

Small guide for more autonomy, creativity, efficiency, radicalism and solidarity in the fight

THE MECHANISMS TO WATCH OUT FOR

We have realized the existence of mechanisms bounding our reflections and making us repeat the same strategies and methods: together, they form a militant software. These mechanisms are not found everywhere nor all the time, yet they exist. We would like to *encourage ourselves to do better*, not to make us feel bad because we don't do enough!

Let us stop for a moment, take the time, a step to the side to *overcome, deconstruct, and potentially reconstruct our frame*. To think outside the box, we must be familiar with the box itself!

As a result, here are some mechanisms that we must watch out for, alongside, here and there, paths to overcome them:

AUTOMATIC CHOICES

The automatism of political expression

We carry out actions for the expression of a disagreement (i.e demonstrations) with a too-well-known contestation vocabulary, often anticipated by the system.

The symbolism

We come first to fulfil needs for meaning and community, to see ourselves in the values of a group, to satisfy the ego instead of reaching the objectives.

The aim of the number

By wanting to group as many together as possible, we might never be enough to... be enough! The number is just a means, not an aim.

The media endorsement

We smoothen our speech to facilitate a media coverage we cannot ensure.

STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS

The sluggishness of structures (the institutionalisation)

We are organised via structures (associations, ONG...) that change necessarily more slowly than the militants, which makes them less agile.

The recycling of revolt

«You're angry? Join an association!» Our structures do not know how to use anger, raw motivation, as energy to act. They recycle it, canalise it, or tame it.

The initiates' secret

We leave a small number of people, who concentrate the information, take the decisions.

PSYCHOLOGICAL RESTRAINTS

The tale of powerlessness

We choose our battles depending on our chances to win them, instead of on the necessity to win them.

The lack of means Tale

We remain convinced to have the same means (human and financial) as before, even though they are more important: Make requests!

The soft consensus

It is in the name of a consensus that we invent mobilisations that do not really please anyone.

Pedagogy of the wait

We postpone to tomorrow what could be done today with the forces that we dispose of. We wait for the right moment...

The sunk cost fallacy

The context having changed, the energy spent in an action project keeps us from challenging it, even though we are doubtful about its efficiency and relevance.

Learning from defeats

By fear of discouraging ourselves, we silence our failures instead of reviving them to learn from our collective mistakes, and eventually do better.

Compartmentalisation and specialisation

The division of work (communication responsible, campaign manager, etc) and the specialisation by field of expertise inhibits the development of a global, complex, critical view.

CULTURAL LIMITATIONS

The faith in a smooth transition

The word of scientists is unanimous, the door of transition is closing. Yet, our speech struggles to adapt. A 180 degrees turn is necessary.

Citizenism

We expect from institutions that maintain capitalism to listen to us and to put themselves at our service. What if they don't?

Organising to lose

We choose our battles depending on our chances to win them, instead of on the necessity to win them.

The culture of "doing"

"What are we doing?" and "How are we doing it?" comes before "Why are we doing it? What do we support?"

The intellectual and creative poverty

We do not take the time to feed each other intellectually, neither to make our creativity flourish.

The incomprehension of the non-violent strategy

Confused with pacifism, we see non-violence as the fact of keeping tidy, not disturbing too much, and avoiding repression.

The culture of sacrifice

We do not allow ourselves to live sufficiently well in our fight. We accept a thousand constraints without communicating the burden it can be.

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THE QUESTIONS WE MUST ASK OURSELVES

This schematic is a tool for brainstorming in the aim of *deconstructing our habits, inventing strategies and means of action*. Start with number 1, then jump from a step to another while noting down the ideas as they come. Once an idea is written, come back to the beginning until you run out of questions, then go through questions number 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. When an idea comes, cherish it. When others present an idea that you don't like, first look for and express what you do like in it! That way, we will avoid losing completely a valuable idea nested within another.

Count 3 hours minimum, in small groups from 3 to 15 people.

1. Analyse the context

What is happening?

- What emotions are people feeling?
- What are they talking about?
- What are the media talking about?
- What are the politicians talking about?
- Which events are going to take place?

2. Summarize

In which situation are we now?

- What is upsetting us?
- What have we done up until now? Why? Aiming at what?
- What were our difficulties? Our failures? How do we explain them?
- What has changed these past months? Weeks? Days?

3. Set objectives

What do we want to do?

- Against what are we fighting?
- Why are we fighting?
- Are our objectives sufficiently concrete?
- Are we ambitious enough?
- What are the intermediate steps?
- Are our objectives useful?
- What has changed these past months? Weeks? Days?

4. Identify the targets

Who/what is involved?

People having an impact, infrastructures/buildings, allies of our opponents, places of power...

- Which objectives do they pursue?
- Which means do they dispose of?
- Opponents' strengths? Opponents' weaknesses? Which strengths can we oppose to the weaknesses of our opponents?
- Is the target essential to the activities of the opponent?
- Is the target vulnerable and accessible?

5. Realize our habits

What would we usually do?

Demonstrations, petitions, advocacies, photos operations, emailing...

- What would we ask for?
- To whom would we ask?
- Would we like to try something else?
- With who would we do it spontaneously?

6. Choose our means of action

Imagine the action

- Do we imagine a progression in the actions? A story that binds them? More and more ambitious objectives?
- How do we plan to take care of ourselves?
- Have we established contact with our target?
- Are we going to surprise our opponents, are we bursting into their system?
- Are we disturbing our opponents? If not, why?
- Are we doing better than yesterday? If not, why?
- Have we thought of more radical actions?
- Do we allow, mid-term, other people to join us?
- Are we improving the system or are we weakening it?
- Will our action have a social impact?
- What are we risking? Are we ready to accept it?
- With who can we / do we want to do the actions?

Validate the action

- Which of our objectives are we reaching?
- Does the action allow to make things happen? Or is it rather asking for things to happen?
- If we are forcing ourselves, are we doing it for the right reasons?
- Can we anticipate the date?
- Can we enjoy the action? Can we make it more joyful, more exciting?
- If everything goes well, which progress will the action have made?
- Does the action encourage the autonomy of the militants? Does everyone understand well what we are doing?
- If our level of confrontation/risk-taking does not allow us to do the action we have imagined, can we go around it while keeping the target and the objective in sight?