Est. 1841 | YORK ST JOHN UNIVERSITY

Keshtiban, Amir (2022) Prefigurative Spaces: Building Community and Collective Record of Resistance to Create Change in Spaces of Organizing. In: Collins, Joshua C. and Callahan, Jamie L, (eds.) The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Human Resource Development. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp. 91-108

Downloaded from: https://ray.yorksj.ac.uk/id/eprint/7148/

The version presented here may differ from the published version or version of record. If you intend to cite from the work you are advised to consult the publisher's version: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-10453-4_6

Research at York St John (RaY) is an institutional repository. It supports the principles of open access by making the research outputs of the University available in digital form. Copyright of the items stored in RaY reside with the authors and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full text items free of charge, and may download a copy for private study or non-commercial research. For further reuse terms, see licence terms governing individual outputs. Institutional Repositories Policy Statement

RaY

Research at the University of York St John

For more information please contact RaY at ray@yorksj.ac.uk

Prefigurative spaces: Building community and collective record of resistance to create change in spaces of organizing

Abstract

This chapter draws on previous calls to embrace critical human resource development (CHRD) approaches that challenge the mainstream human resource development's historically dominating normative structures, practises, policies, and definitions (HRD). To do so, this chapter draws on research on Social Movement Organizations (SMOs) to discuss prefigurative spaces as a means of facilitating bottom-up change in organisations by providing safe and nurturing spaces for members to identify new opportunities, recruit new participants, develop new identities, and form and discuss multiple perspectives. The prefigurative space of the Occupy London movement will be investigated, with the goal of learning more about developing an alternative, integrated framework for understanding and practising HRD.

Key words: CHRD, Prefigurative Politics, Prefigurative Space, Social Movements, Alternative forms of Organising

Introduction

There are emerging calls for the Human Resource Development (HRD) to move away from its existing mainstream approaches on performativity towards more inclusive and participative approaches. The main criticism of mainstream approaches of HRD is their tendency to rely on tick boxing activities as associated with Training & Development, Career Development, and Organization Development that stealthily strip away employee rights. Moving towards more inclusive approaches of Critical Human Resource Development (CHRD) that challenge the historically dominant normative structures, practices, policies, and definitions will enable practitioners and scholars to examine new possibilities and potentialities.

Focusing on current debates regarding the CHRD, in this chapter, I will discuss spaces of organising for inclusive change, considering the Occupy London (OL) movement as a case study. I will analyse the nature of the prefigurative space of the OL movement by looking at the repertoires of protest, decentralised structure, and leaderlessness that characterised the movement. I will argue the importance of such spaces with regard to HRD, which provide a safe and nurturing space to the members of an organisation to identify new opportunities, recruit new participants, develop new identities, and form and discuss multiple perspectives. This will enable the stakeholders to challenge the dominant discourses, which in turn will extend our knowledge of creating an alternative, nested framework of understanding and practicing HRD.

One of the important parts of the social movements that emerged in 2011 (the Arab Spring, the 15 M in Spain, the Occupy Movements across the world) was their tendency to advocate for an alternative form of organising. Their approach to organising promoted a decentralised, leaderless organisational form without any formal hierarchy in place (Gerbaudo, 2012) and advocated open spaces for discussions that foster real, direct, and participatory democracy (Sitrin, 2011). This organising strategy is built upon the concept of prefigurative politics. Boggs (1977) define the 'prefigurative' as a critique to bureaucratic domination, which promotes horizontal organisational structures embodying 'within the ongoing political practice of a movement, of those forms of social relations, decision-making, culture, and human experience that are the ultimate goal' (p. 100). This new alternative form of organising not only criticizes hierarchy and authority but creates new relationships that foster other ways of being and relating. Prefigurative politics have been implemented mostly in social movements and have only recently captured the attention of those attempting to apply its key concepts into traditional organisational settings.

Despite this recent attention, social movements and organization studies are 'like twins separated at birth' (Davis et al, 2005, p. 10). Although Callahan (2013) used the Occupy Wall Street movement to illustrate how HRD can learn from social movements as an alternative forms of organisation, Grenier (2019) noted that Human Resource Development (HRD) scholars have not started to properly look at social movements as organizations. This is problematic, she argues, because 'social movements have the potential to make visible and ignite discussions in HRD around the notions of politics, society, culture, globalization, justice, and education, as well as the role of organizations in contributing and responding to social movements' (P. 145).

Grenier's special issue of *Advances in Developing Human Resources* remains one of the few spaces in which HRD scholars have attempted to bring SMOs into HRD's literature. Kwon and Nicolaides (2019) argue for a need to reconceptualise social movement learning in HRD. Emphasising on the new forms of collective bargaining, Germain et al. (2019) argue that the grassroot activism has taken over the traditional and hierarchical trade unions. Their work suggests that social movements are applicable to the field of HRD by revealing how facilitating change has shifted from change agents to employees' empowerment. In this chapter, I further this argument by introducing the social movement concept of prefigurative politics and prefigurative spaces, arguing the importance of such spaces with regard to HRD, which HRD professionals can use to facilitate inclusive change in organisations.

This chapter begins with a brief discussion of prefigurative politics and the recent social movements that employed it as their alternative form of organising. Using the London Occupy Movement as an exemplar case, I discuss how prefiguration manifests in practice. This will then lead to a discussion of how spaces of social movement organising can be used in HRD to open up new possibilities for changing (Bierema & Callahan, 2014; Collins et al., 2015) and

the lessons learned to meet the changing environment of the future. The chapter concludes with some suggestions for future research.

Prefigurative politics

Although the term 'Prefigurative politics' was coined by Boggs (1977) in the 1970s, it can be argued that the ideology on which it was based was an important part of social movement organisations (SMOs) from the 1960s onwards. The term is linked with the New Left and its associated movements, such as the student and youth, peace, women's, LGBT, environmental and animal rights movements (cf. Hetland & Goodwin, 2013; Melucci, 1980), which are known as the 'New Social Movements' (NSM). Contrary to the Old Social Movements that focused on class as the central issue in politics, the NSMs have worked outside formal institutional channels, emphasising concerns about lifestyle, ethics and identity rather than narrowly economic goals (Calhoun, 1993).

A key point of reference of the NSM that employed the prefigurative politics was their criticism of the states/status quo and their available alternative, Marxism and socialist revolution, at the same time. Carl Boggs (1977) argues that the persistent issue is not because of the Stalinism and revisionism, but because of the deep seeded problem of Marxism to spell out the process of transition. This shortcoming was clear in the Marxist states, where they reinvented the wheel of bureaucracy. Under Leninism, organisation/party members were downgraded to technicians who stress the organisational ends while downplaying the means. Under this agenda, the suppression of values institutionalised, which justified the hierarchical structures, centralisation and alienated labour. This process reproduced what the leftists' critics dubbed as 'state capitalism' (Howard & King, 2001).

This persistence problem led to the emergence of the New Left and its prefigurative nature. The key point of reference for the prefigurative politics of the NSM was the emphasis put on the concept of community that attempted to create and sustain relationships and political forms

within the live practice of the movements to resemble their desired society (Boggs, 1977; Breines, 1980). The prefigurative politics as an alternative form of organising not only criticizes hierarchy and authority but attempts to promote horizontal organisational structures within the ongoing political practice of a movement, in which achieving that prefiguration is through emphasising on the means such as social relations, decision-making, culture, and human experience as ultimate goal (Boggs, 1977). In other words, the prefigurative politics brings all aspects of our social life to the fore, whether it is political analysis, our broader practices, language, ideas and assumptions, physical spaces, food, or social relationships (Rowbotham et al., 2013).

However, the NSM movements and their prefigurative politics have been criticised for their decentralised, spontaneous and activist nature, where most of their members energies were consumed by direct action, demonstration, sit-ins, etc, initiated at the local level. These characteristics led the scholars to dub the New Left and its associated movements as utopian, anti-organisational, even antipolitical movement which, for these very reasons, was bound to fail (Breines, 1980, p. 420). Moreover, the so-called lack of strategy (as defined by conventional theories) due to its decentralised structure, its multiplicity of the goals and its members spontaneity have received huge criticism. Responding to these criticism, Maeckelbergh (2011) argues that the prefigurative nature of these movements itself become a precise strategy that emphasises on the practices of the movements in their 'here and now' and illustrate how the utopian society could be exercised now rather than in the future. As she puts it, prefiguration 'is thought to be cultural, unorganized, and without any goal beyond the enactment of new cultural relations in the here and now among movement actors' (p. 6). We have seen this in famous slogan of the feminist movements, one of the prominent movements associated with the New Left, 'the personal is political' that became an important part of

prefigurative critiques highlighting hierarchies, inequalities, and exploitation that go beyond the reach of formal rules and laws (Raekstad & Gradin, 2020).

One aspect that have not been considered properly is the very fact that these failures are measured against the modernist, hierarchical, party organisation's standards that seek to see success as an achievement of power not against the prefigurative politics, which seeks to focus not only on goal(s) but also more importantly on means and the ways those goal(s) are achieved. As Breines (1980) puts it, 'The process, the means, the participation and the dialogue were as important as the goal.' (p.422). These movements have a clear political agenda in their own terms that does not focus on the party politics, dismantling state power or achieving the power, but on participatory democracy and direct action as ways to showcase its alternative way of perceiving organisation/the world and political structure. These alternative organisational structures and processes enable those movements to avoid co-optation by bringing politics to all spheres of social life and all structure of domination to their 'here and now'. As Maeckelbergh (2011) argues, by citing Sub comandante Marcos, these movements do not want to conquer the world, they seek instead to build the world anew (p. 2). Emphasising on the processes and practices, Lebowitz (2012) argues that through practice, 'people are able to develop their capacities and make themselves fit to create a new world' (Lebowitz, 2012, p. 188). In other words, these movements wanted to literally remain as a movement in its processual sense rather than committing themselves to structure, strategy (in its mainstream conceptualisation) and consequently any goal(s).

Now that we have considered the concept of prefigurative politics and its responses to the criticisms on structure/organisation and strategy, we move to discuss the spaces that the prefigurative politics create for its members to exercise their intended utopian society in their 'here and now'.

Prefigurative space

So far, I discussed the importance of means over the ends and how the means have consequences and affect the overall ends. I have also discussed the emphasis that the prefigurative politics put on practice and process rather than strategy (in its mainstream conceptualisation) and how this alternative form of organising could create a viable option to Michels (1968) 'Iron Law of Oligarchy'. Although it is very promising, however, this exercise needs to be done within nurturing spaces that advocate and promote such activities. It is worth noting that throughout the history of social movements, physical spaces have played major role in getting the movements organised. Evans and Boyte (1992) call these public places 'free spaces' in the community, which are 'the environments in which people are able to learn a new self-respect, a deeper and more assertive group identity, public skills, and values of cooperation and civic virtue. Put simply, free spaces are settings between private lives and large-scale institutions where ordinary citizens can act with dignity, independence and vision' (p.17). There are different reasons why these spaces called 'free spaces' such as their ability to provide a freedom from the authorities' surveillance, but according to Polletta (1999), the term 'free' associated to these spaces as they offer people a chance to preserve and build upon a collective record of resistance. In other words, these spaces enable people to envision their alternative society by supplying the activist networks, skills, and solidarity, which in turn enable people to experience a schooling in citizenship and learn a vision of common good in the course of struggling for change (Evans & Boyte, 1992; Polletta, 1999). Haug (2013) argues that these free spaces fulfil two functions for the movements. First, they provide 'a structural integration by connecting groups with each other, collecting resources, preparing protest activities, and doing public relations. Second, they aim at a cultural integration of the various groups and networks in developing a common frame of meaning (p. 708). One of the well-known examples of creating network and solidarity through these free spaces is the radical feminist movement's

consciousness-raising group in the late 1960s, which were facilitated by non-hierarchical, loosely structured, face-to-face settings isolated from those in power (Hirsch, 1990).

These free spaces facilitate within movements the spread of identities, frames, and tactics from one movement to another. Movements' members do not necessarily create free spaces, but they do enable existing spaces to become free spaces. For instance, churches, played a critical role in mobilising and organising the US civil rights movement (Goodwin and Jasper 2015). Schools, student lounges, bars or even military sites such as the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp (Feigenbaum et al., 2013) have also functioned as free spaces. These instances demonstrate how protesters leveraged existing spaces to their advantage to further their agendas. These spaces could be expanded to organisational settings, where members of organisations transform current settings into a free space to advocate for inclusive and positive changes. For instance, Kellogg (2009) reports on the importance of the 'free spaces' as small-scale settings that allowed for interaction among reformers outside their daily work in the process of organisational change in teaching hospitals. Kellogg refers to these free spaces as 'relational spaces'. Others have discussed these free spaces with different names, such as 'discursive space' (Hardy & Maguire, 2010) or 'experimental space' (Bucher & Langley, 2016; Cartel et al., 2019). Courpasson et al. (2017) call these spaces 'resisting places' and argue that how specific places within organisations are used creatively to resist the status que and efficiency targets that have been put up by senior managers. Toilets or backstage rooms in Shortt (2015) study on hairdressers working in hair salons and meaning of 'liminal spaces' used by hairdressers in their everyday lives or Kellogg's work on operating room and Iedema et al. (2010) hospital corridors are examples of those resisting places. The prefigurative spaces contribute to this literature by attempting to transform those free spaces into nurturing and reproductive spaces that do not merely oppose or resist the status quo or advocate mainstream

changes, as was the case with the preceding literature, but rather propose and live the positive and inclusive change that they desire within their here and now.

Prefigurative spaces are the 'autonomous zones' in which actors attempt to 'prefigure the society that the movement is seeking to build by modelling relationships that differ from those characterizing mainstream society' (Polletta 1999: 11). These settings, Polletta argues, provides people with the network intersection that enable people to have access not only to physical, financial, and communicative resources, but also to people whose only weak ties and consequent social distance and status enable them to challenge existing relations of deference. This is crucial in organisational contexts because employees may empower one another via practise by constructing and enacting within these prefigurative spaces, allowing them to enhance their abilities in the here and now. To illustrate this capacity of prefigurative spaces and connect it to the organisational settings, I will explore the prefigurative nature of Occupy London and how they have leveraged the prefigurative space in their SMO. The next part will go through the methods used to collect the data.

Methodology

Data gathering for the original study began some ten months after the Occupy London movement at St Pauls steps. This included interviews carried out with protesters all of whom had participated in the occupation of the St Pauls site. The data gathered also included the analysis of photographs and other visual material relating to the encampment. Some of this material was gathered from online sources (Occupy blogs websites and Twitter feeds). The original study also drew on a variety of press and media sources that reported on the development of the protests from its inception in October 2011 to the eviction of the protesters in February 2012. A total of 7 semi structured interviews and 22 conversational interviews with participants were conducted between early December 2012 and June 2013. Initial attempts to secure interviews with protesters met with refusals from potential respondents. This was due

to the fact that there was a strong sense on the part of protesters that action at St Paul's had been misrepresented by established news media. Over the course of four months, I engaged with programmes and meetings, such as general assemblies, workshops and different subgroups taking opportunities to contribute to the discussions. This engagement presented opportunities for informal interviews that allowed qualitative data to be gathered incrementally. This recalls Spradley (1980) argument that 'conversational' interview material can be elicited from unstructured and open ended encounters (Douglas, 1985; Fontana & Prokos, 2007). Whilst the 'outsider' status of the researcher presented difficulties at the outset, close engagement with the movement provided important insights and meaningful data was garnered from a variety of situations

The Occupy London

The Occupy London (OL) was initiated on October 15, 2011, when a small group of anti-austerity protestors gathered outside St Paul's cathedral. Following a number of failed attempts to occupy the buildings of the London Stock Exchange (Occupy LSX) the protesters occupied the steps that surround the cathedral. Up to 3000 protestors were involved in these actions. The OL emergence was in solidarity with the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) that emerged on 17 September 2011. The OWS emergence was linked to the Adbusters magazine call that asked people to flood into lower Manhattan, set up tents, kitchens, peaceful barricades and occupy Wall Street for a few months. It can be argued that the OWS in turn has been influenced by the Arab Spring in the Middle East and 15M movement in Spain. Although these movements had slightly different motives, the Arab Spring movements motive was to protest against dictatorship and corruption whereas the Western movement in 2011 were protesting against the austerity measures and unfair distribution of wealth in those countries, they all have the same repertoire of protest, or the range of tactics (Goodwin & Jasper, 2015; Tilly, 1978) such

as decentralised and horizontal structure with no assigned leader(s). Because of the similarity of their repertoires of protest, the Time Magazine chose the 'Protester' as Person of the Year, arguing that whether marching against dictatorships in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Libya, or protesting against neoliberal capitalism and austerity measures in Western countries, people have complained about the failure of traditional leadership and the fecklessness of institutions (Time Magazine).

Although the Occupiers did not use the St Paul's steps, 'free space', as discussed above, in a sense to recruit people from the Cathedral community at first, however, they used it to showcase their own prefigurative space to the world. They achieved this in two mediums. First, St Paul's cathedral is a major UK tourist attraction and one of the world's largest religious buildings, so it is always on the radar of news agency and public sphere. Second, St Paul's occupies a site adjacent to the medieval City whose walls define the present-day footprint of London's financial district, so by occupying the steps, the Occupiers challenged the taken for granted rules and beliefs of the society. According to Milkman and her colleagues, the capacity for securing symbolic and/or physical control of urban spaces, (particularly those close to prominent centres of political or financial power) is a central feature of the social movements (Milkman et al., 2013). Positioning the encampment on the cathedral steps provided the protesters with an opportunity for politically inspired remoralization of what had become an officially sanctioned tourist destination. Following the early discussion on 'prefigurative spaces', the St Pauls encampment camp can be understood as a site of ongoing social interaction (Elden, 2004).

The prefigurative space of the Occupy London

The Occupiers tried to live the future in present by creating the utopian city in their 'here and now'. In doing so, they built first aid tents, a recycling area for their rubbish, a cinema tent, a university tent, a library tent, a food donation counter, kitchen, and used their tents as offices and homes in their occupied physical space, all free for everyone to adhere to their alternative society. In other words, they used the occupied space to 'prefigure the society that the movement is seeking to build by modelling relationships that differ from those characterizing mainstream society' (Polletta, 1999, p. 11).

Interviews with protesters communicated vividly the lived experience of the encampment as a participatory space that offered mutuality and support, identity and a conduit for symbolic communication with the outside world.

> The identity we gained from occupying St Paul's was enormous. There was a clear space that brought us together, and suddenly it wasn't there anymore, and Occupy isn't fine. (Linda)

Members of the movement had a kind of prejudice about St Paul's steps, and the feeling of belongingness that physical space had on them in terms of support and collaboration:

> When I am talking about the space, I talk about the physical space. I think that was really the change; because we have had activism online, but it was bringing people that were acting online to one physical space, because that brings in not only, you know, getting to know each other as well, but, like, collaboration and support, emotional support, physical support, which you don't have in the same way online (Nick)

The encampment worked as a participatory community in which protesters could access to free education, health services or communal kitchens. Some participants spoke about the sense of ownership that pervaded the site. This was apparent even amongst those who did not sleep overnight in the camp.

> When we had St Paul's steps, that was my home, even if I didn't sleep there overnight because I needed to wash myself, and also my daughter who is only six. So, I was there every day; it was my real home (Christine).

Others talked about the power of the space and how the space bring them together

> I think we didn't realise how powerful it actually was to have a fixed space, because first of all, it became our home for days, you know! We started building tents, and we started using it in different ways, but then people always knew that we were there, so they could always come back (Sally).

Another participant also spoke about the importance of the physical space in terms of convergence, which helped them significantly to get back together, communicate more easily and quickly, and broaden their radius of acquaintances:

> When we had the occupation in St Paul's, what was very useful about the occupation of this area was everybody was together. It is not happening this much now. It enables the different groups to report back to general assembly more easily. The occupation of an area actually facilitates, makes easier the interconnection of the groups, of the general assembly (James).

It can be argued that by occupying the physical space and making that space their home by erecting tents, they created a social space. This social space acted as a source of identity and a symbol of the movement, where people knew where to go and find each other. In other words, the occupied physical space became a convergence spot for new recruits and a collective identity for the movement. Apart from identity building through the aid of space and gaining support and convergence from the physical space, the occupied space also played a role as a representational space for the Occupiers, representing the society they aspired to build, in contrast to the existing dysfunctional capitalist system. In other words, the protesters

appropriated a politically and historically significant public space, transforming it into a political commons and establishing a prefigurative free space.

The importance of building an alternative society was underlined on another occasion by a group of three Occupiers, when asked what St Paul's steps meant to them now, after the eviction. One replied that it had everything they needed to live in a civilised way. Indeed, he called it a 'small village'. He also expressed his sadness that there was no longer any physical space:

> Within a few days, there was this entire village, hundreds of people, black and white, pink and blue, old and young, and children and hippies and suits, scholars. We had some people who came and gave us lectures from the academic community day after day. It was amazing. Many of us are still sad, you know, that we have no camp anymore (Paul).

Another member of that particular group also commented on the importance of physical space in terms of decision making, as they used to hold general assemblies in that space:

> We used to have general assemblies every single day. After the eviction, we had chaos for a while (Rob).

This indicates the importance of the space not only for convergence, but also for organising the movement and, more importantly, its existence. The physical space became a decision-making arena for the Occupy members, who exercised real, direct, and participatory democracy in their general assemblies by building their community while at St Paul's steps within their 'here and now'.

Discussion

The Occupiers converted a public space (empty space) into a political common that functioned as a site for open discussion and debate (Harvey, 2012). The occupied space can be seen as a

prefigurative free space (Polletta, 1999) in which the Occupiers attempted to build and exercise their own desired society. The occupied space enabled them to act with dignity, independence and vision (Evans and Boyte 1986). Participants in the research constantly talked about the encampment and St Paul's steps as their utopia, a place that made many things possible for them, such as friendship, unity and mutual support. The protesters felt empowered by the sense of unity that occupation of the physical space had given them. The occupied space provided an opportunity to show how participative democracy could develop around alternative social forms at the very heart of London's financial district.

As I discussed earlier, the location of the Occupy London movement, St Paul's steps' and the subsequent eviction from the steps of St Paul's raised real and significant consequences, leading many to question the legitimacy of the civic and religious authorities who were nominally in control of the site. In other words, the Occupy movement managed to create a 'crack' (Holloway, 2010) in the capitalist system. As Brienne argues, Citing Piven and Cloward's (1977) work on the analysis of poor people's movement in America, protest and mass insurgency are the only alternatives open to poor people seeking redress of their grievances. In other words, due to resources available to poor people in terms of organisation, disruption becomes their only political alternative that has been proven successful throughout history. Experiences show that they have achieved more this way than through building their own ultimately bureaucratic organizations. This was the case for the Occupy London movement, as the occupiers managed to disrupt the major UK tourist attraction and one of the world's largest religious buildings as the symbol of status quo at the very heart of London's financial district. They even managed to create a 'crack' within the management of the Cathedral in terms of how to respond to the occupation of the St Paul's steps. The London Evening Standard reported on Monday 31 October that the Dean of St Paul's the reverent Graeme Knowles (who was believed to be 'with the protesters'), had resigned. Church

authorities within St Paul's were said to be ‘in crisis’ after the Dean had ‘sensationally resigned over his handling of the "tent city" protest’ (Harper et al., 2011).

Similar to other movements that adopted the prefigurative politics, the Occupy movements have been criticised for not having an assigned goal, which eventually led to demise (eviction) of the movement. Similar criticism was discussed earlier regarding the NSMs. We have discussed earlier that not following the established rules of the game in terms of having an assigned goals and strategies to achieve those goals, was at the heart of these movements and it was their chosen structure by choice to avoid the co-optation attempts. These movements tried to disrupt the system and create a crack in the neoliberal capitalism. As Graeber (2002) argues, ‘It’s one thing to say, “Another world is possible”. It’s another to experience it, however momentarily.’ (p. 72). The Occupy London have shown that another world is possible and attracted several people from various background to engage in this discussion and gave them the chance to live it in their ‘here and now’ within the live practice of the movement rather than awaiting it in the future. As Cornell (2011) argues, the prefigurative actions ‘propose’ alternatives to the status quo.

Prefigurative politics and CHRD

Emphasising on the needs of embracing alternative forms of organising, Callahan (2013) argues that the HRD field needs to loosen its ‘definitions of what constitutes an ‘organization’ that is relevant for the study and practice of HRD in order to meet the changing environment of the future’ (p. 299). This is where the prefigurative politics come to the fore, as an alternative setting that enables people to free themselves from pre-defined, fixed roles and rules within a structured organisation towards a new alternative organisational setting. In other words, the prefigurative politics is a shift from mainstream, already defined roles and structures towards a new fluid and unstructured alternative forms of organisation.

The findings from the OL illustrates that the combined use of virtual and physical spaces enabled the Occupiers to showcase their prefigurative movement, by resisting the capitalist state, while proposing an alternative. This could be a lesson for the organisational members to learn from the OL movement and how to embed prefigurative nature in their change process that not only opposes the status quo, but also proposes new practices. Employees should perceive this prefigurative space as their own property, which they may manage, preserve, and oversee among themselves. This will empower them to personalise it, transform it, or even keep it as it is; the key fact is that it is employees' space, and within that space they can begin to not just challenging the status quo but also to implement their inclusive change. This will enable individuals to make sense of their environment, which will encompass both their personal lives and large-scale institutions in which they may act with dignity, freedom, and vision. In order to elaborate this discussion in terms of organisational settings in more detail, I discuss the prefigurative space in a recent event at Google, The Google Walk Out.

On November 1, 2018, thousands of Google employees across the world walked out at 11 am in their local time zone to protest Google's decision to pay millions of dollars in departure packages to male executives accused of misconduct while remaining silent about the offences. (The New York Times). Within three days the walkout organisers managed to organise this huge walk out across Google's branches that attracted 20,000 Google employees. They have used various online platforms to inform the employees and the world about their walkout and on November 1, 2018 Google workers around the world stopped working and poured out of their offices into the streets to protest. A significant point of reference here is their clever use of the Googlewalkout hashtag to include all stakeholders in their campaign, as well as their enormous engagement with mainstream and social media while protesting on the streets of Google buildings, similar to what happened in OL case, discussed earlier. Google employees used these physical and virtual spaces to showcase their protest to the public, recruit new

participants and create agendas for discussion in their here and now. As with the OL movement, which was eventually evicted, the Google walk out organisers' demands were not met at the start of their process, however, this gave those involved in the process integrity with oneself and others, dignity and pride of being part of the change process while trying to maintain hope even though the mainstream current is extremely strong (Noelliste, 2013). This also offered support, knowledge and inspiration to other giant tech companies' employees as a new era for tech companies being challenged by their own employees (Bhuiyan, 2019). The prefigurative space that brought the Google Employees together (streets of Google's buildings) that enabled bottom up change initiation by disrupting the system. The prefigurative space, gave them identity, dignity and being empowered as they took the matter in their hand by promoting and enacting grassroot activism rather than considering traditional and hierarchical methods such as trade unions. The prefigurative space gave the employees the power of showcasing their protest as well as the ability to identify new opportunities, recruit new participants, develop new identities, form and discuss multiple perspectives to create their inclusive future and fight against inequality in their workplace.

Criticising the current state of the Human Resource Development (HRD), Bierema and Callahan (2014) argue that the field is dominated by masculine characteristics of assertiveness, objectivity, control, and performance. What is needed is not another tick boxing activity to equalise the inequalities by balancing the numbers without a comprehensive understanding of the inclusivity and equality issues (Collins et al., 2015), or focusing on big multinational companies and ignoring the Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Nolan & Garavan, 2016) but for workers and stakeholders to involve in big decision making processes and make real differences. For doing so, we need to emphasise on the role of prefigurative spaces that facilitate bottom-up change in organisations as safe and nurturing spaces to the members of organisation that enable them to identify new opportunities, recruit new participants, develop

new identities, form and discuss multiple perspectives (Polletta, 1999, p. 8). This will allow stakeholders to build a shared frame of meaning by integrating the cultures of diverse groups and networks to challenge dominant discourses, therefore expanding our knowledge of developing an alternative, integrated framework for understanding and practising HRD. This is only possible if employees believe in themselves and begin to create the necessary prefigurative space, both physical and virtual, which in turn initiates the dialogue that allows them to not only ask but also provide answers to challenging questions as was the case for the Google Walkout. It will be a rough road, but as the OL case illustrated it can create a 'crack' within the established system. The key point of reference is that the means, the participation and the dialogue within this process is as important as the goal (Breines, 1980). As Callahan and Elliott (2020) argue, resisting managerialist doctrine will be worthwhile regardless of the consequences.

The prefigurative politics creates a safe and inclusive space for everyone with different mindset to join and express their opinions, which was missing from the mainstream HRD (Bierema & Callahan, 2014; Collins et al., 2015). This inclusivity of the prefigurative politics creates a prefigurative space that brings diverse opinions from multiple stakeholders to the change process. The emphasis on means rather than the ends makes the prefigurative politics an ethical process, in which the strategic ends will not justify any means to achieve them. This is because the change agents are not working toward a planned change to make their future workplace a better place to work but enacting their proposed practices for that better workplace in their 'here and now'. As they will be emphasising on the means such as social relations, decision-making, culture, and human experience as ultimate goal (Boggs, 1977).

This is in line with Bierema and Callahan (2014) conceptualisation of the Critical Human Resource Development (CHRD), where their focus is on the inclusive processes and practices rather than rigid planned developments that in reality just enhance organisational aims. They

have borrowed Lee's (2001) account on HRD as a becoming process rather than a thing of being, which enable HRD to be continuously recreated into renewed becoming. This is consistent with the prefigurative politics' processual nature that emphasizes on the processes and practices that enable people to 'develop their capacities and make themselves fit to create a new world' (Lebowitz, 2012, p. 188). According to Cotter (2014), there is an impasse in moving forward for HRD practitioners when it comes to power structures in their organisations. This impasse is the result of an apparent means–end discrepancy between CHRD and practitioner aims. However, these prefigurative spaces, combined with critical reflexivity, would allow practitioners to challenge and change structures that are frequently assumed to be dominant (Cotter, 2014; Sambrook, 2009).

It is worth noting that although the prefigurative politics is an ideal approach for organisation's members to create their prefigurative space within their 'here and now', however, this may not be the case for all organisations on every occasion. What then the prefigurative spaces would help to achieve though, is a creation of safe and nurturing space to discuss and engage with progressive and inclusive ideas and discussions, while resisting the non-prefigurative, performative approaches. We need to bear in mind that prefigurative politics is an incremental process for social change that illustrates such a utopian society is possible and can be enacted in our 'here and now'. Therefore, what is needed is a consistent emphasis and safeguarding on these prefigurative spaces that enable us to create a necessary force to become powerful change agents in the organisations by showcasing the new cultural relations in the here and now among actors. Employees as change agents can treat these prefigurative spaces as theirs, open to use and personalization, where they can be in control and be present in an embodied way (Kociatkiewicz et al., 2020). As Discussed earlier, these spaces will try to create a 'crack' (Holloway, 2010) in the system by 'proposing' alternatives to the status quo while 'opposing' to the current way of doing things (Cornell, 2011).

Conclusion

I started off this chapter arguing of the need for the HRD to seek new ideas by taking on alternative forms of organising to embrace more inclusive approaches that challenge the historically dominated normative structures, practices, policies, definitions, and approaches. In this chapter, I discussed how the HRD practitioner could incorporate 'prefigurative spaces' to start an inclusive conversation and enact the social change that they want in their 'here and now'.

As I outlined in my case study, the Occupiers used the prefigurative space not only to gather in a particular space, but also as a space that gave them collective identity in a sense of being acknowledged as members of a group. The prefigurative space also provided them with a sense of belongingness. This sense of belongingness is created by the safe and nurturing space that was available for them to use. The space allowed them to establish a welcoming environment in which any idea could be shared and explored. They were able to re-connect, interact more simply and swiftly, and extend their circle of acquaintances as a result of this convergent space. It also enabled people not just to discuss those ideas, the majority of which were about creating a better future, but also to put them into action.

The examples from organisational settings and the different terms that they have used for the free spaces such as 'relational spaces', 'discursive spaces', 'liminal spaces' or 'resisting spaces' illustrated that practitioners have also started to create spaces similar to prefigurative spaces, which gave them independence and vision that enable them to learn a new self-respect, develop a deeper and more assertive group identity, share new skills, and create new values of cooperation. However, as this chapter illustrated, the prefigurative space moves one step further from those spaces in which it enables diverse range of stakeholders to enact their proposed changes in their 'here and now' even though that those changes are the limited ones. The prefigurative spaces serve as identity-shaping resources for practitioners, allowing them

to challenge the status quo and live an alternative that they co-created. The CHRD's main task thus is to ensure that these spaces are valued and produced in the process of becoming. As the OL and the Google Walk Out example illustrated, the improvements offered by these spaces will not result in a fast shift, as with management restructuring changes, but in a negotiated space that will allow its members to act with dignity, independence, and vision (Evans and Boyte 1986). These prefigurative spaces serve as a foundation for members to build their discursive content and cultural aspirations. These spaces promote political, cultural, economic, and ecological encounters with common interests as a 'participatory way of practising effective politics' (Routledge, 2003, p. 345), which in turn will enable them 'to develop their own micro-political skills and to ask questions about power and powerlessness' (Trehan & Rigg, 2011, p. 286). The prefigurative spaces therefore will be employed as shapeshifting alternative that 'negotiate their own boundaries vis-à-vis the status quo' (Parker et al., 2014, p. 361) that moves away from critical reflection ideas in CHRD that place too much emphasis on making practitioners critical rather than engaging with them in critically reflective ways (Cotter, 2014). This is in line with what Callahan (2013) argues that such spaces encourages creative risk-taking which enable the practitioners to challenge and potentially shape their identity.

Future research could look at these prefigurative spaces in different organisational contexts to examine HRD practitioners' experiences in developing and sustaining these spaces while resisting the status quo as well as normative modes of change. This will expand our understanding of the roles of SMOs and prefigurative spaces as an inclusive alternative to resist organisational settings and normative modes of change from various levels of analysis.

References

Bhuiyan, J. (2019). How the Google walkout transformed tech workers into activists. *The Los Angeles Times*.

Bierema, L., & Callahan, J. L. (2014). Transforming HRD: A framework for critical HRD practice. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *16*(4), 429-444.

Boggs, C. (1977). Marxism, prefigurative communism, and the problem of workers' control. *Radical America*, *11*(6), 99-122.

Breines, W. (1980). Community and Organization: The New Left and Michels'"Iron Law". *Social Problems*, *27*(4), 419-429. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/800170

Bucher, S., & Langley, A. (2016). The Interplay of Reflective and Experimental Spaces in Interrupting and Reorienting Routine Dynamics. *Organization Science*, *27*(3), 594-613. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2015.1041

Calhoun, C. (1993). "New social movements" of the early nineteenth century. *Social Science History*, *17*(03), 385-427.

Callahan, J. L. (2013). 'Space, the final frontier'? Social movements as organizing spaces for applying HRD. *Human Resource Development International*, *16*(3), 298-312. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2013.782945

Callahan, J. L., & Elliott, C. (2020). Fantasy spaces and emotional derailment: Reflections on failure in academic activism. *Organization*, *27*(3), 506-514. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508419831925

Cartel, M., Boxenbaum, E., & Aggeri, F. (2019). Just for fun! How experimental spaces stimulate innovation in institutionalized fields. *Organization Studies*, *40*(1), 65-92. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840617736937

Collins, J. C., McFadden, C., Rocco, T. S., & Mathis, M. K. (2015). The problem of transgender marginalization and exclusion: Critical actions for human resource development. *Human Resource Development Review*, *14*(2), 205-226.

Cornell, A. (2011). *Oppose and Propose: Lessons from Movement for a New Society* (Vol. 2). AK PressDistribution.

Cotter, R. J. (2014). Reflexive spaces of appearance: rethinking critical reflection in the workplace. *Human Resource Development International*, *17*(4), 459-474. https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2014.932090

Courpasson, D., Dany, F., & Delbridge, R. (2017). Politics of place: The meaningfulness of resisting places. *Human Relations*, *70*(2), 237-259. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726716641748

Douglas, J. D. (1985). *Creative Interviewing*. Sage, Beverly Hills, CA. https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=nq2lPwAACAAJ

Elden, S. (2004). *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*. Bloomsbury Academic. http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=0r3GuXoz77UC

Evans, S. M., & Boyte, H. C. (1992). *Free Spaces: The Sources of Democratic Change in America*. University of Chicago Press. https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=M3Ui_j2RwNsC

Feigenbaum, A., Frenzel, F., & McCurdy, P. (2013). Protest camps. *Zed Books*.

Fontana, A., & Prokos, A. H. (2007). *The Interview: FROM FORMAL TO POSTMODERN*. Left Coast Press. https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=rpExgChKB4wC

Gerbaudo, P. (2012). *Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism*. Pluto Press. http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=sjb_ygAACAAJ

Germain, M.-L., Robertson, P., & Minnis, S. (2019). Protests, Rallies, Marches, and Social Movements as Organizational Change Agents. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *21*(2), 150-174. https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422319827903

Goodwin, J., & Jasper, J. M. (2015). *The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts* (3rd, Ed.). Wiley. https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=jTbcBAAAQBAJ

Graeber, D. (2002). The new anarchists. *New left review*, *13*(6), 61-73.

Grenier, R. S. (2019). Speaking Truth to Power Through Social Movements and Learning. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *21*(2), 143-149. https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422319827902

Hardy, C., & Maguire, S. (2010). Discourse, field-configuring events, and change in organizations and institutional fields: Narratives of DDT and the Stockholm Convention. *Academy of Management journal*, *53*(6), 1365-1392.

Harper, T., Bryant, M., & Dominiczak, P. (2011). Dean who shut St Paul's resigns: second cleric quits over 'tent city' protest. *The Evening Standard, 31 October. [Online]. Retrieved from https://www.standard.co.uk/news/dean-who-shut-st-pauls-resigns-second-cleric-quits-over-tent-city-protest-6362916.html (Accessed: 7 January 2018).*

Harvey, D. (2012). *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. Verso. http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=s4s5f7NnaZAC

Haug, C. (2013). Organizing spaces: Meeting arenas as a social movement infrastructure between organization, network, and institution. *Organization Studies*, *34*(5-6), 705-732. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840613479232

Hetland, G., & Goodwin, J. (2013). The strange disappearance of capitalism from social movement studies. *Marxism and social movements*, *46*, 86-98.

Hirsch, E. L. (1990). Sacrifice for the cause: Group processes, recruitment, and commitment in a student social movement. *American Sociological Review*, 243-254.

Holloway, J. (2010). *Crack capitalism*. Pluto Press.

Howard, M., & King, J. E. (2001). 'State capitalism'in the Soviet Union. *History of Economics Review*, *34*(1), 110-126.

Iedema, R., Long, D., & Carroll, K. (2010). Corridor communication, spatial design and patient safety: enacting and managing complexities. *Organizational spaces: Rematerializing the workaday world*, 41-57.

Kociatkiewicz, J., Kostera, M., & Parker, M. (2020). The possibility of disalienated work: Being at home in alternative organizations. *Human Relations*, *0*(0), 0018726720916762. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726720916762

Kwon, C.-k., & Nicolaides, A. (2019). Reconceptualizing Social Movement Learning in HRD: An Evolutionary Perspective. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *21*(2), 267-279.

Lebowitz, M. A. (2012). *The Contradictions of "Real Socialism": The Conductor and the Conducted*. Monthly Review Press. https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=NfknAAAAQBAJ

Lee, M. (2001). A refusal to define HRD. *Human Resource Development International*, *4*(3), 327-341. https://doi.org/10.1080/13678860110059348

Maeckelbergh, M. (2011). Doing is believing: Prefiguration as strategic practice in the alterglobalization movement. *Social Movement Studies*, *10*(01), 1-20.

Melucci, A. (1980). The new social movements: A theoretical approach. *Information (International Social Science Council)*, *19*(2), 199-226.

Michels, R. (1968). *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*. Free Press. https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=1GwcBdQwIZYC

Milkman, R., Lewis, P., & Luce, S. (2013). The Genie's out of the Bottle: Insiders' Perspectives on Occupy Wall Street. *The Sociological Quarterly*, *54*(2), 194-198.

Noelliste, M. (2013). Integrity:An Intrapersonal Perspective. *Human Resource Development Review*, *12*(4), 474-499. https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484313492333

Nolan, C. T., & Garavan, T. N. (2016). Problematizing HRD in SMEs: A "Critical" Exploration of Context, Informality, and Empirical Realities. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *27*(3), 407-442. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.21261

Parker, M., Cheney, G., Fournier, V., Land, C., Parker, M., Cheney, G., Fournier, V., & Land, C. (2014). Advanced capitalism: Its promise and failings. *The Routledge companion to alternative organization*, 3-17.

Polletta, F. (1999). "Free spaces" in collective action. *Theory and Society*, *28*(1), 1-38. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1006941408302

Raekstad, P., & Gradin, S. S. (2020). *Prefigurative Politics: Building Tomorrow Today*. Wiley. https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=k31wxAEACAAJ

Routledge, P. (2003). Convergence space: process geographies of grassroots globalization networks. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *28*(3), 333-349. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-5661.00096

Rowbotham, S., Segal, L., & Wainwright, H. (2013). *Beyond the fragments: Feminism and the making of socialism*. Merlin Press.

Sambrook, S. (2009). Critical pedagogy in a health service management development programme. *Journal of Health Organization and Management*, *23*(6), 656-671. https://doi.org/10.1108/14777260911001662

Shortt, H. (2015). Liminality, space and the importance of 'transitory dwelling places' at work. *Human Relations*, *68*(4), 633-658. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726714536938

Sitrin, M. (2011). Horizontalism: From Argentina to Wall Street. *NACLA Report on the Americas*, *44*(6), 8-11. https://doi.org/10.1080/10714839.2011.11722131

Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant Observation*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston. http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=sQClDJXc5vkC

Tilly, C. (1978). From Mobilization to Revolution. *McGraw-Hill*.

Trehan, K., & Rigg, C. (2011). Theorising critical HRD: a paradox of intricacy and discrepancy. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, *35*(3), 276-290. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090591111120421

http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2101745_2102139,00.html