

Master Thesis

Resistance and Rebellion: Green Anarchism in West Europe from  
1980 to the Present

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## Abstract

This research explores the ways in which green anarchists have pursued and realized their ideals in Western Europe from the 1980s to the present. Green anarchism is a radical political movement that combines principles of ecological sustainability and social justice while advocating for the demolition of hierarchical power structures. Alongside, examining the historical aspects and evolution of green anarchist movements in Western Europe, this study examines the strategies, tactics, and achievements of these activists in their pursuit of a sustainable future. This study uses qualitative analysis to look into different groups of green anarchism, collected from a variety of sources such as, primary sources, such as handbooks and manifestos. The research identifies several common methods employed by green anarchists to realize their ideals. These methods include direct action, civil disobedience, commune building, alternative forms of living, and blockades. By examining case studies it became clear that they use various forms of protest to achieve their mutual goal. Green anarchists have changed their tactics and adjusted them over the years, together with the evolving social and political contexts. However green anarchists groups differ in countries, they have realized that working together is an effective manner to achieve their goals. Consequently, green anarchists are creating a transnational green anarchists network.

The findings of this research contribute to a deeper understanding of the strategies, challenges, and successes experienced by green anarchists in Western Europe over the past four decades. By examining the evolution of their ideals and the methods employed to realize them, this research provides insights into the transformative and grassroots activism in shaping a more sustainable future. In creating a green transnational anarchist network they have a greater impact on environmental issues.

Keywords: *anarchism, green anarchism, eco anarchism, civil disobedience, environmental activism, direct action, alternative living, mass protest, blockades, communes*

## Content

Abstract.....	2
Content.....	3
Introduction .....	5
Main theoretical concepts .....	6
Literature report .....	9
Methodology .....	15
Chapter 1.....	19
The anarchist view on the unsustainable world in Western Europe.....	19
Historical perspective of green anarchism .....	20
Rise of green anarchism.....	22
Conclusion .....	33
Chapter 2.....	34
Green Anarchists and their use of protest.....	34
Vrije bond .....	36
Stop-HS2 protests .....	37
Fracking protests.....	38
Ende Gelände .....	39
G20 protests .....	42
ASEED Europe .....	43
Conclusion .....	44
Chapter 3.....	46
Anarchist and their use of blockades and occupations .....	46
Stop HS2 .....	47
Hambach Forest Occupation (Hambi bleibt!).....	49
ZAD (Zone D'aménagement Différé) .....	51
.....	54
GroenFront!.....	55
Conclusion .....	56
Chapter 4.....	58
Anarchist and their use of violence .....	58
ELF .....	61
G20.....	62
Hambach Forest .....	63
Black bloc .....	65

Conclusion .....	66
Chapter 5.....	67
Other tactics that green anarchist employ.....	67
Art .....	67
Anti consumerism .....	70
Conclusion .....	71
General Conclusion .....	73
References .....	77
Primary references .....	77
Secondary references .....	80

## Introduction

Anarchism has changed in contemporary times in comparison to the ideas of the nineteenth century anarchists. Anarchism is mostly defined by their complete rejection of the authority, government or state.<sup>1</sup> Since its evolution there have been several distorted assumptions about anarchism that the public takes for granted. People believed that anarchists were violent and disrupted the order.<sup>2</sup> According to anarchists, the media and the government utilise propaganda to construct a false picture of anarchists, portraying them as engaging in violent acts, riots, and even some acts of terrorism.<sup>3</sup>

However, modern anarchists movements see themselves as rational and peaceful activists that fight against the hierarchical world and domination of states.<sup>4</sup> It seems that, many anarchists nowadays are young activists with awareness of women's rights and environmental considerations.<sup>5</sup> The majority of these new anarchists are engaged in counterculture, Black Power, forming autonomous communes, and organizing anti-capitalist events.<sup>6</sup> Because of their popularity and impact, the anti-war, anti-capitalist, and anti-globalization movements have contributed to the growth of the anarchist movement. All these social movements are connected to various international anarchist networks.<sup>7</sup> However, one of the concerns anarchists have is climate change. Anarchists and activists try to create more awareness about climate change and environmental implications. There is a specific group of anarchists that mainly focus on environmental issues, they call themselves green anarchists or eco-anarchists.

Despite these concerns, scholars often overlook the existence of anarchist movements because they are rarely mentioned in studies and social movements.<sup>8</sup> There has not been much

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<sup>1</sup> John P. Clark, "What is anarchism?", *NOMOS: Am. Soc'y Pol. Legal Phi*, 19 (1978): 3.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Bach Jensen, "Anarchist Terrorism and Global Diasporas, 1878–1914," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 27:3 (2015): 447-450.

<sup>3</sup> Don LaCoss, "Anti-Anarchist Propaganda Reported as Historical Fact," *The Anarchist Library* (2003): 2

<sup>4</sup> Dana Williams, "Contemporary anarchist and anarchistic movements," *Sociology Compass* (2018): 1-3.

<sup>5</sup> Martha A. Ackelsberg, *Free women of Spain: Anarchism and the struggle for the emancipation of women* (AK Press, 2005), 32

<sup>6</sup> Andrej Grubacic, and David Graeber. "Anarchism, or the revolutionary movement of the twenty-first century." *The Anarchist Library* (2004): 1-3.

<sup>7</sup> Francis Dupuis-Déri, "From the Zapatistas to Seattle: The 'New Anarchists,'" *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism* (2018): 472-473.

<sup>8</sup> Dana Williams, "Black Flags and Social Movements: A Sociological Analysis of Movement Anarchism," *Manchester University Press* (November 2017): 3-5.

published about contemporary anarchists in general or more specific kinds, such as green anarchists. Many academics are against working with these movements because of their violent past.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, most research about anarchist networks and movements has been done on the nineteenth century. While there is less research on more recent periods, this does not mean they are not active anymore.<sup>10</sup> In addition, it is important to note that green anarchists are relatively recent additions to anarchist networks, and this research places an emphasis on their emergence and development within these networks.<sup>11</sup> This research aims to examine the development of green anarchist networks and activities in Western Europe and see if they have developed into transnational anarchist networks. This study looks at how green anarchists have applied their beliefs and used various strategies to address environmental issues during 1980 till now in several Western European nations.

### **Main theoretical concepts**

#### Anarchism

The goal of anarchism is to create a society where there is no hierarchical government that rule the people. It focusses on not willing to be recognized by any authority whatsoever. To understand how anarchist act, the background and essence of them is important. Around 1860, the modern anarchist movement was formed when a group of people parted from socialism. The primary focus is to oppose all forms of centralized power and that all products should be given to the people in a balanced manner.<sup>12</sup> But the movement started grow out into a movement that was well known for their violent attacks. Anarchists tried to eliminate monarchs and important people of the state, which created a negative stigma about anarchists.<sup>13</sup>

However, a strong foundation for comprehending the ideological, philosophical, and

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<sup>9</sup> Williams, "Black Flags and Social Movements," 3-5.

<sup>10</sup> Spencer Beswick, "From the Ashes of the Old: Anarchism Reborn in a Counterrevolutionary Age (1970s-1990s)," *Anarchist Studies* 30.2 (2022): 34, 41.

<sup>11</sup> Andy Price, "Green anarchism," *The Palgrave handbook of anarchism* (2019): 281-291.

<sup>12</sup> Iain McKay, "A Brief History of Anarchism," *Anarchist Library* (24th April, 2021): 3-5.

<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Frazer and Kimberly Hutchings. "Anarchist ambivalence: Politics and violence in the thought of Bakunin, Tolstoy and Kropotkin," *European Journal of Political Theory*, 18.2 (2019): 259-261.

practical aspects of the green anarchist movement is provided by using anarchism as a theoretical idea. It allows for the examination of the motivations, methods, and objectives of green anarchists within the larger anarchist philosophical framework. So, anarchists argue that a democratic and ecological system cannot be developed within a state, that supports capitalism, hierarchy and the unequal distribution of wealth and money. Anarchists think that the trading structure should belong with the society itself instead of belonging to a company or a government.<sup>14</sup> Anarchists also promote issues of sexual freedom, contraception, and cohabitation. For example, in 1968 anarchists actively supported and fought for the “second wave of feminism” which was about the struggle against the systematic difference between male and female in of labour that consist because of gender roles. They fought for concerns of discrimination and equality. Since tackling these issues, anarchists were focussing on other problems as well, such as the environment. So, in short, the themes that they want to change are the environmental movement, inequality, internationalism, the political structure, and the capitalistic economic world.<sup>15</sup>

A rational, ecologically sound, non-exploitative, and non-capitalist social system is the essence of anarchism. They believe that the state is an ineffective system that cannot resolve all of the world's issues, most notably climate change. Anarchist networks argue that if humanity is to survive, people must stop believing that the state and its leaders will solve all the problems. Networks of green anarchists fight for a variety of political and social causes. To persuade people to engage in social issues, they travel to other nations.<sup>16</sup> It is important to observe for which reason these anarchists travel and what motivates them. These anarchists have significant motivations to change the world. But to understand them and their message we must understand their motivations and thoughts about the world. Understanding the current ecological catastrophes occurring because of capitalism requires the use of the green theory.

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<sup>14</sup> Odin Lysaker, "Bodily felt integrity: the anarchic core of communication in Jürgen Habermas's democratic thought," *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory* 22.3 (2021): 278-280.

<sup>15</sup> Guillaume Davranche, "Dix questions sur l'anarchisme," *Libertalia* (16 January, 2020).

<sup>16</sup> Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group, "The Anvil," Vol 11, No 4 (July-August 2022).

## Green Theory

Green theory posits that the general society and states cannot solve climate change by using the current political system. Green theorists argue that the world is being destroyed by all the states and the capitalistic companies.<sup>17</sup> Natural reserves have been damaged as a consequence of the exhaustion of the earth by economic companies, while the earth is essential to our survival as humans. Alongside this, green theory stresses that consumerism has left us alienated from the local environment.<sup>18</sup> We as inhabitants of the world find ourselves in a difficult situation in which ecological problems should be the number one issue. But unfortunately, these problems are not a pressing issue in states.

Philosophy, political theory, sociology, environmental science, and other fields are all incorporated into green theory. Due to its integrative nature, environmental concerns can be examined from various angles, including social, political, economic, and ecological. It is simpler to follow the arguments of green anarchism by interacting with green theory. Green theory can be seen as one of the critical theories which mainly focuses on environmental issues in international relations. To address environmental challenges, political boundaries must be considered.<sup>19</sup> People are unsure of which level of the political system to look towards for a resolution to the global environmental issues that has consequences for all nations. For proponents of green theory, alternative solutions regarding political concepts are the answer. One alternative solution mentions that the way money flows in the human population is inequitable. Additionally, they contend that the globe cannot continue to produce and consume goods at such a high rate.<sup>20</sup> Along with addressing the political and social approaches to today's environmental problems. They have critiques of how society is handling these issues, much like anarchists do.<sup>21</sup> They have a lot to say about how society and

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<sup>17</sup> Michael Becker, "Anarcho-Primitivism: The Green Scare in Green Political Theory," *The Anarchist Library* (8 September, 2011): 6.

<sup>18</sup> Minna Autio, Eva Heiskanen, and Visa Heinonen, "Narratives of 'green' consumers—the antihero, the environmental hero and the anarchist," *Journal of Consumer Behaviour: An International Research Review* 8.1 (2009): 41.

<sup>19</sup> Andrew Dobson, and Paul Lucardie, *The politics of nature: Explorations in green political theory* (Routledge, 2002), 17-21.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Lynch, Michael A. Long, and Paul B. Stretesky, *Green criminology and green theories of justice: An introduction to a political economic view of eco-justice* (Springer Nature, 2019), 32-33.

<sup>21</sup> Matthew Paterson, Peter Doran, and John Barry, "Green theory," in *The State: Theories and issues*, eds. C. Hay, M. Lister and D. Marsh (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006): 135-154.



the state tackle environmental challenges. Green theorists hold them responsible for materialism, mass manufacturing, large amounts of waste, and growing greed. Environmental challenges cannot be resolved in a way that is consistent with societal norms currently in place.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, proponents of the green theory contend that for the environment to change for the better, people must become more aware of the environment and the changing climate. Additionally, people must look towards the political structure we have now and if that structure is sustainable in the future. By having a understanding of fundamental ideas from green theory like biocentrism, social ecology, deep ecology, ecological sustainability, and the critique of the current political system. This information facilitates the evaluation and interpretation of green anarchist contexts.

## **Literature report**

### The anarchist view on the (un)sustainable world

For many years now, climate change has been a major issue in the world. Numerous agencies have sent warnings to nations and the world. There have been slow moves made to solve this problem. However, well known anarchist Murray Bookchin argues that any initiatives by governments and citizens to prevent the ecological disaster must be "dismissed as chimerical."<sup>23</sup> Older anarchist scholars argued that the destruction of the environment stems from the systematic economic inequality and exploitation of capitalism, but these arguments are still relevant today. They include Elisée Reclus, a nineteenth century anarchist writer who argued that it seems impossible to shift away from the exhaustion that we as inhabitants inflict upon this planet.<sup>24</sup> He stated: "the domination of nature and society will continue as long as humanity remains under the sway of a vast system of social domination", as the current system, of social domination has produced an imbalance in the environment and the social society. Reclus demonstrates how, in a capitalist society, the search for oneself conflicts with the welfare of society.<sup>25</sup> Influenced by the ideas of Reclus, modern green anarchists also point to capitalism as the sole cause of the ecological disaster. Capitalism is defined by more wealth and competition between each other and exploitation of nature. Green anarchists argue that

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<sup>22</sup> Alan Carter, "Beyond primacy: Marxism, anarchism and radical green political theory," *Environmental Politics*, 19:6 (2010): 963-964.

<sup>23</sup> Murray Bookchin, "*Post-Scarcity Anarchism*," (Oakland: AK Press, 2004), 10.

<sup>24</sup> Elisée Reclus, *Anarchy, geography, modernity: selected writings of Elisée Reclus* (PM Press, 2013), 67.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 67, 70.

the capitalistic powers have the ability to address the issue of climate change, but they do not change anything drastic.<sup>26</sup> Therefore the planet's ecological environment is declining.

There is no doubt about it, human exploitation of the earth's resources is thought to be the cause of the current worldwide ecological disaster. This is what some people call the new geological period, known as the "Anthropocene," it is believed that people are to blame for the current environmental crisis.<sup>27</sup> But, green anarchists disagree with this justification. They argue that this analysis simply emphasizes one possible cause for the current problem. Green anarchists contend that concentrating on one event, is not realistic. As a result, another theory that attributes capitalism as the source of this geological epoch, known as the "Capitalocene," has been established. Which blames capitalism and people for the environmental decline.<sup>28</sup> Lastly there is an era which is called the "Necrocene," which is a concept by John P. Clark.<sup>29</sup> This concept stands for a period of widespread extinction marked by death and decay. Some green anarchists believe that we now live in this era.<sup>30</sup> They contend that whereas all political parties in the world only serve to advance the economy in this world, green anarchists are acting to stop it from advancing so they can save the planet. Alongside the creation of these different geologic epochs, the increasing interests towards ecological problems has made green anarchism more prevalent.

Some scholars have argued that anarchist ideas are getting more widespread in radical environmental activism, for example, the components collectivism, individual freedom, self-fulfilment, criticizing authoritarian politics, and capitalism.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, the name "green anarchism" is being used more frequently because of these anarchistic tendencies in radical

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<sup>26</sup> Ricardo Kaufer and Paula Lein, "Anarchist resistance in the German Hambach forest: Localising climate justice," *Anarchist Studies* 28.1 (2020): 62.

<sup>27</sup>Yadvinder Malhi, "The concept of the Anthropocene," *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 42 (2017): 77-78.

<sup>28</sup> Antonio GM La Viña and Jameela Joy M. Reyes, "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, and climate change," *The Routledge Handbook of Global Development* (2022): 158-159.

<sup>29</sup> John P. Clark, *Between earth and empire: from the Necrocene to the beloved community* (PM Press, 2019).

<sup>30</sup> Karsten J. Struhl, "Apocalyptic Hope in a Time of Apocalyptic Despair: Under Discussion: Between Earth and Empire: From the Necrocene to the Beloved Community, by John P. Clark," *Radical Philosophy Review* 23.2 (2020): 389.

<sup>31</sup> Bron Taylor, "Threat assessments and radical environmentalism," *Terrorism and political violence* 15.4 (2003): 173.

environment movements.<sup>32</sup> Other problems like exhaustion of the environment, climate change, economic crisis, and the big gap between the rich and poor continue to create major issues that seem impossible to solve are getting noticed more. So if the current capitalistic dominant system cannot solve these problems or ensures change, another system or structure might be the answer.<sup>33</sup> Next to all these factors, according to some green anarchists one of the major factors in exhausting the environment is consumerism.

### How consumerism influences anarchist thinking

In the current literature scholars have suggested that anarchists use anti-consumerism to promote resistance against the current system.<sup>34</sup> Anti-consumerism means that people are both absent from consumption and forms of consumerism. When anarchists refuse to get involved in consumerism, it is a form of resistance against the state in being manipulated to buy certain products.<sup>35</sup> An automobile is an example of a consumer good that many people view as necessary, but which anarchists do not. Many green anarchists have also converted toward veganism, because it is a less polluting way of life. Policy makers in the European Commission give the consumers the responsibility of promoting a sustainable environment, they development the phrase ‘shopping for a better world’.<sup>36</sup> This sentence suggests that consumers have all the power and responsibility in making shopping more sustainable and good for the environment. Hereby they imply that consumers are able to impactfully change the structures and ways of the consumer habits. But consumers do not change their habits without incentives, this change begins through activism.<sup>37</sup> Here most green anarchist are on the same side as the EU policy makers about putting the responsibility in people their own power. Because green anarchists do not believe that the state can bring about change in the

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<sup>32</sup> Elisa Aaltola, "Green anarchy: Deep ecology and primitivism," in *Anarchism and moral philosophy*, ed Benjamin Franks and Matthew Wilson (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 161-164.

<sup>33</sup> Ove D. Jakobsen, *Anarchism and Ecological Economics: A Transformative Approach to a Sustainable Future* (Routledge, 2018), 10-15.

<sup>34</sup> Laura Portwood-Stacer, "Anti-consumption as tactical resistance: Anarchists, subculture, and activist strategy," *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 12 no.1 (2012): 88.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Bert Keirsbilck et al., "Sustainable Consumption and Consumer Protection Legislation," *Publication for the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies* (European Parliament, Luxembourg, 2020): 11-16.

<sup>37</sup> Autio, "Narratives of 'green' consumers," 40-41.

climate crisis, they believe the people should make this change.

In one study about different kinds of activism in consumerism the authors looked at how different points of activism would influence consumers. The authors argue that the anarchist activist, denies the social value of consumption and the idea that capitalist consumer society can go hand in hand with ecological and human interests.<sup>38</sup> Scientific progress for the future such as alternative fuels is a solution and should be funded according to these scholars. Furthermore, other activists try to implement green consumerism, which concentrates on environment friendly products and behaviours and try to make this scientific progress faster. Organic food and products made from recycled materials are two examples of a proper kind of consumer goods according to these scholars. But on the other hand, there are other scholars that argue that they are against green consumerism. Since they do not think one person can truly play an important role, they do not want to use consumerism to support a sustainable future. On the other hand, green anarchists see green consumerism just as a new way of the capitalistic world to make more money and not necessarily to change their polluting behaviour.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, some anarchist do not believe that excessive consumption is the problem. They argue that the issue is the wasteful production around the globe for the ruling people. Since most people, particularly those in the middle and lower classes, lack access to decent housing, good health care, jobs, transportation, education and more. Their answer to this problem is to create an anarchist society.<sup>40</sup> Looking to different alternatives in a greener world helps this research in investigating how anarchist behave.<sup>41</sup>

According to scholars, anarchists do believe, nonetheless, that in order to utilize the environment consumers everywhere must contribute. Consuming less and using different products are two tactics that green anarchists use to prevent the degradation of the environment.<sup>42</sup> Nonetheless, there have been no united efforts from society to develop sustainable consumption of the materials in the environment. Society could learn something from the tactics that green anarchists use to strive towards a sustainable environment.

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<sup>38</sup> Autio, "Narratives of 'green' consumers," 42.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 46-47.

<sup>40</sup> Warren McGregor, "Linking Environment Activism and Other Struggles: An Anarchist Analysis," *Zabalaza*, no. 13.(2013): 2.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Aaltola, "Green anarchy: Deep ecology and primitivism," 164.

### What are the practices of green anarchists

Green anarchists mainly focus on the earth, nature and animals. But also, the social and political issues that have to do with these topics like the polluting industries and consumerism. Green anarchist networks fight for all kind of political and social causes. Anarchist movements and networks have had some influence. They have participated in multiple equality movements like colonial struggles, student movements and anti-police movements.<sup>43</sup> Therefore scholars have seen that these actions and aid give anarchism a bigger platform and audience in social struggles. In this research it is important to acknowledge, as we will only see the green anarchist movements which have been high profile and got a lot of media coverage. However, the green anarchists get little or no attention at all in comparison to other anarchist movements, which decreases the opportunity to contribute to the environmental problems. They did get a lot of attention when green anarchist helped the struggling Indigenous groups. They worked in solidarity to help claim land from the Canadian and US governments.<sup>44</sup>

Today the green anarchists continue to attempt to get noticed more and use different kinds of tactics to gain attention. Scholars have seen that a certain amount of tactics are used by green anarchists to gain attention from the public, governments and scholars. Some tactics that have been used by green anarchist are demonstrations, rallies, mass arrests, sit-ins, blocking, boycotts, hacktivism, strikes and the use of art.<sup>45</sup> All these defensive tactics try to demonstrate in a nonviolent way to create more awareness in the general population about the environmental problems.

Scholar Dana Williams suggests two general tactics that anarchists use to achieve their goals. In the first they oppose anti-anarchistic views such as hierarchy and inequality. In this

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>45</sup> Fabio Rojas, "Social Movement Tactics, Organizational Change and the Spread of African-American Studies," *Social Forces*, Volume 84, Issue 4 (June, 2006): 2150.; Lee Trymaine, "Mass Arrest of Brooklyn Youths Spotlights Tactics," *New York Times*, June 24, 2007.; Benjamin Sovacool and Alexander Dunlap, "Anarchy, war, or revolt? Radical perspectives for climate protection, insurgency and civil disobedience in a low-carbon era," *Energy Research & Social Science* (2022): 6.; Panagoti Solkas, "No System but the Ecosystem: Earth First! And Anarchism," *Anarchist Studies* (2015).; Liz Wells, "Consumers boycotting brands over environmental policies, Kantar reveals," *Industry Research News*, December 4, 2017.; Simon Collister, "Abstract hacktivism as a model for postanarchist organizing," *Ephemera* 14.4 (2014): 767-768.; Dana M. Williams, "Tactics: Conceptions of Social Change, Revolution, and Anarchist Organisation," *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism* (2019): 108.

approach, the tactics are used to negatively define societal features. The other tactic focuses on increasing ideals of anarchists, like equality and consistent relationships. This component can lead to a better social organization. To consciously fight against authoritarian institutions anarchists implement tactics that can lead to conflict such as civil disobedience and direct action. But to balance these negative tactics out, anarchists also focus on community and creative solutions.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, Williams argues that these anarchist strategies create social organization which attracts people with shared beliefs. So, according to anarchists, there are two major consequences to these tactics. Either they intervene in bad actions from companies and the state or they demonstrate the good things of anarchism. It is to take action and stop the hierarchical lifestyle or they present anarchistic way of a comfortable life. One that is especially consistent with anarchist ideals, or they can do both at the same time.<sup>47</sup> All these different tactics are some examples of how green anarchists started to get more active over the years and how they achieved their goals.

#### How do the state and anarchist networks interact with each other

Anarchist are anti-authoritarian in their core beliefs, however they cannot always avoid authoritarian institutions like the state. Sometimes they have to work together with organizations, like the state, military and others to achieve their goals. Anarchists strive to free society from hierarchy and established rules. To achieve this, they have to collaborate with specific organizations and individuals. Political possibilities are said to strengthen and aid anarchist movements in accomplishing their objectives.<sup>48</sup> When anarchist networks are not as heavily suppressed by the state, they can operate more openly, which attracts more supporters to their cause. However, the reverse is also true, people may wish to rebel against the government if the state employs more state repression. But whenever a movement, formed as a response to repression, forms a threat to the government in their eyes, they can destroy the entire movement. This demonstrates that there is a complicated connection between anarchist organizations and the state. When you examine their relationship, there are many more variables at play. Without the assistance of the state, it is fairly difficult for green

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<sup>46</sup> Williams, "Tactics: Conceptions of Social Change, Revolution, and Anarchist Organisation," 107.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Dana M. Williams and Lee T. Matthew, "Aiming to overthrow the state (without using the state): Political opportunities for anarchist movements," *Comparative Sociology* 11.4 (2012): 558-560.

anarchists to accomplish their environmental goals.<sup>49</sup>

Anarchists generally concur on the need for a stateless society but have different opinions on how to achieve this. Noam Chomsky, one of the most famous anarchists of modern times, considers a world without states to be the ideal situation. But he uses a different strategy than other anarchists to convince people of this. Chomsky argues that social benefits are one of the things that the state does well. So why should that be destroyed along with the state? He makes the case that public measures supporting the weak and unfortunate should be maintained. Famous anarchist Pjotr Kropotkin also contended that parties, not individuals, were responsible for the majority of successful uprisings. Therefore, there is a discussion within anarchist communities about whether to support a stronger state overall or to rather work to undermine it in every way. These are a few factors that show how anarchist networks occasionally require the state. This is interesting for the research because it can investigate how anarchists want to implement their ideas in association with the state.<sup>50</sup>

## **Methodology**

The research presented here uses a multi-source methodology to examine how green anarchist principles have been realised in Western Europe from 1980 to the present. It uses a variety of sources, including green anarchist literature, websites, blogs, manifestos, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, books, and interviews. Combining primary sources enables a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

## **Sources**

Firstly, sources such as books, websites, and blogs that green anarchists have written themselves are used in this research. Online resources like specialised websites and blogs are useful for learning about current and older green anarchist movements. These resources provide first-person narratives, manifestos, pamphlets, campaign updates, and issues within the movement. These resources serve as helpful indicators of movement priorities and goals and offer insights into the historical growth and evolution of green anarchist beliefs. The

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<sup>49</sup> Williams and Matthew, "Aiming to overthrow the state," 586.

<sup>50</sup> Loka Ashwood, "Rural conservatism or anarchism? The pro-state, stateless, and anti-state positions," *Rural sociology* 83.4 (2018): 734.

primary database for information about anarchism is the *Anarchist Library*. The *Anarchist Library* concentrates on materials about anarchism and anarchist thought. Usually, when they decide not to publish something, it is because the subject matter is not anarchist. However, information about green anarchist movements has also been taken from their own websites, such as Ende Gelände, Vrije Bond, Stop HS2, Hambi Bleibt!, ZADs, and ASEED. These websites show the core foundations of their beliefs and actions, which can be used in the research to see how they differ.

Moreover, magazines and newspapers include mainstream publications and independent green anarchist publications. These provide an insight into the endeavours, successes, and difficulties that green anarchist activists encounter. Interviews, feature articles, opinion pieces, and reporting on certain campaigns or events can be found in these sources. *The Guardian* and *NRC* are newspapers that have documented a great deal about green anarchists and their actions. *The Guardian* has interviewed green anarchists at demonstrations and made an objective article about those events. This helps in the research analysing how green anarchists act and feel from outside of their viewpoint. However, newspapers may not always represent a subject in a fair manner since they are often created for entertainment purposes. *The Green Anarchy Magazine* is a magazine that documents green anarchist opinions and actions from all over the globe. This will be a tool that helps with the analysis by searching for green activities in the past.

In addition, statistics and data from EU publications and national government documents are used. These sources provide information, figures, and study findings about environmental issues. These facts can be used to contextualise claims about the progress of green anarchist strategies. Government documents are helpful to assess the frequency of violent incidents, such as clashes with the police. However, the EU reports can also be used to map the influences and interactions between institutional actors like the EU and green anarchists. Insights on the visibility, acknowledgement, or involvement of green anarchism inside institutional frameworks can be gained by examining these documents.

However, not all information on green anarchists was easily found. There can be some accessibility issues since not all green anarchists are eager to share their information since one of their activities is civil disobedience, which involves breaking the law. Furthermore, if the available materials are mostly in one or more particular languages, there can be language difficulties that restrict the research representation. Some sources were in French and German, so I had to translate them. Also, Lara Putnam discusses how it is frequently the case that many online articles may not be accurate or complete and that older sources may be difficult



to locate or expensive to digitise, and make available online.<sup>51</sup> But in this research, most documents are not older than 1980, so this would not affect the research. Furthermore, most documents published on the internet are of significance, so information that might be missed is most likely of lower value to this research. Lastly, even though some green anarchist groups are overlooked, this should not be a major issue since those are not the most prominent and active ones.<sup>52</sup>

### Approach

In this thesis, a qualitative approach is used. In order to gather the data, archives were examined, and searched for the effects that various events had as well as each writer's personal view. The majority of sources are gathered online. The kind of analysis that is used in this research combines case study analysis with comparative analysis.

A case study methodology has been used in this study to explore various green anarchist movements. Based on the availability of relevant sources, case studies were chosen. These case studies are Ende Gelande, Vrije Bond, Anti-HS2, fracking protests, G20 protests, ZAD and ASEED Europe, Groenfront, and the Hambach Forest Occupation. To gather information regarding these cases, a variety of sources, including interviews, websites, papers, and other types of documentation, were gathered. A comparative analysis was done to find the differences and similarities among the green anarchist movements by concentrating on various case studies. This comparative methodology made it possible to investigate differences in activity, philosophies, and results between various countries. The research also looked at how these movements changed over time to take into account the temporal aspect. For instance, one case study covered almost 60 years and offered insights into the evolution and changes of green anarchist movement over time. This temporal analysis made it possible to comprehend how the movements have evolved, changed, or stayed constant over time. As green anarchism is a collection of groups of people, I am going to compare groups in this research. Since green anarchists belong to a movement it is important to look at their behaviour as such.

This research made the categories protests and blockades to put different groups of green anarchists in. In the case of green anarchists, we look at their group behaviour and their

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<sup>51</sup> Lara Putnam, "The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast," *The American Historical Review*, Volume 121, Issue 2 (April 2016): 383-384.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

organisation of activities, but also their individual behaviours because they organise things in a different way than a 'normal' organisation. For example, in most cases, green anarchists are non-violent, but there are some individuals in the movement who would participate in violent activities. Therefore, it's relevant to understand their group behaviour for this research because it impacts the way they act and are perceived.

The next chapter provides an overview of the anarchist perspectives on the unsustainability of the world and a brief introduction of the history of green anarchism and its rise. This is to learn more about the green anarchist movement and how it came to be what it is now. The second chapter explores the tactics employed by green anarchists in organising and participating in different kinds of protests and looks at their motivations. Chapter three focuses on the tactics of blockades and occupations utilised by green anarchists. It explores the theoretical and practical foundation of these tactics, examining how they are employed to resist environmentally harmful activities, challenge oppressive systems, and reclaim public and natural spaces. These two chapters are divided in two because of the fundamental difference between protests and occupations, although they can be discussed together. Chapter four critically examines the use of violence by some green anarchists as a means of resistance and direct action. Because when green anarchists employ their tactics, sometimes violent incidents occur even when they have nonviolent values. The final chapter explores alternative forms of tactics employed by green anarchists in their pursuit of sustainable and just societies. It examines creative, non-conventional methods such as the arts, music, performance, and anti-consumerism.

## Chapter 1

### The anarchist view on the unsustainable world in Western Europe

Anti-authoritarianism, freedom, and equality are the core principles of contemporary anarchists, but they were developed in diverse ways. People who are theorizing and talking about eco-anarchism and anarcho-feminism in particular have shown that anarchism is not a dead idea. An innovative "form" of anarchism has developed. Although the movements organizational structure, vocabulary, and areas of focus are still very different from the old anarchism, it still displays all of the anarchist core characteristics in terms of content.<sup>53</sup> In our society green anarchists argue that the state and its political institutions are responsible for dealing with and addressing the excesses and shortcomings of capitalism and neoliberalism towards sustainable environmental management. But the state has failed in solving environmental problems, and even demotivates the attitude of people to take action in environmental problems.<sup>54</sup>

As early as the nineteenth century, anarchists, and people in general have been criticizing the state in the way they handle their connection with nature. Anarchists argue that the state is the cause of corrupting all the beautiful and useful things nature has to offer and declines the spiritual connections humans have with nature.<sup>55</sup> The role of the state is contested by green anarchists, who see it as a major cause of the ecological problem. The green anarchists movement is made out of social and political factors. First, an opposition to the state as an idealistic political structure from an ontological, scientific and moral perspective. Second, there has been a long history of critical green philosophy that can be connected to early anarchist philosophers and modern libertarians.<sup>56</sup> Early anarchist philosophers were among the first environmentalist thinkers that emerged in response to the beginnings of environmental consciousness in the middle of the 20th century, creating concepts such as social ecology, liberation ecology, anarcho-primitivism, bioregionalism, and deep ecology. These are all different perspectives of green anarchism.<sup>57</sup> The history of the anarchist viewpoint on environmental issues as well as how they currently view these issues are both discussed in this

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<sup>53</sup> Aaltola, "Green Anarchy: Deep Ecology and Primitivism," 161.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 173.

<sup>55</sup> Francisco J. Toro, "Stateless Environmentalism: The Criticism of State by Eco-Anarchist Perspectives," *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 20 (2021):189-205.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 191.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 191.

chapter to eventually answer the main question on how green anarchist networks have tried and are trying to realize their ideals in this society in from 1980 to the present in West Europe.

### **Historical perspective of green anarchism**

One of the earliest writer that has ideas that link up with green anarchist philosophy is Henry David Thoreau. Thoreau, a nineteenth-century anarchist, had a significant influence on transcendentalism. Transcendentalists supported individualism, independence, and the search for spiritual truth because they believe in the goodness of people and nature. Individuals strive to move past the constraints of the material world and established society. They try and do this by exploring the individual and the natural world. Additionally, they think that societies structures, in particular political parties and regulated religion, influence people in a bad way.<sup>58</sup> All these ideas represent anarchism.

In *Walden* (1854), Thoreau's best-known work, he explains why and how he spent more than two years living alone in a cabin, isolating himself from society which aligns with the ideas of transcendentalism. This book gives a summary of his life and makes a case against the spread of industrialized civilization on Earth. He set his life's purpose as doing the opposite of what a normal American citizen would do. He tried not to consume products and to live a simple life. Most American citizens had to work for six days and taking a day off, but he did it the other way around.<sup>59</sup> This experience led Thoreau to come up with some points which are essential for human peace and green anarchistic beliefs. These points were: introspective pursuits, individualism and the freedom from the laws of society. His ecological principles served as a kind of protest against the society norms and the growing industrial revolution for this reason. Along with this, the significance he places on individual freedom reflects anarchist ideals that people should be able to think critically and work cooperatively with both humans and non-humans without being constrained by state laws and regulations.<sup>60</sup>

Anarcho-primitivism, is a branch of green anarchism, was developed as a result of Thoreau's work. Anarcho-primitivism advocates living simply and wasting as little as possible and criticizes the industrial society in which we currently reside for being inherently unsustainable. The denial of technology fits along with anarcho-primitivism as well. This manner of living is comparable to prehistoric lifestyles like the hunter-gatherer way of life and

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<sup>58</sup> Russell Goodman, "Transcendentalism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2003).

<sup>59</sup> Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2016).

<sup>60</sup> Manfred B. Steger, "Mahatma Gandhi and the Anarchist Legacy of Henry David Thoreau," *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism* 411 (1993): 2-3.

the way of living Thoreau discusses in *Walden*. Anarcho-primitivism holds the idea that due to the industrial exploitation of people and resources, nature is dominated and also exploited. In summary, anarcho-primitivism advocates a basic, minimalist lifestyle while rejecting the notion of the state and its hierarchical structure, dominance, and use of technology.<sup>61</sup>

Another well-known anarchist Élisée Reclus has also written extensively about anarchism and the environment. He was a French anarchist and geographer. The book *Universal Geography* (written from the period 1875 till 1894), has had a massive impact on contemporary green anarchist ideas. By incorporating anarchist principles into his geography, he stands for the idea that all people should coexist on Earth as equals and he does not believe in that one specific group of people are more superior or dominant in comparison to the other.<sup>62</sup> An example of this are anarchist geographies, which picture a future without borders where communities rule themselves and work together. In his vision, communities and individuals would have the freedom to decide what happens in their lives and environments.<sup>63</sup> As a result of his scientific geographical research, the groundwork was laid down for what we today call bioregionalism. Reclus argues that the current political, economic, cultural factors, human and non-human relationships should be based on geographical and natural bounds.

Reclus argues that the harmony between humans and environment has been thrown off because of a capitalistic society that solely values political and economic success. Humans would only harm and devastate nature in such a capitalistic world. Additionally, he encourages others to protect the environment and take meaningful action to undo the harm they have caused.<sup>64</sup> He contends as a true anarchist, that the hierarchical state politics and authority might be rejected in order to achieve environmental balance. In addition to this, individuals should respect and coexist with nature.<sup>65</sup> Reclus acknowledges that nature does have harmony and balance, yet it achieves it through a tendency of imbalance. He notes that:

“As plants or animals, including humans, leave their native habitat and intrude on another environment, the harmony of nature is temporarily disturbed. However, these introduced types either die out or adapt

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<sup>61</sup> Becker, "Anarcho-Primitivism: The Green Scare in Green Political Theory," 4.

<sup>62</sup> Federico Ferretti, ““They have the right to throw us out”: Élisée Reclus' *New Universal Geography*,” *Antipode* 45.5 (2013): 1337.

<sup>63</sup> Élisée Reclus, *Anarchy, geography, modernity: selected writings of Élisée Reclus* (PM Press, 2013), 10.

<sup>64</sup> Élisée Reclus, *The Ocean, Atmosphere, and Life* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1873), 440.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

to the new conditions, making a contribution to nature as they add to the wonderful harmony of the earth, and of all that springs up and grows upon its surface.”<sup>66</sup>

Therefore, there can only be a balance whilst there is order and disorder in nature.

Unexpected similarities exist between Reclus views and modern ecological assessments. He emphasizes the value of trees, for instance, for the entire world. A forest serves a purpose other than being cut down and used for material. His list of destructive pioneers includes lumberjacks. To make place for farms, they clear off old woods, darkening the sky and causing animal deaths.<sup>67</sup> What is interesting is that Reclus does not only blame the humans for the decay of the world, like in the Anthropocene kind of view. He argues that humanity as itself is a product of nature and there are bigger forces that make us act. He feels then that humanity is emerging from nature out of nature. Reclus describes "the human social milieu" as the realm of emergent and interconnected natural beings.<sup>68</sup>

In addition to being an anarchist, Reclus also founded some ecological concepts that are still in use today. For instance, earth-centred storytelling, bioregionalism, animal rights theory, social ecology, and ecological holism. Reclus social geography is therefore fundamental to the advancement of ecological theory and green anarchy.<sup>69</sup>

## **Rise of green anarchism**

### 1980-2000

The first green anarchists began to revive nineteenth century anarchists ideals and ideas in the 1960s. They focused on decentralization and diversity as remedies for socio-ecological systems since the problems such as environmental degradation, industrial agriculture, and pollution became a more serious issue.<sup>70</sup> The person behind this growth is Murray Bookchin, he is considered one of the founders of green anarchism.<sup>71</sup>

Bookchin wrote and philosophized about anti-capitalism and environmental problems. In "*Ecology of Freedom*" (1982), he makes the case that men wanting to rule over other men are to blame for the environment its deterioration. He contends that eliminating hierarchical

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<sup>66</sup> Reclus, *The Ocean*, 434.

<sup>67</sup> Elisée Reclus, *L'Homme et la Terre* (Paris: Librairie Universelle, 1905–08), 254.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> John Clark, "The dialectical social geography of Elisée Reclus," *Philosophy and Geography* (1997): 117.

<sup>70</sup> Price, "Green Anarchism," 287.

<sup>71</sup> Wes Enzina, "Bizarre and Wonderful: Murray Bookchin, Eco-Anarchist," *London Review of Books* (21 July, 2017).

institutions and elevating the status of women, older people, people of colour, and the poor will prevent environmental catastrophe.<sup>72</sup> Therefore Bookchin proposed a new form of structure which he called "libertarian municipalism". This is an alternative to the structures and systems we currently live within. It states that freedom is institutionalized in public gatherings and decided in local areas.<sup>73</sup> This kind of structure would eventually result in overthrowing state power.<sup>74</sup> While developing his theory of social ecology, Bookchin was influenced mainly by anarchist Peter Kropotkin. In particular, Bookchin was influenced by Kropotkin's emphasis on mutual aid, decentralized communities, and the possibility of cooperative social organization. As an illustration, Bookchin took inspiration from Kropotkin's book *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (1902).<sup>75</sup> It is clear from Bookchin's arguments that the inclination toward a society of hierarchy and dominance may be overcome by moral ideals in favour of a society of democracy and freedom. One of Bookchin's most innovative concepts was about that human social domination eventually results in human dominance of nature. So, for that reason the main goal of his social ecology theory is to fight against life's predictability and promote the importance of diversity and the organic integration in all parts of society. An important aspect is technology, he is not always in favour of the technology that exists today, but rather for its advancement towards sustainability, so that it might be used to improve both humankind and the environment. Bookchin's ideas have influenced social movements since the 1960s, including the liberal left, the anti-nuclear movement and the anti-globalization movement.<sup>76</sup> One of these movements is Earth First! which has green anarchist ideals.

Earth First! is a group that promotes direct action against environmentally harmful projects like deforestation, animal abuse, climate change and disease-related deaths as a method of population control. Earth First! adopts a deep ecological approach.<sup>77</sup> Which emphasises the worth and interdependence of all living things and the ecosystems, in order to achieve

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<sup>72</sup> Murray Bookchin, *The ecology of freedom: The emergence and dissolution of hierarchy* (1982), 41-43.

<sup>73</sup> Murray Bookchin, "Libertarian municipalism: An overview," *Green Perspectives* 24 (1991): 1-6.

<sup>74</sup> Murray Bookchin, *The rise of urbanization and the decline of citizenship* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1987).; Murray Bookchin, *Urbanization without cities: The rise and decline of citizenship* (Black Rose Books, 1992), 3-4.

<sup>75</sup> Murray Bookchin, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An unbridgeable chasm* (Edinburgh, Scotland: AK Press, 1995), 4-6.

<sup>76</sup> David Vanek, "Het sociale vraagstuk van de ecologie - Een interview met Murray Bookchin," Anarchisme.nl, last modified April 30, 2021, [https://www.anarchisme.nl/namespace/het\\_sociale\\_vraagstuk\\_van\\_de\\_ecologie](https://www.anarchisme.nl/namespace/het_sociale_vraagstuk_van_de_ecologie).

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

ecological sustainability and harmony.<sup>78</sup> This movement is widespread and well-known around the world. Ever since its inception in the United States in 1980, Earth First! has been influenced by and exhibited anarchist tendencies. Bookchin, on the other hand, thinks the deep ecological approach is “a vague, formless, often self-contradictory, and invertebrate thing”<sup>79</sup>, and he stated that this deep ecology undervalued the social and political aspects of environmental challenges as well as the necessity of societal transformation to successfully address ecological difficulties.<sup>80</sup> Nevertheless, the global movement Earth First! has a strong anti-authoritarian tendency and many green anarchist adherents, despite the fact that it has never openly adopted the label of anarchist.<sup>81</sup> According to the handbook, *Earth First!*, the movement connects with anarchist movements because of its “focus on decentralized and non-hierarchical organizing.”<sup>82</sup> This movement also stresses the importance of the nearing mass extinction and the decline of the earths ecological life. They argue that the current system has not taken significant steps in fighting against this future image, and they are trying to warn people with advertisements like the figure below.<sup>83</sup>

In this figure the wolf and the nature area symbolizes nature that is killed off by the capitalistic polluting companies which you can see on the right. The quote: ‘as wolves die so does freedom, hear the warning’. Means that our individual freedom in nature is also taken away by these companies. Which can be connected to the ideas of Thoreau’s idea of individual freedom and Reclus ideas about animal rights and the balance between humans and its environment. Alongside this, the figure implies that the cause of the ecological disaster is of capitalistic polluting companies.



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<sup>78</sup> George Sessions, "The deep ecology movement: A review," *Environmental review* 11.2 (1987): 105.

<sup>79</sup> Murray Bookchin, "Social ecology versus deep ecology: A challenge for the ecology movement," *Green Perspectives: Newsletter of the Green Program Project 1987* (1987): 4-5.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> *Direct Action Manual* (Earth First!, 2015).

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Bron Taylor, "The religion and politics of Earth First!," *The Ecologist* 21.6 (1991): 261-262.



*Figure 1:* Illustration from Earth First! Journal. For members of Earth First! The wolf is a striking representation of the wild and the connection of all life. Source: Earth First!, The radical environmental journal, Vol.13, no.6 1985

Next to the movement Earth First!, there have been several active anarchist networks in West Europe such as in Belgium and the Netherlands. The networks had attempted to organize large anarchist gatherings in the past, but for certain unclear reasons, these meetings either failed to attract enough attendees or were otherwise unsuccessful. However, because the demand of such meetings remained strong, the organizational group "IAB" (International Anarchist Assembly) organised a new anarchist collaboration. The main anarchist-related topics on which they wanted to discuss were feminism, anti-militarism, ecology, and syndicalism. AGAntipädagogik (BRD), Sheppey Collective (VK), Federation of Anarcho Pacifists (VK), Green Anarchist (VK), Fédération Anarchiste Française (Fr), and Freie Arbeiter Union (BRD) were among the groups represented at this assembly.<sup>84</sup>

One revolution in the emergence of anarchism in the Netherlands can be witnessed in the coronation uproar in the early 1980s. The coronation riot is seen as one of the largest protests ever seen in the Netherlands because of the scale, destruction and impact.<sup>85</sup> The riots increased radicalization, for a variety of left movements. Specifically, the squatters' movement which has some characteristics that align with green anarchist ideals.<sup>86</sup> Between 1980 and 1985, there were more significant disputes between the squatters movement, the government, and the royal house.<sup>87</sup> This is because anarchists argue that any hierarchical system is harmful, so in their community, a government of officials and monarchy is not respected. As a result, a number of magazines were founded that aimed to educate society and other activists about the squatter movement and other social or environmental problems caused by the government. Magazines like *Onkruid* (Weeds) and *Ravage* (Havoc) were mainly focused on the theme of anti-militarism and environmentalism.<sup>88</sup> As consequence the interest into green anarchism rose in the Netherlands.

In 1986, an international *Pinksterlanddagen* (Pentecost days) took place in Appelscha

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<sup>84</sup> Programmafolder PL 1986, Archief Appelscha, Appelscha, 40.

<sup>85</sup> Kirsty Lohman, "Punk Lives On: Generations of Punk and Squatting in the Netherlands," *The Connected Lives of Dutch Punks: Contesting Subcultural Boundaries* (2017): 73-75.

<sup>86</sup> Hans Ramaer, "De Gorilla-oorlog. Anarchisten en de Oranjemonarchie," *Maatstaf* (1992): 183.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Jan Bervoets, "Het moeilijke anarchisme – de Federatie van Vrije Socialisten in de jaren 70," *Tijdschrift de AS* (1999): 126-127.

under the title International Anarchist Meeting (IAB), which indicated a greater importance of anarchism in the Benelux. In that year the theme about the environment was central. There were about 1400 visitors from all over Europe at this congress.<sup>89</sup> The *Pinksterlanddagen* is a festival which has his origins in 1927, but became well known in 1983. This festival would serve as a kind of conference venue and would strengthen the anarchist ideology. On the other hand, it is also a place for informal interactions. It is a chance to connect with individuals and anarchists who have the same ideas and keep these connections going. Some even think of it as a prime example of the communal concept. Additionally, it serves as a platform for global viewpoints and schools of thought that might not be explicitly consistent with "ordinary" anarchism.<sup>90</sup> For example, during these gatherings the focus was primarily to the environment and primitivism which are connected with the ideas of Reclus and Thoreau. The idea that Reclus had about his anarchist geography that people live in communities balanced with nature is seen in this festival. The focus of this event was to have balance with nature, enjoying it with as little as interference from the outside world as possible. Other topics were also discussed such as consumerism and atomic energy and feminism. It is still an active festival in the Netherlands. This year they had a large turnout, where they addressed issues such as feminism, foie gras, Ukraine, blockades and many more.<sup>91</sup> Since its origins in 1927, the festival has had an exponential growth in participating individuals, each year focussing more on environmental problems, animal abuse and creating their own community next to anarchists their main ideas. Another green anarchist group in the Netherlands is Groenfront!.

GroenFront! is a movement which has taken action through the means of squatting and is a division of EarthFirst!. This is one of the first green anarchist movements in the Netherlands and was established in 1996. They and other environmental protestors occupied several houses in nature areas that were meant to be demolished for train rails or other polluting reasons.<sup>92</sup> This included a failed attempt to squat a building in Angeren to prevent the construction of a highspeed train track.<sup>93</sup> These actions link with the work of Thoreau in the form of

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<sup>89</sup> Appelscha Archief, programma folder, 40.

<sup>90</sup> J. R.G. Schuur, *Appelscha, bolwerk van anarchisme en radicaal socialisme* (Oosterwolde: Drukkerij Van der Meet, 1996), 9-26.

<sup>91</sup> Arie Hazekamp, "Pinksterlanddagen op het terrein Tot Vrijheidsbezinning in Appelscha 1933 – 2008," (Appelscha: Noordelijk Gewest van Vrije Socialisten, 2008).

<sup>92</sup> "About us," Groenfront!, accessed 12-4-2023. <https://www.groenfront.nl/>.

<sup>93</sup> Marc van Dinther, "Weer is Betuwelijn dag vertraagd," *de Volkskrant*, April 5, 2000, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/mensen/weer-is-betuwelijn-dag-vertraagd~b694d939/>.

individualism and the freedom from the laws of society. Also, the green anarchists were squatting because of the detrimental effects that economic growth and the expansion of transportation have on the environment. This also links back to the Figure 1 which is about the negative effect companies have on nature.

The anarchist movement in the UK from 1980 had an increase during the 1984–1985 miners' strike. As a result of the vast variety of supporters this strike received across the nation, several anarchist formations, including Class War and the Anarchist Communist Federation (ACF), emerged during this time. In 1999, the ACF changed its name to Anarchist Federation (AF), which are still active to this day.<sup>94</sup> This movement combines a libertarian socialist politics with an ecological sensibility.<sup>95</sup> This development of anarchism in the UK has made a place for people searching for a movement they can join that aligns with their own ideas.

As we can see, in the 1980s till the 2000, there was an emphasis in anarchist circles on equal rights, housing, gender, animal rights, consumerism, opposition to atomic energy, the peace movement, etc. These issues also began to make people consider the social structures of society as a whole.<sup>96</sup> As we can see the green anarchists' developments gained popularity after a disruption in society. In the Netherlands it was the coronation riots and in the UK it was the mining strikes. Disruption leads to dissatisfaction in the population and less confidence in the government. Which leads to people joining more radical movements such as green anarchists.

### 2000 – present day

More recently, green anarchist perspectives have analysed how the state and everything that goes along with it are largely to blame for the current state of the environment. In order to counter this coercive force, green anarchists have suggested some alternatives.<sup>97</sup>

According to green anarchists, society should acknowledge that this system is broken as the global ecological catastrophe cannot be resolved by this hierarchical capitalist system.<sup>98</sup> In terms of their ecological concerns and understanding of the need for a more sustainable and

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<sup>94</sup> Benjamin Franks, *Rebel Alliances : The Means and Ends of Contemporary British Anarchism*, (Edinburgh: AK Press/Dark Star, 2006).

<sup>95</sup> Brian Morris, "Derek Wall, The Rise of the Green Left: Inside the Worldwide Ecosocialist Movement," *Anarchist Studies* 19, no. 2 (2011).

<sup>96</sup> "Anarchisme in Nederland," Anarchisme.nl, last modified May 18, 2021, [https://www.anarchisme.nl/namespace/anarchisme\\_in\\_nederland](https://www.anarchisme.nl/namespace/anarchisme_in_nederland).

<sup>97</sup> Toro, "Stateless Environmentalism," 191.

<sup>98</sup> Ian Welsch, 'Review of Green Anarchism: Peter Marshall's "Nature's Web," by Peter Marshall,' *Environmental Values* 4, no. 1 (1995): 73–78.

balanced connection between humans and the natural world, modern anarchists and those from the 19th century have certain parallels.<sup>99</sup>

As an example, an international group of green anarchists have created ‘The Green Anarchist International Organization’ (GAIO). This organization published a manifesto in 2002, wherein they explain what it means to be a green anarchist and tell people about their philosophy, ideals, and how they want to implement their solutions. In this manifesto they contend that green anarchism can only exist in the absence of rulers in the management and coordination. In this manifesto they focus on a more frequent problem that anarchists encounter, for example a green anarchist movement with rules and regulatory mechanisms. Then anarchy does not mean without coordination, management, administration. However, it focuses on coordination despite the absence of control from the top down, from the economic, political, and/or administrative superiors in the private and public sectors, which is now the case in our society.<sup>100</sup> In green anarchism they believe in grassroots/bottom-up organizations wherein there is management and coordination without ruling and rulers, tyranny and slavery and no state or authorities. Furthermore, green anarchists do want a civilization where they can live whereas other forms of anarchy don’t want a civilization, such as primitivism.<sup>101</sup>

According to the GAIO manifesto, eco-anarchism is a green and environmental anarchism that considers many ecological views as well as social, or political and economic, issues that affect humanity. Green anarchist policy is based on environmental scientific knowledge, decent treatment of animals for food, ecologically produced food and a wide range of other principles.<sup>102</sup>

Alongside the green anarchist goals, the basic principles and ideals of the Anarchist International are the following:

““The negation of authority and all of its power, hierarchies and juridical laws. Freedom, equality, solidarity, social justice, free contract, free initiative, atheism, antimilitarism, internationalism, decentralism, autonomy and federalism, self-management (autogestion) and ‘comunismo libertario’, i.e. not communism without adjective, but libertarian communalism — from each according to ability — to each according to needs.”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Colin Ward, “Green aspirations and anarchist futures,” in *Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction*, 1st edn, Very Short Introductions (Oxford, 2004), 9-10.

<sup>100</sup> Green Anarchist International Association, “The Ecoanarchist Manifesto,” *The Anarchist Library* (June, 2002).

<sup>101</sup> John Moore, “*A primitivist primer*,” (Green Anarchy Distro, 1997), 3-4.

<sup>102</sup> Green Anarchist International Association, “The Ecoanarchist Manifesto”, 4.

<sup>103</sup> Green Anarchist International Association, “The Ecoanarchist Manifesto,” 7

The GAIO manifesto also stresses that they are not the same as Marxian and other types of ideologies that are for example radical environmentalists for animal liberation. They stress the importance of not only widening the scope and scale of ecology in academia but making real progress in ecology in general and human and social ecology especially. For example, workplace environment, local, regional and global environment and resource management must be an integrated part of anarchism and the solution of environmental problems.<sup>104</sup>

In conclusion, decentralization and the other non-governmental concepts outlined above are important to green anarchism. More decentralized, non-governmental communities are necessary if people are to live more sustainably. This green anarchist policy is in opposition to the current economic and political system, which tries to centralize resource use and management, which is environmentally unfavourable from a balanced political economy perspective, leading to an overproduction of market goods in relation to ecological and environmental costs. In other words, a decentralization of social organizational structures is required for sustainable communities to endure over the long term, with optimal political and economic coordination being central. Production and distribution, both in terms of market products and environmental costs, can only be balanced in a system such as that which is defined above in the eco-anarchist manifesto.<sup>105</sup> Therefore, it seems that green anarchists and the GAIO are dedicated to making our earth a better place for people to live, especially in terms of the environment and ecology, both now and in the future. The fight against acid rain and ozone layer holes was and is claimed to be led by green anarchists. To protect the environment worldwide, anarchist direct actions are now prioritizing the battle against humanity made global warming and they call for international cooperation to find a solution.<sup>106</sup> There are two main components that green anarchists want to use in politics. The first is to stop the ecological world from further being destroyed. The second outlines a plan for radical systemic transformation, the construction of a world devoid of authority, and an emphasis on nature.

Despite of the creation of the eco manifesto of GAIO, the resurgence of green anarchism in Western Europe came to a halt in the beginning of the 2000s. There still have been anarchist and green anarchist movements in this time, but there is not much heard from them. There could be an explanation for this. Political and economic progress are closely tied to environmental advocacy. As such, concern for the environment is the best indicator of environmental

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Green Anarchist International Association, "The Ecoanarchist Manifesto," 10

activism.<sup>107</sup> As we can see in the west European countries between 2000 and 2010 the UK, Germany, France and the Netherlands had all liberal environmental focused governments.<sup>108</sup> Which gives people less to worry about in terms of the environment since liberal governments focus more on saving the environment.<sup>109</sup> After 2010, though, in exception for France, almost all governments swung to the centre-right again and neglected the environmental issues. Which was an incentive for green anarchist and other environmental activist to be more active in terms of protests.

An exception of this is the long-standing anarchist ZAD (Zone à défendre) commune in France which aims to defend natural areas by blockading those parts with their commune. Since 1960 there has been a conflict between these commune inhabitants and project owners. The area is normally occupied by *zadistes*, which are people who live in or occupy the ZAD. They live there to prevent or block the development of a project. The *zadistes* might establish themselves in the ZAD, and sometimes create a community. In order to develop the autonomous zone, the *zadistes* employ non-hierarchical organizational techniques, direct action, and other anarchistic tactics and strategies.<sup>110</sup> Looking at these structures we can better understand how anarchism can be used for survival in the Capitalocene and for a better understanding of the success green anarchism can have during crisis. The ideals of nineteenth century anarchist thinkers are put into practice by the *zadistes*. First of all, the *zadistes* emphasis on the significance of ecological preservation and sustainable living practices is consistent with Thoreau's strong connection to nature and his belief in residing in balance with the natural world. Second, Reclus and the *zadistes* both reject systems of hierarchy and emphasize the value of community and individual solidarity. Lastly, the *zadistes* dedication to preserving and maintaining ecological spaces connects with Bookchin's social ecology, which aims to harmonize human civilization with the natural world.<sup>111</sup> The particular ZAD movement in Notre-Dame-des-Landes has after 40 years of resistance won because of direct action against the companies who wanted to build there. Since then, the ZAD's spirit has been brought back

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<sup>107</sup> Russell J. Dalton, "Waxing or waning? The changing patterns of environmental activism," *Environmental Politics* 24:4 (2015): 531.

<sup>108</sup> Comparison made by looking at all the political parties that were chosen in countries in West Europe between 2000 and 2010.

<sup>109</sup> Neil Carter, "Greening the mainstream: party politics and the environment," *Environmental Politics* 22.1 (2013): 73-75.

<sup>110</sup> Daliborka Milovanovic, "Interview by Fantine : voix de zadistes," *Le Gal Savoir* (9 April, 2018).

<sup>111</sup> Maxime Chédin, "La ZAD et le Colibri: deux écologies irréconciliables?," *Terrestres* (2018).

to life through an occupation of a dam building site. The most recent incident at this location was the death of a *zadistes* after a struggle with police who were trying to evict the group, which generated a wave of international solidarity actions.<sup>112</sup>

However in the beginning of 2000 there was a little amount of activity in the UK, which is surprising since the AF is a rather active anarchist movement. They largely concentrated on debt and anti-globalization. However, they occasionally also demonstrated against the application of toxic substances to plants. Some of the AF followers participated in the May Day protest in Parliament Square in 2000. Protesters wanted to create a community garden to demonstrate how the streets may be reclaimed to promote social and environmental harmony.<sup>113</sup> This community garden perfectly represents Bookchin's ideas to promote the importance of diversity and the organic integration of all parts of society. The community garden created by the AF is an example of a localized initiative to take control of food production, fostering independence and opposing industrial agriculture. This fits with Bookchin's goal of giving communities the freedom to decide things that directly affect them, such as environmental and sustainable practices. Nowadays a lot of green anarchists have joined the AF and they have all participated in anti-capitalistic and environmental protests together.<sup>114</sup>

The discussion of animal rights and hunting became more prominent in 2012 when GroenFront! was acting against it. They have especially focused on the hunt for red deer and wild boar. The movement established [www.jachtkaart.nl](http://www.jachtkaart.nl) in October of 2012, which is a website that precisely tracks hunting cabins and feeding locations in de Veluwe where hunters often go to shoot animals. Dozens of hunting lodges have been demolished by unidentified offenders since the website's creation.<sup>115</sup> A few people have been arrested. These ideas about animals' rights also reflect the arguments of Reclus that we should treat animals with respect, equal to humans.<sup>116</sup> Reclus states that the "regression" of animals under human influence "is indeed one

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<sup>112</sup> Margot Verdier, "La perspective de l'autonomie. La critique radicale de la représentation et la formation du commun dans l'expérience de l'occupation de la zad de Notre-Dame-des-Landes," (2018).

<sup>113</sup> Ros Coward, "Have plants and watering can; will protest," *The Guardian*, April 30, 2000, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2000/apr/30/mayday.comment>.

<sup>114</sup> Steven, "The Anarchist Federation on the Climate Camp," *Libcom, Libcom.org*, October 5, 2009, <https://libcom.org/article/anarchist-federation-climate-camp>.

<sup>115</sup> Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijk Relaties, "Left-wing activism and extremism in the Netherlands: a multi-faceted, volatile and fickle phenomenon," *Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst* (October, 2003): 11.

<sup>116</sup> Reclus, *Anarchy, Geography, Modernity*, 51.

of the most deplorable results of our carnivorous practices, for the animals sacrificed to man's appetite have been systematically and methodically made ugly, weakened, deformed, and degraded in intelligence and moral worth."<sup>117</sup> Furthermore the anarchist organizations from Amsterdam, Nijmegen, and Utrecht have organised under one banner: the Free Union (*Vrije Bond*). They are working to create a society without classes, states, or borders and to protect the environment. "Direct action in words and in deeds"<sup>118</sup> is their most widely known catchphrase. The Free Union is known for working with other anarchist movements that are placed outside the Netherlands. But they do not want to be part of the International of Anarchist Federations (IAF), this is because the Free Union movement wants to remain autonomous.<sup>119</sup> Their will to be independent reflects the ideas of Thoreau's about individual freedom without rules of state or any authority in general. Furthermore, the Free Union its emphasis on ecological sustainability and environmental issues is in line with the concerns of nineteenth century green anarchists. Like these founders, the *Vrije Bond* promotes environmentally conscious behaviours, conservation of nature, and a critique of harmful polluting capitalistic companies while acknowledging the interconnectedness between human cultures and the natural world. The critiques made by Thoreau and Reclus who criticized hierarchical social connections and the exploitation present in capitalist systems, resonate within their own movement.

Presently, one of the most well-known environmental activist movements worldwide is called Extinction Rebellion. They also have some anarchistic characteristics, such as their non-hierarchical grassroots structure, direct action, pro-environmental stance and use of civil disobedience to fight for the environment and mother earth. They have some important points, and we can also see Reclus and Thoreau's views in the background.<sup>120</sup> These views are seen in their arguments about leaving behind a world where future generations can flourish, the critical mass required to bring about systemic change, a regenerative culture, destruction of conventional business, direct action, reflect and learn, create safe spaces for everyone, replace

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<sup>117</sup> Elisée Reclus, *On Vegetarianism* (Humanitarian League, 1901), 157.

<sup>118</sup> "Over de Vrije Bond," *De Vrije Bond*, accessed 3-4-2023, <https://www.vrijebond.org/bond/>.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>120</sup> In this thesis I don't want to go deep into this movement since there is enough information about it to write a whole new thesis, therefore I don't share much information about this movement. But Extinction rebellion has to be mentioned because it has green anarchist characteristics that are influenced by nineteenth anarchists and their movement is known worldwide because of their successful protests and demonstrations covered by the media.



hierarchy with equal participation, and decentralization.<sup>121</sup>

In Germany there is a large green anarchists movement that battles against fossil fuels and polluting industries called Ende Gelände. The phrase "Ende Gelände" translates to "here and no further" which displays group's dedication to putting an end to the usage of fossil fuels and the growth of polluting industries. Ende Gelände works to develop decentralized, community-based alternatives to fossil fuel production and consumption while also challenging the power structures that support capitalistic companies. The group aims to upset the status quo and highlight how urgent it is to address the climate issue through acts of civil disobedience and direct action. This group and methods of protests will be investigated later in the next chapters.<sup>122</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Contemporary green anarchism is rooted in the ideas of radical anarchist environmental thinkers like Reclus and Thoreau. Since 1980 anarchism has progressed down a more ecologically-focused path, but also remains involved in issues of radical feminist, anti-racist and queer struggles. A wave of protest went over the globe about these issues, especially in West-Europe. These issues have blended with the revival of anarchism to produce what is now contemporary anarchist schools of thought. While most anarchists did not give racial and environmental issues much thought a century ago, they are now widely regarded as essential components of the anarchist movement. Even if there was a slight decrease in anarchist activity, this could be due to national politics. The green anarchist movement has never been more influential or larger since 2010 onward. It is clear that all past and present ecological movements discussed above, including those that are still active today, have been profoundly influenced by nineteenth century anarchist ideas. The principles of green anarchists are built upon the concepts of Reclus, Thoreau and Bookchin. The subsequent chapters will explore the approaches in which green anarchists protest and express their ideologies.

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<sup>121</sup> "Over ons," Extinction Rebellion, accessed 8-5-2023, <https://extinctionrebellion.nl/over-ons/>.

<sup>122</sup> International Working Group of Ende Gelände, "An activist's guide to Ende Gelände," (Berlin: October 2020) 3-4.

## Chapter 2

### Green Anarchists and their use of protest

Green anarchist movements can oppose authoritarianism through covert or overt action. Overt acts of resistance against authoritarianism are performed in, and are clearly visible to the public. Covert acts refer to tactics and procedures used in a more hidden or secretive manner. There are numerous diverse anarchist movements that battle against conventional culture, institutions, and hierarchical norms.<sup>123</sup> Most anarchist movements do not label themselves as anarchists despite pursuing informal and formal agendas to that end, such as extinction rebellion. So, they will be concealed as a broader alternative globalization, environmental and anti-war movements. Many movements that have all the characteristics of an anarchist movement are reluctant to use this term. Due to the stigma associated to the word 'anarchist', many groups and individuals try to avoid association with this term due to the negative implications which could damage their reputation both socially and politically.<sup>124</sup> By rejecting repressive structures that create elites, leaders, divide, or subject people to the forces of capitalism and emphasizing the environment, green anarchist philosophy stands out from other movements.<sup>125</sup> Green anarchists argue that the state is politically dominating, economically unequal, and environmentally disastrous.<sup>126</sup> This thesis looks at all these characteristics in defining what a green anarchist movement is, even though some say they are an environmental movement.

Globally we are experiencing historically high levels of mass protests on a worldwide scale. Scholars have calculated that the number of significant political demonstrations increased by 11.5 percent year between 2009 and 2019.<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, numerous experts predicted that protests would continue to grow throughout and into 2020.<sup>128</sup> The weakening

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<sup>123</sup> Taylor, "Threat assessments and radical environmentalism," 178

<sup>124</sup> Uri Gordon, "Anarchism reloaded," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 12:1 (2007): 29-30.

<sup>125</sup> Michael Loadenthal, *The politics of attack: Communiqués and insurrectionary violence* (Manchester: University Press, 2017), 33

<sup>126</sup> Peter Gelderloos, "Worshipping power: An anarchist view of early state formation," *Lightning Source Inc.* Tier 3 (2016): 4-5.

<sup>127</sup> Samuel J. Brannen, Christian S. Haig, and Katherine Schmidt, "'The age of mass protests.'" Understanding an escalating global trend," *CSIS* ( March, 2020): 5.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

global economy, the worsening effects of climate change, and the foreign meddling in domestic politics through spreading disinformation are all factors that predict this phenomena.<sup>129</sup>

Although every protest has a different background, the key reason why people protest is often due to corrupt government officials, and a generally ineffective government.<sup>130</sup> The impact of protests can range from laws being repealed to a regime change.<sup>131</sup> Most green anarchists only demonstrate in a local area because of their reluctance to go on planes, since air travel is very polluting.<sup>132</sup> But they do often coordinate and collaborate with other movements, such as citizen associations, youth groups, NGO's, and regional parties that represent environmental concerns in order to have a larger reach.<sup>133</sup> Green anarchists use different forms of protests to oppose the status quo, which happens in different countries in West Europe.

Green anarchists utilise three different kinds of protests, direct action, civil disobedience, and nonviolent protests.<sup>134</sup> Direct action focuses on achieving goals in a political spectrum or a social one with direct actions, rather than bureaucracy. Direct action is often associated with violence and sabotage. However, prefigurative politics is an effective way of invoking direct action.<sup>135</sup> In prefigurative politics green anarchists try to implement their social relations with the current society, but also include implementing political strategies that are consistent with the aspirations of the green anarchists.<sup>136</sup> The purpose of this is to, rather than only combat current oppressive systems, a movement like green anarchism should anticipate and embody the ways and means of the alternative better society.<sup>137</sup> This strategy is a proactive and helpful tool in ensuring a better future. Anarchists view this as a: "Commitment to overturning capitalism by only employing a strategy that is an

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<sup>129</sup> Brannen, Haig, and Schmidt, "The age of mass protests," 5

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>132</sup> John Zerzan, "Green Anarchist," *Wired*, April 20, 2008, <https://www.wired.com/2008/04/john-zerzan-gre/>

<sup>133</sup> Gordon, "Anarchist reloaded," 34.

<sup>134</sup> B.K. Sovacool et al. "Conflicted transitions: Exploring the actors, tactics, and outcomes of social opposition against energy infrastructure," *Global Environmental Change* (2022).

<sup>135</sup> Uri Gordon, *Anarchy Alive!: Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory* (Pluto Press, 2008), 34-37.

<sup>136</sup> Guilherme Fians, "Prefigurative politics," In *The Open Encyclopedia of Anthropology* (2022): 1.

<sup>137</sup> Brian Tokar, "The Enemy of Nature," review of *The Enemy of Nature: The End of Capitalism or The End of The World?*, by Joel Kovel, *Tikkun Magazine*, Januari-Februari, 2003, 77-78.

embryonic representation of an anarchist social future.”<sup>138</sup>

Direct action can also be seen by green anarchists as an integrated approach that combines grassroots work and confrontational methods to make new structures and fight against the current capitalistic hierarchical society. Next to this, civil disobedience is a method of protest that aims to intentionally break rules and laws. Acts of civil disobedience can be used to subvert and undermine the key principles of democracy and government.<sup>139</sup> Nonviolent protest on the other hand, includes demonstrations, sit-ins, and other nonviolent acts of peaceful resistance.<sup>140</sup> As can be seen, the two main strategies employed by green anarchists are big demonstrations and marches, as well as blockades and occupations. This chapter will examine several green anarchist movements and their involvement in different kinds of protests.

### **Vrije bond**

In using protests against the government and other associations such as weapon dealers the *Vrije Bond* (Free Union) is pushing for change in the Netherlands, and it is an organization that has been active since the 1990s. It is based on and aspires to an anarchist society where individuals can make their own decisions regarding how to spend their life. Their main focus is the autonomy of each person, their right to self-determination and self-management, their right to free association, and their belief in universal human equality. The movement aims to dismantle all systems of authority, including economic, political, social, religious, cultural, and sexual ones. Alongside this, they urge to build a healthy environment and thriving nature, the creation of a free society devoid of classes, states, or borders, founded on anarchist principles and mutual help.<sup>141</sup>

Free Union held multiple protest in the Netherlands, namely in The Hague and Rotterdam. Since the Hague is home to the parliament, they believe that by choosing to protest in this place, they will have a greater impact on the government. So, it is also a critique on the government ruling and they can show it because they are so close by. The Free

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<sup>138</sup> J. Carter and D. Morland, “Anti-Capitalism: Are we all anarchists now?,” in *Anti-capitalist Britain*, eds. J. Carter and D. Morland (Gretton: New Clarion Press, 2004), 79.

<sup>139</sup> Sovacool, “Anarchy, war, or revolt?,” 5

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 3

<sup>141</sup> "About us," De Vrije Bond, accessed 21-5-2023, <https://www.vrijebond.org/bond/>.

Union has also worked with groups like Extinction Rebellion in their mutual protest.<sup>142</sup> On an average protest there are between 30 and 50 protesters. Since these protests are not on a large scale, they have not received much attention by the media. Even though their protests are not huge, they think it is important to make their message visible, with banners and signs and gear. Alongside this, they are making their message audible, with slogans, alarming noises, music. They make propaganda by handing out flyers with their views and ideals to fellow demonstrators, fellow protestors and bystanders.<sup>143</sup>

Finally, the Free Union uses demonstrations to push for reform in the Netherlands. They support the ideas of autonomy, self-determination, and equality while attempting to undermine various forms of power through their demonstrations. Their collaborations with other movements shows their resolve in challenging the government and established systems. Despite the small scale of their protest, they remain positive and are spreading their message by different forms of media. The Free Union aims to increase awareness, and create a society which is free, equal and sustainable.

### **Stop-HS2 protests**

The green anarchist movement actively joins the Stop HS2 organisation, which campaigns against the installation of the HS2 train route in the UK through protests and blockades. The opposition to the HS2 stems from the threatening destruction by HS2 of 350 unique habitats, 50 historic woods that can never be replaced, 30 river corridors, 24 sites of special scientific interest, and hundreds of other smaller crucial locations.<sup>144</sup> The Stop HS2 movement originated in 2010, and the movement encourages people and organizations to oppose the HS2 train track in the UK in several ways. These have included holding alternative consultation events, releasing a song, delivering an advent calendar to Chequers (the house where government officials occasionally stay), setting up information booths, organizing action groups, attending conferences, talking about shared traits and tactics with pertinent trans-European groups, baking cakes, taking walks along the entire route, hosting quiz nights, and creating videos about HS2. These are not all direct action tactics but they do give people awareness about the problem that HS2 causes. On the day of a House of Commons discussion on HS2, they delivered the original petition to Downing Street in October 2011 with more

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<sup>142</sup> Vrije Bond Secretariaat, "Herdenking van de 740 mensen als slachtoffer van Frontex acties," *de Vrije Bond* (June 21, 2021)

<sup>143</sup> Over ons," De Vrije Bond, accessed 21-5-2023, <https://www.vrijebond.org/bond/>.

<sup>144</sup> *Stop HS2*, (stophs2.org, 2013) <https://stophs2.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/labour2013leaflet.pdf>.

than 108,000 signatures. The supporters and protesters come from a variety of socioeconomic and political backgrounds.<sup>145</sup>

These different kind of tactics shows us that the Stop HS2 movement also wants to engage with people locally. Furthermore, their actions to deliver messages to government officials also makes it more a broader national approach. On a national level Stop HS2 has participated in Party Conferences, planned lobby days and protests outside of Parliament.<sup>146</sup> This is crucial in their protest because it enables the movement to interact with the politicians and publicly express their opposition to the HS2 rail line. Stop HS2 hopes to influence and contest the dominant political discourse and decision-making procedures by attending Party conferences. It gives the Stop HS2 movement a chance to speak up, offer alternate viewpoints, and promote their environmental and social justice goals inside the current political system. Protest camps have been set up next to the railway line and in the nature reserves, alongside this multiple protest have taken place with extinction rebellion. This movement has been protesting against the plans to clear the ancient forests which must be removed in order to build the high-speed train line. These protests are held so close by to the forests so that the companies are delayed in cutting the forest down.<sup>147</sup> The Stop HS2 organization has a distinctive combination of protest strategies in which they interact with residents while simultaneously protesting against the government on a national scale. Stop HS2 is aiming to force the government to abandon the plans to avoid the destruction of natural regions and water resources.

### **Fracking protests**

Green anarchists are against fracking worldwide; therefore they have been part of the fracking protest in the UK since 2011. Because it has such detrimental effects on the environment, the anti-fracking movement aims to outlaw the process of obtaining natural gas from shale rock formations for the purpose of generating electricity. Fracking also causes contamination of drinking water, ecosystem disruption, and detrimental effects on human and animal health.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> About Us,” StopHS2, accessed 4-6-2023,

<https://stophs2.org/about#:~:text=Stop%20HS2%20is%20the%20national,the%20HS2%20proposals%20in%20depth.&text=To%20Stop%20High%20Speed%20Two,to%20scrap%20the%20HS2%20proposal>.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> “Swynnerton HS2 protesters emerge after 47 days underground,” *BBC*, June 25, 2022,

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-stoke-staffordshire-61938239>.

<sup>148</sup> “Get involved,” FrackOff, accessed 1-6-2023, <https://frack-off.org.uk/get-stuck-in/>.

The Frack Off campaign is a grassroots direct action movement that is against the development of unsustainable gas and oil and they want to fight against the industry responsible for fracking. In 2011, a large-scale fracking protest began, green anarchists and activists fought fracking at Preston New Road, Lancashire, from 2011 until 2019.<sup>149</sup> These protests and actions have included blockades of drilling sites and direct action to disrupt fracking operations. The goal of these protests is to suppress fracking operations in the UK and raise awareness about the consequences of fracking.<sup>150</sup> More than 200,000 people have signed a petition in opposition of fracking. During the protests at Preston New Road there were several speakers including politicians, authors, professors, and scientists.<sup>151</sup>

The UK government announced a fracking ban in November 2019 after eight years of activism by locals, green anarchists and NGOs. This protest resulted in a success for the movements and demonstrates what can be accomplished when different movements work together for a shared objective.<sup>152</sup> In the end, these movements achieve their goals because they work together with other movements and organisations. With so many people working together for a common goal the ban of fracking happened. This was due to the demonstrations, direct action, and advocating against the negative effects of fracking on the environment and society.

### **Ende Gelände**

German green anarchist movement Ende Gelände believes that the only way to address the climate issue is through civil disobedience, as such they use anti-authoritarian tactics and large scale protests for the fight against climate change. Due to their efforts to obstruct coal mines and other environmentally damaging infrastructure through civil disobedience, the Ende Gelände movement has made green anarchism popular in Germany. Green anarchism originated in Germany with the Graswurzelrevolution movement, which began in the 1950s and lasted until the late 1980s, but anarcho-anarchism was its focus. Direct action against the transportation of nuclear waste increased noticeably in Germany in 1997, and anti-nuclear

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<sup>149</sup> "Fracking and climate breakdown," Friends of the Earth, accessed 26-5-2023, <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/climate-change/fracking>.

<sup>150</sup> Ella Muncie, "'Peaceful protesters' and 'dangerous criminals': the framing and reframing of anti-fracking activists in the UK," *Social Movement Studies* 19.4 (2020): 464-465.

<sup>151</sup> Tina Rothery, "The tale of Preston New Road," *Green World* (2015).

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

protests have continued, though the number of protestors have reduced over time.<sup>153</sup> Ende Gelände descends from the ideas of the Graswurzelrevolution.<sup>154</sup>

This German direct action group has gotten considerable notice by planning large scale events including the Rhineland and Lausitz climate camps and the occupation of the Hambach coal mine and forest in 2019. In its origin the movement only attracted 30 participants to the first "mass" action in the Rhineland mining region in 2011, but its second action four years later drew 1,500 attendees, and by 2019 the movement had 6000 followers.<sup>155</sup> An explanation for the increase in support can be found in the increasing concern for the environment. The Attitudes Tracker poll results in the UK reveal a slow but steady rise in concern after 2015, rising more quickly after 2018. There were 35% more "very concerned" people in 2019 compared to 23% in 2017.<sup>156</sup>

Numerous local organizations are now affiliated with Ende Gelände, including green anarchist groups in the UK, France and the Netherlands. Ende Gelände is a movement which sets an example for other green anarchist movements.<sup>157</sup> Ende Gelände believes that the only way to solve the climate catastrophe is through civil disobedience, hence they organize large-scale anti-authoritarian protests for climate justice. Ende Gelände is aware of the struggle for individuals to plan disobedient activities, as such one of their aims is to make civil disobedience as easy as possible so that many people can participate.<sup>158</sup> Moreover, because of the mass protest, an action is general less risky for activists. Ende Gelände also works with groups that are supportive to each other, these are groups of 5-7 people.<sup>159</sup> These groups are for emotional support. During the activity, they promote rapid consensus decision-making. But first, each group has to choose which "finger" it will join. A finger is a group of several hundred individuals who are working toward a same goal (the logistics for the action, etc.). A camp finger (those residing at the camp site) is crucial to the demonstration as it allows those

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<sup>153</sup> Corinna Fischer and Klaus Boehnke, "'Obstruction galore': a case study of non-violent resistance against nuclear waste disposal in Germany," *Environmental Politics* 13.2 (2004): 399-404.

<sup>154</sup> Alice Swift, "Climate justice action in Germany," *The Ecologist* (19th December, 2019).

<sup>155</sup> Hendrik Sander, "Ende Gelände: Anti-Kohle-Proteste in Deutschland," *Forschungsjournal Soziale Bewegungen* 30.1 (2017): 30-31.

<sup>156</sup> Elena Ares and Paul Bolton, "The rise of climate change activism?," *House of Commons Library* (June 24, 2020)

<sup>157</sup> "Ende Gelände Goes Europe," Ende Gelände, accessed 3-4-2023, <https://www.ende-gelaende.org/en/egge/>.

<sup>158</sup> Ende Gelände, "Stop coal protect the climate," *Ende Gelände* (2016).

<sup>159</sup> International Working Group of Ende Gelände, "An activist's guide to Ende Gelände" (Berlin): 3-4.



who cannot be active in the protest to still participate.<sup>160</sup>

In combination with their demonstrative efforts, Ende Gelände builds coalitions with many actors with different tactics, from environmental NGOs to Fridays to Future, from local residents, to ZAD's occupations or small groups.<sup>161</sup> These movements help each other because they can achieve more change and attention when they work together. So Ende Gelände uses direct action in two ways. On how to carry out the action, they instruct and train activists. A method to carry out consensual activism while empowering the participants

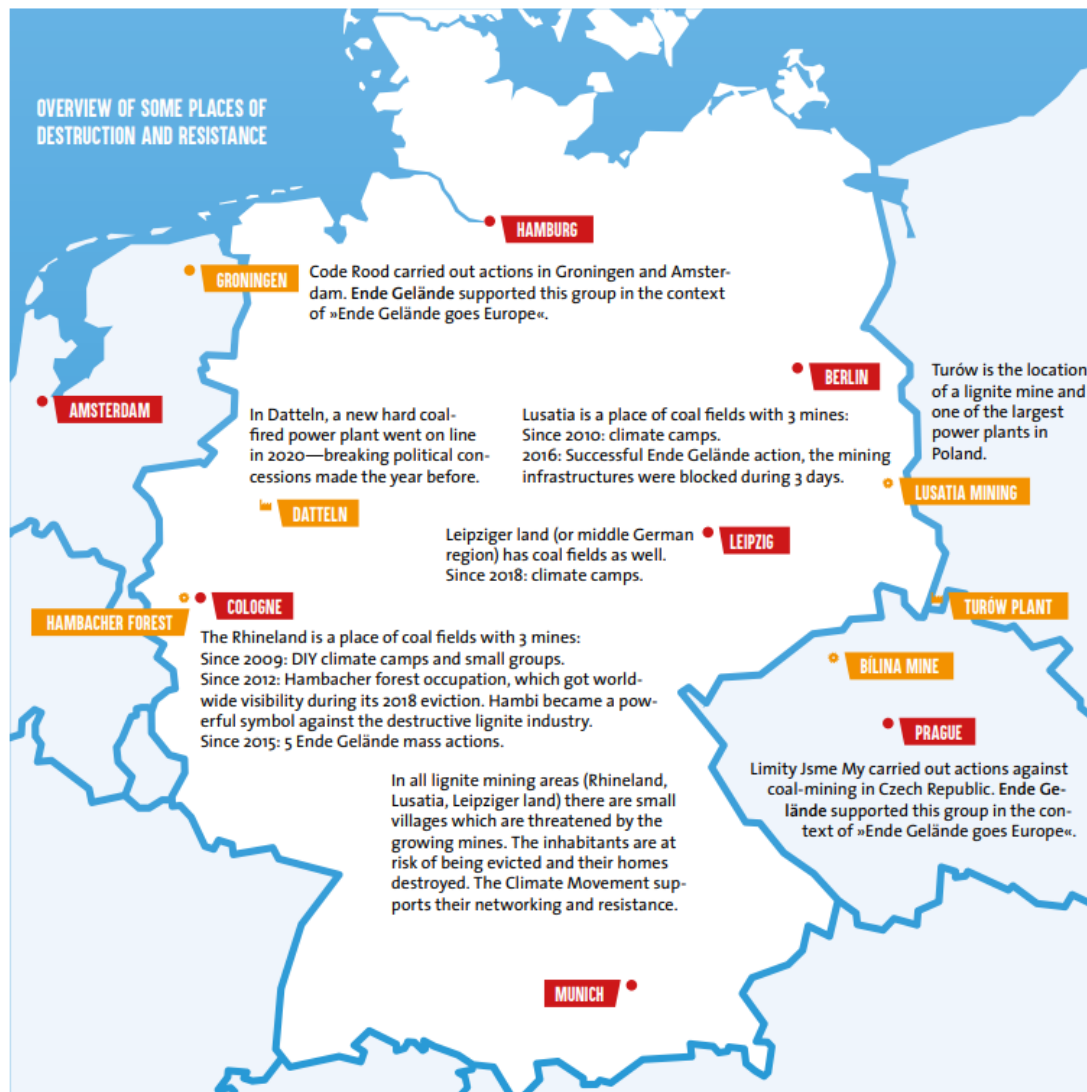


Figure 2: Ende Gelände activity map. Source: Ende Gelände, Basic Training of Ende Gelände, 2020

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>161</sup> Alexander Ruser, "Radikale Konformität und konforme Radikalität? Fridays for Future und Ende Gelände," *Forschungsjournal Soziale Bewegungen* 33.4 (2020): 801-803.

through clarity is to come to an agreement on an action. On the other hand, it sends the message to the public that they don't constitute a threat to their safety or well-being. Their mass activities frequently have dates that are announced months in advance, so they can plan it and attract as many people as they can.<sup>162</sup> Due to the organised structure of the movement, some could argue that it is not an anarchist movement. But what is also said in the eco manifesto, a green anarchist movement can bring chaos and anarchy, whilst simultaneously being well-structured and following strict rules and guidelines to achieve their goals.<sup>163</sup>

## **G20 protests**

Green anarchists choose international gatherings to protest because they want to criticize how officials at these events are talking about climate. There were big environmentally focused protests in Hamburg at the G20 Summit in 2017.<sup>164</sup> One of the topics on the G20 was reform in Africa while no African countries were invited to the summit. Also, nothing came out of the discussion about climate change.<sup>165</sup> These were two of the reasons why people started to protest at this summit. The mass protests were mainly organised and overseen by different kind of NGOs such as Greenpeace. But there were many green anarchists present from across Europe. All of the protests that occurred at the G20 summit had an acute focus on the environment, the main problem was that the countries that attended the summit largely talked rather than took any action. Over the weekend there were 25 registered protests and marches planned in Hamburg, when including unscheduled protests, this number grows significantly. Some of the protests had as many as 11,000 and 20,000 participants.<sup>166</sup> In comparison with other police activities, here the police efforts were less successful. Because the demonstrations were scattered throughout the city, on the land, sky and water, it was harder for the police to manage the protests. In response to the police using water cannons on a ship

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<sup>162</sup> International Working Group of Ende Gelände, “*An activist’s guide to Ende Gelände*” (Berlin: October 2020).

<sup>163</sup> Green Anarchist International Association, “The Ecoanarchist Manifesto,” 7

<sup>164</sup> Dorte Fischer, “Unintended but Consequential? The NoG20 Protests in Hamburg and the Introduction of a Police Identification Statute,” *Partecipazione e conflitto* 14.3 (2021): 1076.

<sup>165</sup> European Council, “G20 top in Hamburg,” 2017.

<sup>166</sup> Max Holscher and Vanessa Steinmetz, “Wer hinter den Protesten steht,” *Der Spiegel*, June 24, 2017, <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/g20-gipfel-in-hamburg-ein-ueberblick-ueber-die-groessten-proteste-a-1153772.html>.

to disperse protesters on shore, anarchists threw objects towards the ship.<sup>167</sup>

The extent that the green anarchists went to in demonstrating, illustrates their determination towards their cause, and their strong beliefs and ideals. As the G20 includes representatives from economically powerful, and international influential states, green anarchists felt it was crucial to demonstrate at this conference.<sup>168</sup> Because these officials can make the decisions about which steps have to be taken to make the world more sustainable. Direct action that has been used here, is perfectly in line with the ideas of green anarchism. It is used to resist the existing societal structures, persons, institutions and tries to implement it in a decentralized way.

### **ASEED Europe**

By aiming to form coalitions among young people dedicated to social and environmental justice ASEED (Action for Solidarity, Equality, Environment and Diversity) Europe aims to create a sustainable society and confront the economic, and colonial system's repressive structures. ASEED Europe is an environmental movement that is based in the Netherlands. This movement tries to support environmental and sustainable food systems and a sustainable world. Young activists founded ASEED Europe in 1991 in response to the UNCED (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) Earth Summit discussions in Rio de Janeiro. ASEED Europe has decentralized connections in Europe, Asia, North America, Africa, Latin America, and Japan. Currently, ASEED Europe is a non-profit organization. The organization has between seven and ten people making up their core staff, and they collaborate with other volunteers and contacts on a local, regional, and European level.<sup>169</sup>

ASEED focuses on subjects such as social issues, climate change, agriculture, food, and resistance against the status quo. They are committed to encourage decentralized, grassroots organizing, and stimulating group action.<sup>170</sup> By planning events including talks, festivals, training sessions, and activist gatherings, the group is able to accomplish their goals.

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<sup>167</sup> Ryan Thomson, "Blockading Hamburg," 161-162.; Philip Oltermann, "G20 protests: police fire water cannon into anti-capitalist rally," *The Guardian*, July 6, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/06/g20-police-and-demonstrators-clash-at-protest-in-hamburg>.

<sup>168</sup> Thomson, "Blockading Hamburg," 162.

<sup>169</sup> About us," ASEED, accessed 4-5-2023, <https://aseed.net/about-aseed-europe-our-mission-statement-and-safer-space-policy/>.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

ASEED hopes to strengthen people's ability to bring about positive change in their daily lives and communities by organising the aforementioned events. Across Europe, ASEED has a history of planning protests and campaigns devoted to environmentalism and agriculture.<sup>171</sup> The organization their campaigns are centred on finding better alternatives to the industrial food system and making associations with other organizations that also focus on sustainable development. some events that are curated by ASEED are: The annual Food Autonomy Festival, reading circles, discussions, awareness-raising activities, workshops, action camps, alternative climate summits, non-violent direct actions, urban farming sessions and a lot more.<sup>172</sup> For example, young activist made a play in which they expose corporate greed and promote regeneration. The story pictured a farmer's life from the moment the farmer fell victim to agricultural modernization till the soil died. The play ends with the farmer succeeding in switching to regenerative agriculture, allowing ecological symbiosis to flourish, and rediscovering respect for mother earth.<sup>173</sup> Through plays like this ASEED tries to educate people about the environmental concerns in a fun way.

Similar to the Ende Gelände movement, ASEED places a strong emphasis on forging relationships with other groups. Through these links, green anarchist movements can create international networks that encourage cooperation and solidarity in the pursuit of common goals. By combining their resources, expertise, and experiences through these networks, green anarchists may have a greater influence and build a stronger collective force for change. Together, these movements may learn from one another, share ideas, methods, and tactics, and create a larger movement for social and environmental change. The interdependence and cooperation among green anarchist movements reflect the rising global activism trend and the understanding that solving problems like social inequality, environmental degradation, and global systems calls for international solidarity and collective action.

## **Conclusion**

What all the different green anarchist groups have in common is a two-way strategy wherein the specific objectives are to dismantle the technical framework for raw material extraction, animal exploitation and to inform and enlighten the public by disseminating statements and analyses on the factors that contribute to environmental and human degradation. France is one

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> "Home page," ASEED, accessed 18-5-2023, <https://aseed.net/>.

<sup>173</sup> Stop greenwashing regenerative agriculture!," ASEED, published September 21, 2022, <https://aseed.net/%EF%BF%BC/>.

of the only countries that have been active from 2000 till 2010, where the other countries were less active during this time. The Netherlands is mainly focused on spreading information instead of protesting which in Germany is more prevalent. However, it can be seen in the Netherlands, that protesting is generally less popular than in other countries. The United Kingdom and Germany have the most green anarchist protests, as can be shown. Since 1980, there have been several protests in various nations, although oddly, the Netherlands and France have seen fewer of them. Really, the demonstrations have not altered over time. When protests turned violent, it was frequently an isolated incident.

Protests are usually used by green anarchists and environmental activists because it is a non-hierarchical form of demonstrations, and since they are against the hierarchy they prefer this method. What can be seen in these protests, is that there is no leader present, which is also a main point for green anarchists. Green anarchist movements aspire to collaborate with as many people, and operate within a system where everyone is equal. Movements like Ende Gelände are more organized but still have norms and values that line with equality and decentralization. A key component of anarchist protest is direct action. Anarchists, unlike most of other socialist movements, have long had reservations about parliamentary structures. Anarchism is about transferring power to the people rather than taking it. That is why these movements encourage their followers to take part in grassroots operations, outside governmental networks to create an alternative community. Green anarchists try to educate the local people but also take their concerns to the national level. These factors make green anarchist direct action unique. What is seen from the case studies is that the movements that have collaborated and are bigger have the largest success rate, even though normally this takes a few years, the outcome was successful. By successful we mean that plans are changed or delayed or that they have been heard by the government. Protests that are organized by multiple NGO's, locals and anarchists have, because of their number reached global media and effectively forced change in the government.

## Chapter 3

### **Anarchist and their use of blockades and occupations**

Blockades and occupations have been popular methods to disrupt the status quo, fight for change, battle injustice, and are commonly used by green anarchists. Blockades happen when a group of people block a road, building, etc. An occupation which involves people physically interfering with or occupying a space such as building, train station, shopping centre, square, event, or park as a protest tactic.<sup>174</sup> These tactics have two functions: to have a direct impact on the target and to make injustice or violence visible. These tactics can disrupt a certain meeting or the supply flow towards a factory, alongside it can also be used to protect places, such as occupying an ancient forest or blocking the roads so people cannot cut down the trees. These tactics can last from a few minutes to multiple years. It also a way to attract the media, which in their turn give free advertisement to society.<sup>175</sup>

Protestors who engage in these tactics do not only engaging in blockades for the attempt to block something. Their ultimate objective is to reorganize social interactions and material flows both within and across spaces. Blockades and occupations are here to generate, deploy, and sustain other kinds of governance in addition to blocking or resisting governmental practices.<sup>176</sup> Blockades and occupations are used as a form of direct action by green anarchists to oppose and stop what they see as harmful to the environment, such as mining, forestry, and other polluting and harmful industries.<sup>177</sup> Blockades frequently result from grassroots movements and local communities that fight against the centralised power and decision-making in local authorities. In addition, it also represents the notion of direct action in tackling social and environmental issues by physically obstructing or disrupting environmentally damaging activity. Blockades are often organised non-hierarchically, rejecting hierarchical power structures and basing their organisation on harmony with people

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<sup>174</sup> Benjamin K. Sovacool and Alexander Dunlap, "Anarchy, war, or revolt? Radical perspectives for climate protection, insurgency and civil disobedience in a low-carbon era," *Energy Research & Social Science*, Volume 86 (2022): 5.

<sup>175</sup> Shasha Davis, "Beyond obstruction: Blockades as productive reorientations," *Antipode* (2021): 3-5.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid*, 1

<sup>177</sup> Brian Doherty, "Manufactured vulnerability: eco-activist tactics in Britain," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 4.1 (1999): 16-19.

their opinions. By encouraging direct action, decentralisation, non-hierarchical organisation, and community development, blockades are consistent with green anarchist goals.

## **Stop HS2**

Blockading and preventing the construction of highways to keep valuable nature areas in existence is an action with which green anarchists have been associated with. Such as the organization Stop HS2, which had the goal of preventing the construction of High Speed 2.<sup>178</sup> The project has been criticized by environmental groups and green anarchists for its impact on animal habitats, nature, and carbon emissions. Some of England's most valuable forests are destroyed by the controversial HS2 route.<sup>179</sup> Green anarchist groups have been involved in blockades against the project, including direct action and occupations of trees and other structures in the path of the proposed rail line. This is used because they know that if they only start a petition, the forest will be cut down anyway. Therefore, occupying the forest is a non-hierarchical way to prevent companies from cutting down the forest. But next to this, it also sends a signal to the government and the public, that this is unsustainable. When companies tried to clear a certain part of the forest, they had to evict numerous different kinds of activists, namely a group of green anarchists, locals, and Extinction Rebellion volunteers.<sup>180</sup> These activists used locks so they could lock themselves to the trees. These locks were made from all kinds of alternative materials, such as plastic, pipe, and even concrete. A demonstrator explains that they wear these lock-ons on their skin, for example around their neck or wrist. So they can always lock themselves to trees or other things, if necessary.<sup>181</sup> Several members of the HS2 Rebellion have been creating a 100-foot maze of tunnels at the London site for months and have sworn to stay there "for as long as it takes to

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<sup>178</sup> Stop HS2, [About Us](#)". – *The national campaign against High Speed Rail 2 – HS2 – No business case, No environmental case, No money to pay for it.* 30 November 2012

<sup>179</sup> Patrick Barkham, "'Seeing the trees being ripped down is really hard': meet a father and son protesting against HS2," *The Guardian*, July 5, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jul/05/seeing-the-trees-being-ripped-down-is-really-hard-meet-a-father-and-son-protesting-against-hs2>.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> HS2 protesters dig secret tunnel near Euston," *BBC*, January 27, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-england-london-55816922>.

stop HS2."<sup>182</sup> The tunnel, code-named "Kelvin," is allegedly the activists' "best defence" against eviction, according to activists.<sup>183</sup> Agents often showed up to try to get people out of the trees and off the land. The police used a lot of effort to break through the locks to free the protesters. This process is dangerous and difficult, but it highlights how devoted these green anarchists are to their cause: to stop HS2.<sup>184</sup>

In the creation of these camps and tunnels, green anarchists have created an autonomous community because they have been protesting for so long against the destruction of nature. Blockades are used by Stop HS2 as a tactic because they offer direct action, visibility, and a symbolic form of resistance. They obstruct construction attempts, promote unity, expand the movement, and criticize the government decision-making procedures. Alongside this, the blockade is a way of creating an autonomous commune while protesting against the destruction of nature. Stop HS2 wants to stop the project, preserve the environment, and promote more democratic and sustainable forms of society.



*Figure 3:* Police are trying to ‘free’ the activist that chained themselves in the trees. Source: Freedom News (UK), Anarchist Federation, December 28, 2021

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<sup>182</sup> Barney Davis and John Dunne, “HS2 protesters dig secret 100ft network of tunnels in Euston Square as bailiffs move in,” *Evening Standard*, January 27, 2021, <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/hs2-rebellion-euston-square-gardens-protest-tunnel-b901275.html>.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> Barkham, “Seeing the trees being ripped down is really hard”



## **Hambach Forest Occupation (Hambi bleibt!)**

Green anarchists have used civil disobedience in their occupation of the Hambach Forest Occupation to protect it from destruction by the energy company RWE. The occupation has been ongoing since 2012 and has involved various forms of direct action and civil disobedience. It is more well known because it is one of the only 12,000 year old forests left in Western Europe and a home to a wide variety of biodiversity, therefore this forest is unique.<sup>185</sup> The old forest is located in the North Rhine-Westphalia state between the towns of Cologne and Aachen, and it is a home for at least 100 activists. They built tree huts to live in to prevent RWE from destroying the forests in 2012. By occupying the endangered Hambach Forest, promoting sustainable living, encouraging community and solidarity, spreading knowledge about the negative effects of coal mining, and taking part in nonviolent direct action, the *Hambi Bleibt* commune operates as a form of protest. *Hambi Bleibt* is the name activist call his occupation.<sup>186</sup>

In the fall of 2018, when RWE sought to carry out its mining plans, thousands of protesters descended on the forest. Several green anarchist groups decided to join, such as Ende Gelände. Green anarchists and other activists were climbing trees, going into underground tunnels in order to stop RWE. However, the idea next to stopping RWE is to fight against the destructiveness of capitalism, and raise awareness about coal extraction.<sup>187</sup> This mass protest caused one of the largest police operations in North Rhine Westphalia, officers were seeking to drive the occupants all out of the forest area.<sup>188</sup> The green anarchists argue that only direct strategic action is useful for changing the German energy system, in this case the seizure of forests. Finally, the expansion of the coal mines was stopped, and the German government declared the forest a preservation area.<sup>189</sup> These tactics are connected with Reclus his theoretical consideration of the ecological crises of capitalist modernity. “One

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<sup>185</sup>Sarah Gibbens, “Protesters battle police in a fight for an ancient forest,” *National Geographic* October 8, 2017, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/news-german-hambach-forest-coal-protests>.

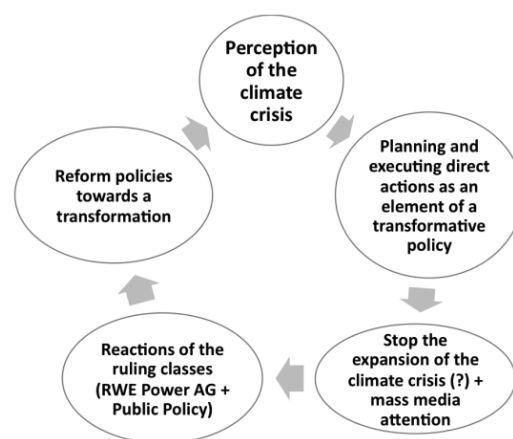
<sup>186</sup> Hambi Bleibt!, *Kampagne gegen die Rodung 2016/2017*, <https://hambacherforst.org/media/flyer/>.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Elliot Douglas, “Hambach Forest: Police tackle green activists' blockade,” *Deutsche Welle*, June 23, 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/hambach-forest-police-again-tackle-anti-coal-activists-eight-year-blockade/a-53904915>.

<sup>189</sup> Welle, “Deutsche, Germany approves coal phaseout by 2038,” *DW* (2020)

is the future, the other is the past,” argues a 40-year-old resident of the Hambach Forest.<sup>190</sup> According to green anarchists, capitalism regards nature as a resource that is only used for financial gain. The capitalistic idea of exponential economic growth results in the exhaustion of natural resources and the stagnation of the environment. The long-term effects on the environment are not even considered. Modern capitalism changes nature, making it an economic good and private property. By doing this, people are separated from their natural surroundings, and the concept that nature is merely a resource rather than a complex web of interconnected systems is enforced. Therefore, green anarchists advocate to a society that returns to nature, realising that it has intrinsic value and that it transcends that of money. The green anarchists that occupy Hambach Forest mention that there are three main ideas to get into action. These are decentralization, direct action, and direct democracy.<sup>191</sup> They want to link the occupation of the forest to social objectives and show the exploitative ways of RWE. The exploitative and oppressive connections between society and the environment are used by green anarchists in the Hambach Forest to support their views. This demonstration serves as a concrete illustration of why green anarchists believe we live in the Capitalocene. They are demonstrating against industries that aim to destroy biodiversity and irreplaceable forests for financial gain. The occupation of the forest has successfully implemented their tactics to save the forests and use the anarchist ideals of anti-authoritarianism, horizontal structures, and self-management while also increasing political awareness of climate change.<sup>192</sup>



<sup>190</sup> Thousands of anti-coal protesters celebrate German forest's reprieve,” *The Guardian*, October 6, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/06/thousands-of-anti-coal-protesters-celebrate-german-forests-reprieve>.

<sup>191</sup> Hambi Bleibt! Blog post 2018

<sup>192</sup> Ricardo Kaufer and Paula Lein. "Anarchist resistance in the German hambach forest: Localising climate justice," *Anarchist studies* 28.1 (2020): 60-62.

*Figure 4: Analysis of the interplay between green anarchist direct actions and public policy.*  
Source: Kaufers, Ricardo, and Paula Lein. "Anarchist Resistance in the German Hambach Forest: Localising Climate Justice." *Anarchist Studies* 28, no. 1 (2020): 71



*Figure 5: activist said that blockading the mine was the best way to let their voices be heard. One hundred activists were at the mine and the coal mine stopped operating for some days.*  
Source: Ende Gelände website.

### **ZAD (Zone D'aménagement Différé)**

Communes are a part of the green anarchists their ideals. These are zones where people can live freely and have characteristics of the primitivism of Thoreau, but often they are also a mean to protest. ZAD is a network of autonomous zones in France that have been occupied by environmental activists, green anarchists, farmers, and other groups in opposition to various industrial and infrastructure projects, such as airports, nuclear power plants, and high-speed rail lines.<sup>193</sup>

The biggest and most well-known ZAD that France has ever seen is La ZAD de Notre-Dame-des-Landes. The protest already began in 1960, because the area of Notre-Dame-Des-Landes was chosen to be the perfect place to construct a new airport in 1968. Local farmers opposed the proposal, and in 1972 they established the first organization to fight it. The first real ZAD was established in the area of Notre-Dame-des-Landes in 1974 because the French

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<sup>193</sup> Stephanie Dechezelles, "Une ZAD peut en cacher d'autres. De la fragilité du mode d'action occupationnel," *Politix* 1 (2017): 91-95.

government had approved the airport.<sup>194</sup> At the beginning of the 2000s, an increasing number of people recognized that this specific area would suffer a lot of environmental damage if the airport would be constructed. So local and national awareness grew, and more people protested. Their perseverance paid off in 2009; Notre-Dame-des-Landes green anarchists, local activists, and citizens established a "climate action camp" that summer. During this camp, a significant number of people joined the occupation by squatting in buildings and farms that were uninhabited.<sup>195</sup> Alongside this, people would create their own shack to reside in.<sup>196</sup> Towards 2010, the climate camp had really resulted in an autonomous commune with all kinds of different kinds of people: anarchists, anti-globalization activists, liberals, and leftists. The *zadistes* themselves emphasize this diversity.<sup>197</sup> Because of this change over time in the number of people that were demonstrating, it finally got the attention of the government.

When the government became actively involved, this consequently led to many legal battles to block the airport project. Also in 2012, operation Cesar came into effect, an eviction mission approved by the French government. This meant that everybody in the ZAD had to be evicted. Later, even more people were evicted by order of the high court.<sup>198</sup> But the *zadistes* just came back to clean up, reassemble the ZAD, and recover and reoccupy the property.<sup>199</sup> After this, multiple calls for protests were initiated by the *zadistes*, and even more than 50.000 people showed up to support their cause. *Zadistes* were labelled as "terrorists" in 2017 as part of a government campaign to end the ZAD. This was done in hopes that fewer people would identify with the occupants of the ZAD when the police evicted them.

This portrayal was an effort to discredit their demonstrations and legitimise repressive actions against them. This did not stop the *zadistes* from their protest. Their response was to stay united, and with the support of the community, this did not put them in a negative light. Alongside this, they were also involved with the media to create counter-narratives. They presented their viewpoints and emphasised their desire for peace and nonviolence in these

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<sup>194</sup> CrimethInc, "La ZAD: Another End of the World Is Possible; Learning from 50 Years of Struggle at Notre-Dame-des-Landes," *Anarchist Library* (April 9, 2018): 3-5.

<sup>195</sup> CrimethInc, "La ZAD: Another End of the World Is Possible," 5.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> interview by Fantine : voix de zadistes. <https://www.daliborka-milovanovic.fr/voix-de-zadistes-par-fantine/>

<sup>198</sup> Anne-leure Pailloux, "Deferred Development Zone (ZAD) versus 'Zone to be protected'. Analysis of a struggle for autonomy in/of rural space," *Justice spatiale-spatial justice* (2015): 9.

<sup>199</sup> A small story of the reoccupation demo, 2012s <https://zad.nadir.org/spip.php?article634>

venues. Their determination and presence successfully repelled attempts to label them as terrorists in the eyes of the population.<sup>200</sup>

In the end, the airport project was cancelled in 2018. The government gave up despite launching a smear campaign, when the public heard about the blockades and widespread protests, they were in favour of the occupants. Although green anarchists definitely do not support the state, it can be a powerful partner in securing immediate gains for their cause. In addition, green anarchists understand that the fight for social justice and environmental sustainability necessitates a variety of strategies. Working within the system to bring about change can be a crucial tactic, even though direct action and resistance may be effective in some circumstances.

To bring about change, green anarchists emphasize the need to take action at all levels, from fostering relationships that address problems like sexism and racism to encouraging sustainable living and founding communes. This reflects dedication to bringing about positive change. In these ZAD's, green anarchists want to build a more just and equal society by actively practicing the ideals they embrace, even as they question the legitimacy of the present order. In the struggle against large, pointless megaprojects, Notre-Dame-des-Landes served as the standard, and the *zadistes* came to represent people seeking a different, more just, and compassionate world. The *zadistes* experience demonstrates the necessity for a variety of tactics as well as a potential alliance with the government to realise environmental and social justice objectives. Their conflict serves as an example of collective living, nonviolent protest, and the influence of grassroots movements on social change.



<sup>200</sup> Letter to the local committees, the supporters of this movement, and to all those who recognize themselves in the movement against the airport and its world, 19 January, 2018, accessed: 23-4-2023  
<https://zad.nadir.org/spip.php?article5047>





## **GroenFront!**

In the Netherlands and Belgium, GroenFront is a green anarchist group that uses direct action and civil disobedience to save pieces of nature and protect animals. The movement started being active in 1996, and it lacks a complex hierarchical structure and functions democratically. It is the Dutch branch of Earth First!. Protecting forests, fostering biodiversity, and opposing environmentally damaging infrastructure projects are its main focus.<sup>201</sup> Across the two nations, the group has planned a variety of demonstrations, civil disobedience activities, and direct actions. In 2003, protesters took control of a forest south of the Efteling, which is a theme park, that was to be the site of the Droomrijk development project, which included new houses for the theme park. The project was ultimately abandoned by the Efteling firm as a result of a Council of State decision. Police involvement has prevented future demonstrations in The Hague and attempts to stop the clearing of other areas of woodland.<sup>202</sup> Also, other actions to prevent forests from being cut down were not successful.<sup>203</sup> This is often due to leaks of the protests and blockades. Therefore, the police are always present to prevent the actions.<sup>204</sup> There is no information available on how these leaks happen. Although these green anarchists do not mind because they also blockade to send a message to the rest of the population that there are ecological disasters happening.

One of the biggest occupations in Groenfront, where more than 500 activists protested, was in the Schinveld forests in 2006, but the police rapidly removed them. The Council of State determined in 2016 that the forest should not have been cleared after additional steps and legal processes. The forest had already been cut down, therefore this decision was made ten years too late. The green anarchists still view it as a victory because they think their tenacity will enable them to achieve more success in the future.<sup>205</sup> This is also a perfect case in which the green anarchists have worked with legal authorities to fight against the development of Droomrijk. They could not have stopped the project without the them.

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<sup>201</sup> GroenFront!, accessed 6-6-2023 ,

[https://web.archive.org/web/20040831073117if\\_/http://www.groenfront.nl:80/](https://web.archive.org/web/20040831073117if_/http://www.groenfront.nl:80/).

<sup>202</sup> “GroenFront” *Eftepedia*, accessed 6-6-2023, <https://www.eftepedia.nl/lemma/GroenFront!>.

<sup>203</sup> Lawaaiactie GroenFront! voorlopig van de baan,” *BNNvara*, January 26, 2012, <https://www.bnnvara.nl/vroegevogels/artikelen/lawaaiactie-groenfront-voorlopig-van-de-baan>.

<sup>204</sup> Buro Jansen & Janssen, “GroenFront! 25 jaar radicaal eco-protest en de inlichtingendiensten,” *Observant #74* (January 2020).

<sup>205</sup> Marcel de Veen, “GroenFront! terug in de Schinveldse bossen,” *De Limburger*, December 5, 2016, [https://www.limburger.nl/cnt/dmf20161205\\_00029543](https://www.limburger.nl/cnt/dmf20161205_00029543).

As we can see in this case study, many blockades in the Netherlands are prevented by the police when we compare them with the ZAD's in France and movements in Germany. This might be a result of variations in how effective Dutch law enforcement is or in the way information is shared with governmental organizations. In general, GroenFront is a decentralized, democratic, and grassroots network of environmental activists and green anarchists that utilizes campaigns of civil disobedience and direct action. This case study additionally raises concerns about how the legal system might interfere with attempts to preserve the environment. Even when the police have to protect the inhabitants of a country, they often stop the goals of activist movements. In comparison with movements in Germany and France, GroenFront activities in the Netherlands have been inhibited by police actions and information leaks. The community building was also not as large as it was in other western Europe countries. This draws attention to the demand for greater accountability and openness in the legal system and the function of the police in stopping political and social protests.

## **Conclusion**

Blockades and occupations serve as powerful means for green anarchists to enact change in their pursuit of environmental and social justice. Alongside this, green anarchists use blockades to create autonomous communities outside of political and state rules. These communities create a whole new space for social living, an alternative way of living that questions the status quo. Instead of being part of civil society, protesters can be part of an alternative society within protest camps.<sup>206</sup> Green anarchists aim to realize, through occupations and blockades, that societies current system of dominance is unable to steer and fix itself effectively. With movements like Earth First! that originated in the 1980s, a lot of newer green anarchist movements have taken their lead. Since 2010, new movements have gotten more attention in the media and been suppressed by the government. The ZADs are an example of a movement in which they demonstrate against the plans of the government by using civil disobedience and ignoring the rules the government imposes on them. The same happens in Germany in the Hambach Forest. Where activists not only chain themselves into trees but even make tunnels to occupy a certain area, which also happens in the UK. This is a

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<sup>206</sup> Fabian Frenzel, "Exit the system? Anarchist organisation in the British climate camps," *Ephemera: theory & politics in organization* 14.4 (2014).



newer form of occupation. In the Netherlands, this trend is seen less, often the government cuts them off before they can occupy an area or make a blockade. Therefore, their actions are less impactful, even though the green anarchists do not see it that way. They feel that with each action, successful or not, they come closer to achieving their ideals. The same applies in the UK, there are a lot of movements active, but they would rather help other green anarchist movements. This leads to a transnational network of anarchists that support each other in the battle against the state, capitalism, and environmental issues. Over time, green anarchists have come to understand that where they demonstrate matters hence, they now frequently visit areas where there are important demonstrations or blockades. The rise of the occupations and blockades from 2010 until now has to do with the environmental issue becoming more of a global issue than a local one. In 1980, the issues were more local such as dirty rivers and air pollution. Another alternative is that from 2000 until 2010, more left wing parties governed countries in Western Europe, which led to less left wing activism. In the present day, environmental problems are affecting the whole world, therefore green anarchist movements across West Europe are taking more drastic action.

## Chapter 4

### Anarchist and their use of violence

Despite their historical links with violence, most modern anarchist actions are primarily peaceful, but some other green anarchists do not oppose the selective use of violence. The European union has written a report about left orientated social and political movements that also researched green anarchists violent acts. According to the European report about eco-radicalization, left-wing and anarchists terrorist their violent actions have decreased in the 1980s. This is also when green anarchism started to rise. But in the report, they have analysed all the violent attacks over the past few years. They concluded that successful attacks are rising again in numbers. The countries who are targeted the most are: Greece, Italy, Spain, Austria, Denmark, Germany, Czech Republic and France.<sup>207</sup> Most of the attacks were committed by the anarchist movements when compared with the eco-radicalized and left wing movements.<sup>208</sup>

Green anarchists most frequently used tactic is direct action, which often can be accompanied by violent behaviour. It is often the case that only disruptive actions are covered by the media which gives the public a distorted picture of the meaning behind those actions. For instance, sabotage and disruptive activities such as breaking windows and throwing with things at the police.<sup>209</sup> But instead of creating chaos or violent situations, it is the green anarchists objective to stop a certain project.<sup>210</sup>

Anarchoprimitivists are a form of green anarchism and these are seen to be the most likely to engage in violent tactics in their attempt to change society.<sup>211</sup> But for them, in comparison with most green anarchists, environmental concern is secondary for their search for freedom and change. As a result, the environment can become collateral damage.<sup>212</sup> However, green anarchists are committed nonviolent protestors and are known to resist those in their group that want to use violent tactics to achieve their goals, especially if it is hurting

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<sup>207</sup> Francesco Farinelli and Lorenzo Marinone, "Violent Leftwing and Anarchist Extremism (VLWAE) in the EU: Analysing Threats and Potential for P/CVE," *European Union*, 2021.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Francis Dupuis-Déri, "The Black Blocs ten years after Seattle: Anarchism, direct action, and deliberative practices," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 4.2 (2010): 47.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Taylor, "Threat assessments and radical environmentalism," 179.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

the environment. Because they feel that violence is not the answer to their problems.<sup>213</sup> Green anarchists argue that when they use violence it is most of the times their last resort. There also is not enough evidence in the literature to predict anything more from these green anarchists than occasional arson and minor street conflicts with the police when we speak in terms of violence.<sup>214</sup>

However there are factors that influence violent behaviour, one of these is police violence. Around the world there have been violent crimes towards environmental demonstrators, for green anarchist in West-Europe police violence is a frequent problem during protests.<sup>215</sup> Police violence is proven to be an incentive to mass protests to make the protestors more violent as well.<sup>216</sup> Therefore, it is important to understand that police violence can act as an incentive for violence, particularly when social and political movements are involved such as green anarchists. When protestors are subjected to excessive force by law enforcement this leads to emotions of injustice and anger. This is called a militarization effect, where protesters become more likely to adopt violent tactics in response to aggressive actions used by the police.<sup>217</sup> This could be a reason why green anarchists choose to act violently during blockades or mass protests. Alongside this riotous activity can be a factor that influences violent behaviour.

Green anarchists can produce violent behaviour, this often occurs when riotous activity is present. Riotous activity can result from street manifestations and produces an escalating massive protest.<sup>218</sup> When a large number of people gather to protest, there are higher chances of conflict and violence. This is because clashes between protestors, counter-protesters, and the police might intervene since protests usually include strong emotions and different opinions.<sup>219</sup> When the state tries to suppress a protest, through methods including

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<sup>213</sup> Sovacool and Dunlap, "Anarchy, war, or revolt?," 2.

<sup>214</sup> Taylor, "Threat assessments and radical environmentalism", 181

<sup>215</sup> Andrea Brock, "'Frack off': Towards an anarchist political ecology critique of corporate and state responses to anti-fracking resistance in the UK," *Political Geography* 82 (2020): 102.; M. Menton and P. Le Billon, *'Environmental Defenders: Deadly Struggles for Life and Territory'* (London: Routledge, 2021).

<sup>216</sup> Erica Chenoweth and Jeremy Pressman, "The Militarization of Protest Policing: When Do Violent Repression Backfire?," *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 110, no. 1, (2016): 61-63

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Miroslav Mareš, "Strategies for Creating Insurgencies and Civil Wars in Europe: From Violent Extremism to Paramilitary Conflicts?," *Jindal Journal of International Affairs* 2t I (2012): 93, 103.

<sup>219</sup> Pearce Edwards and Daniel Arnon, "Violence on many sides: Framing effects on protest and support for repression," *British Journal of Political Science* 51.2 (2021): 488-489.

physical force, curfews, alcohol prohibition or just simply banning the protest. All these things make the situation worse and increase the likelihood of violence.<sup>220</sup> Additionally, it could promote more unrest and possibly violence by making protesters feel enraged and unjustified.<sup>221</sup> Thus, when a riot breaks out green anarchist are quicker inclined to violence but that is due to different opinions, chaos and police brutality.

Alongside, this violent behaviour among green anarchists may be influenced by psychological issues. An example of this is when someone shows a lot of empathy towards a group, or even extreme narcissisms, it can make an individual or a group act violently for a movement. These individuals or groups act out when the movement feels threatened. This could be in a situation where there is police violence.<sup>222</sup> Also, feelings of unhappiness with the status quo in which capitalistic and hierarchical structures are dominant can result in aggression and impulsivity. Additionally, social factors like peer pressure, group dynamics, and exposure to violent media and environments can have an influence on someone's tendency for violent behaviour. Group competition for status has also been associated with violence within a group. Lastly, whether true or false, the victimization of individuals or the movement itself increases the followers to the violent radicalization process. This is because these followers believe they or the movement itself are being attacked by the government, state or opposing groups.<sup>223</sup> Which, in their minds, leaves them with no other choice then to act violently.

Green anarchy magazine for example states:

“The Green Anarchist collective feel a lot of affinity with chaos. They can agree that while the dominant cultures version of chaos is of conflicting order and meaningless carnage, we actually see

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<sup>220</sup> Anisin Alexei, "Violence begets violence: Why states should not lethally repress popular protest," *The International Journal of Human Rights* 20.7 (2016): 899-901.

<sup>221</sup> Zachary C. Steinert-Threlkeld, Alexander M. Chan, and Jungseock Joo, "How state and protester violence affect protest dynamics," *The Journal of Politics* 84.2 (2022): 798-803.

<sup>222</sup> Aadil Mehdi Sanchawala, et al. "Exploring Empathy and a Range of Emotions Towards Protest Photographs," *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society* Vol. 44. No. 44. (2022).

<sup>223</sup> J. P. Zúquete, , "World War A: Contemporary anarchists and extreme left perpetrators," In *Understanding lone actor terrorism. Past experience, future outlook, and response Strategies*, ed. M. Fredholm (London: Routledge, 2016), 46-65.

the organic and dynamic nature of chaos. It is true freedom. It is harmonious. It is violent. It is life. It is anarchy. It is. ”<sup>224</sup>

Nonviolence is always the preferred course of action when it can accomplish the goal, but only when the nonviolent results are more effectively or equally effectively as a violent tactics. However, some green anarchist authors contend that, in some circumstances, violence is necessary. Some green anarchists argue that there are times when using violence is the only way to successfully advance their movement. Their first argument is that when nonviolent means have failed to produce successful results, then violent alternatives must be considered. Their second claim is that when the state itself turns to violence, and the movement is at risk or people are in danger or the structure that people reside in are in danger. In this case violence is regarded as acceptable. The last argument is that violence is unavoidable once a very large group of people have the chance to fight against and overthrow the existing state of power.<sup>225</sup>

## **ELF**

Since the rise of green anarchism from the 1980s onwards, direct action also became the primary method of political expression for radical ecological movements which included violent methods at some time.<sup>226</sup> Earth First! for example, is associated with tree spiking. Tree spiking is when protestors place metal spikes into trees to prevent logging operations by endangering the safety of sawmill personnel and machinery. It attempts to prevent logging of a forests and increase public awareness of the effects deforestation has on the ecosystem. Earth First! did not endorse this method.<sup>227</sup> Therefore, more radical followers of Earth First! formed their own group the Earth Liberation Front (ELF).

This group of radicalised environmentalists have carried out violent acts in the name of protecting the environment. The ELF originated in the US, but it began operating in various nations, including the Netherlands, Germany, Russia, Scandinavia, New Zealand, Italy, Ireland, Poland, Spain, France, and Finland, by the middle of the 1990s. The ELF brand

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<sup>224</sup> Green anarchy magazine, 2001

<sup>225</sup> David Van Deusen and Green Mountain Anarchist Collective, “On the Question of Violence and Nonviolence As a Tactic and Strategy Within the Social Protest Movement: An Anarchist Perspective,” *The Anarchist Library* (2001).

<sup>226</sup> D. Wall, *Earth First! and the Anti-Roads Movement* (London: Routledge, 1999); Brian Doherty, Matthew Paterson, and Benjamin Seel, *Direct Action in British Environmentalism* (London: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>227</sup> Taylor, "The religion and politics of Earth First!," 262-263.

started to gain international popularity about this time.<sup>228</sup> When the ELF see things that they perceive as a threat to the environment they are known to commit violent acts. Some of the sites that were the chosen were an electrical tower, a wood research centre, a police station and a ski resort.<sup>229</sup> Some violent incidents occurred in Europe carried out by the ELF such as an attack on a McDonald's restaurants in Germany and Poland, and Amsterdam Airport Schiphol has been the subject of sabotage.<sup>230</sup> High polluting automobiles were also purposefully destroyed, demonstrating the ELF's motivation on eradicating detrimental environmental practises.<sup>231</sup> Hunting towers were also demolished in the Netherlands and Germany, similar to Groenfront! practices.

## **G20**

Anarchists and other radical organisations have been blamed for acts of violence that occurred during the G20 conference in Hamburg, Germany, in 2017. There were individuals and groups within the larger protest movement who employed violent methods throughout the demonstrations. There was a clash between police and protestors. Protestors engaged in looting, property damage, and confrontations. Projectiles were thrown at the police, barricades were built, and cars were set on fire. These activities were perceived as a direct threat to the G20 summit's authority and capitalist system.<sup>232</sup>

The G20 conference was seen as a representation of global capitalism, inequality, and environmental damage by some green anarchists and other radical activists. Through direct action, green anarchists try to oppose and interrupt the summit. These strategies were used to show their criticism of the economic and political systems that the G20 stands for. In spite of the fact that some people who identify as green anarchists may have used violence at the G20 protests, this does not speak for the entire movement. The core values of green anarchism are

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<sup>228</sup> Steve Best and Anthony J. Nocella, *Igniting a revolution*. (AK Press: 2006), 52-53.

<sup>229</sup> Bron Taylor, “Religion, Violence, and Radical Environmentalism: From Earth First! to the Unabomber to the Earth Liberation Front”, *Terrorism and Political Violence* (1998): 1042.

<sup>230</sup> Best and Nocella, *Igniting a revolution*, 52.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> “Violence escalates over G20 summit in Hamburg,” *DW* August 7, 2017. <https://www.dw.com/en/g20-summit-in-hamburg-marred-by-violent-protests-vandalism/a-39605119>

about nonviolence, decentralisation, and ecological sustainability. The use of violence by some should be considered a deviation from the larger ideals and tenets of green anarchism.<sup>233</sup>

### **Hambach Forest**

There was a violent upsurge in 2018 as a result of the protest and blockades in the Hambach Forest. In Germany's Hambach Forest, where green anarchist extremists had taken up residence and utilised it as a gathering place for protests, a housing, and a networking place, several police officers, protestors, and inhabitants were hurt during the eviction.<sup>234</sup> Direct action can lead to violence, but this does not happen frequently. Germany is the nation in which most of violence acts happen by anarchists in West-Europe.<sup>235</sup> Although when violence is utilized, it is in reaction towards government authorities which try to break up a protest by using police force or water cannons.

When the mining company was clearing out the tree houses in the Hambach Forest, inhabitants and activist joked about their dangerous weapons such as fire extinguishers and sticks.<sup>236</sup> However, the interior minister of the state North Rhine-Westphalia, Herbert Reul, described the occupants as extremely violent left wing extremist. The protest group denies this description. From this point on the police were actively clearing and destroying the houses in the forest and evicting people out of the forest. A anarchists journalist man went to go and help defend the village, and fell 20 meters from a bridge to his death. Following the accident, Reul, announced that police activities in the forest would be suspended for a few days.<sup>237</sup>

The tensions between police and environmental activists and anarchists reached new heights on Monday, as German police resumed forced evictions from the Hambach Forest. Video footage also has shown violent confrontations with police and activists who refused to

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<sup>233</sup> Ben Knight, "Who's who in Hamburg's G20 protests," *DW* July 7, 2017) <https://www.dw.com/en/whos-who-in-hamburgs-g20-protests/a-39495922>

<sup>234</sup> "European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend report," *Europol* (2019): 59.

<sup>235</sup> Farinelli and Marinone, "Violent Leftwing and Anarchist Extremism (VLWAE) in the EU: Analysing Threats and Potential for P/CVE,"

<sup>236</sup> Police arrest Hambach Forest activists," *Deutsche Welle*, September 16, 2018, <https://www.dw.com/en/german-police-arrest-hambach-forest-activists/a-45504419>.

<sup>237</sup> Katherina Wecker, "Hambach in shock after journalist's death," *DW* (20 September, 2018).

<https://www.dw.com/en/stillness-and-shock-in-hambach-forest-after-journalist-dies/a-45579629>. retrieved: 26-6-





## Black bloc

Black bloc is a strategy that anarchists frequently employ and is known to escalate into violence. Groups of demonstrators cover their identities by dressing all in black and wearing black hats. They confront icons of capitalism and power, with direct action against perceived injustice. This protest movement started in Germany in the 1970s. Through online forums and anarchist websites, it has since spread globally. Because of their anonymity they can effectively defend themselves from police attacks, and act violently without any repercussions. Using a black bloc mask to engage in violence against the government and capitalism and the destruction of public property is encouraged. The black bloc use tactics like, covert guerrilla terrorism and sabotage and (non)violent civil disobedience.<sup>240</sup> Black bloc has been strongly associated with the 2017 G20 protests in Germany by the media and the police. Following violent black bloc protests at the 2017 G20, German politicians from all political parties called for a renewed emphasis on Europe's radical left.<sup>241</sup> This shows us that even though we as society do not support the tactic of using violence, it is effective in getting people to listen to them. It is also hard to see what kind of anarchists the black blocs are because of their anonymity. A prediction can be made based on the kind of protest they participate in and what kind of slogans, flags and demonstration



Figure 9: Black blocs holding anarchist flag and protesting Source: Matt Davis, "What are 'black bloc' anarchists?," *Big Think* (2019)

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<sup>240</sup> *Green anarchy* No. 5 (Late Spring 2001).

<sup>241</sup> Francis Dupuis-Déri, "How Black Blocs have changed protest movements around the world," *The Conversation* (August 24, 2017).

boards they are holding. There is no clear connection between green anarchism and black blocs but they have been present at similar protests, so it is a certainly a possible connection.

## **Conclusion**

Despite their historical links with violence, most green anarchist activities today are nonviolent. Considering that green anarchists have little faith in the government to address environmental issues. By utilising direct action and civil disobedience, which may result in violence, they take matters into their own hands. Even though green anarchists do not promote violence this sometimes still happens in mass protests or blockades. There are certain groups that go to protest and will actively search for violent interactions such as the ELF. But in most cases certain protest and blockades escalates, what consequently makes people more violent because they feel threatened, often by the police. The EU report has stated that they see a rise in more violent incidents over the past couple of years in eco radicalisation and anarchism. But most green anarchists are dedicated to nonviolent protests and are against individuals who use violent methods. Violent behaviour mostly occurs when there is police violence and riots. But also, psychological factors can influence if people behave violently or not. This thesis also looks at attacks that have been done by anarchists in the EU. The conclusion is that violence may result through direct action, but this is not a common occurrence. Green anarchists favour nonviolent demonstrations and only use force when it is absolutely necessary or as protection in their view.

## Chapter 5

### Other tactics that green anarchist employ

Particularly green anarchist commitments to the liberation of the planet and animals as well as the abolition of exploitative relationships and extractive industries try to achieve these goals with various use of protests.<sup>242</sup> The major strategies employed by green anarchists are those covered in the earlier chapters, such as mass protest, blockades, and occupations. However, these are by no means the only strategies that green anarchists might employ. For instance, while art, music, and lifestyle are all used as a form of protest, they are not as prevalent or well known as the other strategies. The rise of social media has been a positive development for green anarchists in West Europe. They have more reach for recruitment and it is easier to communicate. Freedom, equality, and mutual aid are the three core principles of anarchism, and they have influenced authors and artists throughout history. Therefore we want to examine these various strategies used by green anarchists because this does not imply that they are any less significant.

#### Art

In terms of the arts, green anarchists frequently use the arts to convey their political views and further their vision for a society that is more just and sustainable. Street art, graffiti, murals, sculptures, and performance art are just a few examples of this. In order to expose the ways in which consumerism, capitalism, and other kinds of oppression contribute to environmental destruction, green anarchist artists frequently utilize their art to question prevailing narratives about the environment and society. Additionally, they might produce works of art that honour and celebrate nature and inspire viewers to get in touch with it and protect it. This kind of art protest has a wider scope than written word is artistic demonstration. It allows people to get beyond linguistic obstacles. They can stand out from all other communications shown to us thanks to the usage of art.<sup>243</sup>

A certain movement called Reclaim the Streets, was founded in 1991, that used art as protest. They painted bike lines at night because they were against the polluting cars that were riding through the city. Alongside this strategy, they use art protest also in the form of music and raves. They would create a rave in the middle of the street where people could dance, eat,

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<sup>242</sup> Dunlap, "I don't want your progress! It tries to kill ... me!' Decolonial encounters and the anarchist critique of civilization," 2.

<sup>243</sup> Mark Mattern, "Anarchism and art," *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism* (2019): 589-602.

make music as a form of protests against the overfull streets.<sup>244</sup> This interruption of motorized traffic is a form of civil disobedience created by art. Extinction Rebellion is also known for using artistic protest with the use of art to create their own posters and performances. One factor in Extinction Rebellion's success is its eye-catching visual style. People can also download funds and posters online so they can spread it all over the globe. Even the Victoria and Albert Museum in London has acquired some of Extinction Rebellion's artifacts for its permanent collection. They have a wooden printing press from the collective, as well as a green, blue, and pink flag bearing the hourglass sign. Which gives green anarchist free advertisement in the museum as well.<sup>245</sup> Concepts like the “Red Rebel Brigade” are people who often join extinction rebellion in a calm and peaceful way. But they are also making a performance of their protest.<sup>246</sup> This is later also shared on social media what gives the movement more attention.



*Figure 10: The Red Rebels outside the Cabinet Office on Whitehall, during an Extinction Rebellion (XR) protest in Westminster (Photo: Victoria Jones/PA)*

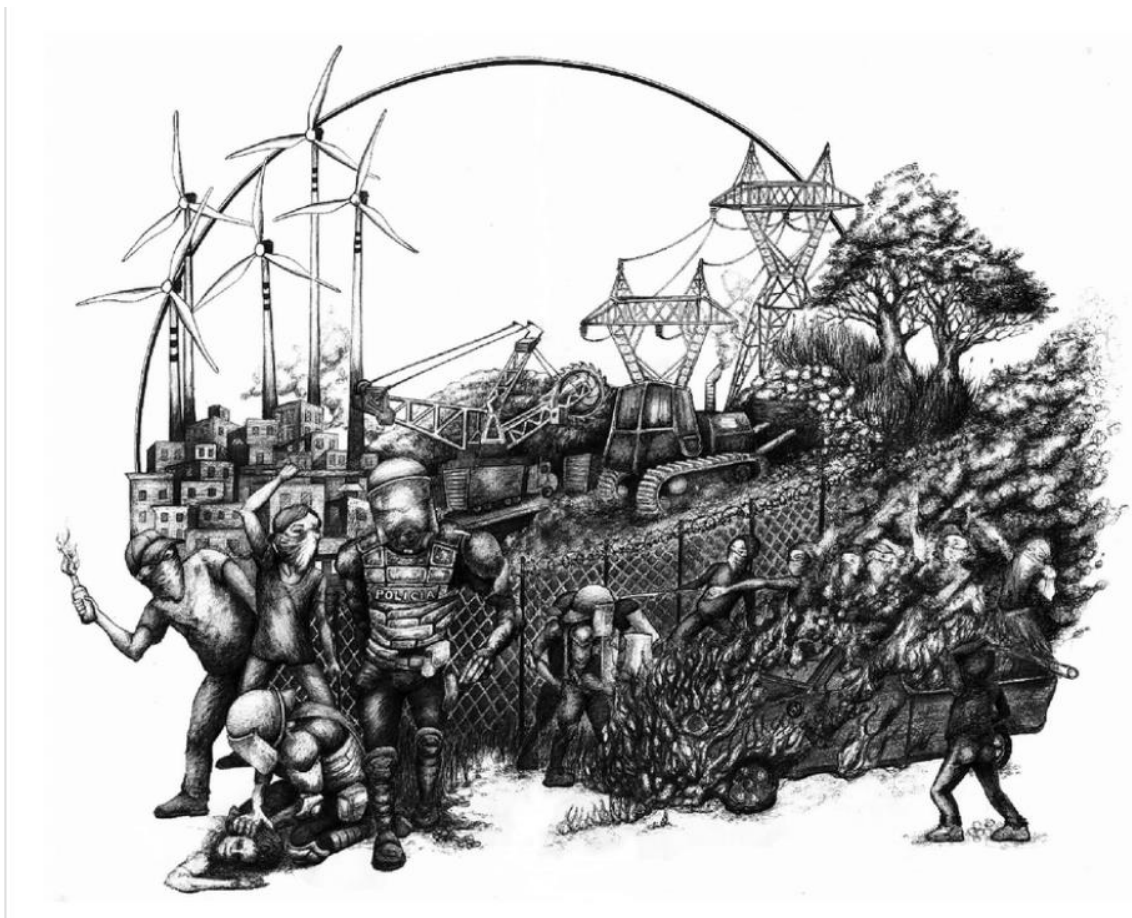
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<sup>244</sup> Julia Ramírez Blanco, “Reclaim The Streets! From Local to Global Party Protest,” *Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture* (July 2013).

<sup>245</sup> Anna Behrmann, “The artists of Extinction Rebellion: ‘Our bold imagery is helping to change the conversations around climate change’,” *Inews*, November 24, 2019, <https://inews.co.uk/culture/arts/extinction-rebellion-artist-protest-banner-art-red-rebel-flag-logo-366404>.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

Rebellious artistic actions have the power to motivate an environmentally aware public to take environmental action. However, to fully realise this potential, a careful balance must be struck between the art, the precise call to action, and the intended outcome. There must be an emphasis on both the internal and external aspects of art activism in social movement research and practise.<sup>247</sup> In order to help activists and independent organizations in their fight against industrial pollution, photography is also important vital in raising awareness of environmental ethics. Environmental photography is a collaborative form of cultural creation that uses aesthetics to advance the political ideals of green anarchist ideas like social ecology is crucial to this discussion.<sup>248</sup>



*Figure 11: Ecological anarchist and anti-extractivist struggle. Artist: Riona O'Regan.*

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<sup>247</sup> Lara Stammen & Miriam Meissner, "Social movements' transformative climate change communication: extinction rebellion's activism," *Social Movement Studies* (2022).

<sup>248</sup> Conohar Scott, "The eco-anarchist potential of environmental photography: Richard Misrach and Kate Orff's Petrochemical America," in *The Routledge Companion to Photography Theory*, eds. Mark Durden and Jane Tormey (London: Routledge, 2019), 260-275.

## **Anti consumerism**

Anti-consumerism tactics are used by green anarchists activists as part of their ultimate goals for political and subcultural opposition. Just to not consume because it is bad for the climate but also as a means to bypass capitalism.

Leading a completely non-consumptive lifestyle is not something that everybody can do, but anti-consumption has cultural and political relevance for activists.<sup>249</sup> There are a few examples of how anti-consumerism can help achieve green anarchists their goals. For instance, some green anarchists do not use soaps, shampoos, and deodorants. They state that it includes unnecessary chemicals created by capitalist companies that only want to make more money by making it unnatural.<sup>250</sup>

Another illustration of anti-consumption is veganism, which is popular among green anarchists. Consuming no items made from animals can be seen as a political act resistance against the capitalistic economy that routinely abuses animals. Many green anarchists were vegetarians before they became aware of or identified with anarchism, but many "went vegan" after they were able to combine an anarchist hostility to hierarchy with their prior dislike of animal killing.<sup>251</sup> Other green anarchist describe veganism as a form of avoiding the 'system'.<sup>252</sup> They criticize the agricultural and meat industry in this way.

Another anti-consumer tactic is not using an automobile. This is because cars are polluting and they do not want to support that. For example, Reclaim the Streets motivates people to reconsider and oppose the consumerist ideals that support automobile culture. Housing is another consumer item, what everyone needs. Green anarchists want to eliminate the need for housing. An example of this is the widespread anarchist practice of large-scale cohabitation, or collective dwelling, which involves anywhere between six and twenty people.<sup>253</sup> Communes like the ZAD's are examples of this. Many ZAD projects are anti-consumerist, they show alternatives to consumerist lives such as communal areas, organic gardens, and engaged in sustainable practices.<sup>254</sup>

Furthermore the phrase DIY ('do it yourself') is fairly common under green

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<sup>249</sup> Portwood-Stacer, Anti-consumption as tactical resistance: Anarchists, subculture, and activist strategy, 87.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid, 91.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid, 88.

<sup>254</sup> ZAD, Letter to the local committees, the supporters of this movement, and to all those who recognize themselves in the movement against the airport and its world, <https://zad.nadir.org/spip.php?article5047>

anarchists. Green anarchists actions represent yet another anti-consumption strategy. The principle underlying DIY is that one should, whenever possible, use their own, unalienated labor to produce the goods they need rather than investing money in industries and practices that exploit people and the environment. This is something that ASEED Europe promotes every day and gives workshops about it.<sup>255</sup> ASEED Europe also tries to minimize waste, promote local and sustainable recycling and promote a culture of sharing and cooperation.<sup>256</sup>

In addition, green anarchists use another method to battle consumerism which is shoplifting. Hereby green anarchists obtain consumable goods without any expense. This technique obviously carries some danger for the practitioner because it is illegal. Because if they get caught they could end up in prison or pay a fine. Green anarchists see shoplifting merely as a valid act of property redistribution. In other words, there is nothing morally wrong with anarchists reclaiming the goods those businesses sell for profit because the structure of capitalism exchange allows corporations to "steal" natural resources. Some green anarchists even claim to be freegans as well.<sup>257</sup> Freegans are individuals who oppose consumerism and work to reduce waste, particularly by salvaging and utilizing unwanted food and other items.<sup>258</sup> They express their opposition to consumer capitalism and the follow hierarchies. Not by not consuming but by not paying for their consumption. Freegans there lifestyle is not organized. Additionally, they believe that by taking things out of the system without adding anything to it, they are slowly weakening this system. The freegan way of life may goes beyond dietary restrictions to include a lifestyle that does not support the corrupt elements of the capitalist system financially.<sup>259</sup>

## Conclusion

In conclusion, green anarchists use unconventional strategies to further their environmental and social goals, including art, music, and anti-consumerism. These techniques are effective tools for mobilization, communication, and cultural change. Green anarchists use music and

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<sup>255</sup> Portwood-Stacer, "Anti-consumption as tactical resistance: Anarchists, subculture, and activist strategy," 89

<sup>256</sup> Building Solidarity & Connection Across Movements," ASEED published May 16, 2023, <https://aseed.net/building-solidarity-connection-across-movements/>.

<sup>257</sup> Lauren Corman, "Getting their hands dirty: Raccoons, freegans, and urban 'trash.'," *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* 9.3 (2011): 34-40.

<sup>258</sup> Jeff Shantz, "One person's garbage... Another person's treasure: Dumpster diving, freeganism, and anarchy," *Verb*. Vol. 3. No. 1. (2005).

<sup>259</sup> Portwood-Stacer, "Anti-consumption as tactical resistance: Anarchists, subculture, and activist strategy," 93-94.

art to evoke strong feelings and spur action. Anti-consumerism promotes sustainable lifestyles and opposes the status quo. Collectively, these strategies support continuous initiatives to create a world that is more ecologically and socially balanced. Green anarchists work such as ASEED, ZADs and more try to build a more just and sustainable society by using art, music, social media, and anti-consumerism. They achieve this by raising awareness, igniting action, and opposing prevailing structures and ideas.



## General Conclusion

Green anarchists have been influenced by nineteenth-century anarchist philosophers who wrote about the environment. Both Henry David Thoreau and Élisée Reclus were important philosophers whose works continue to influence modern green anarchism. Reclus supported bioregionalism, the idea that the Earth's ecosystems should be respected, and the idea that people should coexist with nature rather than destroying it to further their own interests. Thoreau, on the other hand, promoted simplicity and independence as a means of escaping the rules of society. People should live simplistic and strive towards being a better individual. This viewpoint is appealing to modern green anarchists who reject consumerist principles in popular culture and seek to live more sustainably and independently. By focussing on these 19<sup>th</sup> century anarchist, modern green anarchists expand on these concepts as we can see in the eco anarchism manifesto from 2001. Through the years green anarchists all over West-Europe have adhered these ideas from 1980 till now. This means renouncing state-based and economic structures in favour of self-sustaining, decentralized groups that prioritize social justice and environmental sustainability. These concepts are currently shared by all green anarchist movements, including Ende Gelände, Extinction Rebellion, and others. Green anarchists continue to be at the centre of radical movements for environmental and social change, gaining knowledge about these ideas and gaining new insights.

Additionally, green anarchists engage in direct action and other forms of protest in order to challenge and overthrow political structures that they view as oppressive to people and destructive to the environment. Green anarchists think that drastic action such as mass protests and blockades are necessary to stop future ecological degradation and fight against the status quo to tackle environmental issues. Besides, the non-hierarchical, decentralized structure of these tactics makes them a perfect strategy for supporting green anarchists their viewpoints. Green anarchists argue that direct action is a way of immediately confronting and trying to dismantle the institutions and companies responsible for environmental degradation. Next to this they try to develop an alternative structure for society that puts the environment first. Additionally, their strategies are not just random. For instance, when individuals go out and chain themselves to trees to defend the forest, they are not only doing so out of a simple concern for the environment and the woods, but also as a form of symbolic protest against the corporations. Specifically, environmentally destructive corporations that practice capitalism. This is the same with the success rate of their protest. Even though the government does not listen to them, they try with their tactics to reach as many people and spreading their symbolic

message. They argue if they just reach enough people in the end there will be too enough to overthrow the system. Although violence is not a shared practice by green anarchist, some of them may also employ this as a tactic. Often violence is used when green anarchist feels threatened from the state or when their fighting against injustice. Finally, green anarchists use direct action and other forms of protest to oppose repressive political structures and advance ecological sustainability.

Although there has been a rising emphasis on peaceful methods and innovative forms of resistance, green anarchists in West Europe have continued to use direct action and civil disobedience. This has included bringing attention to environmental challenges and refuting the status quo through the use of mass protests, blockades, art, music, and other cultural forms. In general, West European green anarchists have changed their methods throughout time to suit shifting social, political, and environmental situations. Since 2010 there was a rise in more environmental green anarchist mass protests throughout Europe. We see that different green anarchist movements use different degrees of tactics. Some do want a confrontation with government officials and others not. Some movements have more opportunities to protest than others. Although there have been some similar themes such as demonstrating against polluting companies, protecting forests and going against the state. After this all the green anarchist movement is still broad and dynamic, employing a wide range of tactics and methods to advance radical ecological transformation. Finally, it has been demonstrated that green anarchists nowadays cooperate more to attain their shared objectives in which they create transnational networks, because they will be stronger standing together.

Despite the fact that this thesis has used numerous sources on green anarchist methods, some important information may be omitted from magazines and newspapers, particularly when viewed from an anarchist perspective. Although blogs made by green anarchist are subjective, green anarchist blogs are often the only place to acquire information directly from those engaged in green anarchism. Such as, the GAIO eco manifesto, the blogs on Hambli Bleibt or blogs written on the anarchist library. It is possible that the medias terminology and viewpoint may not correspond to that of green anarchists. Police reports might just provide factual data and not present the full picture, and other sources like government records might not be available. Such is the case in the European report on the radical left. It may be difficult to get information directly from green anarchists as many of them are not online. In addition, as Lara Putnam describes in her article about what it is often the case that a lot of online papers could not be accurate or full, and older sources might be hard to find or cost a lot of

money to digitize and make available online.<sup>260</sup> Despite this, it is still possible to gain relevant knowledge about the actions of green anarchists by focusing on well-known sources and using a critical lens to research and understand the available data. Alongside, while this thesis only concentrates on Western Europe, there are other green anarchist movements and ideologies from other regions of the world. This is because green anarchists are a global movement. The green anarchist movements around the world are also being influenced by various notable philosophers, activists, and organizations outside of West Europe. This could be an interesting topic for future investigation.

Research on green anarchism in West Europe has given a better understanding for how radical political movements affect society. Through the analysis of different kinds of strategies and tactics used by green anarchists, this thesis has shown how these movements can influence public opinion, challenge established governmental power structures, and achieve social and environmental justice. Though there is still much to learn about the effects of green anarchism in West Europe, future studies might concentrate on a number of other areas in green anarchism itself. For instance, how social media affects movements like green anarchism and also to look at green anarchism in other parts of the world. It is clear from the analysis of the green anarchist movements and strategies, that it will persist and most likely just get greater because environmental challenges are becoming more severe. It is still a relevant topic in environmental politics and our current society could learn from them. Green anarchists are continuously assess their strategies and adapt to shifting social and political settings. Overall, in this research on green anarchism in West Europe has had influence for understanding how radical environmental political movements may actually bring about social and environmental change. But also try to create a sustainable future for everybody by continuing to engage with the complicated concerns and difficulties that everybody will face.

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<sup>260</sup> Putnam, 'The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast,' 383-384.



That's right, it's time to break out from your meager existence and this issue of *Green Anarchy* has plenty of ideas on how one might do so. The countdown to eco-**armageddon** has begun folks, and we need to start fighting back with every tool at our disposal. As anti-authoritarians, we define our own struggle and decide for ourselves what sort of tactics will be effective in the struggle to reclaim our lives and the planet. Invariably, our struggle will bring us into conflict with the state and its laws, as self-determined activity is one of the main things the rulers of our society fear. **Have fun!**

Figure 12: Break out from your meager existence. Source: Magazine Cover Green Anarchy 2001.

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