchy around them would fizzle or simply cease altogether. Most day-to-day work, the most routine work of the organisation, such as payroll, general security of the building, and physical fitness, would happen in small teams with little supervision beyond an immediate supervisor. Many of these processes were compliance oriented, and the Commander's (and therefore the hierarchy's) interest was a binary 'good or needs improvement' checklist or understanding. There were, however, many central 'warfighting' processes, particularly the development of core plans and strategy, that eventually made their way to the Commander, but the activity of the planner group, comprised of Action Officers throughout the Command, was peer-led and organised. Only when something was 'ready for prime time' did it make it up to the next echelon of leadership. This group would then review it, and possibly approve it for the Commander.

The sum of these 'physics' of hierarchy and coercion meant MFE/A was always experiencing a tightening and loosening of its second epoch anarchism. This 'elastic' anarchism conforms with Ward and Goodman's notions of natural anarchism interacting with suppressive authoritarianism throughout society. In their view, anarchism versus authoritarianism in a constant push and pull. Notably however, authority dominates our consciousness. Recall again White and Williams (2012, 2014), who point this out as well around neoliberal capitalism. By their research, far more free exchange happens than coercion, but coercion and its structure and effects dominate our thinking and perception of the world.

While the micro- and intense managerialism of being under the microscope was problematic at times, it did interestingly feature higher morale. This was not easy to parse out and required hypothesising the phenomenon and then watching for it to manifest. Essentially, the group that had the highest dedication and commitment to the Marine Corps, had its collective and individual ego and sense of purpose aligned to high visibility and intensity events or processes. LtCol Bistro, who features in chapter 5, demonstrated this behaviour. Whenever his projects received MajGen Bilson's attention, Bistro's demeanour clearly elevated (field notes, 2016). Bistro was a career active-duty Marine. Marines like Bistro were usually high-achievers and were the most fit and well-educated types in the Command. The G-5, the planner group mentioned in chapter 5, was generally comprised of these individuals. MajGen Bilson, when more junior in staff roles, came from a planner background, and had similar postings to Bistro and the planner group. It stands to reason that he experienced similar ebbs and flows to his own morale and expressions in his career.

MFE/A and third epoch anarchism

The anarchism of MFE/A is probably best understood as a mix of second and third epoch anarchism; we take the generally non-antistate, but freedom asserting nature of New Left anarchism, and combine postmodern power dynamics and insight, particularly those oriented on the individual or subject. Recall the text of Nick's, Nathan's, and Granger's interactions. They generally feature mild

resistance, some conscious, some unconscious, and an unwillingness or a sort of mild malaise of being at MFE/A and participating in its meetings and activities. Moreover, they were very aware of how their time at MFE/A afforded other things in their lives, such as Nick's sailing. Much of my observation and interview interaction with other Marines in MFE/A was similar. If this is anarchism, then anarchism aligns with and seeks to explain a great deal of alienation at work (Finney and Maes, 2018), which is a well-documented and discussed feature of the sociology of work, capitalism, and of course, a common zeitgeist of modernity writ large. Even the most dedicated of Marines 'fell' often in complaining behaviours about the Marine Corps and MFE/A; as it is common in many workplaces, the pub and beyond, complaining as a way of connecting.

Chomsky (2015), Bob Black (1997) and others insist that the natural man endeavours to create and explore. 'Work' at MFE/A was hard to pin down, much like it is at other white-collar enterprises. Most felt like they were 'working' when manipulating information at their workspaces or sitting in meetings discussing information and decisions. This led to a persistent sense of unease for most; arriving each day and searching for meaning was common. 'Work', when characterised as going somewhere to sit for hours, gesticulating in a type of knowledge-oriented activity, posturing one's ego against unclear outcomes and needs, is commonly perceived as a vacuous and soul-sapping experience. Granger's 'it's all a s--- show' comment illustrated the tense hilarity of MFE/A. He was far from alone in this perspective, but the unease created various reactions. MajGen Bilson and Will's sheer hours per day, something many of the most dedicated 'company men' also demonstrated, often without clear need, caused others to resist MajGen Bilson's and Will's unclear energy. While MajGen Bilson and Will pursued meaningfulness through long hours, ostensibly a visible dedication, many at MFE/A responded in a form of vague resistance and insurrection to the demands of MFE/A. The resistance was often against the acting and performance of 'being busy' as a way of demonstrating one's care towards the enterprise. This put many at odds with the Commander and his most dedicated company men.   Resistance, 'bullshit

jobs', and the general meaninglessness of white-collar work are prominent CMS and broader management topics (Contu, 2008; Lauri, 2016; Graeber, 2019). The experience of MFE/A is not unique.

Clear in the MFE/A data were the sentiments of most at the Command in it 'not being the real Marine Corps', and that the corporate nature, the nature that produced the above 'busyness' pathology, was unnatural to the Corps, and therefore not a thing to really be contemplated and solved, but rather endured for a short time, a penance, in order to return to combat units. What exactly is the 'real Marine Corps', was a complex topic for many, but it generally meant combat. Recall that Nick 'joined the Marine Corps to kill people'; this father of a young girl, married, and owner of several small businesses in Germany and the US, who also sailed the world, and demonstrated a certain anti-work lifestyle, does not seem like a violent psychopathic killer. His somewhat doughy features belie his Marine Corps affiliation, and his anti-politics of 'this place basically sucks' illustrate the walking paradox of Marine theory and action. While he was the most consistent and colourful illustration of this tension, many—even most—of my MFE/A counterparts expressed these sentiments as a way of being. MFE/A, with its corporatism, meetings, and banality, sits atop a crying-out for freedom of expression anarchism.

MFE/A anarchism

Anarchism at MFE/A is tenuous, dynamic and always shifting. I argued the plausibility of classic or first epoch anarchism at MFE/A through both a semantics and historical lens, but logically most anyone claiming anarchism today would reject that a nation's military -- the main state apparatus of power -- could in anyway be anarchist. However, as anarchism has evolved to its second and third epochs, MFE/A's anarchism, and the anarchism of the Marine corps writ large, become both more plausible but also clear, in at least some instances.

But, the anarchism of MFE/A, like the anarchism of anywhere, is tedious, tenuous, fleeting and

dynamic, a bit like trying to press down on bread dough. When one seeks to study or isolate

consistent anarchism, all it takes is one bad oppressive meeting, or a new memo detailing an update

to the phone procedures, or MajGen Bilson needing you for something, and one's freedom of action

and less oppressive existence is evaporated. Thankfully, many however moved on from these

disruptions to their 'personal anarchisms', and even grew and rekindled their freedom in a large ebb

and flow. Thus, we might argue that 'power' as centralised control in MFE/A orbited around its dual

opposite, 'freedom' constantly. Logically, this is not at all unique to MFE/A.

A final vignette, innocuous and corporate, was the nature of meetings. For any meetings I ran,

which were often given my planner status, I often tried to physically sit at the table in a way that

would indicate togetherness and equality, especially to the junior officers and enlisted Marines from

whom I needed insight. I wanted to build a good working rapport. This egalitarian gesture was often

derailed, particularly by one aggressive and standard-bearing Marine's Marines, LtCol Martin. 'Brian,

why don't you bump to the Commander's chair, so they know you're running the meeting'? LtCol

Martin's 'technique' of leadership (and coercion) was to regularly assert a relatively innocuous level

of control over every event in which he took part. There were other lieutenant colonels in the

meeting who did not make any mention of my management of my meetings. Something as subtle as

'sit there' served often in MFE/A to undermine local expressions of autonomy.

This was common behaviour from senior and 'institutional' Marine leaders at MFE/A, to include

MajGen Bilson, the MFE/A commander. While Martin outranked me, the matrixed nature of me

running the meeting and event as a major, was absent from his thinking. I was a tool for his insight,

and a vehicle for his dominance of the Command. He had his impressions and footprint

everywhere. LtCol Martin would go on to run The Basic School, a highly prestigious command for a

Marine officer. Formed by the Institution's general way of thinking and judged by a conjecture of

what senior leaders would think of when contemplating a man like LtCol Martin, was he was highly

effective as a result of his micro-assertions of leadership and influence. This sort of 'low level' influence campaign was a mild coercion to be sure, but coercive, nonetheless. There were other senior leaders in those same types of meetings who would yield the floor entirely and not seek to grandstand, take over, or otherwise run and influence the event. Thus, the greatest barrier to more expressions of freedom, which would often accelerate information sharing and have many organisational benefits, was harmed by a cadre of more 'corporate' types, ones that used rank and 'type-A' behaviour to dominate others. This is, of course, nothing unique to MFE/A.

Therefore, my main learning of MFE/A's anarchism was that I found Colin Ward's 'seeds beneath the snow' mixed with the Marine Corps' own Mission Command logic and its many figures like Nick seeking expression and freedom even while in such a strong culture. This encouraging mix was however violated by a near constant administrative and bureaucratic pain, and the power and politicking machinations of 'institutional' men and women. Thus, anarchism at MFE/A was a dynamic mix, where 'anchors' or 'openings' could germinate; this notion complements Kinna's (2019) encouragement to grow anarchism where it already is. This, as opposed to a notion of politics where the anarchist might seek to wholesale destroy or replace the Marine Corps into its seemingly opposite self, something that would no doubt entrench its members in their more centralised notions of self and organisation.

Zappos and first epoch anarchism

Zappos and anarchism are an equally complex and interesting entanglement. At first glance, Zappos as a capitalist enterprise is dichotomous with classical anarchism. As with MFE/A, modern organisations that operate inside neoliberalism, or in the case of MFE/A, contribute or even assure its hegemony, are generally viewed to be far from classical anarchism. Zappos could exist in an anarcho-capitalist arena, but most anarchists do not view anarcho-capitalist as 'pure' anarchism (Kinna, 2019: 8), or at least this is widely contested (Long, 2004). As Chomsky has noted (2015), 'The imprecision of politics terms' persists. In its search for a more consistent and meaningful place in

the span of political ideology, anarchism remains deeply contested terrain, and examining Zappos as classically anarchist only adds to the contest.

If classical anarchism cannot simply in any way be in alignment with capitalist enterprise, if anarchism is a binary philosophy, then the section on classical anarchism and Zappos can proceed to quick conclusion. If, however, anarchism operates as Chomsky indicated, 'around a core anti-coercion, and to an extent an anti-hierarchy', (2015) then the nuance of anarchism opens much discussion. A non-binary but multi-polar anarchism may exist, that of the three epochs (if not more), themselves deficient of course in the breadth and depth anarchism in its various forms can provide, but a useful perspective.

Anarcho-capitalists certainly argue that anarchism and capitalism are complementary. The Ludwig von Mises Institute of Auburn, Alabama, in the US aligns Austrian Economics with a broad rejection of government or state intervention in the free market, this is typically regarded in the US as 'libertarian'. The lineage of the Mises Institute involves Murray Rothbard, the Koch Brothers, and Friedrich Hayek. Chomsky describes the weighted and obscured use of 'libertarian' in the American anarcho-capitalist sense here has, 'generally simply supportive of massive big business with total destruction...in essence, the opposite of its initial French use, *libertaire*, or the early anarchism' (2015). Hayek, generally a villain on the left for his intellectual role in present day neoliberal capitalism, indicates the complexity of pinning down the classically anarchist notion. Klikauer (2015) critiqued Critical Management Studies (CMS), discussed in chapter 4 as an expression of critical theory applied to capitalism and modern-day management, as possibly a Hayekian versus critical project. Unless CMS reworks ownership, it is a sort of wolf in sheep's clothing; it masks its grand design for more effective capitalist management through language (e.g., 'management' is reworked into 'organisation').

In this perhaps confusing morass of -isms, the now further distinction of something like anarcho-capitalism comes into play, colliding again with the often-found problem of defining what 'real' leftist anarchism is. Leftist anarchists largely view anarcho-capitalism to simply not be anarchism because of its overt support of capitalism. If this series of logic is correct, what occurs at Zappos is not anarchism. It is noteworthy to return to Bakunin's row with Marx all the way back in the First International of 1870, when socialism split between its libertarian (anarchist) and authoritarian (later Leninist, Trotskyist, Stalinist, and Maoist) elements. Given the clear 'victory' of authoritarian socialism in the consciousness of the world and beyond, anarchism as a left-leaning libertarianism or socialism, falls at least into the category of confusion, if not outright rejection.

Nevertheless, the data at Zappos suggest a variety of things that should interest both CMS and anarchist scholars; namely, for all its problems around the demagoguery of Hsieh and concertive and neo-normative control, it is an enterprise interested in humane interaction. Perhaps the *intention* of being and doing better inside the extant system represents a meaningful reform of capitalism, or maybe yet another new spirit (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005) of capitalism's ability to absorb and even repurpose critiques. In the case of Zappos, neither Hsieh nor Robertson appear 'aware' of anarchism as a well from which to reform capitalism. Robertson is quoted many times saying Holacracy is 'not anarchy'— but more likely, a way of organising that is aware of the relationship between control, efficiency, profit, and a broad interpretation of organisational effectiveness. When I asked Robertson during a webinar if he was aware of anarchism, he did not reply.

'Millennials are bearing the brunt of the economic damage wrought by late-20th-century capitalism', argues Malcolm Harris, a millennial sociologist, in his 2018, *Kids These Days: The Making of Millennials.* A 2017 *Financial Times* piece describing Harris' text cites and alludes to Paul Goodman's 1962, *Growing up Absurd*; experiencing alienation and tiring of capitalism is a generational occurrence, and indeed never far from somewhere/various places in the anarchist milieu. In an interview for Vox magazine, Harris noted that:

'[with regard to economic and workplace concerns], Marxists would refer to this as an increase in the rate of exploitation, meaning workers are working longer, harder, and more efficiently but are receiving less and less in return. I reference Marxism here (even though his name never appears in the book) because conventional American economists don't really have a term for this— it's not something they like to talk about because they don't recognize that capitalism is built on exploitation'.

I read Hsieh and Robertson as aware of this exploitation but lacking the language and awareness as Harris suggests.

This awareness, and possibly even genuine concern for the experience of workers, feels common among Hsieh and Robertson's ilk. Similarly related is philanthropy and other forms of 'giving back', perhaps cynically seen as stemming from guilt over capitalist excess. Not too far from the anarchist milieu is the Critical Pedagogy and overall social criticism of Paulo Friere. Claimed by anarchists interested in what an 'anarchist pedagogy' might entail and noting the relationship between education and youth upbringing with setting future political conditions right, Friere's insight is useful and powerful for our conversation here. Friere (1996), like Fromm (1962), hearkens to Marx to highlight the *Entfremdung* or alienation of capitalism. Here, anarchists and Marxists align to critique extant capitalism. While perhaps the material needs of many are addressed by capitalism in a broad abstract sense, for example, there are more people in Africa with access to clean water and medicine than ever before in industrialised history (Fotso, 2007), clearly many more are disenfranchised away from a meaningful existence.

This raises the subjective notion of happiness that appears to be a Developed World problem. Flint, Michigan, notwithstanding, poverty and precarity in the US or the UK, for example, likely does not include poor drinking water. But, for many in the working world, 'happy' on some level to have an income, life takes on dystopian tones as it is reduced to strange metrics, 'goals', 'vision', 'KPIs', and

all other manner of modern management. Here is where the most damning critique of Zappos' even remotely possible anarchism resides; in this, a strange paradox exists. It is indeed, 'better to work here than anywhere else', a common utterance and point from the Zappos data, but it is still harmful capitalism, and still probably something society should not overall be satisfied with. Especially not when the arc of history shows such human achievement, insight and creativity exploding around us and in recent memory. We did, after all, land on the moon just 50 years ago. And 50 years prior to that of course, we didn't even have a handle on many common ailments that today are largely no longer an issue, the anti-vaccination untruthfulness challenge notwithstanding.

Zappos and second epoch anarchism

Perhaps a silver bullet, as hard as it may be to swallow for dyed-in-the-wool anarchists, is indeed broadening 'anarchism' to include the yellow/black version of itself so often rejected as 'not anarchism' mentioned earlier. Anarcho-capitalism could be a second epoch anarchism. While Kinna (2019: 8) rejected anarcho-capitalism as anarchism, she does however leave room for the intersection of anarchism with capitalism: 'the future of anarchism is not the expansion of specially anarchist groups, but anarchist themes inside other organizations'. (I have cited this important passage from her 2019 book elsewhere in my thesis). Could these organisations be capitalist enterprises? Military organisations? Those heretofore anathema to classical anarchism certainly, but possibly not completely, or in totality; moreover, the extended nuance of second and third epoch anarchism, which Klikauer (2015) justifiably critiques as 'micro-emancipation' at best. Or, as many revolutionary and ardent critics of capitalism often contend, is a 'micro-emancipation' simply a 'decaffeinated' (Contu, 2008) expression of resistance, and therefore ultimately a meaningless event that reifies core issues with capitalism.

Second epoch anarchism appears to move beyond a concern for both the state and capitalism, however, and instead focuses on immediately practical and tangible ways to assert greater liberation. Perhaps an obvious and useful way to unearth Zappos' practical anarchism, is to compare

some of its features to practical anarchist organisations, ones not particularly anti-state, but embodying anarchist ethos in a practical manner. When looking at presently existing anarchist organisations, who decides if it is anarchist or not? A self-declaring entity saying 'we're anarchists' is perhaps the most anarchist, but chapter 4 revealed an organisation like Mondragon, operating inside neoliberal capitalism, is broadly anarchist, or shares enough features to make the conversation interesting and plausible. Therefore, declaring oneself to be an anarchist organisation is not necessary to being anarchist. Equally challenging are the acceptance of contemporary violent extremists, like those of Black Bloc— not an organisation but rather a sensibility but seeming certainly like a viable group from the minds of most onlookers. As with the semantics of describing 'anarchism' as something specific writ large, defining an anarchist group remains contested terrain.

Food Not Bombs (FNB) is a relatively well known and high-functioning anarchist organisation. It does not claim to be 'anarchist' however, nor does it (at least overtly) state anywhere on its website or associated materials that it seeks the violent toppling of the American state. Its website describes 'hundreds of autonomous chapters sharing free vegetarian food with hungry people and protesting war and poverty'. It is easy to find evidence of their activities across the internet. While there are no pictures of central leadership, and the FAQ states, '[FNB] is autonomous or independent and uses the process we call consensus to make decisions. We encourage each Food Not Bombs chapter to invite those relying on our food to participate in the regular meetings': there are 'The Three Principles' which describe its ethos and organisational principles:

ONE - ALWAYS VEGAN OR VEGETARIAN AND FREE TO EVERYONE

TWO - EACH CHAPTER IS INDEPENDENT AND AUTONOMOUS AND MAKES DECISIONS USING THE CONSENSUS PROCESS

THREE - FOOD NOT BOMBS IS NOT A CHARITY AND IS DEDICATED TO NONVIOLENT SOCIAL CHANGE

In 2005, the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) placed FNB on Central Texas' 'Terror Watch List' (Riccardi, 2006). This came to light when an FBI counterterrorism official showed a law class at the University of Texas in Austin, '35 slides listing militia, neo-Nazi and Islamist groups. Senior Special Agent Charles Rasner said one slide, labelled 'Anarchism', was a federal analyst's list of groups that people intent on terrorism might associate with. The list included Food Not Bombs, which mainly serves vegetarian food to homeless people. '[FNB] are among the numerous organisations affiliated with anarchists and anti-globalization protests, where there has been some violence' (Riccardi, 2006).

How is FNB anarchist? From our anarchism model, FNB certainly meets the top general criteria of anti-coercion, anti-hierarchy, and striving for egalitarian modes of organising— if the organisation is measured based on their own proclamations (their FAQ webpage is particularly useful). In chapter 6 on Zappos, the loudest annunciations of anarchism were indeed in Holacracy and Zappos organisational literature or key leaders like Robertson and Hsieh's utterances. Auditing the actual day-to-day tone and workings of the organisation might reveal a different picture painted by its own marketing and media materials, and the idealised, romanticised, and celebrated notion of itself from its leadership and core believers. Figeroa-Helland, Thomas, and Aguilera (2018) suggest FNB's main tension is adhering to its decentralised ethos. Regardless of tensions, FNB appears to be successful, with over 500 chapters self-reporting and claimed on the FNB website. FNB's cyber structure illustrates perhaps some persistent tensions or hierarchy; someone/a group maintains the website and core principles logic, branding, and other organisation-wide elements, but there are no individual leaders listed, and assertion throughout their materials of decentralised and autonomous chapters. Theoretically, anyone could create a competing FNB website and claim central authority.

Like FNB, Zappos prides itself on an oppositional tone and narrative. Both Ward and Goodman, and indeed other New Left anarchists noted practical anarchism as 'easier' and more productive; practical anarchism is an elegant 'thing we can all do now', and as I have noted from previous

references to White and Williams (2014, 2012) work, it is all around us already. Fixed on a notion of first identifying the norm, and second on creating space to oppose it, the second epoch anarchists skirt the anti-state and binary nature of classical anarchism by focusing on the here and now of their present experience. The reality of an oppressive superstructure around them does not dissuade one from asserting his or her independence when possible. When this happens, fixating on the state and capitalism fades away; it is about specific behaviours and situations. In this sense, the state and capitalism, while probably not preferred for practical anarchists, are not necessarily 'simply' dichotomous with it.

Goodman's anarchism was one of specific political actions versus adherence to an anarchist politics. In this, he often found himself at odds with more dogmatic New Left figures, and even the student revolutionaries of the 1960s. Concerned much more with active politics than perhaps an elegant revolution, practical anarchism becomes much less abstract.

'At Zappos, we're a bit weird'. This was Samantha, one of my main interviewees first mentioned in chapter 6. Samantha is one of Zappos' earliest employees and leads the Insights team. She is a true believer. 'Of course, it's not perfect', was a common comment from her, but so was a general annoyance at, yet again, being studied to see if their innovation was real or a charade. Samantha resisted the looming notion in my interviews with her that her company's exercises in a more meaningful and improved work experience were disingenuous or manipulative, and simply yet another mischievous effect of pernicious capitalism. For Samantha, Zappos was probably practical or second epoch anarchism, if, like Goodman and Ward suggest, it meant an improved liberating experience, if only just.

Gauging the degree or extent of this practical anarchism can be dialectically ordered without too much of a challenge, although like any reduction, this would not allow for enough nuance, which is a hallmark distinction between first and second epoch anarchism. New Left, second epoch practical

anarchists are anything but dogmatic in their rejection of 'conventional' revolutionary politics. This remains the central point to this type of anarchism.

Practical anarchism also conforms and is compatible with the Holacracy Constitution. While there are elements of hierarchy, power and stratification, the document also positions a check on senior leadership uncommon in capitalist enterprise. Similar to how the Magna Carta checked but did not end monarchical rule in England, the Holacratic Constitution provides a variety of curtailments to otherwise largely unreserved power in corporate enterprise.

Zappos and third epoch anarchism

Zapponian identity and mentality signal postanarchism. Inasmuch as a Zapponian would identify their experience as emancipated away from capitalism's worst features, however abstract or ill-defined these may be, might be third epoch anarchism. In chapter 4, I argued that mainstream capitalist management, particularly the type found in conventional organisations is the manipulation and coercion of activity to organisational ends. Only to the extent that a person identifies with the mission and values of an organisation does one see any reduction or assuaging of manipulation and coercion, assuming they are clear, understandable, and actually operationalised/realised (Durieux, 2017, Bart, Bontis and Taggar, 2001, Bart Baetz, 1998). This too, however, is contested; is perceived emancipation the same as actual emancipation? This is a core question for the Zappos case study. The data around Zappos suggest perception of emancipation and being better off, particularly when employees compare their experience to perceived options elsewhere. The identity of Zapponians, complex and manipulated by many features of their organisation, is possibly a 'better' one than most organisations, certainly other call centers or e-commerce outlets. At least Zappos has some measure of concern for workers, even if it remains instrumental and exploitative. The presiding logic of similar organisations is pure value extraction with probably little to no attempt at even a marginally improved workplace experience. As witnessed by Woydack and Lockwood (2017), 'Scripts Are Beautiful': Managers' and Agents' Views of Script Use in Call Centers',

most leaders of call centers are primarily concerned with how to get low and deskilled humans to robotically and efficiently move through customer service challenges; excessive time on the phone actually helping someone in a humane and meaningful way, is simply a 'cost'. Perhaps we give 'credit' of some sort to Hsieh and Robertson for at least attempting to 'care', even if it materialises expectantly as heightened but less obvious control.

The reader will recall that the work of 'culture', showed the pernicious mechanics of a concertive, normative, and neo-normative control (Fleming and Sturdy, 2011, 2009 and Costas and Fleming, 2009). In these controls, an employee may perceive emancipation at work, like at Zappos where one may often choose their own title, but in reality, that minor mode of autonomy is a vehicle for more extraction of labor value. Witness the Googler whose work/life balance is disintegrated into nothing but rationalised by, 'working for a great company', 'great pay', 'the ability to do meaningful things'.

Third epoch anarchism distinguishes itself by its focus on the individual, however. While Zappos' management shows cultural manipulation, it does also allow and encourage an individual sense of freedom as evidenced by Samantha and other's notion of 'being yourself' through clothing, hair color and choosing one's own title, such as Williams' 'Fungineer' moniker. Samantha cited these examples when insisting that 'respect for the individual' was 'central to working at Zappos'. Postanarchist logic folds into a broader postmodern project, where exposing and unearthing oppression in all forms is a central goal. The expression of some relatively innocuous pieces of identity encourage this release from a type of oppression, albeit maybe a 'low-hanging' one. Nevertheless, one can see how Zappos is likely a more progressive and fairer organisation than maybe a, for example, 1960s analog, where women and minorities would have little autonomy. Witness however Hsieh's call to arms and clarity if Zapponians did not adhere or agree with the 2015 shift to Holacracy: 'As previously stated, self-management and self-organization is not for everyone, and not everyone will necessarily want to move forward in the direction of the Best Customers Strategy and the strategy statements that were recently rolled out.' The reader will recall

this was part of a broader memo which outlined a severance package for those not wishing to stay with Zappos during its switch to Holacracy. Individual expression is only allowed to go so far. Nevertheless, Zappos may be doing what many corporations wish they could do: keep capitalism, but ditch as many other oppressions as possible. This would never satisfy the Marxist or classical anarchist, but it may satisfy the practical or postanarchist.

If practical or second epoch anarchism's hallmark is an overt and group-oriented desire to emancipate wherever possible, postanarchism's focus on the individual and Newman's 'insurrection' ideas brings a variety of conflicts and tensions to the forefront. Namely, what does a postanarchist ethos and activity look like, how can one observe and measure individual decision and sensibilities, do these nest, interact or fold into a broader organisational awakening or resistance, and do these amount to anything meaningful for overall workplace emancipation and liberation?

Recall 'Ben', my Insights team member interviewee, who discussed the culture and nature of work at Zappos. 'It's better here than elsewhere', was a common theme, and 'we're a bit weird' notion of expression combined on some level to engender personal expressions. Personal expressions are the hallmark of a postanarchism; Newman (2015), as is the recognition that power and coercion do not simply exist north or above oneself, but rather all around in a myriad of complex and dynamic ways. In describing modern life, both at work and elsewhere, Newman described a rich and dizzying array of challenges (and opportunities): 'We are confronted, [with] a perplexing field of power relations which take the form of a network rather than a hierarchy, a field into which we are inserted and with which we are in many ways, complicit' (2015: 48). Newman acknowledges a Foucauldian notion of power, where perhaps the simplicity of classical and practical anarchism is rejected. It is all too easy to identify those 'above' you as the issue, but rather the postanarchist acknowledges their own role in power dynamics all around them. The logical thing to do is assert a careful individual insurrection of liberating activity, hoping to not errantly disaffect another's world for the worse.

'Zeb', also in the Insights team, was perhaps a more balanced and contemplative interviewee from the Insights team. That team, comprised of around 10-20 members whose job is to 'evangelize' and 'spread the message' about Zappos' culture and leadership ethos, had a mixed reaction to my study. Samantha, who had been with the organisation the longest, admitted annoyance at 'constantly being studied' and evaluated, despite the obvious irony of her position, which put her and the company in regular scrutiny; Zappos does, after all, regularly make itself known in the popular business press. Zeb's, 'study and tinker' quote, which I took to mean a nice and hopeful combination of awareness and reflection, indicated a postanarchism. Zeb was certainly concerned with Insights and Zappos overall, 'but you do what you can, you make gains where possible. It's all work', was a regular utterance. Zeb was very comfortable with this existence at Zappos, and the tensions of capitalism and their desire for something better and more humane. Zeb did move on from Zappos while I conducted the study, but 'it wasn't really anything Zappos did or didn't do, just a desire to break out on my own a bit more'. Now, at the time of this chapter's writing in 2020, Zeb is a regular on LinkedIn posts about Holacracy, 'integrative decision-making', 'fairness at work', and 'how having a great culture means everything'.

A tension with postanarchism is the distinction that the above notions of balance and making the best possible circumstances are unique as 'anarchism'. Naturally, no, they are not unique, and labelling general human nature, activity, and sensibility as 'anarchism' does not make anarchism instantly more viable. Or does it? This illustrates a common thread of both practical and postanarchism, the insistence that the 'natural' state of things, and certainly humanity writ large, desires fairness, equitability, fun, and all things good and emancipatory. All epochs of anarchism work to claim a more cooperative and positive human nature however, and Ward (1973: 10) described his *Anarchy in Action* as, '[simply] an extended footnote to Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*'. The reader will recall that *Mutual Aid*'s main contribution to the anarchist canon is Kropotkin's work in

Siberia, that showed human cooperation, not competition, was essential to surviving the harsh winters.

If the state of things is largely postanarchist, and the world is an unnatural assault, then the issue is our consciousness and awareness. Perhaps elegantly, if that is true, 'simply' bringing 'anarchism' into mainstream discussion would be a meaningful thing for all, and certainly those interested in promoting fairness and emancipation at work and beyond. I will address this further in chapter 8, this thesis' concluding chapter. Maybe everyone is an anarchist to some degree, and this natural state is simply buried under a variety of unnatural weights, most of which look like the necessary normalisation of abuse and manipulation at work, however undesirable and seemingly inevitable with human enterprise.

Conclusion, and the prospects for an anarchist theory of management

This chapter summarized the main findings of the study, and, if judged by a nuanced and contextual perspective on anarchism, it illustrated anarchism present in two contemporary organisations. I suggest that anarchism is present in most contemporary organisations. This assertion is perhaps problematic when considering classical or first epoch anarchism, which has the closest ties to 19th century revolutionary ideas and experience, violence, and a binary and even dogmatic notion of anarchism. When opening anarchism to second and third epoch definitions, I argue the anarchism is easier to see, and provides prospects for an anarchist theory of management. That is, current organisations of various sectors and stripes operating inside extant capitalism, or, in the case of MFE/A, support capitalism's entrenchment, can identify and expand key behaviours, structures, mentalities and ways of being that are anarchist. If appropriate to that locality--a highly contextual thing best determined by those in that organisation--and done in a fluid and nondogmatic way that allows for ongoing local dynamic diffused control, anarchism could improve the reality of the workplace.

Capitalism and its managerialist ideology remain in opposition to the spirit and content of all anarchisms to be sure, but none of these concepts, in whatever and however they take form, are binary and fixed. In this, we assert second and third epoch anarchism as 'useful' to an emancipatory project, such as that of critical management studies and other critical projects. People and organisations can find some relief from the oppression of capitalism and modern organisation by studying and implementing second and third anarchism ideas. Acknowledging that aspects of Zappos indicate a desire to do and be better than, for example, Amazon proper, with its recent notable worker abuse (Drury, 2019), then there is nuance inside capitalism itself. Does this defend capitalism, or simply indicate areas of useful reform to exploit, much like Goodman, Ward, Newman, and others encourage?

In the next and final chapter, I discuss areas of future research and ways to 'operationalise' anarchism. Both, I argue, are productive and effective mechanisms for improving any work circumstances, regardless of the dominant capitalist superstructure.

CHAPTER 8 // CONCLUSION

The study's purpose

The purpose and goal of this study was to locate a general description of anarchism and assess its interaction with contemporary management and organisation. In this conclusion I will review the key components of the study, which include the anarchism model, methodological challenges, contemporary management and anarchism, the key elements of each case study, and the discussion chapter. I will end by addressing the 'success' of the study, and future work in the area.

The anarchism model

I asserted in chapter 3 that there are three main anarchism 'epochs'. This is broadly based on Ruth Kinna's work in her 2019 and 2005 texts, where she uses 'classical', 'practical' and 'post' as organising or framework tools. Others (Woodcock, 1962; Marshall, 1991; and Guerin, 1970) have used similar terms and chronology. Like any framework, it is reductive, and the desire to shape various takes on a rich philosophy can be problematic. Also, anarchism paradoxically embraces and rejects borders and definitions. Nevertheless, I chose to consider anarchism as one might other competing political ideologies, and frameworks assist in sense-making. Bob Black, who features as a 'postanarchist' -- specifically a 'post-left' anarchist -- said in an interview (2016), discussed how, 'your ideas are an ideology, mine are a theory'. Indeed, the coherence or incoherence of anarchism often hinges on aggressively dogmatic views, and this strange feature of anarchism must be acknowledged.

The three epochs have their own distinguishing features, but they all share a similar core: decentralised organisation (which could also be called diffused decision-making), hostility to centralised and coercive power, and opposition to the status quo. Chapter 3 uncovers these features across a discussion of various authors over a chronological history of the idea. While there are political and moral anarchist currents that extend from ancient records, these epochs see

anarchism as an industrial, modern-world political theory generally starting with Proudhon and his

1840 publication of *What Is Property? Or, an Inquiry into the Principle of Right and Government* and

extending to today's wide-ranging anarchism, which encompasses many different ways of being

anarchist, to include relatively well-known examples such as Antifa's classical anarchism, Food Not

Bombs' peaceful, practical distribution of food, to Newman and others' postanarchism.[1]

Through the three epochs, the core features endure, even if attenuated or nuanced as the

anarchism canon and ism has grown and developed. Some of its change over time coincides with

broader changes in progressive and leftist politics. For example, anarchism became less material

and more philosophical and cultural through the 20th century, just as 'mainstream' socialism and

communism have through their evolution from Soviet Stalinism through the Frankfurt School, the

New Left and to today's communitarian, eco, and various 'post' permutations. Similar to how

Frankfurt School members like Horkheimer and Adorno grew dissatisfied with Lenin and later Stalin's

authoritarianism, New Left thinkers in the 1960s grew even more disenfranchised and disillusioned

with authoritarian Stalinism and Maoism and sought a 'third way' socialism. As a result, anarchism

moved from a fixation on replacing or destroying the 'state' to combating coercive and centralised

power where it may be. Some consider this artful evolution (Kinna might be the main standard-

bearer), others (Klikauer, 2015) may consider it to be reformist, and even not anarchism (Zerzan,

2009). Who claims authority over the politics of anarchism is a common and ongoing anarchist

tension? Anarchism's evolution and nuance is centrally meaningful for my study; a nuanced view

allows for a capitalist or military enterprise to be any way anarchist.

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[1] Antifa is an excellent example of the contested definitions of anarchism, or an anarchist 'group'. Individuals and groups identifying with antifa, often view it more as a 'movement' or 'ideology', but not a group with a structure or leadership. Even 'FBI Director Chris Wray told lawmakers that antifa is an ideology, not an organization, delivering testimony that puts him at odds with President Donald Trump, who has said he would designate it a terror group' (2020).

Classic or First Epoch anarchism is anti-state, often violent, and arguably the most well-known and expressive anarchism. It is the anarchism of the angry late 19th century and houses various key historical events in Western industrial and political history, such as the Paris Commune of the early 1870s, and the Haymarket Affair of Chicago in the late 1880s. Classical anarchism's key thinkers are Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Mickhail Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin, Rudolf Rocker, Emma Goldman, Lysander Spooner, Max Stirner and Errico Malatesta. This canonical scope takes its direction from prominent secondary authors in anarchist texts, namely Peter Marshall (1991), Dan Guerin (1970), Noam Chomsky (2005), and Ruth Kinna (2019 and 2005). From classical anarchism we have the first industrial era assertions of a politics as anti-state and anti-capitalist; this differentiates itself from other leftist politics, namely those of Marx, which asserted the worker class ought to (and will) revolt and seize the state (to advance a leftist revolution).

In this, anarchism rejected the trend of industrialised life towards greater coercive and centralised governmental and institutional power, and the capitalist engine that afforded its growth. In chapter 3, I explored the linkage between Kinna's and others' definition of anarchism to the incidence of its use with largely 19th and early 20th century thinkers. This juxtaposition revealed the list of canonical writers above. Marshall (1991), Woodcock (1962), Guerin (1970), Chomsky (2015), and Kinna (2019 and 2005) all cited the above list of thinkers in various forms and noted their agreement essentially with Kinna's definition. There are degrees of insistence on where anarchism's focus should lay. For example, Bakunin focused his life relentlessly on 'the state', which in the mid-19th century was surely the locus of power in the sense anyone generally understood in the industrialising urban world. Spooner, however, interestingly an American abolitionist, detested the idea of an aggressive North Union forcibly removing slavery from the largely agrarian Confederate South. Nevertheless, first epoch anarchism is fundamentally anti-state, anti-government, and anti-capitalist. Therefore, first epoch or classical anarchism for our purposes here is an anarchism that focuses on the state as an assemblage of power, the government as the apparatus of the state, and

capitalism as a means of dividing most from any means and wealth with which to govern and defend themselves.

Second epoch or practical anarchism is what Kinna (2005: 3) calls the 'origin of contemporary anarchism'. Colin Ward and Paul Goodman are archetype second epoch anarchists. Both thinkers knew of one another and regarded each other highly. Ward dedicated his 1973 *Anarchy in Action* book to Paul Goodman, who had died a year earlier at just 61. Ward lived until 1995 (86) and would pen *A Very Short Introduction to Anarchism* (2004) among many other pieces on anarchism. Here, and in his 1973 text, Ward emphasised the anarchism of, 'a mode of human organisation, rooted in the experience of everyday life, which operates side by side with, and in spite of, the dominant authoritarian trends in our society' (1973: 11). This anarchism does not seek to replace an old politics with a new one like the classical era of anarchism did, but rather, it seeks to skirt or avoid it. Ward does not fixate on 'the state'. It dovetails back to Kropotkin's late 19th century work however, particularly *Mutual Aid* (1902), which argued and illustrated the various 'anarchisms' of modern-era life in spite of its growing oppressive and ordering features. To second epoch anarchists, a fixation on the state drains one's energy better spent elsewhere. In short, practical or second epoch anarchism argues one can have anarchism without replacing or destroying the state or other institutions of formal and clear assertive authority.

Third epoch or postanarchism takes practical anarchism a step further and incorporates postmodern ideas into anarchism. This is the current trend in anarchist thinking. While postanarchism can be both something 'after' anarchism in the sense that it deviates from its first and second epoch predecessors, the incorporation of postmodern modes of thinking is what is most interesting to modern contemporary managerial life. Kinna (2019: 144) notes that 'postanarchists question the conventional anarchist commitment to abolition of the state' (2019: 144). Additionally, '[postanarchism takes Max] Stirner's egoism [to] rescue anarchy from anarchism to invoke a constantly creative, transgressive resistance politics' (2019: 145). Stirner's creative and resistant

politics, an assertion of the self, might even resist the politics of Ward's collective practical

anarchism, which often emphasised local collective community activism and organisation, where, at

least to some degree, the individual would need to suppress themself to live 'productively' in the

group. Postanarchism would also question the 'physics' of violence and revolutionary activity;

activities that justify and reify institutional response. The focus here is on mental and individual acts

and even thinking 'in' anarchism. A third epoch anarchism is an individually realised, sometimes

hidden but still prosaic; one just assumes a mode of being and thought that is to them

anarchist. Clearly this is controversial to anarchists and beyond; it reeks of a massive cop out. In an

interview I did with Ruth Kinna early in my study (2016), she felt postanarchism was, 'a useful mode

of thinking, but you still have to address literal nodes of power'. Postanarchism suggests a self-

awareness where one picks and chooses their insurrection so as to grow their personal freedom but

not provoke violent or material counters; in this, the notion of an external expert— even from

anarchism itself— invoking rules or character of being, would be problematic.

Methodological challenges

Chapter 2 detailed my methods for the study. This study operates inside critical management

studies (CMS) in that it fundamentally studies 'management' through a 'critical' lens, and seeks to do

what Adler, Wilmott, and Forbes (2007: 1) discussed of CMS in their seminal piece: '[offer] a range

of alternatives to mainstream management theory with a view to radically transforming

management practice'. This thesis acts in that regard; it seeks to analyse and make aware

exploitative trends in management and propose anarchism as a possible source for 'new' insight into

management's improvement or the mitigation of this exploitation. The improvement desired is not

necessarily improved profit, and in a certain sense the study could be anti-capitalist or anti-

instrumental, despite locating in a business school. This is working in a manner to address a concern

Klikauer raised in 2015, when he wrote, 'Mats Alvesson, often regarded as CMS' originator or key

early figure, wrote CMS wants 'the production of better managers' (Alvesson et al. 2009: 446ff.),

with next to no interest in Kinna's (2014: 611) exhortation that it should 'expose, subvert and undermine dominant assumptions about the social order'. The 2014 Ruth Kinna reference is an article published in *ephemera*, mentioned earlier. While Kinna points out the tensions between anarchism and CMS (and capitalism writ large), she discusses anarchism as a possible model or tool for management's improvement: '[Because] CMS appears to operate in a conceptual universe that is hostile to anarchist perspectives and testing for anarchists to negotiate, it's possible to find a positive stimulus for CMS in anarchist thinking. Indeed, the inventive and productive ways that anarchism has approached questions of organisation in theory and through practical experimentation might be seen as its primary contribution to CMS' (Kinna, 2014: 613).

Parker (2018: 57) discusses anarchism as, 'organization theory in the truest sense, a theory that takes nothing about human beings and their organizational capacities for granted'. Kinna, also in her 2014 article, cites earlier work by Parker (and George Cheney, Valerie Fournier, and Chris Land), and notes 'Anarchists are not against organization'. Martin Parker, George Cheney, Valerie Fournier, and Chris Land are of course right, but the contrary view remains stubbornly persistent'. In this, my thesis operates as an exploration of management, organisation, anarchism, and their relationship written and situated inside CMS.

For my study, I built two cases, one of my own Marine Corps headquarters, where I conducted a formal ethnography with permission for over 2 years. The second case was Zappos, where I initially attempted to conduct an ethnography, but pivoted to a set of interviews, and social media and secondary source reviews.

The main challenges in the study are design and epistemology related. Knowing what is 'anarchism' and 'management' in an objective sense was challenging. Second, what constituted good 'data' relied on inductive logic. Nevertheless, I hope to have presented plausible models of anarchism and management, ones which were clear enough to 'take through' chapters 5 and 6 and the MFE/A and

Zappos data and discussion. Karl Popper's challenge to induction is on point; it is possibly I defined

anarchism and management in a way where I could then 'hunt' for their interaction in cases I

chose. The retort is straightforward: studying and exploring these themes, particularly how one can

define anarchism, reveals plausible intersections. Also, the 'search' for anarchism is inherently

inductive, and will always be somewhat easy to contest and challenge based on the imprecision of

political and social terms. Anarchist studies are swimming (mired?) in these inductive, semantic, and

dogmatic tensions (Kinna, 2019 and 2005).

Dwelling a bit more on the epistemological challenges in the cases is appropriate. Most evident in

the MFE/A case, for example, the long-running ethnography can read and feel like an uncritical

autobiography of my time in the corporate side of the Marines. Given the various war stories out

there, yet another discussion of great men/insane bureaucratic machinery might just add to that

long-running vein of military memoir. Bearing in mind many of the issues Moskos (2008), Waquant

(2004), Rabinow (2007), and others raise with anthropology writ large, the act of knowing through

embedded observation is the knowledge edifice on which the MFE/A data reside. The reader will

have to decide if all MFE/A's anarchism can be judged from my presentation of essentially time with

my friends and dear colleagues, most of whom I greatly respect and admire, all the while being

continually puzzled by the mishmash of high education, ethics of a sort, and the vast imperial violent

engine of Americana in which we continue to participate. The Zappos case has less knowledge

challenges; the interviews, social media and secondary source reviews indicate a variety of

straightforward, useful data. I naturally wish I could have gained better access to the company,

particularly time with Hsieh. Their barring any deeper ethnography seems to reinforce what

certainly feels like capitalism's general desire to avoid transparent critique.

Challenges from contemporary management

In chapter 4, I discussed management and contemporary organisation in ways that appear

anarchist. In a sense, by illustrating anarchism in present organisations like Spain's Mondragon or

even the UK's Coop and US-based Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs), I could 'complete' the

study with chapter 4— anarchism exists in modern cooperatives and worker-run firms (usually

referred to as worker self-management or WSM) inside capitalism with little conflict. It looks like

diffused ownership, which allows for greater access to decision-making, improved job security, and

lessened coercive power structures. These forms are neither particularly revolutionary,

inflammatory, or novel. Indeed, why cooperatives and worker run firms are not discussed more in

the business school and broader world is curious, especially given pieces like two 2019 *Fast*

Company articles (Blasi, Kruse and Conway, both 2019) titled 'We found one simple trick to boost

employee happiness: Give them ownership', and 'One way to close the wealth gap: make employees

part owners' illustrate ever-growing interest in ownership models. 'Mainstream' business thinking

appears unaware of how long shared ownership has been around; the unequal oppressive and

manipulative hierarchical experience of most corporations is normalised, and 'alternatives' have

been suppressed. Shared ownership sounds like a capitalist utopia; no violent revolution

required. Reedy, (2002: 171) notes, 'Following the long hegemony of scientific socialism, anarchism

has largely inherited the utopian mantle'. This is probably because inasmuch as shared ownership

models are anarchist, there are already options for improved experience, and they represent little to

no threat to the dominant neoliberal order, something that is perhaps dogmatically fetishised in

'typical' and more oppositional socialist, communist, and anarchist circles.

Chapter 4 did identify that self-managed teams or SMTs— the philosophy of Holacracy, Teal, and

Management 2.0— where self-management, less bureaucracy and conventional management

possibly sum to both an improved bottom line and employee experience, but not to the degree of

shared ownership. SMTs are ostensibly more democratic and 'flatter' than a typical hierarchy, but

beyond perhaps limited stock or equity options, employees are not 'owners', and are therefore

financially precarious and have limited real input into senior-level organisational decision-

making. Control and ownership are the key components or foci of contemporary

management. Whereas WSM offers varying degrees of enhanced control to labour through

ownership, it still operates inside capitalism and does not necessarily contest the extraction of

labour value to maximise the accumulation of capital. In SMT firms, the concern for control and

ownership appears to be low or rhetorical and can lead to subtler but even more exploitative forms

of control (Fleming and Sturdy, 2009). In WSM firms, there is often a greater, if not clear, concern

for the lived experience of the firm's members— most are owner-operators, and indeed they

typically rotate managerial duties rather than 'sit' in elite roles with little challenge or change. The

usual stratification and power dynamics found in 'most' mainstream companies are mitigated in

WSM firms but largely persist in SMTs. Both have implications for unionisation and other worker

rights, and, as mentioned in chapter 4, there is a curious and unfortunate tension between WSM and

unions (similar to anarchism and communism's long-running feud).

Concern over coercion and hierarchy are both core anarchism, and of course directly relate to

control. In a changing or nuanced ownership circumstance, such as in cooperatives, ESOPs, and

worker self-managed firms, control changes through greater access to meaningful decision-making

around the use of capital. Further, meaningful decision-making includes access to strategic and

existential firm topics, such as where and how to compete, personnel moves and job security. In

firms using Hamel, Laloux, and Robertson techniques, control may also fluctuate, but lack of

ownership limits 'real' access to key or top decisions. In other words, unless ownership of the

organisation leads to improved meaningful democratic decision-making, access to decision-making

that self-management suggests is somewhat (or very) hollow. It is at least problematic and

uncertain, primarily in the form of job security. Thus, an SMT firm is considerably less anarchist than

a WSM one.

While chapter 4 focused on SMT and WSM, it did note that in conventional ownership models, there

is a spectrum of ownership that often provides hope and advancement of anarchist elements, and

therefore improved emancipation. In a firm with an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) in the

US, for example, workers may own some share of the firm. They may be given voting rights like what stock owners of other firms may experience. This ownership is not likely to affect day-to-day, enterprise-wide access to decision making however, and an employee's role in senior strategy and their own financial security may remain abstract/distant. While publicly traded firms can theoretically be 'run' by their shareholders, modern issues with inequality indicate that a relatively small percentage of society has a meaningful impact on large corporate decisions. A 2019 Gallup Poll (Saad, 2019) showed 55% of Americans own stock in some form, usually in a 401k or similar retirement account. Of this percentage, 'A whopping 84 percent of all stocks owned by Americans belong to the wealthiest 10 percent of households. And that includes everyone's stakes in pension plans, 401(k)'s and individual retirement accounts, as well as trust funds, mutual funds and college savings programs like 529 plans' (Cohen, 2018).

Anarchism as an ontological and epistemological challenge; MFE/A and Zappos

In chapter 4, I showed anarchism is present to some degree in self-managed firms, self-managed teams, cooperatives, and worker-run or -owned organisations using various degrees of governance and insight to check, curtail, or otherwise limit the coercive nature of typical hierarchical capitalist enterprise. Thus, any organisation that uses self-management is at least minimally anarchist, even if it is rhetorical, and perhaps even if it is used to extract greater labour or exert more control. While tensions persist, expansion of self-management into more existential and strategic decision-making, either through ownership and access to capital in a for-profit organisation, or however the organisation's mission is defined, as might be the case with a government or military entity such as MFE/A, would mean it was 'even more' anarchist. This would eventually approach a notional and possible 'full' realisation of an anarchist organisation. Whether this would require outright rejection of all capitalism, all militantism or violence, all coercion, et cetera, in a binary and complete sense is a matter of nuanced debate, one which I have shown is very common in anarchist studies.

MFE/A, inasmuch as it embodies and adheres to broader US Marine Corps 'Mission Command'

ethos, has anarchist features. Zappos, at least as much as Holacracy is a self-management system,

has anarchist features. But, both MFE/A and Zappos' anarchism, and anarchism found elsewhere in

the other designs mentioned above and in chapter 4 is attenuated, dynamic, suppressed, hidden and

otherwise constantly under duress. These 'anarchisms' manifest in theoretical ways, for example, in

stated literature or rhetoric like the Marine Corps' *Warfighting* (1997) publication which spends

significant time discussing 'Maneuver Warfare' and 'Mission Command', or Zappos' *Holacracy*

Constitution. The 'anarchisms' also manifest perhaps more meaningfully in the people of the

organisation, either through their attitude towards organisation, leadership, management, or theory

compatible with anarchism, or through their actual lived behaviour, which may include being as fair

as possible, coercing as little as possible, interacting with others with as much effort to keep things

equal and other behaviours expressing a desire to be fair and balanced.

Anarchism in modern capitalism or related structures like the US military is fluid and mobile, its

anarchism skips around in its nature, 'grabbing' pieces from first, second or third epoch, mixing

them, and doing this in real time. It is an ontological and epistemological challenge to pin down its

anarchism, and invites several questions, for example, was my experience of personal freedom in a

given meeting or role 'anarchism?' Was Nick's sailing in between sets of orders at MFE/A, 'his

anarchism?' Anarchism is inconsistent, and as Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) have argued and I have

already mentioned, risks simply being co-opted into mainstream capitalism, and losing its

revolutionary elan and 'true' emancipatory features. Several anarchist thinkers, Kinna and Chomsky

included, describe anarchism as a process versus an end; I read this as a powerful way of addressing

the challenge of pinning down a given organisation's anarchism. Without oversimplifying the

discussion however, if more anarchism means greater emancipation for most involved, that an

organisation has any anarchism must be hopeful. Further, if anarchism could expand at MFE/A,

perhaps by becoming a more standard lens for viewing managerial relationships, then anarchism becomes a helpful organisational or managerial tool.

The WSM, SMT, and Zappos discussion reveal persistent tensions between classic 'owners' and 'labour' in the Marxist sense. While SMT at Zappos materialised as a form of heightened labour extraction and manipulation, WSM becoming more mainstream would certainly be a productive advancement of anarchist thought and practice inside capitalism. Rather than pitting classic elements against one another, worker enterprise brings them together in the same person or group. This seems productive. From a Marxist class-consciousness perspective, it could be a problem if 'enough' WSM firms meant continued exploitation of labour elsewhere. If, however, the desired effect of an emancipatory, fair, non-precarious/stable, green, and otherwise healthy enterprise and work situation arises, how could this be viewed as a leftist failure, even if the core tenets of capitalism persist? This is a top question I believe my study poses, and it is ripe for further study. I recognise the ambition and scale of this, and I humbly note my goal here is only to raise the issue. Certainly, more work is needed to understand WSM, cooperatives, and their role in critical management studies and beyond.

Was the study 'successful'?

It is appropriate to contemplate the extent to which my study could be considered successful. From a social science perspective, one most concerned with the sociology of work, anarchism as a mode of studying and thinking about the experience of work is most certainly useful. The study revealed, for example, that Zapponians are generally exploited and not emancipated. While initially I thought the main insight would be the confirmation that SMT at Zappos was anarchistic, and indeed it is to a minimal degree, the real story of Zappos is the cult-like experience working there entails. Given how similarly Zappos operates to other 'progressive' tech firms and beyond, this has farther-reaching implications for firms claiming progressive management.

From an anthropological perspective, the study shows a detailed story of intrigue at MFE/A, one which reveals typical Marine Corps hierarchy with its machismo and domination, but it also showed more meaningful anarchism than at Zappos. In this way, I found the two cases to invert. I thought initially that Zappos represented a hopeful use of anarchism in modern work, and that the Marine Corps would violate its Mission Command ethos, especially at a corporate-styled headquarters. Zappos as a capitalist for-profit business, MFE/A as an organisation that supports capitalism's entrenchment, means that comparing the two organisations directly is problematic. However, it is striking that the ostensibly freer and more open Zappos had much less anarchism than MFE/A, the uber-strong and hyper-structured Marine Corps military command. This amounts to a 'finding' of sorts around 'mini' anarchisms perhaps being more common in hierarchical organisations who more purposefully express areas or nodes where freedom to operate more independently is allowed or expected, as is the case in MFE/A's planning teams. In other words, Zappos perhaps strangely had fewer 'Nicks', those figures at MFE/A who were more aware of their hierarchical workplace reality and chose simple and effective ways to postanarchistically express their freedom. That MFE/A, with its common Marine Corps rank and structure would produce 'more' postanarchism, and thus more emancipatory behavior, seems like a profound and counterintuitive finding.

How anarchists may respond to the study; an anarchist theory of management

The study wishes to appeal to multiple audiences. While CMS scholars and business school academics are the main target, anarchists and anarchist studies scholars are a close second. If this study contributes to those two seemingly opposed groups meeting and seeing the value in exchange, that would be a great leap. Anarchism, perhaps like much of the left, has a curious way of attacking itself however, and a study like mine here risks alienating many ardent as I lay claim to an essentially reformist and nuanced version of the philosophy.

While many examples of anarchists of various flavours attacking one another, often with greater anger and intensity than given to those much farther away on the political spectrum, a recent interaction inside critical management studies itself is illustrative. In 2014, Thomas Swann and Konstantin Stoborod, both CMS scholars rooted in anarchist studies (and both editors with Martin Parker of a 2020 book that contains a chapter of mine co-written with my thesis supervisors), edited an edition of *ephemera*, a CMS journal. The edition, *Management, business, anarchism,* includes pieces from a range of CMS and anarchist scholars, namely Ruth Kinna, Martin Parker, Patrick Reedy and Richard White and Colin Williams. All of these authors feature in my thesis.

Perhaps notably missing was a dialectically opposed voice in the mix; most of the essays take on the tone of exploring possibilities; in short, the group generally viewed CMS and anarchism as possible instruments in a broader reform of neoliberal capitalism, something possibly best seen in Swann and Stoborod's, '*Did you hear the one about the anarchist manager?*' (2014: 591) which addresses the seeming paradox, but nevertheless explores possible intersections of management, business and anarchism.

> While the inclusion of anarchism and management in the same sentence would normally connote a rejection of one and a corresponding defence of the other, the study of management and radical social and political thought are not as antithetical as one might at first imagine. The field of critical management studies (CMS), regularly dated back to the publication of Mats Alvesson and Hugh Willmott's collection (1992), has drawn on theoretical sources including the Frankfurt School, poststructuralism and various left-wing political traditions, as well as heterodox empirical research, in reflecting on and ultimately criticizing prevailing practices and discourses of management. As Gibson Burrell noted twenty years ago, there is a 'growing number of alternative organisational forms now appearing, whether inspired by anarchism, syndicalism, the ecological movement, the co-operative

movement, libertarian communism, self-help groups or, perhaps most importantly,

by feminism (1992: 82)'.

Thomas Klikauer reviewed a special edition of *ephemera* in *Anarchist Studies* in mid-2015. His

review was scathing and illustrates a classically anarchist response. From his perspective, anarchism

and management or capitalist organisation are in no way compatible or intersected; the ideas could

not be more diametrically opposed, to claim otherwise is 'pure ideology', a phrase Klikauer has used

in other critical texts (2015) to critique critical management studies itself (as not critical, but rather

an agent of reformist and normalising acceptance of capitalism).

> CMS is thoroughly social-democratic, seeking to create 'better management'
>
> while accommodating capitalism – so even in the mildest crypto-critique of CMS,
>
> management studies collides with anarchism. CMS's pretended 'radicalism' is
>
> occasionally linked to the idea of post-modernism and some rather misleading
>
> excursions into critical theory, but there is virtually no link between CMS and
>
> anarchism. So it is unsurprising that 'anarchism hasn't prominently featured in many
>
> of the key CMS journals' (p592) and that 'CMS is on the whole hostile to anarchist
>
> research' (p597). In a nutshell, CMS is a system-integrative ideology while
>
> anarchism is not.

Of note, Ruth Kinna, who wrote an article for the *ephemera* edition, also edits *Anarchist Studies*. It

seems reasonable given her expertise that she is aware of the tensions such a volume as Swann and

Stoborod's would cause, and sought a critical theory scholar operating in management, organization,

and radical ideas to review the volume. The vibrancy of the exchange illustrates the future of

further studies, but also reveals persistent problems. Reform oriented anarchists would likely be

more accommodating than Klikauer; more revolutionary ones of course less so.

Swann and Stoborod wrote a response to Klikauer in 2016, also published in *Anarchist Studies*. They reiterated the tensions unearthed in defining anarchism, and contested their main goal was to simply broach the topic and capture the best voices. My interpretation of Swann and Stoborod, much like Parker and Kinna, is they are seeking a way to use anarchism more effectively in contemporary life. Given that people spend the majority of working lives at work, and that many are disaffected by modern life beyond material malaise, poststructuralist (as in postanarchist) influenced perspectives are particularly hopeful. While Zappos can still run you off if you do not work hard enough according to their intense culture, their openness to people from many backgrounds and interests— provided they operationalise to the raising of capital for the company— are welcomed. Someone might be better off here than other areas of the working world.

But what of Swann, Stoborod, and Klikauer's engagement? If there is no hope for diametrically opposed ideas to integrate, this study remains at a full-stop for anarchism. Anarchism will likely never make it past its current place as a largely misunderstood and therefore limited-utility philosophy. This is a shame given its rich history and wide array of ideas, much of which offer productive insight into moving society forward on many levels without provoking violent reactions for establishment entities. Including a subtle second and third epoch anarchism, in particular as an analytical and ethical lens, might be a very productive entrant into both critical and mainstream management theory. This might be the foundation of an anarchist theory of management.

Success as positioning opportunities for further research

Any study that sets out to 'prove' something is problematic. My study's main proposition is that anarchism is 'useful' for management, and an exploration of anarchism and management through two seemingly different case studies should locate 'enough' anarchism to justify that suggestion. Anarchism is probably influencing management innovation, if continued interest to make organisations healthier is an anarchist goal. It is clearly not singularly and only an anarchist goal however, so in a certain sense, this could also illustrate anarchism's alignment with a variety of

workplace and organisational ideas around improving the lives of people at work. Further

exploration of 'healthier' is needed; while it might be better to work at Zappos than another call

center, it is still an exploited and manipulated existence, and the heightened cultural emphasis on

openness, weirdness, fun, and other seemingly advanced notions of a workplace existence are

absolutely a form of hidden aggression. Anarchism cannot abide by this reality, and its heavy ethical

tone requires eventual reconciliation. Fleshing this out will be a productive future course of

study. The study also reveals a selection of related but separate topics, all interesting in their own

rights. Examples include the complex sociology of the military, the sociology of tech organisations

largely staffed by millennial generation owners and labour, and critical management studies' interest

in 'alternative' organisations and themes.

Mission command and anarchism; critical military studies

It is probably not a stretch to suggest that the most successful military activities—if success is judged

by the lethality of a given force—are rooted in *Auftragstaktik*. The most recent mission command

event of note was the American and British invasion of Iraq. Politics and morality notwithstanding

(difficult to jettison obviously), the speed and ferocity of the invasion is not rivalled in

history. American forces pushed 300 miles from Kuwait to Baghdad in just over 4 weeks. By

contrast, German forces in WWII, during the Blitzkrieg in the Battle of France, covered about 600

miles in 3 months. World War I military successes, of which there were few, were the modern

rediscovery of mission command. The advent of the machine gun and defensive tactics had stilted

manoeuver, however later in the war, 1917 forward, German and American units both started using

'Stormtroop' tactics which resembled mission-type elements. Small bands of grenade-laden teams

would advance through no-man's land to break through certain elements and sow chaos

(Gudmondsson, 1989). Future study of the military and mission command could 'draw in'

anarchism; anarchism could inform this study, and even enhance military effectiveness— clearly a

curious and tension-ridden thing anarchism could do.

A relatively new critical subfield of military sociology is Critical Military Studies (CMilS) has emerged from scholars primarily operating in the UK and Europe (Basham, Belkin, Gifkins, 2015; Rech, 2016, 2015, 2014). There are also some American or other global counterparts (Zool, 2016, 2015). The general theme is similar to Critical Management Studies (CMS) in that it seeks to apply Frankfurt School and other critical theories to a given topic. Basham et al (2015) describe CMilS as, '[something operating against the typical tendency in security studies] to interpret critique solely as a means through which to offer recommendations for the improvement of military policy[.] [CMilS] is its own productive and proactive field of inquiry that moves beyond a simple oppositional stance'. Criticalmilitarystudies.org's home page has a prominent defining quote, 'Critical Military Studies is a transdisciplinary community of scholars and activists raising questions about, and seeking to challenge, military power (2019)'.

A full discussion of CMilS is outside the scope of this thesis, but the general application of critical theory to security studies is clearly of interest to the relationships between critical theory and management. The website's simple definition suggests this thesis is both a Critical Management and Critical Military piece. Furthermore, given the longstanding relationship the military, strategy and professional management have, arguably dating back at least to Napoleonic organisation in a modern sense (Klikauer, 2015 and 2011), the crossovers suggest learning from this case are germane and on point for learning in other sectors.

Final words

This study examined anarchism and contemporary management. I also addressed how management interacts with ways of organising. While I initially set out to show how anarchism was influencing innovation in management, the study evolved to a broader story of identifying anarchism's nuance and broader 'use' as an analytical and ethical philosophy. Given the history of worker ownership and control of capitalist enterprise from the 1840s to today's cooperatives, management influenced by fairer power arrangements is not new or innovative. Anarchism's nuance is probably best seen as

a philosophy necessarily critical of its own tendency towards dogma. Anarchism is thus reflexive rather than ideologically fixed. This might be how it differs from other 'competing' modes of analysis, managing, organising and ways of being. Anarchism must, by definition, be nuanced, flexible and contextual. Swann and Stoborod (2014) cannot assert an anarchism any more than Klikauer (2015) can, or even (and especially?) Kropotkin (1955) or Ward (1972) or others. Anarchism thus stimulates contextual analysis and awareness, useful for improving a variety of circumstances, probably in particular that of assuming organisations of all types must naturally and normally be organised like any other.

As illustrated by both cases, and the various organisations raised in chapter 4, a nuanced anarchism exists in contemporary organisation and management. A nuanced anarchism, as a means of raising emancipatory consciousness, is a useful trove or resource. In this, anarchism can interestingly oppose violent redistribution of ownership and power in an organisation— the usual narrow option presented in opposition to capitalism— but still raise issues of emancipation and oppression, usually the province of socialism alone. Probably what many anarchists throughout history have insisted upon is relatively clear: that anarchism presents a useful alternative to straight capitalism and straight communism. Insofar as the modern manager is concerned with maximising both profit and social good, something some like Hsieh and others appear at least partially concerned with, anarchism raises fundamental issues of capitalism, but does not seek its complete eradication, a nonstarter for most of the world. Those looking for how to improve capitalism should be interested in anarchism. I look for nuance and alternative organisation, such as workers' coops and worker-run firms.

Obviously at its core however is a diffusion of power. While classic anarchism would reject any hierarchy, second and third epoch anarchism may recognize a more nuanced approach, such as hierarchy being justified so long as it serves the needs of a given organisation's members equally. This is not common in Western enterprise, but perhaps it should be. Mondragon's success

suggests its design is durable and useful, even in neoliberal capitalism. Surely this could be copied

and replicated? Why modern business schools do not teach workers' self-management is a

fascinating discussion in either straight ignorance, or blatant repression (Parker, 2018). Given this

instrumental piece, combining it with the clear humanitarian component of an improved and

healthier livelihood is obvious. This is no doubt a shaky proposition, but perhaps it could resonate in

particular with younger owners and managers, such as what we see in tech companies, and those

interested in some version of a 'conscientious capitalism'. There is no shortage of interested

capitalists in such things, as demonstrated by our many *Fast Company* and related references. Hsieh

and Robertson signal both capitalist and emancipatory interests; what tools do they presently have

to do both? Redistributing ownership in their respective companies and tying equal ownership to

direct democratic decision-making would be the best possible outcome. My discussion in chapter 4

indicated this is anarchism, and it is presently existing in several companies in various

countries. These organisations demonstrate healthier outcomes, more durable finances, and better

social outcomes.

The main impediment to more of this is probably the dearth of understanding and study, both in

anarchism itself, which is unsurprising, but also the variety of tools and instruments offered by

critical management studies and related disciplines. The core issue is a persistent one in most leftist

thought, that of reform and engagement versus revolution and opposition. In CMS, this debate has

taken the form of 'critical performativity' (Parker and Parker, 2018). My study is decidedly reformist

and seeks engagement rather than opposition. I read second and third epoch anarchism as

fundamentally reformist and focused on engagement but not dogmatically 'always', and in 'every

case'. Chomsky has asserted this often around his perspectives on anarchism and goes so far as to

suggest elements of the present state are desirable. These are naturally the welfare and socially

oriented services mostly found in the developed world. In his view, anarchism is generally a tool

used to audit a structure's justification, not a set of dogma that insists on the eradication of anything organised.

The last note I will make is around if a nuanced anarchism will interest anarchists and others most sceptical of management and capitalism. Ardent CMS scholars, anarchists, and other similar ilk who may argue to 'never engage' or remain in 'constant opposition' as Burrell (Hancock and Tyler, 2005) counsels, might reject this nuanced view of anarchism. It remains unclear how to engage a revolutionary anticapitalist who has no interest in a reformist middle ground. The result of no engagement is the evaporation of relevance, or at least steeped insularity, something academics must wrestle with all the time. Surely the other side of that coin, the side knowledge without 'impact' does not exist, is equally unhelpful. My goal is not to apologise and vindicate anarchism, CMS, any form of neo-management or a conscientious capitalism, but rather to contribute to CMS's project to find improved experiences for people at work and in organisations. Recalling Kinna's words from her 2019 text (2009: 141), 'I want to suggest the possibilities for anarchism should not be evaluated by the spread or reach of anarchist groups, but by the adjustments anarchists can foster in non-anarchist organizations'. Anarchists of all stripes should be intrigued with this and rally to the CMS goal. Additionally, anarchists must ask themselves if their ideas of what anarchism are, are designed for broad societal advancement, or as some anarchists have accused (Bookchin, 1995), their own semi- or clear nihilism, or ineffective 'lifestyle anarchism' (one of style but no substance). Anarchism without a productive immediate means to emancipation is probably not anarchism, but rather a fanciful politics, and even immature egocentrism, one that only gives a vacuous mode of revolutionary aire and style. The goal here is to openly and faithfully engage and convince oppressive structures to reform; all the tools in anarchism's kit should be marshalled to that end.

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