Fragments of an anti-fascist geography: interrogating racism, nationalism, and state power

Abstract

Extensive research exists in geography concerning racism and nationalism, yet there has been surprisingly little written on the far right, and even less on their anti-fascist opponents. In the context of a resurgent far right, this paper draws together disparate work on this topic within geography to investigate the possibilities for the development of anti-fascist geographies. While fascism and anti-fascism have been chronically under-researched in geography, I argue that there remains an insightful body of research in existence, and that geographers are well positioned to undertake substantial work on the subject. Three connecting dimensions of an anti-fascist geography are identified; namely, investigating not only racism but also the more-than-racist dimensions of the far right; their intersections with one another; and the development of anti-fascist rationalities in our scholarship. Through this discussion, I suggest that the field of anarchist geographies offers a useful framework for these tasks, not only for empirical study but also for developing agendas to embed anti-fascist principles into academic practices. By focusing in on the spatialities of far right and anti-fascist politics, political geographers can position themselves at the forefront of this important area of work.

It is widely acknowledged that in the last decade or so there has been a growth of organised far-right activity across the Global North, as well as parts of the Global South (e.g. India; see Banaji, 2016). Although the performance of their electoral parties has been uneven (Mudde, 2014), the wider street movements, global co-ordination and online networks of populist-right, alt-right, and neo-fascist groups have undoubtedly grown in size and prominence. Recent gateway events such as the 'Brexit' vote for the UK to leave the European Union and the election of Donald Trump as US President have made space for more openly racist and authoritarian activities, especially in the Anglophone world, and have become seen as emblematic moments through which these dynamics were brought to popular and scholarly attention (e.g. Gökarıskel and Smith, 2016; Ingram, 2017). However, there has also been a longer-term story of slow and careful recomposition of far-right movements beyond those specific events themselves.

Operating in many regards relationally to this resurgent far right has been the growth of anti-fascist movements, which have received both praise and scorn for their bold and often confrontational approaches to dealing with the mounting threat from the right. As will be discussed, however, anti-fascism does not simply involve physical confrontation but also employs a range of tactics and political cultures that seek to disrupt and undermine fascist and fascist-enabling movements and values in other ways.

In this paper, I draw together writings across geography and the wider social sciences to explore the possibilities of what might be called 'anti-fascist geographies'. After outlining some definitional points, I turn my attention to geography. Despite a wealth of scholarship in related sub-disciplines such as anti-racist, political, and social movement geographies, there has hitherto been a lack of interest paid to the organised far-right, and especially anti-fascism. As such, I draw from a small, fragmentary, but insightful body of existing work to identify two key themes – spatial strategies and spatial imaginaries – in which geographers have engaged in this topic.

However, viewing the far right as an interesting topic of study is distinct from embedding anti-fascist principles into academic praxis; crucially, the latter allows geographers to nurture physical and intellectual spaces for solidarity. In particular, I point to anarchist perspectives in geography that propose useful critiques and conceptual tools. In concluding, I propose that anti-fascist sensibilities and research agendas indicate both politically and intellectually potent future directions in political geography.

Fascism and anti-fascism: defined and entwined

While outside the academy people may instinctively have an idea of what the far right or fascism[1] is, conceptually it is hard to define since "each national variant of fascism draws its legitimacy... not from some universal scripture but from what it considers the most authentic elements of its own community identity" (Paxton, 1998: 3). This fact that fascism varies widely according to geographical and historical context is telling: one of its strongest characteristics is a populist dimension, in which far-right groups seek to shape their politics and priorities to apply their ideology to popular cultures, concerns, and grievances in order to draw popular opinion towards their core beliefs.

It is this intoxicating populism that facilitates, in Deleuze and Guattari's (2004) view, a desire at the root of fascism for one's own repression. There is, therefore, also a decidedly anti-populist thread underpinning far-right politics, especially traditional forms of fascism, which are fundamentally elitist, rooted in deference to strong leadership and rejection of

---

[1] It is worth noting here that 'fascism' as a term is technically used to refer to the specific ideologies and systems of government employed in the mid-20th Century, whereas it is often used as a general catch-all term to refer to the broad family of far-right politics. In this paper, I tend to use the less specific term 'far-right' to incorporate the broad spectrum that includes both (neo-)fascist and the less extreme populist hard-right ideologies.

democracy. It is therefore linked to neo-Platonic beliefs about who, or which groups, are legitimately capable of leading. While the cult of leadership and rejection of democracy may nowadays not normally be present to the same extent as in mid-20th Century fascism, it often endures implicitly (e.g. Cammelli, 2017).

What does unite the full spectrum of far-right ideologies, however, is a fundamental emphasis on the nation – often but not always[2] represented through the territorial state – as taking primacy in all aspects of political and cultural life. This nativist hyper-nationalism extends to a range of principles and practices, including white supremacy, patriotism, militarism, and obsessive deference to authority. Ultimately, it is a project in national *rebirth* or *renaissance* (Griffin, 2013). In recent years, although nationalism has remained a core tenet of the far right, in Europe a wider, pan-European political project has emerged, partially eschewing the hierarchy of whiteness that characterised 20th Century fascisms (Spektorowski, 2003; Zúquete, 2015).

This does not, however, mean that the far right has given up the nationalist project or no longer adheres to white supremacist principles; instead, there has been a reconfiguration among many from biological supremacy to the belief in discrete ethnic families with common cultural, historical, and phenotypical traits. Thus, the far right relies as much on a sense of belonging and love for 'community' as it does on hatred or fear of the 'other'; indeed, the two are closely linked (e.g. Berezin, 1997; Ince, 2011; Rollo, in A Collective of Anarchist Geographers, 2017; Teitelbaum, 2017). Thus, Holmes (2000) understands fascism not simply as hate but as operating on four registers: meaning, practice, solidarity and consciousness of belonging.

Anti-fascists also operate through a wide range of registers and tactics. Deploying multiple spatial strategies, from community outreach, to political lobbying, to physical confrontation, anti-fascism is also a broad ideological church that defies clear definition and typically functions as a 'united front' for multiple groups facing a common enemy (e.g. Copsey, 2000; Neumayer, 2013: 44). The dynamics of anti-fascist organising tends to mirror the activity of the far-right, reshaping their movement according to the specific context and the nature of their opposition. This means that it is an uneven and fluid movement that ebbs and flows according to the level and nature of the threat from the far right.

Nonetheless, elements of what could be considered 'anti-fascist culture' – including music, sports, and the arts, as well as more explicit opposition – endure in ways that do not conform to a purely reactive model of mobilisation (e.g. Birchall, 2010; Daniel and Kassimeris, 2013; Ferguson, 2002; Neumayer, 2013; Spaaj and Vicas, 2013). These cultures and practices serve various purposes such as incubating new initiatives, fundraising, connecting anti-fascists across space, and maintaining memories of past struggles (e.g. Copsey, 2000; Pinto and Pries, 2018). Anti-fascist cultures also build connections across

---

[2] Groups such as the Nordic Resistance Movement operate across several states, believing in a fraternal and genetic connection between all Nordic peoples (often excluding the Indigenous Sámi people of the far north) that functions at a deeper level than the legal entity of individual states in the Nordic region.

wider progressive and radical movements and often seek to operate prefiguratively, developing structures and relations of envisaged future worlds into their structures and policies (Franks, 2014).

What we see, then, are important distinctions between racism/anti-racism and fascism/anti-fascism. Most significantly, while all far-right ideologies incorporate some form of racism at their core, they cannot be confined to a 'pure' focus on race. Instead, they incorporate a number of 'more-than-racist' characteristics, principles, and values. Among these characteristics, far-right movements promote authoritarian principles, including tropes of militarism and extreme nationalism, which intersect with racialised attitudes to generate a set of systemic imaginaries around national rebirth and order.

Likewise, anti-fascism incorporates but is distinct from anti-racism, since it primarily focuses on confronting organised far-right activities and often incorporates a systemic critique of the structures and relations that underpin far-right tendencies within society. The nature of anti-fascist politics is always partly reactive, yet also constitutive of something more than simply opposition. As such, anti-fascism, and the (sub)cultures that operate within and around it, can be a vehicle for the articulation and enactment of alternative political agendas. These characteristics position the two movements in a different but closely linked political space to racism and anti-racism; recognising them as distinct phenomena is essential to understanding the contemporary political moment and their relation to it.

(Anti-)fascism and geography

Even a basic introduction indicates a multitude of geographical dimensions at play. Their spatial strategies, the unevenness of their activity, the spaces they seek to claim as their own, and their contestation of borders, authority and territories all intersect through their activities. It is surprising, then, that there has been little attention paid to anti-fascism and the far right in political geography. A number of factors may influence this. Significantly, there is already a well-established field of anti-racist geographies that has long engaged with geographical dimensions of racism, including white supremacy (e.g. Bonds and Inwood, 2016; Domosh, 2017), ethnic and civic nationalisms (e.g. Antonsich, 2016; Tolia-Kelly, 2011), environmental racism (e.g. Pulido 2017), racial segregation (e.g. Simpson, 2004) and various other phenomena. These geographies that scholars have investigated since at least the 1980s underpin race and racism's explicit articulation as a core element of far-right ideology.

Another barrier consists of methodological challenges. Anti-fascist organising can be unpredictable, following the shifting ideologies and dynamics of its opponents. This makes it difficult to study. Moreover, even when the far right gains some level of electoral power, it often struggles to sustain its position long-term (Mudde, 2014) – partly due to anti-fascist opposition, and partly its own internal instabilities. Thus, given the slow process of applying

for funding and undertaking fieldwork, the sharp peaks and troughs of far-right and anti-fascist activity do not fit easily into standard research frameworks. Relatedly, access and ethics are difficult: the far right is notoriously difficult to access (Blee, 2007; 2009; Pilkington, 2016), and anti-fascism's concern with security – understandable, given the violent character of their opponents – makes them similarly challenging. Some of anti-fascism's more militant tactics (e.g. violence, sabotage, infiltration) may also pose ethical challenges for some researchers when considering activist methods.

Spatial strategies

Despite challenges, there exist disparate geographical writings that engage with far right and anti-fascist politics. The spatial strategies of both movements has been of particular interest, perhaps most obviously, in the aftermath of Donald Trump's presidential victory, in which he was (and remains) flanked by a host of far right advisors and supporters. Advocating "a keen focus on praxis", A Collective of Anarchist Geographers (2017: 609) and Gökarıskel and Smith (2016) both explore how Trump's victory provides insights into new (or renewed) spatial strategies for radical movements. Alongside Ingram (2017), both papers also note the longer-term and wider-scale dynamics that placed him in office, viewing the 'moment' of election as an outgrowth of deeper structural processes. While opening up figurative and literal space for the far right to organise, and exhibiting proto-fascist traits, Bessner and Sparke (2017) nevertheless remind us that there remains a deeply neoliberal current underpinning so-called 'Trumpism' that represents a new variegation of governance distinct from 'pure' neoliberalism or fascism.

Beyond Trump, social movement geographies[3] have perhaps the richest vein of research on this theme, in which scholars have investigated the various spatial strategies deployed by these opposing movements in their articulations of contentious politics (Nicholls, 2007). Pinto and Pries (2018: 156) outline how, in a Swedish context, anti-fascist mobilisations are "temporarily connected across time and space… to form new modes of acting" that activists draw on elsewhere and elsewhen for future anti-fascist actions. A relational understanding of solidarity (Featherstone 2012; Kelliher 2016) is therefore at the forefront of much anti-fascist praxis, in which the geographies of action are made and remade through 'outward' spatial relationships. Anti-fascist spatial strategies have also been studied in relation to global or macro-regional geopolitical events, where such external relationships proved crucial to understanding triggers and responses to far-right emergence, such as the 1936-39 Spanish Civil War (Featherstone, 2013) and reunification of Germany in 1991 (Bassin, 2003).

The urgency of much anti-fascist praxis can take on new forms as contexts and discourses change, often quite rapidly (Merrill and Pries, 2018), whereas it may also take on a slower, more deliberative approach when the threat is an everyday one linked to the geopolitical specificities of place (Mott, 2018). In the midst of everyday crisis in Greece, scholars have addressed how instabilities have been mobilised differentially by multiple political

---

[3] This includes strong overlaps with anthropology.

tendencies, especially the far right (Dalakoglou, 2013; Karamanidou, 2016). Conversely, Arampatzi (2017) outlines how networks of solidarity created through community assemblies across Greek cities also serve as anti-fascist hubs.

A number of electoral geographers have engaged with what the spatial patterns of voter behaviour can tell us about the nature and distribution of far-right politics. Studies, particularly in Italy and the Low Countries, show how geographically uneven voter dynamics indicate urban peripheries and small towns as key areas of far-right support (Agnew et al, 2002; De Decker et al, 2005; Van Gent et al, 2014). Yet, despite 'granular' differentiation at the local scale, feelings of belonging at this scale are often less central to far-right success than wider issues concerning national identity and public services (Passarelli and Tuorto, 2012). While electoral studies are important, they do not always grasp the role of street movements that often feed parties, and the anti-fascist movements that oppose them; after all, social movements are not easily 'measurable'. As such, the insights of these studies and social movement geographies should be combined to develop holistic understandings.

Medina et al. (2018) have followed electoral geographers by studying the far-right quantitatively, using GIS to map the unevenness of drivers of hate groups in the USA. While we must not assume fascism can be traced solely to hate, their study nonetheless observes that motivations are geographically uneven, concluding that "the same model of hate cannot be applied across the United States" (2018: 13). A limitation identified by the authors is that their study ignores lines of communication between places, which has become a key factor in the spread of far-right messages. Elsewhere, Zúquete (2015) has identified a range of factors and dynamics in the intensification of far-right transnational collaboration, particularly within the European Union. Notably, this transnationalisation of far-right movements has its origins in the 1990s, long before EU integration reached its height (Zúquete, 2015), and was inspired by a much longer intellectual tradition of pan-European fascist co-operation (Spektorowski, 2015).

Spatial imaginaries

The 'material' activities of far-right and anti-fascist movements often embody their spatial imaginaries, which articulate distinct representations of space as a lived phenomenon, a set of ideals to which they aspire, and "cognitive mechanisms" that inspire participation (Wolford, 2004: 411). As noted previously, anti-fascist movements also promote certain political and social agendas, chiefly on the far- and centre-left. This ideological constitution of the backbone of anti-fascist movements is particularly important in a context where some scholars appear unsure about the difference between anti-fascists and (apolitical) gangs (Pyrooz and Densley, 2018; see Copsey, 2018 for a rebuttal). As such, it is promising that some geographers have explored how these movements and their far-right targets represent and envision spaces and places.

Reflecting an electoral strategy that Davey (2010) identifies as targeting peripheral and 'forgotten' communities, the far right operates in ways that articulate a politics of hope and renewal for those 'left behind' or who feel threatened by change (cf. Schuermans and de Maesschalck, 2010). Thus, Ince (2011) identifies a tendency among the far right in cultivating a sense of authenticity that mobilises target groups' place-based nostalgia. Attachment to an imagined past among the far right is paralleled in relation to the future, too. Cammelli's (2018) research on a small Italian neo-fascist party, *Casa Pound*, which began as a subcultural group in a squatted building, is a case in point. Now expanded to include music, art, publishing, and electoral activity, Casa Pound shows how far-right activism can embody multiple layers of identification – not only the nation but also deep ties to/in places.

At a macro-scale, for Blencowe (2016), "ecological attunement" may provide an operational principle through which anti-fascist spatial imaginaries can be integrated with wider principles of justice to confront the far-right's exclusionary imaginations of community. This, Blencowe suggests, necessitates a confrontation with the Western capitalist modernity itself, demanding a distancing from the territoriality of capitalism's spatial aesthetic that fascism takes to its extreme conclusion. Relatedly, Ferretti and García-Álvarez's (2017) study of Gonzalo de Reparaz Baez, a Spanish geographer who turned to anarchism during 1930s anti-fascist struggles, explores how Reparaz Baez realised how hierarchically-imposed demarcations of space can buttress a shift towards fascism. This implicates the state itself in the spatio-ideological architectures that feed the far-right, and resonates with the centrality of place that others have identified in the dynamics of contentious politics (Nicholls, 2009). However, there remains an unanswered question in these writings regarding how bottom-up reassertions of 'organic' socio-cultural or ecological regions can avoid appropriation into imaginaries of 'natural' difference that the far right themselves valourise.

The geopolitical imaginations of the far right reveal very clearly how natural belonging can be weaponised through their representations of the West 'under siege'. An enlightening set of interventions following the 2011 massacre of socialist youths in Norway by a neo-Nazi, Anders Brevik, is particularly poignant at a time when far-right violence is increasing. Bachmann et al (2012) suggest that the contemporary far right has come to interpret global political dynamics in terms of a struggle between the Western order and the forces of so-called 'Islamification': "[s]uch dystopian imaginations evoked a Europe/West that needed to be reaffirmed in the face of 'foreign' threats and reterritorialised along the lines of an ideal pure cultural and political order." (Ibid: 192). This clash, the authors note, is not simply between a homogenous, white Europe and an external, threatening Other, but also against internal 'traitors', supposedly facilitating the latter's occupation of European space.

A group of historical geographers over the past 30 years has investigated not only the dangerous malleability of spatial analysis but also, crucially, the centrality of spatial imaginaries to the far-right project: Brevik's narratives connect with the ideas of geographers in Nazi Germany such as Walter Christaller, Carl Schmitt and Siegfried Passarge (e.g. Barnes and Minca, 2013; Michel, 2018). Indeed, it was a geographer, Friedrich Ratzel,

who theorised *lebensraum*, which would later shape National Socialist geopolitics (Bassin, 1987). Historical studies of actually-existing fascist government are therefore important in understanding how, following Arendt, the *banality of evil* can be operationalised through geography and spatial planning. "For the Nazis," notes Barnes, "geography was not merely a stage on which to mount their operations, but an integral part of their ideological mandate" (2016: 218).

Fragments of an anti-fascist geography

I now consider possible directions towards an anti-fascist geography. So far, several points are clear. Geography has hitherto rarely made inroads into analysing the far right and engaging with its opponents in anti-fascist movements. Nevertheless, a small but insightful body of work exist exists. There has also been notably more emphasis on the study of the far right, and significantly less on anti-fascist movements and cultures, which are often active constituents of the political landscape. Finally, acknowledging both racist and 'more-than-racist' dimensions of the far right can reap important insights.

In light of these observations, an holistic anti-fascist approach to geography should do three things. First, it must incorporate an analysis not only of racism but also other dimensions of far right ideology, especially common threads of authoritarianism, nationalism, and state power. Second, it requires analytical tools for understanding how these characteristics intersect and adapt to diverse social conditions in multiple places and scales. Third, it must develop an explicit anti-fascist rationality that incorporates a commitment to enhancing anti-fascist capacities, while envisioning alternatives to the contemporary societal conditions that give succour to far-right movements.

In the remainder of this article, I propose that the nascent field of anarchist geographies can help us to begin addressing these tasks. The field of anarchist geographies has become increasingly well-known, with scholars recognising the indebtedness of the discipline to early anarchists such as Reclus, Perron and Kropotkin (e.g. Ferretti, 2013; 2014; Ince and Bryant, 2018), while also forging new directions (e.g. Springer, 2016). Anarchist geographies broadly unite two interconnected components: first, a critique of all forms of authority and their socio-spatial dynamics; and second, a reading for, and nurturing of, forms of mutual aid and other libertarian-egalitarian practices. The notion of *prefiguration* – of embedding into present-day activities, structures and relationships the principles of an envisioned future – lies at the heart of anarchism, requiring the means through which one acts to reflect the principles of one's end goal (Franks, 2018). Throughout the following sections, I explore how anarchist analysis and prefigurative principles might provide a framework for anti-fascist geography.

Authority, nation, and statist power through and beyond racism

A core principle[4] of far-right ideologies is the centrality of the state for formalising and policing exclusionary national belonging. This makes the state – and, by extension, the principle of sovereign authority on which it rests – a key target for analysing the dynamics and ideologies of the far right. While anarchism constitutes far more than anti-statism, anarchist geographers have nonetheless taken the state and state power seriously. Not only have there been geographically-attuned extensions of long-standing anarchist critiques of the state (e.g. Springer, 2016) and citizenship (Garside, 2016), but also a fundamental rethinking of the state's role in geographical epistemologies. Rather than viewing the state as a static, neutral and eternal 'container' for politics, it is repositioned as a contingent and fragile invention of elites, around which knowledge pivots (Barrera and Ince, 2016; Ince and Barrera, 2016). Thus, this epistemic dominance of statist power blinds us to its inherent authoritarianism and capacity for fascism. Many consider the state to be largely benign, and only its most extreme manifestation is totalitarian fascism, yet statist logics operate as a *spectrum*, underpinned by common assumptions about the efficacy of governance through hierarchical order, authority, and violently-enforced territoriality. For anarchists throughout history, the nominally benign statism of liberal democracy has always been intimately associated with the extreme statism of fascism – and other totalitarianisms such as orthodox Marxist-Leninism – through their shared territorial and institutional rationalities (e.g. Brinton, 2004; Fabbri 1922). Thus, the state, as Dupuis-Déri (2016) argues, becomes part of a societal "matrix of domination", alongside the likes of patriarchy, capitalism and racism.

This way of thinking opens up wider questions on belonging and citizenship. The state creates "feral" (Garside, 2016) outsides; both external others that threaten the perceived purity of nationhood, and internal others who do not conform to logics of the 'good citizen' (cf. Michel, 2018). This is an important critique, yet if anarchist geographers are to develop this thinking further, they need to consider more fully the complexities of belonging and the indisputably powerful bonds that national (and other exclusionary) identities produce – including their affective, emotional and embodied dimensions. These are clearly linked to the epistemic centrality of the state in everyday life as an anchor for national identity, but understanding these dynamics more carefully can help to develop robust scholarship on how liberalism's banal nationalisms (Billig, 1995) create the social 'ecologies' necessary for the far right to exist (Arditi, 2008).

One area where anarchist geographers have begun this is in the study of settler colonialism, where state authority and white supremacy (as both ideologies and social phenomena) intersect powerfully. Scholars have identified how the expansion of capitalism, the state form, and white supremacy were copresent in colonialism's expansion, which functioned as a vehicle for the global entrenchment and institutionalisation of these relations as dominant

---

[4] A notable exception is the peculiar case of 'national anarchism', a hybrid ideology developed by Troy Southgate, proposing a stateless system of autonomous ethnic communes operating according to 'natural' boundaries of ethnic culture and identity (Macklin 2005). National anarchism has a very small following and has been criticised heavily from both fascist and anti-fascist perspectives, however it has endured in various guises since the mid-1990s.

organisational logics (e.g. Barker, 2009; Barrera and Ince, 2016; Sloan Morgan, 2016). The relative youth of settler-colonial states renders the endurance and intersections of state power, imagined nationalism, white supremacy and capitalism most clear. This can thus be read into the dynamics of state formation more generally (e.g. Ince and Barrera, 2017; Springer, 2016), but what is most interesting for the development of anti-fascist geographies is how the study of settler colonialism may help geographers trace the co-evolution of interlinked phenomena and ideological building blocks that can induce fascism's growth *as if from nowhere*. The leap from singing nationalist songs at sports events to advocating forced repatriation of migrants and militarisation of the police, for example, is enormous, but remarkably easy given the mainstream ideological architectures that facilitate what Reid Ross (2017) has called 'the fascist creep'. As such, an anarchist lens can help illuminate the uncomfortable continuities between the liberal mainstream and the far-right 'extreme'.

Towards anti-fascist rationalities

Building on the critiques above, this final section considers approaches that may help develop anti-fascist rationalities in geography. If we consider fascisms to be built principally on domination in various forms, the anarchist principle of *non-domination* – understood as "a maximal equality of power relations" (Eisenstadt 2016: 27) – should be constitutive of any anti-fascism. Domination as 'power over' is juxtaposed with the anarchist principle of 'power with', rendering power itself a terrain of struggle over which anti-fascists operate. For Eisenstadt (2016; and others, e.g. Mott, 2018), anarchist practices such as anti-oppression work are recognised as *becoming*, where non-domination is a situated process to be nurtured, in relation to dynamics of place and belonging, rather than 'magicked' into being as a singular or universal manifestation.

Additionally, though, some anti-fascist practices and discourses can be deeply problematic and need to be engaged critically for reproducing precisely the social relations and structures that sustain the far right, such as problematic nationalisms or patriotisms (Bhattacharyya, 2013; Fortier, 2005). Geographers need, therefore, to think and act in *prefigurative* terms, both as a principle of analysis (what worlds are certain practices, policies, or discourses prefiguring?) and action (how can we prefigure more liberatory, non-dominating worlds?). Anarchists, as well as feminists, have been at the forefront of considering these questions (e.g. Franks, 2014; Mott, 2018; Siitanen et al, 2015).

How, then, can we develop (prefigurative) anti-fascisms in practice?[5] 'Official' state-led multiculturalism in much of the Global North is increasingly recognised as flawed and a

---

[5] Despite the possibilities encapsulated in prefiguration and self-management, they are not exclusive to progressive or anti-fascist politics. Movements such as 'autonomous nationalists' (Schlembach, 2013), which mimic the tactics and aesthetics of the radical left, operate – at least superficially – along broadly similar lines to autonomous anti-fascists. Importantly, Franks (2018) notes that distinctions between different ideological iterations of the same principle lies in their centrality or peripherality to the core ideological framework. For

constitutive factor in the rightward shift in recent years (e.g. Lentin, 2014; Vasta, 2007; Vertovec, 2010); as such, it is important to recognise grassroots activity as central. The notion of self-management cuts across anarchist and Marxist thinking in geography, first identified as *autogestion* by Lefebvre in his musings on the state form (2001). Much like prefiguration, self-management can be a useful analytical tool as well as a principle of organisation, since it measures the extent to which a group's agency is entangled with the efforts of authority to choreograph social organisation (Ince, 2015). The anti-fascist movement is inherently positioned as an alternative to state power – even if it sometimes uses state laws or engages in electoral strategies – because it exists to address a problem that governments will not, or cannot, solve.

Nevertheless, domination is not the sole preserve of state and capital, and can also operate within anti-fascist and radical milieux themselves. Through an anarchist lens, this is a challenge for any genuinely prefigurative project, since means are diverging from ends. Following intersectional feminist analyses (e.g. Davis, 1983; Rogue and Willis, 2012), in all activisms there exist powerful structures that variously help or hinder differentially-positioned groups in their capacity to fully participate. Thus, an anti-fascist rationality must seek ways of undermining the centrality of the white, able-bodied, physically aggressive male figure that is not only glorified by the far right but also can be a common trope of what anti-fascism supposedly 'is'. While the latter is often an exaggerated stereotype, a certain mythology of anti-fascism feeds it (e.g. Birchall, 2010), and it is telling that activists have recently sought to build feminist strategies into anti-fascist operations (e.g. Plan C London, 2018). Such approaches have included recognising care and social reproduction as pivotal factors in overcoming or reproducing exclusion.

Finally, anti-fascism in academia requires consideration of the university as a space of conflict, not least since far-right threats, activity, and attacks have been recorded on campuses (e.g. USA, see Squire, 2017). In the wider context of a shift to the right in policy agendas, with associated shifts of research funding away from critical social sciences and towards narrow 'policy relevance', there are reasons to be concerned about indirectly feeding the mainstreaming of hard or far-right political agendas. Pedagogies that seek to destabilise and question these modes of academic power (e.g. Firth, 2016; Meyerhoff and Noterman, 2018), alongside the development of grassroots power through unions and other workplace collectives, can be important for both confronting this and experimenting with alternative ways of being both academics and workers.

Utilising academic expertise, funds and privilege to support anti-fascist initiatives may also form part of being anti-fascist geographers, as well as engaging in research that seeks to understand the nature and dynamics of far-right movements and their enabling factors.

---

example, self-management is a core principle of anarchist and autonomist-Marxist ideologies, whereas it is used only instrumentally by the far right to embed themselves among youth subcultures such as punks and squatters. A vigilance towards this chameleon-like character of the far right is therefore important to any anti-fascist perspective.

Undertaking such research may feel useful, yet alongside methodological challenges discussed previously, it is crucial to consider the potential impacts of such projects on anti-fascist groups and individuals on the ground (cf. Derickson and Routledge, 2015). The danger posed by the far right in terms of physical and other violences is very real for many anti-fascists. Nevertheless, the approaches suggested may open up spaces for solidarity and collectivity in the midst of multiple factors within the academy that provide succour to fascist-enabling dynamics and institutions. Considering what an 'anti-fascist university' might be – or indeed, whether it is even possible – can therefore also become a component of the intellectual project of anti-fascist geographies.

Concluding thoughts

Existing research demonstrates how fruitful geographical investigations can be in critically interrogating spatial patterns and dynamics of belonging, pride, hate, vulnerability, territory, place, and so on. Research indicates not only that the far right is a valid subject of investigation, but also that an anti-fascist rationality can provide valuable tools to support more just ways of being and relating. However, not only is there relatively little research on the far right in geography but also this is mirrored by even fewer publications concerning anti-fascism. In the context of a globally resurgent and increasingly mainstreamed far-right, research in this area is timely and important, yet scholars also face challenges and dilemmas with regards to ethics, positionality, respect for anti-fascist movements, and research design. Within the university itself, shifts within policy, teaching, and administration that prioritise narrow 'national interests' or produce academics as border guards must be confronted as part of recognising the position of the university within societal matrices of power.

Using academic skills, privilege and access to prefigure the kinds of relations and structures we need for doing this can be a good start. Indeed, many tools to begin addressing these challenges are already available for taking forward such an agenda. It is often said that fascism does not arrive fully equipped with guns, secret police and gas chambers, and that vigilance towards the potential for fascism to emerge gradually needs to be maintained; similarly, an anti-fascist geography cannot expect to arrive fully-formed. However, in this article I have outlined how various fragments of anti-fascist geographies are, in fact, already among us.

References

A Collective of Anarchist Geographers (2017) Beyond electoralism? Reflections on anarchy, populism and the crisis of electoral democracy. ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies, 16, 607-642.

Agnew, J. and Shin, M. (2017) Spatialising populism: taking politics to the people in Italy. Annals of the American Association of Geographers, 107, 915-933.

Agnew, J., Shin, M. and Bettoni, G. (2002) City versus the metropolis: The Northern League in the Milan metropolitan area. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 26, 266-283.

Antonsich, M. (2016) The neoliberal culturalist nation: voices from Italy. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 41, 490-502.

Arampatzi, A. (2017) The spatiality of counter-austerity politics in Athens, Greece: Emergent 'urban solidarity spaces'. Urban Studies, 54, 2155-2171.

Arditi, B. (2008). Politics on the edges of liberalism: Difference, populism, revolution, agitation. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Bachmann, V., Bialasiewicz, L. and Sidaway, J. (2012) Bloodlands: critical geographical responses to the 22 July 2011 events in Norway – Introduction. Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 30, 191-206.

Banaji, J. (ed.) (2016) Fascism: Essays on Europe and India. 2nd edition. Gurgaon: Three Essays Collective.

Barker, A.J. (2009) The contemporary reality of Canadian imperialism: Settler colonialism and the hybrid colonial state. American Indian Quarterly, 33, 325-351.

Barnes, T.J. (2016) A morality tale of two location theorists in Hitler's Germany: Walter Christaller and August Lösch. In Giaccaria, P. and Minca, C. (eds.) Hitler's Geographies: The Spatialities of the Third Reich. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 198-217.

Barnes, T.J. and Minca, C. (2013) Nazi spatial theory: The dark geographies of Carl Schmitt and Walter Christaller. Annals of the American Association of Geographers, 103, 669-687.

Barrera de la Torre, G. and Ince, A. (2016) Post-statist geographies and the future of geographical knowledge production. In Lopes de Souza, M., White, R.J. and Springer, S. (eds.) Theories of Resistance: Anarchism, Geography, and the Spirit of Revolt. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 51-78.

Bassin, M. (1987) Imperialism and the nation-state in Friedrich Ratzel's political geography. Progress in Human Geography, 11, 473-495. DOI: 10.1177/030913258701100401

Berezin, M. (1997) Making the Fascist Self: The Political Culture of Interwar Italy. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Bessner, D. and Sparke, M. (2017) Nazism, neoliberalism, and the Trumpist challenge to democracy. Environment and Planning A, 49, 1214-1223.

Bhattacharyya, G. (2013) Regional narratives and post-racial fantasies in the English riots. Journal for Cultural Research, 17, 183-197.

Billig, M. (1995) Banal Nationalism. London: Sage.

Birchall, S. (2010) Beating the Fascists: The Untold Story of Anti-Fascist Action. London: Freedom Press.

Blee, K.M. (2007) Ethnographies of the far right. Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 36, 119-128.

Blee, K.M. (2009) Access and methods in research on hidden communities: Reflections on studying U.S. organised racism. Communities 10-27.

Blencowe, C. (2016) Ecological attunement in a theological key: adventures in anti-fascist aesthetics. GeoHumanities, 2, 24-41.

Bonds, A. and Inwood, J. (2016) Beyond white privilege: geographies of white supremacy and settler colonialism. Progress in Human Geography, 40, 715-733.

Brinton, M. (2004) The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control. In Goodway, D. [ed.] For Workers' Power: The Selected Writings of Maurice Brinton. Edinburgh and Oakland: AK Press.

Cammelli, M.D. (2017) Fascism as a style of life: community life and violence in a neofascist movement in Italy. Focaal – Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology, 79, 89-101.

Copsey, N. (2000) Anti-Fascism in Britain. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Copsey, N. (2018) Militant antifascism: An alternative (historical) reading. Society, 55, 243-247.

Dalakoglou, D. (2013) "From the bottom of the Aegean Sea" to Golden Dawn: Security, xenophobia and the politics of hate in Greece. Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism, 13, 514-522.

Daniel, P. and Kassimeris, C. (2013) The Politics and Culture of FC St. Pauli: from leftism, through anti-establishment, to commercialisation. Soccer & Society, 14, 167-182.

Davey, A. (2010) Confronting the geographies of enmity. City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action, 14, 622-624.

Davis, A.Y. (1983) Women, Race and Class. New York: Ballantyne Books.

De Decker, D., Kesteloot, C., De Maesschalck, F. and Vranken, J. (2005) Revitalizing the city in an anti-urban context: extreme right and the rise of urban policies in Flanders, Belgium. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 29, 152-171.

Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (2004) Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Trans. Hurley, R., Seem, M. and Lane, H.R. London: Bloomsbury.

Derickson, K.D. and Routledge, P. (2015) Resourcing scholar-activism: collaboration, transformation, and the production of knowledge. The Professional Geographer, 67, 1-7. DOI: 10.1080/00330124.2014.883958

Domosh, M. (2017) Genealogies of race, gender, and place. Annals of the American Association of Geographers, 107, 765-778.

Dupuis-Déri, F. (2016) Is the state part of the matrix of domination and intersectionality? An anarchist approach. Anarchist Studies, 24, 36-61.

Eisenstadt, N. (2016) Non-domination, governmentality and the care of the self. In Lopes de Souza, M., White, R.J. and Springer, S. (eds.) Theories of Resistance: Anarchism, Geography, and the Spirit of Revolt. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 27-50.

Fabbr, L. (1922). The Preventative Revolution. Available from: https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/dfn3w5 [Accessed 27 November 2018]

Featherstone, D. (2012) Solidarity: Hidden Histories and Geographies of Internationalism. London: Zed Books.

Featherstone, D. (2013) 'Black internationalism, subaltern cosmopolitanism, and the spatial politics of antifascism' Annals of the Association of American Geographers 103(6): 1406-1420.

Ferguson, T. (2002) "Taking It Back, Making It Strong!": The Boundary Establishment And Maintenance Practices Of A Montréal Anti-Racist Skinhead Gang. MA Thesis. Montréal: McGill University.

Ferretti, F. (2013) "They have the right to throw us out": Élisée Reclus' New Universal Geography. Antipode, 45, 1337-1355.

Ferretti, F. (2014) Pioneers in the history of cartography: the Geneva map collection of Élisée Reclus and Charles Perron. Journal of Historical Geography, 43, 85-95.

Ferretti, F. and García-Álvares, J. (2017) Anarchist geopolitics of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939): Gonzalo de Reparaz and the 'Iberian tragedy'. Geopolitics. DOI: 10.1080/14650045.2017.1398143

Firth, R. (2016) Somatic pedagogies: critiquing and resisting the affective discourse of the neoliberal state from an embodied anarchist perspective. Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organisation, 16, 121-142.

Fortier, A.M. (2005) Pride politics and multiculturalist citizenship. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 28, 559-578. DOI: 10.1080/0141987042000337885

Franks, B. (2014) Anti-Fascism and Prefigurative Ethics. Affinities: A Journal of Radical Theory, Culture, and Action, 8, 44-72.

Franks, B. (2018) Prefiguration. In B. Franks, N. Jun and L. Williams (eds). Anarchism: A Conceptual Approach. London: Routledge, 28-43.

Garside, N. (2016) Celebrating the invasive: the hidden pleasures and political promise of the unwanted. In Lopes de Sousa, M., White, R.J. and Springer, S. (eds.) Theories of Resistance: Anarchism, Geography, and the Spirit of Revolt. London and New York: Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 237-252.

Gökarıskel, B. and Smith, S. (2016) "Making America great again"? The fascist body politics of Donald Trump. Political Geography, 54, 79-81.

Griffin, R. (2007) Fascism and Modernity: The Sense of a Beginning under Hitler and Mussolini. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Griffin, R. (2013) The Nature of Fascism. London: Routledge.

Holmes, D.R. (2000) Integral Europe: Fast-capitalism, Multiculturalism, Neofascism. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ince, A. (2011) Contesting the "authentic" community: far-right spatial strategy and everyday responses in an era of crisis. Ephemera, 11, 6-26.

Ince, A. and Barrera de la Torre, G. (2016) For post-statist geographies. Political Geography 55(1): 10-19.

Ince, A. and Barrera de la Torre, G. (2017) Future (pre-)histories of the state: geography meets archaeology. In Ferretti, F., Barrera, G., Ince, A. and Toro, F. [eds.] Historical Geographies of Anarchism. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 51-78.

Ingram, A. (2017) Geopolitical events and fascist machines: Trump, Brexit and the deterritorialisation of the West. Political Geography, 57, 91-93. DOI: 10.1016/j.polgeo.2016.12.003

Karamanidou, L. (2016) Violence against migrants in Greece: beyond the Golden Dawn. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 39, 2002-2021.

Kelliher, D. (2017) Constructing a culture of solidarity: London and the British coalfields in the long 1970s. Antipode, 49, 106–124.

Lefebvre, H. (2001) Comments on a new state form. Trans. Johnson, V. and Brenner, N. Antipode, 33, 769-782.

Lentin, A. (2014) Post-race, post-politics: The paradoxical rise of culture after multiculturalism. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 37, 1268-1285.

Macklin, G.D. (2005) Co-opting the counter culture: Troy Southgate and the National Revolutionary Faction. Patterns of Prejudice, 39, 301-326.

Medina, R.M., Nicolosi, E., Brewer, S. and Linke, A.M. (2018) Geography of organised hate in America: A regional analysis. Annals of the American Association of Geographers. DOI: 10.1080/24694452.2017.1411247

Merrill, S. and Pries, J. (2018) Translocalising and relocalising antifascist struggles: From #KämpaShowan to #KämpaMalmö. Antipode. DOI: 10.1111/anti.12451

Meyerhoff, E. and Noterman, E. (forthcoming 2018) Revolutionary scholarship by any speed necessary: slow or fast but for the end of this world. ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies.

Michel, B. (2018) 'Anti-semitism in early 20th century German geography: From a "spaceless" people to the root of the "ills" of urbanization. Political Geography, 65, 1-7.

Mott, C. (2018) Building relationships within difference: An anarcha-feminist approach to the micropolitics of solidarity. Annals of the American Association of Geographers, 108, 424-433.

Mudde, C. (2014) Fighting the system? Populist radical right parties and party system change. Party Politics, 20, 217-226.

Neumayer, C. (2013) When Neo-Nazis March and Anti-Fascists Demonstrate: Protean Counterpublics in the Digital Age. PhD thesis. Copenhagen: IT University of Copenhagen.

Nicholls, W.J. (2007) The geographies of social movements. Geography Compass, 1, 607-622. DOI: 10.1111/j.1749-8198.2007.00014.x

Nicholls, W.J. (2009) Place, networks, space: theorising the geographies of social movements. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 34, 78-93.

Paxton, R.O. (1998) The five stages of fascism. Journal of Modern History, 70, 1-23.

Pilkington, H. (2016) Loud and Proud: Passion and Politics in the English Defence League. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Pinto, A.B. and Pries, J. (2018) Rethinking transformative events to understand the making of new contentious performances: the "autonomous left" and the anti-fascist blockade in Lund, 1991. In Wennerhag, M., Frölich, C. and Piotrowski, G. (eds.) Radical Left Movements in Europe. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 156-172.

Plan C London (2018) Anti-fascists took to the streets of London to block the DFLA. Available from: https://www.weareplanc.org/blog/anti-fascists-took-to-the-streets-of-london-to-block-the-dfla/ [Accessed 22 November 2018]

Pulido, L. (2017) Geographies of race and ethnicity II: Environmental racism, racial capitalism and state-sanctioned violence. Progress in Human Geography, 41, 524-533.

Pyrooz, D.C. and Densley, J.A. (2018) On public protest, violence and street gangs. Society, 55, 229-236.

Reid Ross, A. (2017) Against the Fascist Creep. Edinburgh and Oakland: AK Press.

Rogue, J. and A. V. Willis. 2012. Insurrection at the intersections: Feminism, intersectionality, and anarchism. In Dark Star Collective (eds.) Quiet Rumors: An Anarcha-Feminist Reader. Oakland: AK Press, 43–46.

Schlembach, R. (2013) The 'Autonomous Nationalists': new developments and contradictions in the German Neo-Nazi movement. Interface: A Journal For and About Social Movements, 5, 295-318.

Schuermans, N. and de Maesschalck, F. (2010) Fear of crime as a political weapon: explaining the rise of extreme right politics in the Flemish countryside. Social and Cultural Geography, 11, 247-262.

Shin, M.E. and Passarelli, G. (2012) Northern League in national, European and regional elections: A spatial analysis. Polis, 3, 355-372.

Siitanen, J., Klodawsky, F. and Andrew, C. (2015) "This is how I want to live my life": An experiment in prefigurative feminist organising for a more equitable and inclusive city. Antipode, 47, 260-279.

Simpson, L. (2004) Statistics of Racial Segregation: Measures, Evidence and Policy. Urban Studies, 41, 661-681.

Sloan Morgan, V. (2016) Swimming against the tide: towards an anti-colonial anarchism in British Columbia, Canada. In Lopes de Sousa, M., White, R.J. and Springer, S. (eds.) Theories

of Resistance: Anarchism, Geography, and the Spirit of Revolt. London and New York: Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 177-206.

Spaaj, R. and Vicas, C. (2013) Political ideology and activism in football fan culture in Spain: A view from the far-left. Soccer and Society 14(2): 183-200.

Spektorowski, A. (2003) The new right: ethno-regionalism, ethno-pluralism and the emergence of a neo-fascist 'Third Way'. Journal of Political Ideologies, 8, 111-130.

Spektorowski, A. (2015) Fascism and post-national Europe: Drieu La Rochelle and Alain de Benoist. Theory, Culture and Society, 33, 115-138.

Springer, S. (2016) *The Anarchist Roots of Geography: Toward Spatial Emancipation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Squire, M. (2017) Google map of campus hate flyers. Online. Available from: https://megansquire.com/google-map-of-campus-hate-flyers/

Teitelbaum, B.R. (2017) Implicitly white: Right-wing nihilism and the politicising of ethnocentrism in multicultural Sweden. Scandinavian Studies, 89, 159-178.

Tolia-Kelly, D.P. (2011) Narrating the postcolonial landscape: archaeologies of race at Hadrian's wall. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 36, 71-88.

Van Gent, W.P.C., Jansen, E.F. and Smits, J.H.F. (2014) Right-wing radical populism in city and suburbs: an electoral geography of the Partij Voor de Vrijheid in the Netherlands. Urban Studies, 51, 1775-1794.

Van Gent, W.P.C. and Musterd, S. (2013) Unintended effects of urban and housing policies on integration: 'white' discontent in the Dutch city. Geography Research Forum, 33, 64-90.

Vasta, E. (2007) From ethnic minorities to ethnic majority policy: Multiculturalism and the shift to assimilationism in the Netherlands. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 30, 713-740.

Vertovec, S. (2010) Towards post-multiculturalism? Changing communities, conditions and contexts of diversity. International Social Science Journal, 61, 83-95.

Wolford, W. (2004) This Land Is Ours Now: Spatial Imaginaries and the Struggle for Land in Brazil. Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 94, 409-424. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8306.2004.09402015.x

Zúquete, J.P. (2015) The new frontlines of right-wing nationalism. Journal of Political Ideologies, 20, 69-85.