

Organizational norms and practices in affinity groups: an anarchist perspective

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to introduce anarchism as organized order. My thesis is that a thorough study of management and organization of anarchism is much needed in theory and praxis because it examines conditions and levels of relationships within anarchism itself. Because of practicing non-hierarchical and non-authoritarian methods and techniques, anarchism should be examined through the theory of organizations in the context of science. In doing so, I derive from Von Bertalanffy's *general systems theory*, more specific, open system theory. From this point of view I will study *self-organization* within anarchist movement, precisely affinity groups and their activity, decision-making and self-learning within them. I will also try to show that anarchist theory of organization is connected with the theory of organization on the ground of the theory of adhocracy, learning (cybernetics) and holographic organization. Also, my intention is to expose what is the role of the manager within an affinity group – of course not in authoritarian sense, but as a stimulator, researcher, facilitator or moderator. So this paper is also going to examine if this sociopolitical system could be organized beyond the ideological apparatus of neoliberal capitalism and in doing so, I'll try to focus on self-organization in all aspects of organizing, whether it's political system, direct democracy, economy, healthcare etc. Is it possible to speak about new paradigm of theory of organization?

Introduction

At first mention of the words organization and anarchy/anarchism you might think that this is a paradox. But anarchism is more than that, because its negative perception is obvious by its definition. This discussion, which was inspired by Gareth Morgan's *Images of Organization*, tries to present anarchism as an organized order. In doing that, We use the theory of open systems to examine *self-organization* within anarchist movements¹, i.e. affinity groups, and operation, decision-making and (self)learning amongst them. My thesis is that the examination of management and organization of anarchism is significant because it questions

¹ Of course this does not mean that this text applies only to anarchist affinity groups, because, as Vodovnik (2012, 24) said, anarchism »was an idea and practice not only of self-proclaimed anarchists, but also of 'common' people who practiced anarchism without being aware of it or with no previous knowledge of the word 'anarchism'. The anarchist principles of non-authoritarian organization spread around to such an extent that many social movements could be classified as an anarchist even without assuming this identity. By contrast, many anarchist intentionally refuse to declare themselves anarchists, probably due to their extreme adherence to the anarchist ideas of an anti-cult attitude, openness and flexibility, whereby complete emancipation also encompasses emancipation from the rigidity of identity.« So we can acknowledge anarchism for rediscovering ideas and practices of affinity groups that are based on consensus.

the relations within anarchism itself.² Like Colin Ward³ said in *Anarchy in Action*, published in 1973:

»Organisation and its problems have developed a vast and literature because of the importance of the subject for the hierarchy government administration and industrial management. Very little of this vast literature provides anything of value for the anarchist except in his role as destructive critic or saboteur of the organisations that dominate our lives. The fact is that while there are thousands of students and teachers of government, there are hardly any of non-government« (Ward 1996, 20).

The situation in this area is practically identical today. Of course there is the Marxist critique of the exploitation of workers and proposal of alternative organization, but this critique, with the exception of autonomous Marxism, is focused exclusively on factories: workers should run the factories where they work themselves. This text expands the research and tries to focus on self-organization in all aspects of organization, whether those aspects are political systems, direct democracy, economy, healthcare, etc. So, is it possible to talk about a new paradigm of the theory of organizations? Ward continues:

»There is an immense amount of research into methods of administration, but hardly any into self-regulation. There are whole libraries on, and expensive courses in, industrial management, and very large fees for consultants in management, but there is scarcely any literature, no course of study and certainly no fees for those who want to do away with management and substitute workers' autonomy. The brains are sold to the big battalions, and we have to build up a theory of non-government, of non-management, from the kind of history and experience which has hardly been written about because nobody thought it all that important« (ibid.).

As we know, anarchism is weaker where Marxism is the strongest: theory. But in practice, anarchism is more diverse, as it, with its network approach, distributes (political) power amongst all actors in motion. Precisely because of “practicing” non-hierarchical and authoritarian methods and techniques, it is important to research the theory of organization in the context of science. But most of the social-politic theories understand anarchism as a »move away from exclusively materialist accounts of change to consider matters of

² Therefore in some parts of the text you may notice equating between companies (as an organization) and anarchist affinity groups

³ Ward is actually one of the few authors which consider anarchism as a (or one of) theory of organization. See: Colin Ward: *Anarchism as a Theory of Organization* (1966).

psychology, human nature and people's 'need' for authority is seen to be too unscientific« (Purkis 2004, 41). However this kind of discourse, in the era of constant resistance and uprisings and changes in the socio-political field, is changing: anarchism is moving outside the margins – becoming a battle on the political agenda. So a question emerges: is organization without government possible?

Organization as the premise of anarchism

In Vodovnik's (2012, 42) words, »even though is amorphic, paradox-ridden and full of contradictions, we can still try to mark off this complex theory and practice with a loose working definition which understands anarchism as a political theory and practice aimed at (according to Proudhon) achieving anarchy – a society without ruler.«

There are actually as many different definitions of anarchism as there are anarchists, not only that, as many as there are people. In the eyes of the majority anarchism today still remains a synonym for chaos and disorder.

In the *Oxford Dictionaries*, anarchism is defined as:

»belief in the abolition of all government and the organization of society on a voluntary, cooperative basis without recourse to force or compulsion.«

This definition of anarchism is vague, but the Anarchist FAQ better defines anarchism as »a political theory which aims to create anarchy, 'the absence of a master, of a sovereign'. In other words, anarchism is a political theory which aims to create a society within which individuals freely co-operate together as equals« (McKay 2009, 19). Therefore anarchism defies all forms of hierarchical control – whether we are talking about governmental or capitalistic control – whereas control is unnecessary and detrimental to an individual.

John Clark gives us a broader definition, as he defines anarchism as:

- »1.) a view of an ideal, noncoercive, nonauthoritarian society;
- 2.) a criticism of existing society and its institutions, based on this antiauthoritarian ideal;
- 3.) a view of human nature that justifies the hope for significant progress toward the ideal

4.) a strategy for change, involving institutions of noncoercive, nonauthoritarian, and decentralist alternatives« (Clark in Vodovnik 2010, 42).

Anarchism is more based on organization than it receives credit for. Rudolf Rocker, for example, wrote:

»anarchism as such is not opposed to organization, on the contrary, anarchism is its strongest supporter, this assuming that it's a natural organization on every level that resulted from the common relationships of people and that finds its expression in a federative cooperation of forces. As a result it opposes all imposition of cooperation from the top over the rest of the people, because it destroys natural relationships between them, which is the base for all real organization and it coverts each individual into a part of a machine that works for the interests of the privileged« (Rocker 2003, chapter 6).

Therefore organization is a means which at the same time is also the goal. Organization here and now is a reflection of functioning that will take place even after the transformation of the capitalistic society to a non-capitalistic, classless society.

Colin Ward highlights – in his own words – one of the many interpretations of anarchism, that states: *»far from being a speculative vision of a future society, it is a description 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 of our society« (Ward 1996, 18).* Ward is aware that this description of anarchy as a form of organization might be *»deliberately paradoxical. With anarchy you may consider to be, by definition, the opposite of organisation«.* Errico Malatesta⁴ follows the anarchistic interpretation of organization, when he states, that an organization is - after all, only the practice of cooperation and solidarity -, a natural and necessary condition of social life; only through organization alone can the people stand together and defy authority.

The open system of anarchism

Anarchism gained its ontological premise on the basis of the definition of organization in Kropotkin's book *Mutual Aid*. Using the principle of mutual aid, Kropotkin radically changed the course of Darwinian thought about the laws of nature. On the basis of his own and other

⁴ In *Anarchism and Organization* (1897)

anthropological findings, he has come to the conclusion, that living creatures can only survive if they work together and that the principle “war of all against all” (Hobbes) does not correspond with evolution. On that same note, the theoretical biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy developed the open system theory which argues that »organizations, like organisms, are 'open' to their environment and must achieve an appropriate relation with that environment if they are to survive« (Morgan 2006, 38).

Even though Morgan describes multiple concepts that are part of the open system or systems⁵ – these are often presented as general principles for all types of systems⁶ – we are going to focus on the one, which is most significant⁷ for our thesis, that is the concept of open system:

»Organic systems at the level of the cell, complex organism, and population of organisms existing a continuous exchange with their environment. This exchange is crucial for sustaining the life and form of the system, as environmental interaction is the basis of self-maintenance. It is thus often said that living systems are 'open systems', characterized by a continuous cycle of input, internal transformation (throughout), output, and feedback (whereby one element of experience influences the next). The idea of openness emphasizes the key relationships between the environment and the internal functioning of the system. Environment and system are to be understood as being in a state of interaction and mutual dependence. The open nature of biological and social systems, although the degree of openness can vary, as some open systems may be responsive only to a relatively narrow range of outputs from the environment« (Morgan 2006, 40).

If we follow Bertalanffy’s classification of open systems we can divide them into environment, subsystem and compliance.

Environment is rather important for management and organization because it means interaction between input and output. Thus, much attention has been devoted to

»understanding the immediate 'task' or 'business environment', defined by the organization's direct interactions with the customers, competitors, suppliers, labour unions, and government agencies, as well as the broader 'contextual' or 'general

⁵Homeostasis, entropy/negative entropy, structure, function, differentiation and integration, requisite variety, equifinality and system evolution.

⁶ Mostly thanks to the so-called general system theory, which aims to formulate and derive principles applicable to systems in general (Flood 1999, 31). To put it different: he foresaw a system of laws and generalised theories to unify all sciences. This is the core of this article, to unify anarchism with organizational theories.

⁷ Morgan considers the concept of open system as part of a wider theory of open system.

environment'. All this has important implications for organizational practice, stressing the importance of being able to scan and sense changes in task and contextual environments, of being able to bridge and manage critical boundaries and areas of interdependence, and of being able to develop appropriate operational and strategic responses (Morgan 2006, 39).

Morgan continues: »If we define the other whole organization as a system, then the other system can be understood as subsystems, just as molecules, cells, and organs, can be seen as subsystems of a living organism, even though they are complex open systems on their own account« (*ibid.*).

Therefore a system without subsystems does not exist, because organizations also include individuals (who are systems themselves), which belong to departments or groups, which furthermore belong to larger departments, etc. Subsystems also focus on internal and external relations and whilst realize their interdependence.

The third approach rests on the attempt »to establish congruencies or 'alignments' between different systems and to identify and eliminate potential dysfunctions« (*ibid.*). Therefore, at this point, it is important to integrate differentiation, diversity, integration and other ideas.

Anarchism is thus like the general theory of systems: it is a system, which is in conflict with its environment (capitalism, neoliberalism), but nevertheless remains open, because if it were to close, it would put itself back on the margins of society. In other words: it would marginalize itself. Cooperation of the subsystems enables the functioning of the system as a whole.

Anarchism, if we look at its transformation from the very beginning, transformed itself into something new, something innovative. It has freed itself from doctrinal shackles and took on a new methodology of fight, which became global. Anarchism connected different groups that do not describe themselves as anarchistic, but function on the basis of anarchistic organization. For young activists anarchism today is:

»a decentralized organizational structure, based on affinity groups that work together on an ad hoc basis, and decision-making by consensus. It also means egalitarianism; opposition to all hierarchies; suspicion of authority, especially that of the state; and commitment to living according to one's values ... Many envision a stateless society based on small, egalitarian communities. For some, however, the society of the future remains an

open question. For them, anarchism is important mainly as an organizational structure and as a commitment to egalitarianism. It is a form of politics that revolves around the exposure of the truth rather than strategy. It is a politics decidedly in the moment« (Epstein 2001).

This *ad hoc* basis was specifically studied by theorists of organization. In theory it is called adhocracy. The intention – first of Henry Mintzberg (1979) and then Miller and Friesen (1984) – was to show »that effective organization depends on developing a cohesive set of relations between structural design; the age, size, and technology of the firm; and the conditions of the industry in which it is operating« (Morgan 2006, 49-50). Their thesis is that professional bureaucracy and centralized decision-making are possible only in stable environments, where the tasks are relatively complicated. On the contrary, simple structure and adhocracy function best in an unstable environment. Adhocracy can be understood as organizations which are designed for temporary operation. Adhocracy is an »organization that disregards the classical principles of management where everyone has a defined and permanent role /.../ it is a non-bureaucratic networked organization« (Hodgson and White 2004, 560).

»The adhocracy usually involves project teams that come »together to perform a task and disappear when the task is over, with members regrouping in other teams devoted to other projects. Sometimes, this kind of enterprise is called a 'virtual' or 'network' organization, especially when teams and team members are spread geographically, using electronic technology and occasional face-to-face meetings to integrate their activities« (Morgan 2006, 51; Hodgson and White 2004, 561-565).

All members have authority within their specific areas, along with the option of coordinating with other members, decision-making and influencing the future of the organization. There is no hierarchy in adhocracy. Alvin Toffler, the founding father of the concept of adhocracy⁸ has gone to assert in 1970 that »the social and cultural institutions that currently exist have become unwieldy and outdated. The problem, he claims, is a lack of flexibility. ‘Why is this that all our institutions going through a simultaneous crisis?’ he asks. ‘The answer is that we have sets of institutions that were designed either for agrarian life ... as parliaments were, or ... the Industrial Age, but no longer meet the requirements of today’ what is needed, Toffler suggests, is a wholesale move to adhocracy« (Hodgson and White 2004, 561).

⁸ He introduced the concept of adhocracy in the book *Future Shock*.

The concept of adhocracy can be understood through Bey's Temporary Autonomous Zones (T.A.Z.), because these, similarly to ad hoc organizations, »liberate a part (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolve themselves to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, before the State can crush them« (Bey in Vodovnik 2012, 27). Therefore adhocracy can be used as a fundamental tool for organizing groups to solve dilemmas, situations and problems. Precisely with the dispersal of tasks and the short life of temporary autonomous zones, we suppress any possibility of authoritarian takeover by a manager, therefore an individual, because the latter does not have enough time, resources and ultimately not enough support to form their own group which would dominate all others.

A concept similar to adhocracy is the concept of network organization. Both notions can be associated with the notion of direct democracy, which is used by anarchists. Graeber (2002) defines this practice as a tool of the so called new anarchists: »It is about creating and enacting horizontal networks instead of top-down structures like states, parties or corporations; networks based on principles of decentralized, non-hierarchical consensus democracy.« Thus, we can use this as a premise for our next chapter on how to use the theory of a learning organization with consensual decision-making of affinity groups.

Anarchism, management and self-organization

From what we have learned so far we can confirm the fact that anarchist affinity groups adjust to the environment and situations in which they are situated. These groups are open to cooperation and anyone can enter or exit these groups at any time. This is the principal of direct democracy. However, at this point, we have to question the role of groups and the forms of learning within them, thus examine the behaviour of affinity groups.

Learning can be examined through two different methods. These two methods are single-loop and double-loop learning. The difference between them is that former of these involves the detection and correction of error within a given set of governing variables; the latter involves changing the governing variables themselves (Easterby-Smith in Araujo 1999, 3). In other words, the difference is that single-loop learning only tries to introduce changes gradually, whereas double-loop learning implements radical changes. The difference is also shown in picture 1. For our understanding of learning, the second double-loop concept is most significant, because anarchism itself is radical and, as said before, questions new methods and

techniques of organizing. We can consider it as a *bottom-up* approach, which is actually the essential premise of horizontal or so called network organizing. Thus organizational members must:

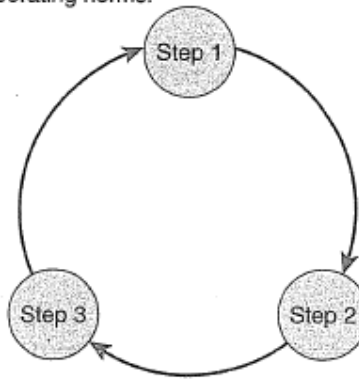
»learn and change, must be skilled in understanding the assumptions, frameworks, and norms guiding current activity and be able to challenge and change them when necessary. /.../ Double-loop learning depends on what is sometimes described as the art of framing and reframing, which, as Donald Schön has shown, is crucial for the kind of self-reflective practice that underpins intelligent action. In concrete terms, it means that organizational members must be skilled in understanding the paradigms, metaphors, mind-sets, or mental models that underpin how the organization operates. They must be able to develop new ones when appropriate.« (Morgan 2006, 89-90).

At this point we have to stress the fact that this is an idealization of organizational learning and that many groups go back to or strive to single-loop learning, either due to internal or external factors. Another thing worth mentioning is that most company managements almost always tend towards a more traditional, centralistic, Tayloristic leadership and struggle to allow for the organization to evolve into a self-organized form. The reason for that lies in the capital or profit and power within the organization.

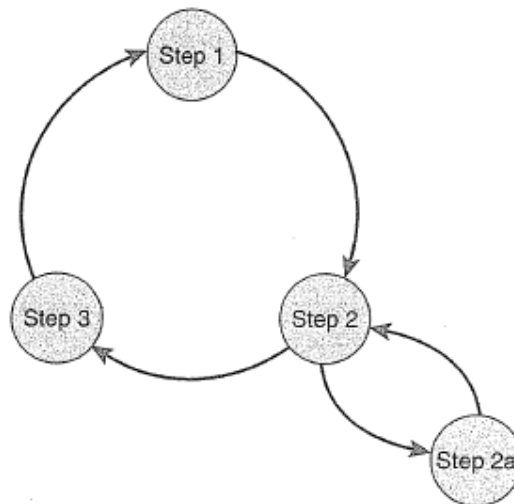
And at the same time, managers are not satisfied with this situation, because it makes it rather difficult to control the subordinates and their innovations. Thus a tendency to maintain the *status quo*⁹ occurs.

⁹ We can compare this finding to the state of government. A government which is satisfied with the status quo won't allow any principles of self-organization outside the government apparatus. We can illustrate that using the example of sporting and cultural associations. These can organize however they want, but at the same time they stay in the government's domain. On the other hand, we are faced with the question of political organizing. Whenever social movements are organized with a bypass around the government, the latter will try to discredit them. It is worth mentioning that we are talking about internal factors, whereas external factors lie mostly in the interests of capital and therefore multinationals. In a democratic system only interest groups and political parties are considered as legitimate and while political parties are based on conflict, affinity groups on the other hand function on the base of the principal of consensus. So the conflict of *all against all* is possible only in the current state of society in neoliberal capitalism. However if this "natural" state of things was to change, it is probable that all shackles of domination and hierarchy would fall with it. That is the anarchist premise of anti-authoritarianism, or as Rudolf Rocker points out, the anarchist thought was »quite the opposite, one of the greatest accusations against the State apparatus is that it is the biggest obstacle to effective organizing based on

Single-loop learning rests in an ability to detect and correct error in relation to a given set of operating norms:



Double-loop learning depends on being able to take a "double look" at the situation by questioning the relevance of operating norms:



- Step 1 = the process of sensing, scanning, and monitoring the environment.
- Step 2 = the comparison of this information against operating norms.
- Step 2a = the process of questioning whether operating norms are appropriate.
- Step 3 = the process of initiating appropriate action.

Picture 1: Single-loop and double-loop learning. Taken from Gareth Morgan (2006) *Images of organization*, p. 85. Thousand Oaks; London; New Delhi: Sage publications.

the equality of interests for all. /.../ They saw in Anarchism a social state in which individual desires and the needs of humans surpass their social sentiments and are more or less identical to them« /.../ For this reason they refused the coercive law as a way for relationships and developed the idea of the free accord as basis for all social forms of organization« (Rudolf Rocker 2003, chapter 1).

Double-loop learning can be understood as a process of building constant improvement. One of these processes is a process called *ringi* which derives from Japan. It is one of the first efforts to manage quality in an organization through collective decision-making. Under this process, »a policy document is circulated among a group of managers or other personnel for approval. If a person disagrees with what is being proposed, he or she is free to amend the document, and it is circulated again. The process in effect explores the values, premises and details relating to a project from multiple points of view until an agreed-on position that satisfies all critical concerns and parameters emerges.« (Morgan 2006, 94).

Therefore we can connect *ringi* as a managerial theory with anarchism, as decision-making is a very important factor of participation in affinity groups. Morgan continues that the essence of double-loop learning is precisely in *ringi*. It has a »double function of allowing people to challenge core operating principles and, in both the process and the outcome, to affirm and reaffirm the values that are to guide action. Paradoxically, it is a process that mobilizes disagreement to create consensus. It is also a process that allows innovation to be driven from all direction and for 'intelligence' to evolve to higher and higher level« (Morgan 2006, 94-95). Finding consensus is the most democratic way of expressing opinions and positions, as consensus benefits all members of the organization. In fact, anarchism is very devoted to consensus, as consensus means that no one can take initiative and with it claim leadership. So *ringi* is an identical case of operating inside an affinity group.

But it is important to stress that *ringi* is usually misinterpreted in the Western literature, because the lower employees are in fact not as independent as they are sometimes portrayed, as their self-organization is based on a method which is actually also known in western managerial culture (see: Vogel 1975, xvii-xviii).

Furthermore we can highlight operation in affinity groups through the theory of so called holographic organization. It represents a »radical form of decentralization in which different parts of the organization have capacity for self-organization, the opportunity and resources to choose how they operate (Hales 2001, 202). This capacity, in turn, depends upon a number of other principles. According to Hales, it is a very important principle of decision-making. He adds: »decision-making is devolved according to the principle of 'localness' (Senge's concept), or 'federalism' (Handy's concept), that is decisions are taken by those most directly involved in the operations to which they relate«. Holographic organization therefore means that the organization has the ability to constantly self-organize and reproduce: it is a whole,

incorporated into each and every part. Besides this classification, Morgan further divides the holographic organization to four principles¹⁰ amongst others he describes holistic teams and diversified roles. Morgan states, that »the basic unit of design is a work team that is made responsible for a complete business process /.../ Within the team, roles or jobs are then broadly defined with individuals being trained in multiple skills so that they are interchangeable and can function in a flexible, organic way /.../ The prototype of this mode of operation is found in offices and factories built around self-managing work groups« (Morgan 2006, 103). He uses an electrical engineering company¹¹ as an example:

»Through the work of autonomous work teams of 14 to 18 people, these operating teams have complete responsibility for production, from the arrival of supplies in the plant to the shipment of finished products. Every employee is multiskilled and able to perform the operating tasks needed to produce the whole product. The teams meet daily to make decisions about production, to divide work, and to attend to special issues such as improvements in work design, problems in supplies or shipping, or the hiring of new members. Members of the team are responsible for setting their own hours of work and production schedules and conduct their own quality control. They even administer skills-certification tests to their colleagues. Each operating team has a leader or manager who acts as a resource, coach, and facilitator and who has special concern for the team's identity« (ibid.)

Thus, in other words, we can understand the holographic form as principles of solidarity, equality, non-hierarchy and non-authoritarianism. Therefore the level of autonomy is high and in the hands of the working group within the organization. Factories and offices become groups of “mini-factories” and “mini-offices”, organized on cellular principles. Anyone can consolidate and develop ability in each of the employees, by regularly producing and reproducing competencies, skills, visions, values and ethics of the organization (Morgan 1997, 176). Holographic organization is thus based on mutual culture, vision and value as opposed to rigid and strict hierarchical structures and policies¹².

¹⁰The importance of redundancy; requisite variety; minimum specs; learn to learn (Morgan 2006, 99-112).

¹¹For other examples see Ward (1966); Wall et al. (1986);

¹² A practically identical case can be found in Swedish *Kämpa tillsammans*. For more, see:

<http://libcom.org/library/proletarian-management-informal-workplace-organization-k%C3%A4mpa-tillsammans>

Manager within affinity group: question of leadership

Uri Gordon describes the role of the philosopher or an intellectual as a facilitator among activists, as many unresolved questions remain, and the philosopher, with his intervention, tries to direct dilemmas or problems, like the issues of violence (i.e. »should an anarchist ever use violence to achieve their ends if the ends themselves are not justified?«) and leadership in the anarchist movement (»if one does not endorse some ethos of horizontal organizing«) (Gordon 2006, 277).

Similarly, Grubačić pictures the role of the anarchist researcher:

»She should not be a teacher, but someone who envisages a new and a very difficult role: she must listen, explore and discover. Her role is to expose the interest of the dominant elite carefully hidden behind supposedly objective discourses. She has to help activists and to supply them with facts. It is necessary to invent a new form of communication between activists and activist scholars. It is necessary to create a collective mechanism that would connect libertarian scientists, workers and activists. It is necessary to found anarchist institutes, reviews, scientific communities, internationales« (Grubačić 2003).

Can we talk about the facilitator or researcher as a manager? Based on the fact that the fundamental assignments of a manager in an organization are: planning and designing objectives of an organization and planning and designing strategies to reach those objectives; managing work within the organization and integrating the organization internally and externally; managing organization to manage people; measuring outcomes of the organizations performance and assessing the results of workers' activity (Tavčar 2009, 25), we could, based on everything that was said, conclude that we can.

We have to realize that the traditional managerial role is, in essence, authoritarian. Today the manager's role is understood in the sense that the manager himself plans, organizes, guides and monitors. However, if we understand anarchist affinity groups as work groups within an organization, we can conclude, that the role of a manager, thus the facilitator/researcher should not be understood as an authoritarian, but in fact a participative manager: his role can be understood in the horizontal, network, therefore non- authoritarian sense. He cannot make any conclusions on his own; he does that together with other "members" of the organization. This type of manager can be understood as a *spokesman*. Graeber describes the operation of affinity groups and its spokesman:

»Spokescouncils, for example, are large assemblies that coordinate between smaller 'affinity groups'. They are most often held before, and during, large-scale direct actions like Seattle or Quebec. Each affinity group (which might have between 4 and 20 people) selects a 'spoke', who is empowered to speak for them in the larger group. Only the spokes can take part in the actual process of finding consensus at the council, but before major decisions they break out into affinity groups again and each group comes to consensus on what position they want their spoke to take« (Graeber 2002).

Therefore the manager within the group just integrates and draws information and ideas that he later passes on to the assembly and, as we mentioned previously (on the work group example), manager is just a source, instructor that facilitates the work of the group. In other words, he is a moderator. No matter the strategies, techniques and methods¹³, a spokes or a manager is equal to all others. He is appointed by other members of the affinity group, so he has to serve its interest and the interest of the wider circle of activists, the assembly respectively.

Conclusion: self-reflection

In this article, we tried to convey anarchism as a strategy and tactic of organization which can be seriously studied and, through concepts like adocracy, network and mainly holographic organization and cybernetics (and learning organization within it), understood as a theory of organization. Double-loop learning means innovative, radical *self*-learning and, with in-depth understanding of organizations, we find that precisely this is what contributes to the development and better understanding of the company, which leads to new ideas and new ways of organizing. Anarchism can be understood as a system, a system that is open and interdependent of its subsystems: without the subsystems, the whole does not work, the organization falls apart. There is an infinite amount of literature about organizational concepts and, which is even more important, they actually work in practice. They are based on principles of decentralization, horizontality and equality. They can also be found outside the strict organization environment, thus outside the company. For example, we can detect a strong tendency towards similar organization principles in the new social movements. Anarchism as an open system poses questions that are more behaviouristic in nature – after all

¹³Graeber mentions »spokescouncils, affinity groups, facilitation tools, break-outs, fishbowls, blocking concerns, vibe-watchers and so on.«

the main criticism of open systems applies to the fact that they have left out the behaviouristic spectrum. Of course, the environment has to be stable; in fact, we are talking about ideal operational conditions.

Another question or dilemma that occurs is the question of the role of a manager in an organization or affinity group. We have seen that his role in a company is authoritarian - he has the power to intervene into work in a top-down way, but what we are trying to suggest in this text is, that his role could be exactly the opposite, anti-authoritarian, encouraging, exploratory, in short, he could operate as a representative (spokesman) of his group and by the bottom-up principles. However it is important to stress that this is another separate question, a question of leadership within the company, which can be problematic because, as we pointed out earlier and as Morgan (2006, 114) sceptically says, »managers are often reluctant to trust self-organizing processes among their staff and truly 'let go'«. However there have been some cases that prove otherwise and which could be used as an example. Morgan himself admits, that it is also true that when »[self-organizing] ideal comes to reality, many forces of resistance can be unleashed«. And that is exactly what status quo is all about – there are always two sides: the dominant one, which tries to take control of everything and the other one that is resistant to such forms of governance. In the future, we could focus more on the question of cybernetics, as it questions the processes of self-learning. For these we have discovered that the double-loop self-learning ambiguously represents the principles of organization which are also characteristic for anarchism itself: they are radical, pervasive, justified and, as we have seen, particularly successful. We have to admit that this article is written in an optimistic tone and that the thesis that 'it is probable that all shackles of domination and hierarchy would fall' seems a bit excessive. We realize that movements form and disintegrate regardless of the fact if they achieved their goals or not. It is also worth mentioning that we are discussing management, which is terminologically established as a form of leadership and as such authoritarian *per se*. Thus most authors who discuss decentralization, mean decentralization within the organization, not outside it. It is formalized either way, determined either by profit or power. This article is an offset from that type of understanding, as affinity groups are inherently radical and do not consent to forms based on profit and much less to capitalist understanding of decision-making in organizations. However the topic of decision-making and consensus in a group is a delicate subject, namely because of the question 'can we reach consensus in a group of people that do not have the same beliefs

(for example extreme right-wing groups)? This question is very problematic and it does not seem that it will be resolved any time soon.

There is a long way ahead of us, as I think that research in this area is open to many different interpretations and ideas. So it may seem that this article opens more questions than it resolves, but let this be an introduction into a new field of research. However if we go back to Ward (1966), who believes »that the social ideas of anarchism: autonomous groups, spontaneous order, workers' control, the federative principle, add up to a coherent theory of social organisation which is a valid and realistic alternative to the authoritarian, hierarchical and institutional social philosophy which we see in application all around us«, we can end this discussion with an answer to our original question: is organization without government possible? We say yes, because activists and social movements, with their prefigurative policies through theories and practices organize here and now, all in the domain of (self)learning. Because, in Choo's words: »failure to learn often means failure to survive« (Choo 2002, 13) and in that we can often use the organizational concepts and theories and incorporate them into our lives and the lives of the unemployed, (precarious) workers, women and people of all races, that have the possibility to form groups.

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