Introduction: Pluriversalisty, Convergence and Hybridity in the Global Left

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Anarchism and Marxism are two of the longstanding intellectual frameworks through which anti-capitalism is articulated and practiced. As ideological cornerstones of the left, they continue to provide the source for anti-capitalist movement. While animosity, and internecine warfare, has been the hallmark of this relationship at times, the intellectual dialectic has sometimes been productive. The central question of how capitalism could and should be transcended has given rise to innumerable examples of groups and movements transcending ideological divides to forge new hybrid paths, from the Situationists to syndicalist trade unions like the IWW, CGT, CNT, FORA and others (Prichard et al 2012). On both sides, individuals broke ranks. The Second International saw Rosa Luxemburg attack the Leninist orthodoxy that the state should play the decisive role in delivering a revolutionary strategy, while Mao was only the most significant individual to take the opposite path, from anarchism to Marxist Leninism (Dirlik et al, 1997). Likewise, from the Paris Commune to Occupy Wall Street, and syndicalist movements worldwide (Hirsch and Van der Walt, 2010), anarchist activism has not been without a hint of communism. In short, many significant struggles and events relied upon the convergence, divergence and compromise between anarchist and Marxist-inspired groups in order to succeed, exhibiting a degree of hybridity always lost when purist accounts of political ideology distract from the lived experiences and compromises activists had to make on the ground.

These movements were global almost from inception. Indeed, the history of the Age of Extremes was precisely a global ideological struggle over the terms of modernity, one in which the Marxist Leninists triumphed, temporarily, with the establishment of the Soviet Union. But the contemporary post-Cold War era, and collapse of the hegemony of Marxist-Leninism, has seen a re-emergence of anarchism, and alongside this a renewed ideological convergence has been evident within numerous movements.

Many of the core activists and movements consider themselves post-ideological, where ideology denotes eschatological blueprints and unthinking deference to the ideas of long dead white men. But ideology need not be considered in this way (Freeden 2006. See also Franks, Jun and Williams 2018; Prichard 2017). Much contemporary scholarship understands ideology as a complex constellation of core and peripheral concepts, many of which are shared by neighbouring ideologies, with added emphasis or contrary definitions often placed on the same term. Liberty is a concept shared by liberals and anarchists alike, but the emphasis on positive accounts of liberty and the need for socialised property regimes, place anarchists to the left. But the historical transformation of these discourses, and the meanings attached to the core concepts, not to mention the ideological frames through which we filter the material and intellectual past, implies a complex hermeneutic circle, to use Gadamer's phrase, which must itself be located in concrete material contexts (Femia 1981). Social movements might attempt to achieve ideological purity, but this is a chimera. The empirical history of left wing ideology is no exception. Rather than expect to see uniformity, we need to presuppose pluriversality, convergence and hybridity.

In recent years, the Zapatistas have become symbolic of the first type of post-cold war resistance to neoliberalism in a post-ideological frame. Drawing from Marxism, anarchism, indigenous and landless rights movement, as well as the writings of Emilio Zapata, they very

quickly became the post-Cold War's first mass articulation of non-statist resistance (Holloway, 2002). The 'anti-globalisation' or 'global justice' movements that followed, right up to and including the Occupy Movement, 15M, the revolution in Rojava, and even the Naxelite movement, also appear to contain a distinct mix of Marxist and anarchist influences, even if these failed to lead to any significant reshaping of a global policy agenda (Worth, 2013). Occupy may have moved debate about class and socialism back into US public discourse, and individuals such as Jeremy Corbyn, Bernie Sanders, Alexis Tsipras and Pablo Iglesias have all made electoral gains, much as the Pirate Party and the Left-Green Movement did in Iceland (this issue). But while these groups run campaigns that appear to attract a diverse set of supporters that reach out to both traditions of the left, there is no evidence that any are proposing a post-capitalist politics.

Indeed, given the nature of the contemporary state, it is debateable whether they would be able to achieve this even if they wanted to. The legacy of late modern capitalism is a one of the hollowing out of the state, the out-sourcing of the provision of public goods to private bodies and the supranationalisation of state competencies to regional governance bodies with only this democratic credentials (Gill and Cutler, 2014). On the one hand this has led to fragmentation and *anomie*, where multiple competing collective agents pull in different directions, and power vacuums entice opportunists. On the other, the regional or supranationalisation of government competencies has integrated and homogenised governance structures while at the same time removing democratic public from their purview. The opportunities for reordering world politics from the bottom up, particularly through the nation state, seem sparse indeed. As we argued in our previous collection, pluriversality, convergence and hybridity on the left, is not just an option but a necessity in our contemporary world order (Prichard and Worth 2016).

A dialogue and a renewed exchange between anarchism and Marxism is required in order to address the shortcomings inherent within those traditions changed historical circumstances and interrogate how such shortcomings in one can by addressed by the other (Choat, 2016). As is widely argued, the mainstream left has lacked a wider strategy since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the decline of the Keynesian-driven post-war social democracy. But likewise, the autocratic monarchies of the nineteenth century can no longer be cyphers for all states, as is often wont in anarchist theory (for a singular alternative see Gelderloos). Any convergence would allow for a renewed belief that new forms of resistance to contemporary capitalism can develop into a more coherent and more nuanced collection of strategies that reflect the diversities of the Marxist and anarchist traditions (Wigger 2016, Vey, 2016).

Conceptual and theoretical convergence, historical and contemporary, were surveyed in pervious work (Prichard et al 2012; Prichard and Worth 2016). Our aim with this special was to invite contributors to speak about and from within (where possible) social movements in which this convergence takes place. Our contributors pose original answers to such questions as, where do we see this ideological convergence and compromise taking place, and what are its main features and contours? What lessons are to be learned from this convergence? What can this analysis tell us about the future of the left? The contributors to this special issue explore precisely this. The seven pieces here each reflect case-studies where left-wing forces have been active and where the forms of socialism developed in response to capitalist alienation and exploitation exhibit distinctive traits of both anarchism and marxism. They are instances where either an environment has emerged for such forces to operate and potentially converge, or

where movements have developed strategies align them more concretely one way or the other in response to the presumed failure of convergence.

The case studies range widely, reporting from experiments in South America, the Middle East and Africa, as well as Eastern Europe, helping us to decentre the Anglo-American framing of much strategic debate on the left. What can we learn from case-studies that are generally drawn from instances that have appeared away from what could be considered as the core or heartlands of the capitalist world order? In the case of the *La Vía Campesina*, its transnational development might have gained considerable support from its Northern partners in Europe and North America, but its departure point emerged from the mobilisation of radical peasant organisation in Latin America (Martinez-Torres and Rosset, 2010). Like Latin America, the Middle East, South Africa and the post-Soviet space have all been regarded as 'semi-peripheral'. Semi-peripheral regions are often understood as those that neither represent a core or the underdeveloped periphery, but have an unequal combination of both characteristics (Worth and Moore, 2009). More significantly, for some, such as Chris Chase-Dunn, they represent the terrain where the engines of change and transformation often begin (Chase-Dunn, 1990). Noted for their instability, resistance movements appear to emerge more frequently in parts of the semi-periphery and as a result provide greater insight into the health of the wider workings of the world order that they are operating within.

Whilst *some* of the cases here have emerged from regions which could be described as 'semi-peripheral', many more have developed from situations of national exceptionalism. Whether as a source of geopolitical instability (in the case of Ukraine), in the aftermath of a significant financial collapse (in Iceland), as a result of the suppression of the right to self-determination (both in the case of Rojava and to a certain degree with PAH) or in the aftermath of a uniquely racial and authoritarian regimes (in the case of South Africa), the various case-studies explored in this special issue can all claim to be unique in some form or other. Nevertheless, the forms of convergence that they discuss all reflect the wider developments that have occurred through global political society since the decline of state socialism. In reflecting on these developments, this special issue provides us with first-hand reflections of such convergence and the problems they have had in building any viable form of global action.

There was no simple transmission of ideas from North to South, or West to East. The global history of the left is more complex and more fluid, resulting from the confluence of material, cultural and political context, ideology, and a vision of the future. There have been multiple and vicariously connected struggles shaping the futures of protagonists as they attempt to shape the world, with often unforeseen and not always pleasant consequences. As each example demonstrates, despite the unique experiences they describe, similarities echo through history and across space.

Each of these studies allows us to reflect critically on the contemporary form of the global left. But what's missing in this collection and what more might we productively examine? China, indigenous or first nation struggles, black power, Naxelites. Each of these are examples of actually existing social movements that exhibit both the unique and the general, and it is in the study of these movements that we will see the echoes of the future coming back to us. As Comte once argued, and Marx followed, the proper sequence of philosophical history is not past, present, future, but past, future, present. Sociology is futurology. (perhaps delete)

What's missing conceptually? More could have been said by our contributors, or by future research in this area, how ideologies morph from one form into another, what the causal relationship is between context and changing meaning, what is the relationship between agency and structure in this process of ideological morphology?

This collection achieves the more modest task of holding a looking glass up to the wider problems and challenges that the left faces in the 21st century. This provides us with both reflection on the idea of 'convergence and compromise' within the left, or hybridity, but also on the future of the left. We show where alliances and intellectual or ideological hybridity are capable of challenging the path dependency of neoliberal capitalist practices in the everyday politics of our lives.

The first article in this collection, by Ribera-Almandoz, Huke, Clua-Losada and Bailey, is a case in point. The authors discuss the anti-austerity movements in Spain and the United Kingdom. What they note is that whist both anarchism and Marxism can be evident in the manner in which some of the anti-austerity resistance have been orchestrated, the lack of conscience ideological framing around them have made potential divisions redundant. As resistance has been forged around what they call 'pragmatic prefigurativism', where groups have looked to spontaneously occupy spaces and disrupt forms of production through the use of strikes and protests, then these strategies have made potential divisions that might emerge between different ideological less likely. They also suggest that whilst many might dismiss such pragmatism as lacking a wider strategic vision, the fact that institutional political movements such as Podemos have emerged in Spain, and Jeremy Corbyn won the leadership of the Labour Party in the UK, show that forms of formal political representation have followed on the back of these movements as a result.

Looking at the progress of a transnational body, Robin Dunford turns his attention to look at *La Vía Campesina* and the concept of food sovereignty to assess the effectiveness of left-converge around a specific area of interest. In doing so Dunford provides a screen shot of not just how left-wing convergence might look at the transnational level but also the tensions that need to be overcome for any form of transnational activity to make progress. We can see from Dunford's evidence that the movement has developed tactics and strategies from the syndicalist or democratic unionism movement, stretching back to the Industrial Workers of the World. [Evidence] But these have morphed into a postcolonial politics that takes 'counter hegemony' to mean pluriversality rather than ideological and strategic unity. Thus, whilst the austerity campaigns in the UK and Spain might use micro-political and everyday forms of pragmatic prefigurativism, and have maintained much tighter ideological uniformity at the small scale, pluriversality of movements has provided a medium wherein ideological differences can be tolerated and integrated without erasure. These 'open' networks and exchanges were commonplace at the height of the World Social Forum (popularised around the slogan 'Another World is Possible'), but *La Via Campesina* is predicated on the very real exchange of ideas alongside very real objectives of food sovereignty. This concrete focus stands in contrast to 'the creation of space' for the convergence of ideas in order for imagined forms of transformation to emerge. As he argues, 'food sovereignty is not an empty signifier, but a signifier rich with the content of intercultural dialogue across cultures.' [page ref] Convergence in plurality also demands clear strategic objectives.

The next three pieces look at instances in specific states and at the building of left fractions in light of the ending of a specific regime or as a result of a specific occurrence that has structurally spaced that states' development. In the first, Leroy Maisiri, Phillip Mzamani Nyalungu and Lucien van der Walt look at how the independent left has grown since the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa. With the Tripartite Alliance of the African National Congress (ANC), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) co-opting large parts of the post-apartheid political landscape, the place of independent left groups such as Zabalza are a surprising alternative that have played an instrumental tactical role alongside these larger groups, and have developed their own strategy of critical antagonism, rather than compromise or hybridity, in order to she harsh light on the failures of the traditional left. The piece focuses on the development of anarchist groups in the Guateng region in South Africa and the problems that have emerged in forging oppositional movements that align themselves to grassroots movements in a manner that distinguishes them from governmental positions, particularly in relation to their understanding of neoliberalism. Here, at least, wider convergence is certainly possible, although as the detailed discussion of the evolution of such an opposition suggests, it remains fraught with difficultly, and often not pragmatic or strategically valuable at all.

In the case of Ukraine, the Maiden uprisings of 2014 have left a significant mark on the potential development of left convergence. Ishchenko shows the dangers of failing to articulate the core socialist ideology of a movement and the pitfalls of aligning with wider movements that do not share your core values. The Maiden and subsequent anti-Maiden protest and the politicization of nationalist forces have marginalized left-wing development, and indeed in the most extreme cases, led to the cooptation of the left by the right. The geopolitical terrain of the country as a battle-ground between the Ukrainian and Russian forces of nationalism, liberalism and socialism, have both highlighted the weakness of leftist groups to confront this nationalist-liberal polarization and have seen such groups moving to support either the Maiden or anti-Maiden groups, and as a result, towards a partnership within the right. In response, Ishchenko concludes by suggesting that a form of left-converge around the traditional values of solidarity, internationalism, and labour, might emerge as a response to such polarizing developments. Regardless, this article stands alone in this volume in telling a story of complete failure, and is thought provoking for that reason.

If South Africa and Ukraine can be both understood as states that lie in shadow of a former authoritarian past, Iceland stands in stark contrast. Here the context both of left convergence and of state failure has been the direct result of the global financial crisis. What is striking about Iceland, a country of just shy of 400,000 people, is the rise and mainstreaming of radical leftist groups that had previously been marginalized. The left-Green/Social Democratic coalition that oversaw the post-crisis period of 2009-2013 has been seen internationally as providing a vision for left/progressive forces in general (Blyth, 2013). As Ómarsdóttir and Valgarðsson show in their piece, the subsequent emergence of the Pirate Party as a libertarian/anarchist group, that had four members of parliament and was led by Birgitta Jonsdottir, pushed the poles of party politics in Iceland even further to the left. However, as the article also shows, parliamentary politics stymies alliances. Indeed, the uneasiness between the Left-Greens and the Pirates, certainly when the latter was thriving in the polls, was more profound than might have been though. It also shows the problems across the different left groups with fragmentation and 'short-termism' of parliamentary cycles, and highlights how the emergence of another

organization – the Socialist Party - might either be reflected of this trend or an alternative that might or provide a new vehicle for potential convergence.

The last two articles concern movements that have emerged from self-determinism and from a dissatisfaction with the state (or states) within which they reside. Yet, neither can be reduced to separatist movements. The Spanish civil war remains perhaps the best example of left-wing convergence, and it was in Catalonia that left fractions were to appear to provide a front against Franco's Spain. Despite the confrontational and deadly clashes that marked the divisions between these fractions, both preceding and following the civil war, the symbolic 'moment' in the war echoes through to the politics of the city today.. Berglund illustrates how the anti-austerity strategies adopted by the *Plataforma de Afectados por La Hipoteca* (or Platform for the Mortgage-Affected, known as PAH) provide a useful example of left-convergence at the micro level. Again, organised around a clear objective and strategy, and despite having branches across Spain, they were, momentarily highly organised and successful. But it is in Catalonia that their power was most keenly felt. Berglund shows that the actions of PAH go some way to addressing the questions posed by others over the viability of forms of horizontalism to establish a coherent form of opposition (Kiersey and Vrasti, 2016). For Berglund, the ideological looseness, civil disobedience, and what O'Brien and Liu called 'rightful resistance' and strategic illegality tactics they deployed, show PAH can be understood as coherently 'counter-hegemonic'. The organisation provides a potential model for those looking to understand how such a 'war of position' can be realised at a wider level. That says, he also shows how the fragility of groups like PAH can also lead to potential splits and fragmentations which can serve to de-legitimate its effectiveness.

Rasit and Kolokotronis draw our attention to the feminist currents in the democratic confederalism of Rojava. The aim is to […] Their piece suggests that actors in Rojava have drawn from their Marxist-Lenisnist past, coupled this with Bookchinian anarchism and radical feminism, and created a unique form of 'decentralised vanguardism' that has transformed the lives of millions and acted as one of the most effective bulwarks to the spread of ISIS between 2011 and 2019. The movement's central attack on the forces of patriarchy provides an lightning rod for conflicting ideological forces to converge. Rojava's fight against the patriarchy in all its forms, in Arab nationalism, statebuilding projects, militarism and ethnocentrism, while at the same time defending ecumenical polities and grass roots direct democracy, have provided a departure point for left-wing forces to combine and converge in a manner that can provide a useful wider case-study for the building of a counter/left hegemony. At the same time, as Rasit and Kolokotronis stress in conclusion, Rojava has only been successful in its ongoing revolutionary process and in its mobilisation against wider opposition forces at a time of civil and international war. The echoes with Civil War Spain are clear, but how these conditions might be mimicked and hybridised in areas where the state still holds that monopoly of violence is an open question. More strategically, can Rojava compromise its specific objective of self-determination with its wider commitment to universalism? Questions of international politics and cosmopolitan internationalist values require greater scrutiny when looking at left strategy more generally.

These articles serve as important instances of actually existing attempts at socialist convergence and compromise have been forthcoming in 21st century global civil society. They illustrate different examples of strategic alliance with mixed results. Localised struggles are articulated as global struggles, and where they are not, failure followed. In Iceland we see how

potential left-wing parties have emerged at the centre of government, whilst in South Africa they very much appear at the margins. In Ukraine the failure of the left to articulate and enact a coherent left strategy had regional effects and mirrored historical failures. In Rojava and the food sovereignty movement, internationalism and localism work hand in hand.

Finally, we have seen differences in the success of the various forms of movements. For example, there has been a certain degree of success in the objectives that the anti-austerity movements outlined in the paper Ribera-Almandoz, Huke, Clua-Losada and Bailey, and these achievements are possible precisely because the cultural and socio economic changes underway in modern Britain and Spain. In addition, Rasit and Kolokotronis argue that the Rojava case has been distinctly successful in its ability to forge a left convergence. In contrast, the failure of the left in the Ukraine to mobilise in light of competing nationalist forces reminds us of the obstacles any left strategy might have.

Our hope is that this special issue, like the two collections that preceded it, can inform debates around the conceptualisation, history and global practice of contemporary left strategy. Our contributors provides us with unique insight into different cases where forms of such strategy have been levied. It is not questioning whether forms of left convergence are necessary – a question which as we said, has been addressed elsewhere, but how ideological currents converge at different levels with different degrees of success, having faced different obstacles. It is in these practices, and the forms of domination they resist, that we will find the birth pangs of our collective future.

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