Post-representational epistemology in practice: processes of relational knowledge creation in autonomous social movements

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Abstract

This article investigates the challenges arising from the relationship of epistemology to the post-representational practices of autonomous social movements. It does so with the help of the concepts of nomad science and royal science developed by Deleuze and Guattari. These concepts allow us to picture the knowledge creation within autonomous social movements, which is based in a politics of the act within everyday life and constituted in relations of affinity between differently situated subject positions, as a different but equal type of knowledge to academic or scientific knowledge. The article engages with two challenges resulting from this relational conception of knowledge within everyday life: the devaluation of such knowledge within academic discourse, and methodological difficulties of recognising moments of knowledge creation for a researcher speaking from within autonomous social movements. Two proposals for facing these challenges are formulated at the end of the article: engaging in an epistemological rebellion in walking on the borderline between royal science and nomad science, and taking the geographies of autonomous social movement's political practices as contestable focus points of sensitive attention to relational knowledge creation processes.

Keywords: epistemology, autonomous social movements, knowledge, practice, post-representational, nomad science, royal science, prefigurative

Introduction

This text was written after inspiring evening discussions in living rooms about direct action within the political context of the right to the city movement, after morning conversations with coffee on the roof of an autonomous social centre about self-organisation and horizontal decision-making and after many other moments of relational epistemological practice. The idea for this text and its first sketches is itself a process of knowledge creation based on personal relations of affinity with those who appear in it. It got reviewed and discussed by some of those who were present in encounters providing material for it. I hope it helps to learn to value our eccentric, fractious, playful, spontaneous and often poorly documented knowledge and the precious moments when it is created in our

encounters and exchanges in moments of reflection within the diverse struggles against oppression that we are involved in.

This text has the form of an article which investigates the challenges arising from the relationship of epistemology to the practices of autonomous social movements. The practices of autonomous social movements are thereby theorised as post-representational articulation of political desire (Day 2005). Because "the movements … see their everyday experiences and creations as the revolution they are making," (Sitrin 2011, 271) the way political desire is articulated already reflects a projection of the desired social transformations that autonomous social movements aim at into the present. The use of horizontality, as in de-hierarchisation of different practices, as a tool and a goal (Sitrin and Azzelini 2014) turns this plurality of political expressions into positionings amongst a series of resonances and gestures that collectively add up to something that goes beyond a gesture-less politics (Tormey 2012). Taking up the concrete example of Occupy Wall Street (OWS) for post-representational practices of autonomous social movements, Tormey writes that OWS is

> one kind of resistance that 'represents' in its post-representativity the response of those at the margin of wealthy countries of the metropolitan centre; the Zapatista insurrection (to take a contrasting example) is another kind of resistance, one characteristic of the needs and resources of groups at the global periphery. They are both concerned with the same issue (...). They resonate in different ways, they have different effects, but their concerns are very similar. (Tormey 2012, 135).

The horizontal self-organisation through direct democratic decision making of these movements projects their political desire to resist institutionalised hegemonic power into the present of their practice. Within the autonomous social movements a plurality of practices is producing knowledge through experience with others. This process is intrinsically linked to the horizontality of the utopian political project of autonomous social movements. Thus theorising about this project, producing knowledge about it, happens in a critical collective reflection within the moment of struggle (Motta 2011, 180-81).

Before continuing to elaborate how the post-representativity of autonomous social movements conditions their prefigurative political practices, we need to make clear what type of prefigurative practices can be attributed to autonomous social movements. In doing so we will briefly elaborate what type of movement we are talking about when speaking of autonomous social movements.

As a demarcation within social movement studies, characteristics of autonomous social movements have been coined by Richard F. Day (2001, 2005), George Katsiaficas (2006), David Graeber (2002, 2004), Marina A. Sitrin (2012), Saul Newman (2010) and many others. Some of these characteristics have led to a definition of autonomous social movements as the counterpart of

institutionalised social movements stating that

> [A]an autonomous orientation entails emphasizing self-management,
> egalitarian, nonhierarchical structures, and consensus-based decision making.
> Ends and means have a continuity that reflects activists' attempts to apply their
> ideas of an ideal society to their own movement. In contrast, an institutionalized
> orientation is characterized by a clear division of labor and authority, a
> centralized organization, and a lose coupling of ends and means.
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> (Pruijt 2014, 144)

It is precisely this continuity of ends and means that determines the
prefigurative nature of autonomous social movements in their attempt to apply
"ideas of an ideal society to their own movement" (ibid, 144): it is defining the
prefigurative politics of autonomous social movement actions and knowledge
creation as the self-shaping along the lines of their desired society with an
emphasis on self-organisation in the creation of alternatives in egalitarian and
non-hierarchical social structures (ibid, 145-46). Within autonomous social
movements the individual participates in organisations which are dispensable
and can be restructured any time because they exist to serve the individual's
desires and goals. This is a stark contrast to the role of organisations in
institutionalised politics, where the individual is dispensable for the existence of
an organisation (Flesher Fominaya 2007, 339). It reveals the opposition of
autonomous social movements against a type of hegemony that is attributed to
institutionalised and representational structures with a fixed group membership:
the hierarchical division of labour and authority (Flesher Fominaya 2007).

In his historical analysis of European autonomous social movements, Katsiaficas
(2006) explains the rejection of fixed group identities by autonomous social
movements through their opposition to the existing social order. This opposition
emerges from the articulation of collective and *individual* needs fleshed out in
an anti-oppressive critique of everyday life within the existing social order which
reproduces exploitative divisions of labour and authority. The resulting
"anti-identitarian" orientation of autonomous social movements can be seen as a
further characteristic (Flesher Fominaya 2010, 399) which, according to some
authors, makes a collective identity within autonomous social movements
impossible (Saunders 2008). Others have argued that it is the ability of (but not
limited to) autonomous social movements to generate a collective identity based
on plurality, difference and multiplicity (Flesher Fominaya 2010) that
characterises them in escaping the logic of representation.

This ability is conditioned by a decentralisation and in-formalisation through
affinity-based organising within autonomous social movements (Day 2001):
Permanent forms of formal organisation get replaced by the flexible coming
together of small groups connected through personal relations of affinity and
united in a collective action which is open to different tactics.

Instead of subsumption under an identitarian politics which is representing demands advanced by a shared subject position, cohesion in autonomous social movements is defined by post-representational collective practice of the prefiguration of individual and collective political desire.

How can we know this when doing research on autonomous social movements? The glance at a barricade defending a social centre from eviction varies depending on what kind of relationships we can identify as being involved in its construction. Is the barricade there because people discussed this in small groups or during an assembly, is it there because someone set out to gather material to build it? Maybe s_he asked a friend employed in a workshop? Is the barricade being built in this specific moment because people know that the cops will come? Maybe someone leaked the day of eviction? Is the barbed wire there to provide a spectacle for the media or has it been put up there because of a heated discussion that took place between pacifists and proponents of militant action? If we do not dare to walk on the borderline between scientific knowledge production and rhizomatic, relational knowledge creation within autonomous social movements the relationships creating knowledge horizontally within autonomous social movements remain largely invisible to the eyes of a researcher when investigating their political practice.

If we do not take the act of defending the squat as a process, if we assume that there is one position from which dissent is articulated, if we assume that this position has the goal to mobilise certain elements of the movement or if we assume that the barricade is a political opportunity to mediatise the struggle that this one articulation of dissent aims at, we lose the rhythm of daily life and activities within the squat that shapes the discussion process about whether and how the barricade is to be build, out of sight. We also lose the attentiveness to the relations of different subject positions involved in the struggle, and to the entire process of their transformation (from a squat of pacifistic societal deserters to militant activists). We then lose the connection to the praxis of autonomous social movements while theorising them.

Who speaks?

The challenge of this article has been set out as investigating the relationship of epistemology to the practices of autonomous social movements. At this point a lot has been said *about* autonomous social movements. The need to clarify who is speaking here is related to the question of whether the known object, as in the autonomous social movements, can speak for themselves. This matter is very similar to the question raised by Gayatri C. Spivak in her post-colonial discussion of the banning of sati (1988). In her writing Spivak demonstrates how Western scholarship has obscured subaltern experiences by assuming the transparency of its scholarship and reflects on the question whether the known object, in her discussion the women of colour, can even speak. The question whether the autonomous social movements can speak, as in produce knowledge about themselves from their own perspective, is equally complicated taking into

account their post-representational expression. John Holloway writes about theoretical reflection within autonomous social movements:

> The starting point of theoretical reflection is opposition, negativity, struggle. (...) Our dissonance comes from our experience, but that experience varies. Sometimes it is the direct experience of exploitation in the factory, or of oppression in the home, of stress in the office, of hunger and poverty, or of state violence and discrimination. Sometimes it is the less direct experience through television, newspapers or books that move us to rage. (Holloway 2010, 1)

The "we" of the autonomous social movements is a diffused "we" of different subject positions which reflect and create knowledge in different ways: some produce knowledge about themselves through a structured approach, influenced by their university education, through reading literature and maybe even writing articles. Others produce knowledge about the autonomous social movements through participating in a bike workshop or an autonomous social centre reflecting on and evaluating their practices because they believe that these are an important constituent of the autonomous social movements that they are part of.

When autonomous social movements speak they do this with many voices coming from a multiplicity of subject positions bound together through relations of affinity: personal affinity between people who trust each other, ideological affinity between people who notice each other taking action against oppression and creating alternative and horizontal social relations (Karatzogianni and Robinson 2010, 144 ff). A rhizomatic network of affinities, exchanges and reflections makes a relational knowledge creation process and articulation of autonomous social movements possible and contextualises it at the same time.

In this article I will first work on suitable epistemological conceptualisations of the knowledge creation within autonomous social movements. I will attempt to show that the knowledge creation processes within autonomous social movements have a specific rhizomatic and horizontal logic of knowledge creation through a plurality of practices (Deleuze and Guattari 2013). I believe that outlining how autonomous social movements create knowledge will make their articulation of antagonism and alternatives to social order more expansive because my identity and political practice is co-constructive of and by them: building barricades to resist the eviction of a squatted social centre where I used to organise workshops and cultural events with my friends; or sleeping in a tree house on a road protest site to prevent the deforestation of a woodland that is privatised for capitalist profit paid with resource extraction at the cost of environmental damage and expulsion of local inhabitants. I have never been a stranger here. The experience of strangeness came first when I felt the need to take territory in academic discourses, because I believe that horizontal alternatives should spring up in any sphere, domain, aspect and part of society to

transform it profoundly. This includes academic research and creates some tensions, too.

I remember how, years before I engaged in academic research myself, a researcher introduced herself at an activist gathering that I attended. She explained that her research was supposed to help the voice of the movements being heard and yet I remember how my friends were saying: "I would not like to be researched." We had a controversial discussion and concluded that self-reflection as well as articulation is important and that *someone* had to take this on. I also remember another occasion when a "double identity" as an activist-researcher lead to a controversial discussion on an activist email list and how I came to realise then that being both, an activist and an academic who does research as an activist is one of many possible subject positions within autonomous social movements, one that can cause insecurity and destabilise relations of affinity between activists, too. I have learned from these experiences that doing research as an activist needs to be based on stable relations of affinity with those that we learn with and from.

Yet, I never felt that engaging in academic research alienates me from the people that I take collective action with. It is rather the opposite: we get passionately involved in discussions about academic research being elitist and therefore necessarily hierarchical. Not everyone that I know and consider part of the autonomous social movements agrees with me that writing about how autonomous social movements create knowledge is a fruitful endeavour for our aim of putting horizontal social relations in practice or appropriating more space to do so. Nevertheless I am in a relation of affinity with those within the autonomous social movements who share the idea to voice our imaginaries not only in actions but also in artistic and contentious expressions as well as in words written for others on paper. This is to take space not only on the ground, in the streets, on the sites of dissent, but also in the discourses, in the narratives, in the thoughts. When I speak of "our" imaginaries that are reflected in articulations, I speak of practices that I engage in with others. These practices do not take place because enough individuals have decided to participate but because each time a specific set of relations of affinity calls them into existence. I do not aim to speak *for* anyone when I speak of "our" imaginaries and "our" practices. And yet I cannot speak purely of "my" practices in this context - for these emerge through a relation with others.

Coming from a post-colonial feminist critique of the "exclusionary power/knowledge nexus which produces the known object" (Motta 2013, 1) I will argue in the second part of this article that in the practices of   knowledge creation within autonomous social movements there is an emancipatory practice/knowledge nexus which produces the knowing object. The third part of the article focuses on two challenges for epistemological conceptualisations and engagement with the horizontal and relational knowledge creation of autonomous social movements while the fourth part formulates two proposals for facing those challenges.

Royal science and nomad science

In her book on contemporary political protest Abby Peterson writes that the political performance of autonomous social movements is inseparable from the process of articulation of an autonomous social movement community "in sites of collective identity construction" that are within everyday life (Peterson 2001, ix). How is this process of political articulation of autonomous social movements directed towards shared aims and goals? How can autonomous social movements take action or take place? How are strategies evaluated and defined within this process? In other words: How do autonomous social movements create knowledge about themselves?

While it is acknowledged that movements, as distinct from academics, do produce this type of knowledge about themselves (Eyerman and Jamison 1991, Barker and Cox 2002, p. 1 and Cox and Flesher Fominaya 2009, p. 3) the question of who is entitled to produce answers to the type of questions mentioned above is intriguing when talking about post-representative movements.

Answering these questions is impossible without entering the sphere of autonomous social movements everyday practices because this is where the diverse experiences of its participants constituting its post-representational articulations are located.

Political articulation through practices that are entrenched in daily life are different in nature to representative, formalised and hierarchically organised political articulation in the polity.   It is, so to speak, a different modality of expression that goes along with a different logic of knowledge creation for and about this practice. To illustrate this difference in knowledge creation through a politics of the act that is inherent in the autonomous social movements (Day 2005) versus a representational political articulation about autonomous social movements as a known object of scientific research, we will use the concepts of royal science and nomad science conceived by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (2013).

These concepts represent two different ways of producing knowledge that can be easily compared with a scientific, "impartial" way of stating truth claims about a known object and a rhizomatic, horizontal approach to the production of knowledge which is situated in interactions and encounters in everyday life. The difference of these two ways of producing knowledge is to be found in practice[1].

It has been suggested that there is a borderline in terms of a difference in "types of knowledge" between academic and activist theorising about movements (Barker and Cox 2002, 4). This supposed borderline cannot be simply equated to royal and nomad science producing different types of knowledge. The reason

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[1]   Although with their description of royal science and nomad science Deleuze and Guattari refer to the natural sciences rather than the social sciences, some connections can be made.

why the concepts of royal and nomad science are used here, is to illustrate that there are different logics of knowledge production and creation at play. They are shifting the focus away from the question of who produces the knowledge towards the question of how knowledge is created. Literature on movement knowledge suggests that certain questions about the identity of those producing knowledge are impossible to pose when talking about post-representational movements such as autonomous social movements. Cox and Flesher Fominaya present two types of questions about how movements produce knowledge: how to make the hidden, silenced and oppressed knowledge of the subaltern visible and how the specific process of knowledge production within social movements works (Cox and Flesher Fominaya 2009, 4). We can find answers to these questions in the Italian operaist tradition, in non-male consciousness-raising groups, in the tradition of popular education in the work of Paolo Freire, in the study of the "hidden transcripts" of peasants serving a master by James Scott and in the literature produced by black feminist writers on gender oppression and racism. A specific subaltern subject position that produces knowledge from its standpoint, such as the exploited worker, women, and people of colour, cannot be identified without ambiguity when talking about the knowledge produced within anti-identitarian and post-representational social movements. Turning our attention to the specific process of knowledge production, its "where", "when" and "how", does, however not free us from the question of who produces or creates this knowledge. Focusing on methodological questions of movement knowledge creation Fuster Morell (2009) distinguishes between knowledge produced by savant individuals (in the words of Barker and Cox (2002, 21): "organic" as well as "traditional intellectuals") and knowledge created collectively where it escapes the logic of knowledge as private property and turns into knowledge as experience through action with others. The concepts of royal science and nomad science will help to illustrate this difference in the logic of the process of knowledge production where it is possible to investigate their differences by investigating their borders - those places that are dimly lit, where royal science and nomad science touch each other. We will start with taking a closer look at the concept of royal science:

Royal science can be simply described as a state science with a methodology restricted to using templates which implies a model of reproduction of this type of knowledge creation (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 2013, 420-436). To reach a more detailed understanding it is probably better to use Deleuze and Guattari's example of a travelling worker carving a stone arch on a construction site of a Gothic cathedral in the twelfth century (ibid, 424 ff.). On this construction site royal science would be the architect's master plan to produce a stable stone building which includes precise and technical directions for every single work step, exactly defining how a stone carver has to make an arch that is to be fitted into a mathematical formula predefining every stone arch. Royal science thus imposes a division of labour on the construction site. It seeks to control the travelling workers who were

building cathedrals near and far, scattering construction sites across the land, drawing on active and passive power (mobility and strikes) that was far from convenient for the State. The State's response was to take over the management of the construction sites, merging all the divisions of labour in the supreme distinction between the intellectual and the manual, the theoretical and the practical, modelled upon the difference between "governors" and "governed"" (ibid, 429).

In opposition to royal science or State science, nomad science

is a kind of science, or treatment of science, that seems very difficult to classify, whose history is even difficult to follow. What we are referring to are not "technologies" in the usual sense of the term. But neither are they "sciences" in the royal or legal sense established by history.

(ibid, 420-21).

The functioning of the model of nomad science is marked by affinity and affect (cf. ibid, 421). To continue elaborating the role of the knowledge created in nomad science, the construction site of a Gothic cathedral in the twelfth century provides again an illustration: despite the calculations in the architect's master plan created by royal science, "it is the cutting of the stone that turns it [the Gothic cathedral] into material capable of holding and coordinating forces of thrust" (ibid, 424) which is done by the approximative and situated movements of the travelling stone carvers who need no reference to an architect's master plan of mathematical formula to create a stable stone arch. Instead, the skill of carving a stone arch is developed through the worker's own movement, through experience and exchange, through information gathered along the path of the journey, through the varied engagements on construction sites with other workers. The knowledge of stone carving of the travelling worker is what Deleuze and Guattari call "nomad science". Its process of creating knowledge is rhizomatic and horizontal because it is developed in the movement of different workers moving between different construction sites where moments of exchange and coordination are developed through practice. This concept of knowledge is usable for analysing everyday life practices because on this plane the knowledge of the workers is developed when they carve a stone arch together or when they speak about it during lunch or with strangers when they travel from one construction site to another.

It is conceivable to apply these different conceptions of knowledge to the practices of autonomous social movements.

In the study of autonomous social movements royal science would define a research interest, apply a theoretical lens to study a phenomenon which is comparable to the architect's blueprint in the example of Deleuze and Guattari: the researcher would act as an architect with a master plan about how

autonomous social movements engage or react to a specific issue. The researcher's hypothesis predefines how the practices of autonomous social movements fit into a complex set of factors. If for example a researcher would make a hypothesis about the causes for autonomous social movement's engagement in the discourses on the "right to the city" (Lefebvre 1968), s_he would gather data to produce scientific, objective knowledge suitable for talking at an academic conference about it or writing a journal article about the movement's practices, defining them, measuring them and thus constituting them as the known object from a perspective from above which impresses a "plane of organization" on the immediate plane of variable material-forces[2].

In this example nomad science would be constituted by the autonomous social movements creating knowledge in meetings, actions and daily encounters in informal settings. Relational knowledge is being created horizontally as participants learn how to engage with an issue when there is a collective need formulated to do so. The "construction sites" where knowledge is created would be within the different groups of people working autonomously in different cities on the topic of gentrification or other related issues depending on their local context and composition of involved subject positions. Here knowledge will be created in relations of affinity between subject positions, relations defined by a shared "standpoint outside of the dominant system whether excluded or self excluded" (Karatzogianni and Robinson 2010, 144), in rhizomatic nodes of relations where "each node connects to every other node" (ibid, 144) facilitating a decentralised sharing of information in group meetings, working groups and private conversations.

To make it clear: the problem that occurs when royal science is applied for making statements about social movements that are rejecting representability through collective fixed subject positions, is not so much about the content of what is written and published. It is not about miss-characterisation of autonomous social movements or the production of statements that are detrimental to their political desire. If the adherence to the logic royal science puts the researcher (at least in the moment of the research activity) in the position of the architect instead of among the travelling stone carvers within the process of knowledge creation, this does not imply that the architect has no complicity with the travelling stone carvers - quite the opposite. Just like architects, researchers can have varying degrees of complicity and sympathy with and for autonomous social movements.

As Deleuze and Guattari make it clear, there are no binary divisions between royal science and nomad science - just like there are no binary divisions between degrees of sympathy and complicity, as well as between an inside or outside the autonomous social movements. What is the problem with knowledge production

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[2]   "variable material-forces" (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, 430) are in this example the various social settings and conditions in which autonomous social movements engage with the topic and which elude representation - be it neighbourhood assemblies, working groups inside an autonomous, self-organised social centre or informal discussions.

about autonomous social movements then?

According to Deleuze and Guattari

> the State always finds it necessary to repress the nomad and minor sciences, (…), it does so not because of the content of these sciences is inexact or imperfect, or because of their magic or initiatory character[3], but because they imply a division of labour opposed to the norms of the State. (ibid, 429)

To explain the contention it seems useful to focus on the logic of knowledge production through royal science with its division of labour and epistemic authority. This logic is reflected in what is written and published about autonomous social movements by academics as well as activists themselves. Yet, it is a logic that undermines the prefigurative nature of autonomous social movements when they seek to embrace difference and emphasise collective action and experience in their articulation of political desire.

The division of labour in nomad science is different than in royal science (ibid, 428): it is horizontal instead of hierarchical and thus represents a logic of knowledge production where ends and means are continuous with the autonomous social movements' political project. A difference in the horizontal creation of knowledge within autonomous social movements to   the logic of knowledge production through royal science is best fleshed out when reminding ourselves of the epistemological authority of science.

In Western culture "scientific" is an extremely powerful word when used in statements about reality. The statement "Scientific research has proven that capitalism causes recurring economic crises", for example implies that a specialised `scientific´ process of the discovery of truth has taken place. In royal science an architect's master plan of calculations that precisely define with the highest possible correctness how a building is to be constructed, in what angle an arch has to be carved, would be represented by the classical empiricist methodology which an architect would use to calculate the plan for a building. It refers to sensual experience as the sole grounding of all scientific judgement (Fraassen 2000, 30). But what kind of experience is suitable for scientific statements about reality? In the hands of scientists experience becomes "data" that is selected and produced under the condition of a research program following a theoretical commitment that is based on any pre-defined set of assumptions about reality. Behind the scenes of the rigorous empiricist methodology of royal science "anything goes" (Feyerabend 1975, 19) and yet: method is not for everyone! It is only for those who master the complex rituals and language of science to take part in an epistemic culture that defines when it

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[3]   From our perspective, a perspective from within the autonomous social movements, the words "magic and initiatory character" perfectly describe the atmosphere brought about by a practice of the politics of the act.

is possible to claim to know something about the world. As a result royal science creates a place of epistemological privilege which entitles it to make objective truth claims and claim to be value free. This account of science overlooks that objectivity can be seen as a construct bearing absolute authority to define truth (Haraway 1988), it overlooks the practice that comes from the stone carver's experience on different construction sites when working with a specific type of stone and brings the knowledge about a certain kind of movement of carving it.

Deleuze and Guattari are interested in the "borderline phenomena in which nomad science exerts pressure on State science, and, conversely, State science appropriates and transforms the elements of nomad science" (ibid, 422).

Nomad science and royal science touch each other in various encounters in the field. One place where this becomes visible is the practical relationship between the researcher and the activist - being the same person or not - "negotiating access, (…) offering their services in various ways." (Cox and Flesher Fominaya 2009, 6). In nomad science negotiating to which kind of experience with others the researcher is admitted is solved through a logic of affinity, in royal science the researcher already owns the knowledge produced. Another place where royal science and nomad science touch each other is where activist practices of theorising and knowledge creation become academic knowledge production, and vice versa. For example, in her comparison of action research methodologies Fuster Morell (2009, 28) includes "Action-oriented training and empowerment" which would fit the description of my last example of practice (in a seminar on effective-sustainable activism) of relational knowledge creation within autonomous social movements.   Here the logic of knowledge creation of nomad science is placing epistemological importance on the collective, unpredictable and varied moments of rhizomatic knowledge creation while the logic of knowledge production of royal science is predicting and prescribing these moments.

In its next part this article will turn it into a borderline phenomenon between nomad science and royal science: rhizomatic moments of relational knowledge creation will be collected to present them in an expression of royal science looking at how these abstract concepts are reflected in concrete practices of relational knowledge creation within autonomous social movements. This "border-thinking"/"border dwelling" (Motta 2013, 8, 11) has also implications for my subject position as a researcher: living on the border can lead to marginalisation because it destabilises and reformulates my role as an academic providing potential to contribute to "the construction of dialogue between and within movements that result in the development of ´movement´ relevant research. The types of relationships formed in this process challenge traditional conceptualisations and practices of theoretical knowledge creation," (Motta 2011, 181) for doing research "from the border" is not an individual's process of knowledge production. The act of producing "movement relevant knowledge" is turning into a shared creation process through shared practices.

The practice of relational knowledge creation

When looking at how knowledge is created by different subject positions in a relation of affinity within autonomous social movements in contrast to scientific knowledge *about* autonomous social movements, the difference that comes into play is to be found in the process of how the knowledge is created. To stay with the example of autonomous social movements engaging with the issue of the right to the city, I will briefly sketch its idea and development.

Henri Lefebvre's idea that the city should be shaped by its inhabitants instead of an architect's or investor's master plan (1968) had a revival in the context of the progressing neoliberalisation of urban spaces (Brenner, Marcuse and Mayer 2012). Since 2007 (U.S.A.) and 2009 in Europe (Hamburg) post-representational movements took up the issue of spatial commodification which includes a whole complex of topics, such as gentrification, privatisation of public space, private property and rent, social exclusion, street harassment and racist police controls. Different activist milieus, such as squatters, citizen initiatives, associations working with migrants, have been engaging with the topic in a variety of ways subsumed in the catch phrase coined by Lefebvre as "the right to the city": from direct actions, such as squatting empty private property or sabotages on construction sites of luxury apartments, to the organisation of events such as lecture series or art performances.

The variety of actors, organisational styles and decision-making processes involved led to the development of different "construction sites" where knowledge is created in encounters. A neighbourhood assembly in a squatted social centre in Barcelona and a reading group meeting in a self-managed infoshop[4] somewhere in Germany are both engaging with the right to the city. Yet they do so coming from perspectives situated in their everyday experience of the city that they inhabit.

Encounters where knowledge for political articulation of autonomous social movements is collectively created are constitutive of their political practices. Hence these encounters occur in   action spaces - temporal action spaces of an event created by autonomous social movements (Peterson 2001, 2) or territorial action spaces where "activists act through specific geographies: e.g. on the streets, outside of military bases, surrounding a historical monument, an abandoned building," (Peterson 2001, 5). These time-spaces are confrontational action spaces linked to resistance and since autonomous social movements' politics take the shape of a non-representational politics of the act, these action spaces equally occur in the everyday. The relations between differently situated knowing objects that constitute the networked horizontal process of knowledge creation in nomad science are thereby not any intersubjective relationship but

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[4]　"Infoshops" are often but not necessarily rented social spaces for encounters, discussions, socialising and networking within and beyond the autonomous social movements. They often display a collection of books, zines, flyers to facilitate a sharing and spreading of information.

specifically a relationship of affinity. Hence occasions for this type of relational creation of knowledge can take place in spontaneous, sporadic and unpredictable moments of exchange marked by affinity in the practices of autonomous social movements.

To provide a concrete example of such a moment of relational knowledge creation taking place spontaneously in the everyday life of autonomous social movement activists, I will take recourse to my own field notes. These were mostly taken down while engaging with the topic of the right to the city from an autonomous social movement's perspective. Just like field notes for the following examples, this dialogue is linked to the purpose of writing this article through my relations of affinity and shared political practices with those who speak in it. Our collective engagement with these issues grew from shared experiences in daily life and the socio-political contentions that we face here. In the first two examples illustrated by my field notes I am present as a participating subject position participating in the knowledge creation process, the third example is part of a dialogical narration.

The following extract was collectively selected from a dialogue between friends involved in a group working on the right to the city about what it means that economically less privileged people are being pushed out of the city centre and resettled due to an investor's luxury refurbishment of a block of houses.

> A[5]: "Of course this is a really obvious example for gentrification in our city. These houses are the last ones with affordable rent located in the central district where everything is easily accessible without using public transport ..."
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> B: "... which is really not affordable for everybody! ..."
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> A: "... yes, and it is really unjust that those who have the smallest incomes have to live in a place where they have to spend lots of money for coming to the city ..."
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> C: "... Do you know how much a monthly ticket is worth in our city? I bet you don´t even know it because you never considered to buy one. It´s almost 75 Euros. Imagine paying 75 Euros a month! This is really unaffordable for people with low income."
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> D: "And I know for a fact that the people living in these houses have a low income. One of them came to the social centre to get information on how to get his benefits back which means that they [the job centre] have cut his benefits almost completely. It would be even difficult for him to find a new place to live because the rents are so high here."
>
> B to A: "Do you know if the inhabitants want to resist the eviction?"
>
> A: "I don´t even know whether there is really a formally issued eviction order."

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[5]   Names have been replaced by letters for anonymisation.

B: "How can we find out?"

C: "I think I have an idea whom we can ask ..."

D: "We should ask the inhabitants first."

Reasons for autonomous social movement's militant action feed into a process of creation of the knowledge necessary to perform the action: Why is the eviction unjust and should be resisted?

A: "(...) These houses are the last ones with affordable rent located in the central district where everything is easily accessible without using public transport (...) and it is really unjust that those who have the smallest incomes have to live in a place where they have to spend lots of money for coming to the city ..."

C: "(...) [a monthly ticket for public transport] is really unaffordable for people with low income."

D: "And I know for a fact that the people living in these houses have a low income. (...)"

In other words: the socio-economic structure of the lived environment makes it unaffordable for people with low income living on the outskirts to access the city-centre. This leads to social exclusion from places where public life is happening. The bits of assumptions, information and perspectives that the knowledge creation process is constituted of are derived from everyday experience of life in this specific city (*"(...) These houses are the last ones with affordable rent located in the central district ...", "(...) [a monthly ticket for public transport] is really unaffordable for people with low income."*) and is constituted through interactions. It is rhizomatic because anyone could contribute to the discussion - everyday knowledge is situated on a horizontal plane with other everyday knowledges - and yet it is specific people whose everyday experiences take the knowledge flow in this specific direction. Knowledges derived from everyday practices and experiences have simultaneously various possible nodes with other everyday knowledges. In interconnecting with each other the exchange of specific everyday knowledges constitutes a knowledge flow that depends on the everyday experiences of people participating in the knowledge creation process. It is imaginable that instead of connecting the eviction of economically de-privileged people from the city centre to unaffordable prices of public transport the knowledge flow could have spontaneously gone in a slightly different direction - for example in arguing that the inhabitants to be evicted have been criminalised by racist police controls which take place mostly in the city centre. Recent protests against racist police controls in the city might be one of the reasons for the authorities to attempt to pacify the resistance in displacing the targets of racist police controls which is why the eviction of these specific houses should be resisted. Such an interconnection of everyday knowledges might be derived from shared

experiences of being involved in the organisation of the protests against racist police controls.

There is an implicit evaluation of autonomous social movement's strategies to be found in the dialogue as well. It consists in the will not to act on behalf of the oppressed but in solidarity with the oppressed, hence the attention is turning to the will of the affected residents and collection of knowledge about their situation:

> B to A: "Do you know if the inhabitants want to resist the eviction?"
>
> A: "I don´t even know whether there is really a formally issued eviction order."
>
> B: "How can we find out?"
>
> C: "I think I have an idea whom we can ask …"
>
> D: "We should ask the inhabitants first."

The knowledge creation process leads from the information of the houses getting evicted up to the question of getting relevant information for the resistance to an eviction. The subject positions involved in the discussion recognise that it is necessary to create relations with other subject positions involved to constitute a political articulation of resistance against this specific eviction. They find these relations in their situated knowledges (*"I think I have an idea whom we can ask …"; "We should ask the inhabitants first."*) connecting those who know and speak about the eviction (students who want to resist oppression in a struggle for the right to the city) and those directly affected by oppression (economically less privileged people to be evicted from their central housing).

Let us assume now that many discussions similar to the one cited above will take place before a leaflet to mobilise people to come and participate in the planned blockade against the eviction will be written and distributed. These discussions might seem insignificant due to their incidental nature: friends spontaneously shift the topic of their dinner conversation from university seminars to the upcoming eviction; guests casually drop in and participate in the discussion; one of the friends decides to speak with other people she considers as being experienced in resisting squat evictions about the issue when she meets them in the social centre a few days later. What if knowledge about the political practice of resistance to the eviction was to be produced without an access to the everyday life of those involved? What if solely the written leaflets calling for a blockade of the houses on the day of the eviction were to be used to research this political practice - for example in doing a discourse analysis of the text based on actor network theory? The everyday experiences of people involved, the political practices from which this experience derives, the ways these experiences interconnect, the settings in which they do so would remain invisible if it is assumed that there is a single political articulation to be studied.

My field notes of the discussion illustrate the spontaneous and informal nature of this relational knowledge creation process. Yet, such a moment of exchange can also be more formally organised in a regular group meeting where people meet to speak about theory and to reflect on local urban politics. In a territorial action space constructed or created by militant action and at the same time co-constructive of these same militant actions (Peterson 2011, 5), such as a squatted social centre, time and place is set for encounters: the activity of a reading group on the right to the city links with other events, like action days or presentations which are other spaces for relational knowledge creation situated on a horizontal plane of the creation of knowledge happening simultaneously in a rhizomatic structure.

The knowledge of friends involved in a right to the city group and the knowledge created in weekly meetings in the social centre in another city can form a node in a more or less formalised manner: through the attendance of members of both groups to the squatting days in Hamburg[6] which was conceived by its organisers as an event to provide space for encounters and collective action during August 2014. Points of connection can also be established without any pre-planned organisation through a casual visit to the squatted social centre where the neighbourhood assembly meets during a journey of one of the friends involved in the discussion about gentrification.

The occurrence of these situations is structured through the rhythm of participant's daily life and political practices: going to meetings, gathering material for building barricades, equipping oneself with tools to do so, discussing the concept of the right to the city in the infoshop where people interested in the topic regularly spend time.

To show how the rhythm of daily life conditions when moments of relational knowledge creation that inform the autonomous social movement's direct actions occur, I will provide another example from my field notes. This example will invite engagement in reflections on the role of lifestyle choices made by participants of autonomous social movements since the rhythm of their daily life cannot be seen as separate from those choices. The example provided here is a conversation that took place during a casual encounter at the bin of a supermarket when recycling cast off food. While it is difficult to state when the act of recycling food from the bin represents an ideological choice that is made by activists and when it represents an economic necessity, it can be said that this practice of daily life creates a shared experience and point of encounter between people with both types of motivation for engaging in the free recycling of food from the bin.

The bin where trash and food are being put on the street at a specific time in the evening is known to those living in the area. The local neighbourhood assembly was discussing the issue of gentrification through tourist consumption, which, it

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[6]   http://squattingdays.noblogs.org/ (accessed: 20.08.2014)

has been articulated in one of the previous assembly meetings, dissolves the social tissue of the neighbourhood through the creation of places of cultural consumption such as galleries with an entrance fee. A squat containing a self-managed theatre operating without entrance fees and putting up occasional DIY shows for the local community got evicted some months before the unscheduled encounter at the bin takes place. One of the participants in the conversation at the bin of the supermarket is a former resident of the squat who moved to another area of the city after the eviction. Another participant is an inhabitant of the neighbourhood who participates in the autonomous neighbourhood assembly.

> A: "What a surprise! Good to see you here again. How are things and where do you live now?"
>
> (...)
>
> A: "You know, since you people got evicted and there have been no theatre nights in the neighbourhood any more, I feel I know much less of what is happening in the neighbourhood in general."
>
> B: "You mean in people's lives or with the movement in the neighbourhood?"
>
> A: "A bit of both, to be honest. You used to see everyone at the theatre night sometimes: the neighbours that are not so involved in politics, the students, the punks and the people from the social centre [other participants in the autonomous neighbourhood assembly]. Now it has been rare that you would meet all of them coming together in one place."
>
> C: "This is exactly what gentrification is about, isn't it? That places for less consumerist and more social encounters disappear."
>
> A: "Yeah, because having a place that is not a meeting but where you can talk to everybody is also where you can get an impression of what you can do as a political actor for this community."
>
> B: "And the neighbourhood assembly is not such a place?"
>
> A: "Also. But it is only a very specific group of people who want to be really active against gentrification and poverty and all the other things. And they need to be connected to the people from the neighbourhood. This has always been working best when you have a fun reason to meet - like watching a theatre play and having a chat at night in the backyard of (...) [the squat theatre]."
>
> B: "Maybe this means we need a new place to do DIY culture and arts. I would do it again if there are more people interested in squatting something new here."
>
> A: "Maybe I should mention this in the next neighbourhood assembly."

The random, unplanned encounter at the supermarket bin between the autonomous social movement activists is due to their shared practice (despite different subject positions: recycling food as an ideological choice of lifestyle or as an economic necessity) setting specific places and times to go to within their

rhythms of daily life. Unplanned encounters happening in these specific places and times provide opportunities for exchange of information and discussion about other collective practices related to the political context of daily life. In the case of this example the people recycling food from the bin collectively develop a perspective on the evicted theatre that sets it out as a place that fortifies the social tissue in the neighbourhood. This is seen as an opposition to the effects of local gentrification - an issue that the participants are involved in through their activity within local practices of autonomous social movements (through participating in the autonomous neighbourhood assembly and the creation of autonomous cultural spaces for the neighbourhood). In the conversation the need for a self-organised cultural space was placed in the political plane of autonomous social movement direct action:

> A: "Yeah, because having a place that is not a meeting but where you can talk to everybody is also where you can get an impression of what you can do as a political actor for this community."

If a social movements researcher would have overheard this conversation, would s_he assume to have learned about the flow of information within the squatter's movement because the political articulation at stake in the discussion is to open a new squat? This assumption would miss out that there is no squatter's movement as such - it consists of relations between different people with different political practices, between those who crack doors of empty houses at night to turn them into places for self-organised cultural performances and those who feel uncomfortable with actions that can be penalised as a criminal offence and choose to engage in community organising instead. Neither can both participants in the discussion at the bin represent the squatters movement, nor can they represent each other. They were holding different subject positions in the squatted theatre (a guest and a squatter), they have different subject positions from which they get involved in squatted spaces in the neighbourhood (a resident who comes to the squat theatre to meet and exchange information with other residents and a nomadic DIY culture enthusiast who is up for squatting). It is their shared practice of having been part of the squatted theatre that creates relations between these different subject positions and allows them to engage in a spontaneous knowledge flow in every place outside of these practices.

When describing the model of nomad science we see it as "operating in an open space throughout which things-flows are distributed, rather than plotting out a closed space for linear and solid things" (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, 421). This is a contrast to the type of knowledge that royal science produces in closed conference rooms. As against royal science the knowledge created by nomad science also prefers no predefined citation style, no privileged habitus of speaking and writing or formal entitlement to do so in the institutional context of a university. This is, however, not to say that relational knowledge creation

within autonomous social movements cannot happen in closed conference rooms or that a certain way of self-expression will never be prevalent in certain moments of knowledge created by different subject positions. What distinguishes these moments from the knowledge production in royal science is that no place of knowledge production is granted epistemological authority - be it an encounter at the bin or a seminar on sustainable activism and burn out prevention. The latter constitutes my next example, which is of interest here because it contrasts the previous examples with a set place, time and content as well as with a more formalised (through facilitation and a pre-structured agenda) course of action.

Workshops and seminars on specific issues concerning participants in autonomous social movements constitute a different place of encounter for relational knowledge creation within autonomous social movements. Although in these workshops and seminars a group of people ("trainers", "facilitators", "organisers", ...) is responsible for facilitating the creation of knowledge amongst participants, a characteristic of these workshops and seminars is that they are organised by participants of autonomous social movements for participants of autonomous social movements according to the principle of a horizontal exchange in the process of knowledge creation (through discussion rules, consensus decision-making, exchange of information about differences in subject positions and practices within autonomous social movements, ...).

As an example I will choose the *effective-sustainable activism* workshop that took place in 2014 in the Ecodharma centre, a community in the Pyrenees. The seminar

> …aims to support awareness and change at both the personal and inter-personal levels to enable more effective and sustainable activism. It seeks to foster forms of community organizing and activism that nourish, inspire and empower people, in ways that are personally sustainable and contribute to long term movement building.[7].

In the words of one participant, the seminar:

> A:"… was a place where knowledge got created by the movements for the movements and to an equal amount by all those who attended the seminar, regardless if they were a trainer or a participant. I would say we created knowledge about group building and group dynamics, consensus, burn-out in general and how to deal with burn-outs from activism, the making of everyday routines and practices, self-reflection, … . The trainers were a diverse group:

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[7]   http://www.ecodharma.com/self-society-a-radical-response/effective-sustainable-activism (accessed: 19.12.2014).

some of them, from the community itself, were really into the Buddhist stuff and meditation, but they never imposed their views on others. Some trainers came from the U.K. where they were involved in environmental direct action and had nothing to do with these ideas about spirituality. The participants also came from a diverse range of political backgrounds and this is why the seminar was so valuable for knowing more. We had quite a tight time schedule but there was also time for relaxing and thinking. It was really well organised with different seminar sequences leading into each other and one could see that the trainers had experience in facilitating groups. Sessions were still open to change and spontaneous inputs. Of course there was some `seminar style talk´ and group exercises, too. The organisation that funded it also helped to fund the Ecotopia biketour [where the interviewee had previously participated] in the past."

This statement portrays the seminar as a place of horizontal knowledge creation within autonomous social movements that succeeded in embracing a   plurality of subject positions:

A:"(...) knowledge got created by the movements for the movements and to an equal amount by all those who attended the seminar, regardless if they were a trainer or a participant. (...) The trainers were a diverse group: some of them, from the community itself, were really into the Buddhist stuff and meditation, but they never imposed their views on others. Some trainers came from the U.K. where they were involved in environmental direct action and had nothing to do with these ideas about spirituality. The participants also came from a diverse range of political backgrounds and this is why the seminar was so valuable for knowing more."

Despite the more formal organisation in the shape of a facilitated and pre-planned seminar, the access to the knowledge creation process was given to this participant through informal relations formed in previous participation in autonomous social movement practices:

A: "The organisation that funded it also helped to fund the Ecotopia biketour [where the interviewee had previously participated] in the past."

This example pictures that the relational knowledge creation process within autonomous social movements can include different ways of speaking (in the context of a seminar as opposed to the context of an casual encounter):

A: "We had quite a tight time schedule but there was also time for relaxing and thinking. It was really well organised with different seminar sequences leading into each other and one could see that the trainers had experience in facilitating groups. Sessions were still open to change and spontaneous inputs. Of course

there was some `seminar style talk´ and group exercises, too."

Yet, no specific knowledge (of trainers, in this case on spirituality as a tool for sustainable activism,) was granted epistemological privilege despite a specific position and role within the seminar group:

> A:"The trainers were a diverse group: some of them, from the community itself, were really into the Buddhist stuff and meditation, but they never imposed their views on others."

The aim of the seminar is placed within the prefigurative practice of articulating political desire (more effective-sustainably). Within such practices the horizontality of different knowledges remains operative despite the potentially hierarchical setting of different knowledges to be involved (trainers and participants). The seminar is open to participants from different struggles to come together to create knowledge about effective-sustainable activism. The knowledges that these different struggles create (in mediatised campaigns against deforestation or on the street preventing evictions) are thus placed on a horizontal plane where it is possible to connect different nodes of relations of affinity collectively constituting a spontaneous knowledge flow.

Would a social movements researcher choose to study the seminar in order to learn about knowledge production because a seminar is obviously a place and a setting to produce knowledge as an outcome? Assuming that there are such central places for knowledge production within autonomous social movements, we would miss out on all the knowledges from different struggles that people gained elsewhere, that they brought to the seminar from their different places of struggle. Although there might be some seminar outcomes conclusively written on a flip chart on the last day, it remains untraceable what the results really are for the everyday practices of autonomous social movements. Solely looking at the seminar outcomes as one united production of knowledge we do not know in which contexts these insights will be applied in the future, where the various experiences involved in the knowledge flow within the seminar came from, unless we enter the sphere of participant's everyday life that made them engage in the seminar.

The creation of knowledge in autonomous social movements through relations of affinity between differently situated subject positions produces shared conceptions of issues through a horizontal connection of situated knowledges derived from everyday experience within the autonomous social movements struggle (Motta 2011). It is intrinsically related to the practice of socio-political dissent itself because it is in this moment that the creation of knowledge about how and why to articulate dissent takes place (cf. Sitrin and Azzellini 2014, 51-67).

Two challenges

If we conceive the practice of relational knowledge creation within and about autonomous social movements as nomad science happening in moments of reflection within the movement that are rhizomatically connected to each other on a horizontal plane with no epistemologically privileged point, we face at least two important challenges when engaging with this knowledge.

1. Devaluation of nomad science by royal science

Looking at the exclusionary power/knowledge nexus in scientific research which produces the known object we find an "epistemological logics of intellectual production in political science in which only certain ways of performing the intellectual are considered legitimate." (Motta 2013, 1). These privileged ways of intellectual production produce "relationships of 'power-over' between the knower and the known subject." (Motta 2013, 4).

In scientific research which privileges ways of knowing that are objective, neutral, detached and methodologically confined to empiricism, putting more epistemological importance on the practice of autonomous social movements which is situated in everyday life, is a difficult task.

We can relate to Paul Feyerabend's (1975) complaint about the oppressive authority of (royal) science through which different ways of knowing that are intuitive, affinity based, collaborative and informal are epistemologically devalued and "nomad science is portrayed as a prescientific or parascientific or sub-scientificagency." (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, 428). This devaluation makes the process of relational knowledge creation with nomad science invisible to the eyes of the scientist who, in maintaining a "legislative and constituent primacy for royal science" sides with the State (ibid. 428) and exerts 'power-over' the autonomous social movements in making them an object of research to be studied, analysed and objectively demonstrated to the outside world refusing to grant the autonomous social movements any agency in their self-definition or positioning. Thus the autonomous social movements as an object of research have lost their ability to *speak to* social research - instead they are being *spoken of* in social research. Hearing the autonomous social movements speak behind the methodological impositions and confines of royal science or State science in academia is therefore extremely challenging.

2. Recognising moments of relational knowledge creation

Accepting the horizontal nature of relational knowledge creation when doing scientific research and learning to recognise moments of knowledge creation as such when they happen is challenging for the researcher. Settings in which these moments occur are defined by relations of affinity between participants, since autonomous social movements are characterised by an affinity-based organising (Day 2001). These moments can be very different, with different modalities of

expression being employed. As described in the previous part of this article, they can happen in a scheduled meeting of a working group but also spontaneously when socialising, or even in a more hectic moment during an action. In these moments it is difficult not to be completely caught up by the social situation itself to recognise that right here and now knowledge is being created.

As activist academics we prone to have relations of affinity with participants in autonomous social movements, we are more likely to assist group meetings where knowledge creation takes place through relations of affinity between differently situated subject positions, and more likely to be present on an action where knowledge and practice intertwine. Yet, we are ourselves part of the situation when doing research, just as the knowledge that we create or that we see being created is situated in a specific context (Anderson 2012). The situation in which knowledge is created horizontally in networked relations of affinity might be stressful, emotionally loaded and present a whole set of everyday life challenges to the knowing object whose first priority as an activist within autonomous social movements might not be with meta-theoretical reflections but with the political articulation itself. The methodology of "border-thinking"/"border dwelling" (Motta 2013, 8; 11) that conceives the researcher as a travelling storyteller that is inhabiting different spaces – scientific ones and experienced ones, the world of research and the one of the researched at once, presents us with another challenge here. On the one hand it prefigures horizontal relationships between different types of knowledges dwelling on the epistemological margins in both worlds which facilitates a transmission of stories making the silenced object of research heard. On the other hand side, a life with full participation in both worlds, the world of research and the world of experience within the autonomous social movements, makes high demands on the activist academic as a travelling storyteller: not only to transcend knowing as mastery and to start learning with and from the movements but also to accommodate the calculations of royal science with the hydraulic model of nomad science based on relations of affinity and affect.

Attempting to do so constitutes exactly the type of "borderline phenomena" that Deleuze and Guattari are interested in (2013, 422): paying epistemological attention to the relational knowledge creation process within the autonomous social movements is an act of transgression between nomad science and royal science when nomad science takes place within royal science. It is an act of de-hierarchising different types of knowledge which allows us, as academics or activists, to engage with the practices of autonomous social movements beyond the strict impositions of royal science. In the next part of this article I will elaborate two proposals to help in this process.

Two Proposals

1. Epistemological rebellion

Faced with the devaluation and discreditation of post-representational and rhizomatic knowledge creation in nomad science by royal science, we can start questioning the rules by which royal science operates. In doing so the set of binding methodological guidelines applied with an empiricist epistemology that produces "intellectual security in the form of clarity, precision, `objectivity´, `truth´"(Feyerabend 1975, 18) comes to our attention. Revisiting the history of epistemological rebellion in science we find a seductive starting point for fruitfully engaging with knowledge produced by nomad science in Paul Feyerabned's epistemological anarchism in "Against Method" (1975). He claims, scientific progress occurs through what positivists call "methodological weaknesses" – chaos, opportunism, errors and the opposition to reason (ibid, 158) and violations of scientific laws (ibid, 14) established by royal science. For the reason that "Variety of opinion is necessary for objective knowledge. And a method that encourages variety is also the only method that is compatible with a humanitarian outlook" (ibid, 32).

Feyerabend doubts objectivity partly because of the same reasons as Foucault (2002): no `objective´ truth claim can be detached from its `subjective historical context´ (Feyerabend 1989) and subject position issuing the truth claim. Therefore subjective beliefs and opinions of the scientist have to be included in the research carried out. In "Against Method" he dedicates one of twenty chapters (ibid, 252-267) to the development of his personal beliefs and interests in the topic.

The epistemic authority of science gets challenged by Feyerabend through questioning the rules by which it operates, its underlying assumptions as well as through the suggestion to criticise science from the point of view of a different (but equally important) conceptual systems of knowledge such as mythology or "the ramblings of madmen" (ibid, 53).

"First-world science is one science among many" (ibid, 3). This break gives voice and tools to those who create knowledge outside of the institutionalised scientific community and makes different ways of knowledge creation equal to those of royal science. It empowers those who employ differing ways of speaking about knowledge: speaking through narratives, through myths and traditions, through creating events and encounters for a horizontal process of speaking with each other, speaking through practice in projecting the world we want to live in into the present.

Applied to the study of autonomous social movements this means to learn to listen to different ways of speaking and to unlearn oneself as a scientist. In reclaiming the history of epistemological rebellion in science the known object can suddenly not only speak, it is also situated in contexted positions and perspectives when doing so and it has a post-representational plurality of different situated expressions.

At this point we have to start looking for epistemological allies in the present and we find them in feminist and post-colonial epistemology where, just like when working with autonomous social movement's relational knowledge creation process, the researcher deals with marginalised ways of knowing. The commonalities are obvious: "Feminist epistemology conceives of knowers as situated in particular relations to what is known and to other knowers. What is known, and the way that it is known, thereby reflects the situation or perspective of the knower." (Anderson 2012). To profit from a closer look at feminist epistemology, which is mainly focusing on gender relations, when studying post-representational and rhizomatic knowledge, it is necessary to work out which type of feminist epistemology provides a conceptual link for taking a post-representational plurality of expressions into account. It is important to note that feminist epistemology provides different approaches to seeing how women have been silenced in science not all of which are suitable.

Standpoint theory in general claims "to represent the world from a particular socially situated perspective that can lay a claim to epistemic privilege or authority" and feminist standpoint theory claims "an epistemic privilege over the character of gender relations, and of social and psychological phenomena in which gender is implicated, on behalf of the standpoint of women" (ibid). Feminist standpoint theories ground the claim to epistemic privilege in different features of women's social situation, such as work, reproduction (Hartsock 1987 and Rose 1987), education (Chodorow 1999) or sexualised objectification (MacKinnon 1999).

In contrast, feminist postmodernism provides a rhizomatic conceptualisation of knowledges situated on a horizontal plane. Postmodernists such as Foucault, Derrida and Lyotard claim that what we perceive as reality is discursively constructed in language and systems of thought. They stress the partiality, ambiguity and essential contestability of any particular account of truth about reality. This idea gets extended from language to social practices conceptualising actions as linguistic signs. Within these social practices our identities are equally socially imposed through discursive construction and we occupy a plurality of them at the same time: a woman might also be a lesbian, a person of colour, a daughter, … . Postmodernist feminist theories have provided a variety of criticisms of the concept of "woman" from a post-representational perspective (Collins 1990) which opens up a post-representational meta-theoretical ground for a plurality of situated knowledges and thus resonates with the practices of post-representational movements.

Prefiguring horizontal relationships between these different knowledges created in different ways, an epistemology that stands against the devaluation of the practices of nomad science by royal science treats different processes of knowledge creation and their outputs as different but equal narratives. It facilitates an exchange between them in translating the post-representational narrative of the autonomous social movement practices with care into the language of royal science where it is to stand its epistemological ground.

2. Taking 'homeplaces' as a contestable focus of sensitive attention

The second challenge with relational knowledge creation and its unpredictable context dependent nature is recognising the moments of knowledge creation as such when they happen. This is a matter of sensitive attention, but sensitive attention can not always be maintained when engaging with autonomous social movements "in the field" which is literally everywhere and includes emotionally charged and stressful situations. In an emergency meeting in an occupied house with the police at the doors for eviction, sensitive attention to the fact that knowledge is created in rhizomatic relations here and now is difficult to maintain. Thus I suggest finding contestable focal points of attention for these moments situated on an imaginary map of the practices of the movements.   I suggest placing these contestable focal points of attention in the geographies of resistance of autonomous social movements and their nomad science. On a territorial scale, nomads need different points to go to. These points are situated on a horizontal plane of places that are socially constructed in the geographical reality (Cresswell 1996). Moments of relational knowledge creation within autonomous social movements take place in a place. For the researcher to be able to focus on this process with a sensitive attention, it might be useful to ask what kind of spatial settings enable the relational creation of knowledge.

Autonomous social movements act in geographical places, struggling to appropriate place in conjunction with their cognitive action space, their map of place, and it is crucial to understand that they are elements engaged in a struggle against forces of domination. They act on topographies imposed through the spatial technologies of domination, and partly their actions move across these topographies (cf. Peterson 2001, 6). "Their 'room' to manoeuvre in a struggle against authorities which superimposes itself onto physical places is across and beneath these places, in the inevitable cracks which exist and which involve alternative spaces which are dimly lit, deliberately hidden, and saturated with memories." (ibid, 7). Peterson argues that autonomous social movements create action spaces of encounter through their practice of resistance against domination. Sharp et al. conceptualise these places as the autonomous social movement's "'homeplaces' of resistance" (2000, 29), where resistance is never an unfractured practice but the 'homeplace' of resistance remains unstable and penetrable by practices of domination.

In a temporal action space of autonomous social movements, the street can become such a 'homeplace' of resistance when occupied in a demonstration, while territorial action spaces provide a geographically fixed point of reference, such as an infoshop where encounters and collective processes locate the everyday practices of autonomous social movements.

The collective social construction of these places can serve as a focal point for processes of relational knowledge creation because it is in the spatial reality that autonomous social movements become tangible through their practice of articulation and their knowledge is situated within the "geographies of resistance" (Pile 1997) that they create collectively through their articulation.

Conclusion

My aim was to investigate epistemological challenges for a speaking from within autonomous social movements about their practices in contrast to conceiving them as an object of research whose voice is buried underneath quantitative evaluations of media coverage of the movements' actions or "objective" discourse analysis of "social movement actors". I was instantly faced with two different challenges. While the first challenge is a purely epistemological one resulting from the structural privileging of a certain way of producing knowledge by an individualised, rational, detached and socially privileged subject position of the scientist and the hegemonic devaluation of other knowledge creation processes, the second challenge is methodological: the question of the knowing object as a researcher and as the researched at once. This challenge sends us on the quest for suitable methodological tools for working with and within post-representational movements on an emancipatory practice/knowledge nexus which brings their voices and knowledges to the foreground opposing a hegemonic speaking-over by royal science within autonomous social movement studies.

The proposals concerning these challenges that are formulated here, are situated in a specific political context and can be adapted, transformed, modified, to be applied to another situation of the knowing object. Therefore these proposals are part of a plurality of expressions coming from different subject positions within the autonomous social movements and hopefully they can contribute, fertilise, mix and exchange in a horizontal process of articulation along with other expressions.

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