



## YERSİZ-YURTSUZLAŞTIRILMIŞ POLİTİKA: DELEUZE VE GUATTARI'NİN SİYASET FELSEFESİNİN ELEŞTİREL BİR İNCELEMESİ\*

Can BÜYÜKBAY<sup>1</sup>

### ÖZET

Bu makale Gilles Deleuze ve Félix Guattari'nin siyasi felsefelerini eleştirel bir şekilde incelemekte ve yersiz-yurtsuzlaşma, asamblajlar, duygulanım ve Savaş Makinesi kavramlarına odaklanmaktadır. Teorileri, hiyerarşik gücü ve devlet kontrolünü eleştirir. Araştırmacılar, kuramlarının örgütsel yapı eksikliği ve çağdaş mücadelelerde uygulanabilirliği konusunda eleştirilerini dile getirmektedir. İncelenen temel eleştirilerden biri yersiz-yurtsuzlaşmanın paradoksudur: Deleuze ve Guattari bunu bir direniş gücü olarak sunsa da, kapitalizmin kendisi yersiz-yurtsuzlaştıran piyasalar ve toplumsal ilişkiler üzerinde gelişir ve bu da özgürleşme ile neoliberal uyum arasında ayırım yapmayı zorlaştırır. Benzer şekilde, asamblajlar siyasi oluşumun akışkan bir modelini sunarken, eleştirel akademisyenler uzun vadeli direniş için sürdürülebilir bir çerçeveden yoksun olduklarını savunmaktadır. Ek olarak, genellikle kapitalist yeniden yerleştirme altında çözülen, duygulanım odaklı politikanın sınırları vurgulanır. Bu makale ayrıca Deleuze ve Guattari'nin devlet ve Savaş Makinesi arasındaki karşıtlığının dijital çağda uygulanabilir olup olmadığını da incelemektedir. Kurama eleştirel yaklaşanlar, algoritmik yönetişimin ve ağ tabanlı kapitalizmin kontrol ve direniş arasındaki ayrımı bulanıklaştırdığını savunur. Buna karşılık, bu makale yersiz-yurtsuzlaşmayı yeniden düşünmenin ve asamblaj teorisini hegemonik mücadeleyle bütünleştirmenin yollarını araştırır. Sonuç olarak, Deleuze ve Guattari'nin kavramlarının değerli olmaya devam ettiği; ancak çağdaş güç yapılarını etkili bir şekilde ele almak için stratejik uyarılama gerektiği savunulmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Deleuze, savaş makinesi, algoritmik yönetişim, şizoanaliz, kapitalizm sonrası siyaset

## DETERRITORIALIZED POLITICS: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF DELEUZE AND GUATTARI'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

### ABSTRACT

This article critically examines the political philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and focuses on the tensions between their concepts of deterritorialization, assemblages, affect, and the War Machine. Their framework challenges hierarchical power and state control. However, scholars have raised concerns about its lack of organizational structure, its susceptibility to capitalist co-optation, and its applicability in contemporary struggles. A key critique explored is the paradox of deterritorialization: Though Deleuze and Guattari present it as a force of resistance, capitalism itself thrives on deterritorializing markets and social relations. This makes it difficult to distinguish between liberation and neoliberal adaptability. Similarly, while assemblages offer a fluid model of political formation, critics argue they lack a sustainable framework for long-term resistance. Additionally, scholars highlight the limits of affect-driven politics, which often dissolves under capitalist reterritorialization. This article also examines whether Deleuze and Guattari's opposition between the State and the War Machine remains viable in the digital age. Scholars argue that algorithmic governance and networked capitalism blur the distinction between control and resistance. In response, this article explores ways to rethink deterritorialization and integrate assemblage theory with hegemonic struggle. Ultimately, it argues that Deleuze and Guattari's concepts remain valuable but require strategic adaptation to address contemporary power structures effectively.

**Keywords:** Deleuze, war machine, algorithmic governance, schizoanalysis, post-capitalist politics

<sup>1</sup> Dr., [canbuyukbay2002@yahoo.com](mailto:canbuyukbay2002@yahoo.com)

## INTRODUCTION: THE POLITICAL PROBLEM OF DELEUZE AND GUATTARI

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's collaborative works, *Anti-Oedipus* (1983) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), have profoundly influenced contemporary political philosophy and international relations. Their radical critique of capitalist axioms and psychoanalytic subject formation introduced a vocabulary that disrupted traditional understandings of political action and governance. Unlike structuralist and dialectical traditions that emphasize contradiction, Deleuze and Guattari theorize political life as an assemblage of flows, deterritorialized movements, and affective intensities. They reject both the dialectical framework of Hegelian-Marxist thought and the psychoanalytic emphasis on repression (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). However, their vision raises significant tensions: can their fluid, non-totalizing approach provide a coherent political strategy, or does it risk becoming a theory of resistance without organization?

One of the core tensions in Deleuze and Guattari's thought is deterritorialization, which describes how structures, be they political, social, or economic, are disrupted and transformed. While deterritorialization offers the potential for liberation, it also poses a paradox: if all structures are deterritorialized, how does one sustain meaningful political organization? As Günzel (1998) argues, Deleuze and Guattari's insistence on immanence and movement often prevents them from theorizing a stable basis for collective struggle.

This issue is particularly pronounced in their discussion of *the State and the War Machine* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). They oppose striated space (State control, hierarchy) to smooth space (nomadic movement, deterritorialization), yet Patrick Crogan (1999) challenges this binary. He shows how modern technological developments collapse the distinction between the State and the War Machine. In an era where digital governance, algorithmic surveillance, and military technology blur traditional power structures, can deterritorialization still function as a mode of resistance, or has it been absorbed into capitalist acceleration and state control?

Another paradox concerns the academic and political reception of Deleuze and Guattari. As Gammon and Reid (2010) observe, their work originally sought to disrupt totalizing political structures. However, it has itself become a disciplinary orthodoxy within cultural studies and poststructuralist political theory. This raises the question: has their thought been defanged by its integration into mainstream academia? If Deleuze and Guattari's work has become an intellectual canon rather than a practice of disruption, does it still retain its radical edge, or has it been co-opted into what Fisher (2009) calls "capitalist realism," a system in which even revolutionary ideas are absorbed and neutralized by the very forces they seek to oppose?

Deleuze and Guattari's concept of schizoanalysis offers an alternative to psychoanalytic models of political subjectivity. It emphasizes the productive, desiring forces that shape collective life (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). Yet, Tim Jordan (1995), in his study of rave culture, critiques their over-reliance on affect and intensity as modes of political engagement. While raves embody temporary forms of deterritorialization, Jordan argues that they ultimately lack sustainability, as capitalism quickly reterritorializes them into commodified entertainment industries. This critique extends to broader discussions of affect-based politics, where moments of intensity (protests, uprisings) are celebrated but rarely lead to lasting structural change.

Thus, while Deleuze and Guattari provide an expansive theoretical vocabulary for thinking about resistance, scholars continue to debate whether their fluid, affect-driven approach can counter capitalist co-optation and state capture. Does their rejection of fixed identities and institutions limit their ability to articulate a theory of hegemony or sustained counter-power? As Laclau and Mouffe (1985) argue, radical democracy requires contingent but structured articulations of collective identity, something Deleuze and Guattari's anti-identitarian approach struggles to maintain.

This article examines these tensions in Deleuze and Guattari's political philosophy and focuses on their core concepts (deterritorialization, schizoanalysis, affect, the War Machine), and their critiques. The first section explores their political ontology. It analyzes how assemblages, multiplicities, and rhizomatic structures function within their framework. The second section engages with critiques of their work, particularly regarding the limits of deterritorialization, the issue of co-optation, and the viability of their model for political strategy. The final section assesses their continued relevance and

considers whether their non-dialectical vision can still inform contemporary struggles against capitalism and biopolitical governance.

### **THE POLITICAL ONTOLOGY OF DELEUZE AND GUATTARI**

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's political ontology is grounded in a radical rejection of fixed structures and hierarchical organization. Instead, they propose a framework based on flows, multiplicities, and emergent formations. They draw from Spinoza's "philosophy of immanence", Bergson's concept of *durée*, and Nietzsche's critique of transcendence (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Unlike traditional political thought, which often emphasizes dialectical contradictions or ideological formations, Deleuze and Guattari conceptualize political life as an assemblage of deterritorialized movements, affective intensities, and non-hierarchical distributions of power. Their work seeks to move beyond the state-centric models of political organization that dominate Western thought and replaces them with a decentralized and rhizomatic conception of politics. While their rejection of fixed categories allows for new ways of thinking about power and resistance, it also raises questions about the practical applicability of their framework in structured political movements and struggles.

One of the core tensions in Deleuze and Guattari's political philosophy lies in their concept of deterritorialization, which describes the displacement or transformation of fixed structures, identities, and institutions (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). This process operates on multiple levels, from the subjective breakdown of stable identities to the economic deterritorialization of capital, which moves beyond national boundaries. It creates global flows that undermine territorial control. However, while deterritorialization is often presented as a liberatory force, scholars such as Günzel (1998: p.140) have noted that Deleuze and Guattari fail to theorize the conditions under which deterritorialization leads to meaningful political transformation rather than reterritorialization within capitalist circuits. Indeed, capitalism itself operates as a deterritorializing force and dissolves traditional structures while simultaneously reterritorializing them within its own axioms. Crogan (1999: p.142) reinforces this critique by arguing that contemporary technological developments have accelerated the process of deterritorialization, but rather than enabling resistance, they have facilitated new forms of capitalist capture and control. This raises an important question: does deterritorialization truly offer a strategy for radical political transformation, or does it merely reinforce the flexibility of neoliberal governance?

Closely tied to the concept of deterritorialization is Deleuze and Guattari's notion of assemblages (*agencements*), which serve as the fundamental units of political organization in their framework. Rather than viewing political structures as rigid or pre-determined, assemblages form through contingent relations of force, desire, and organization (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: p.23). Unlike classical political theories that emphasize fixed categories such as the state, class, or ideology, assemblages operate through distributed agency and create shifting networks of connection that resist simple categorization. However, Gammon and Reid (2010: p.324) argue that while assemblage theory provides a powerful way to conceptualize the fluidity of political formations, it lacks the capacity to identify structured forms of oppression. This tendency makes it inadequate for theorizing systemic domination. Similarly, Wiley and Wise (2019: p.81) note that assemblage theory has been selectively adopted in cultural studies, often in ways that strip it of its radical potential by reducing it to a descriptive framework rather than a politically actionable tool. Without a clear mechanism for political change, the concept of assemblages risks becoming an abstract theory of organization rather than a tool for political intervention.

Another significant component of Deleuze and Guattari's political ontology is schizoanalysis, which challenges traditional psychoanalytic models of subjectivity. A productive way to enter the debate on schizoanalysis is to begin with Deleuze and Guattari's distinctive conception of subjectivity. For them, the subject is not a fixed, inner psychological entity but an ongoing process shaped by flows of desire, affective intensities, and socio-political assemblages. Subjectivity is therefore fundamentally relational and distributed: it emerges through interactions between bodies, institutions, technologies, and collective practices rather than being anchored in any stable interior core (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 16–18). This stands in contrast to Freudian and Lacanian accounts, which understand the subject as structured through lack, castration, and the family drama of Oedipus. By rejecting this model, Deleuze and Guattari reconceptualize subjectivity as a mobile and productive arrangement continually formed through desiring-production. Only once this alternative understanding of the subject is established can

schizoanalysis be understood as a method for mapping how desire circulates across social fields and how it might escape the familial and capitalist structures that traditionally confine it.

Unlike Freudian and Lacanian theories that posit desire as lack, Deleuze and Guattari argue that desire is productive and forms the basis of social and political life (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: p.28). In *Anti-Oedipus*, they critique the way psychoanalysis reterritorializes desire within familial structures and reinforces capitalist modes of organization. Instead, they propose schizoanalysis as a method for liberating desire from these constraints and reveal its potential for collective transformation. However, Jordan (1995: p.132), in his study of rave culture, critiques their over-reliance on affect and intensity as modes of political engagement.

Rave culture cannot be understood solely as an extension of the entertainment industry; such a reading risks overlooking the subtle forms of micropolitical resistance that unfold within these spaces. Emerging from the alternative music scenes of the 1980s and 1990s, raves created hybrid environments in which participants temporarily escaped state regulation, social hierarchy, and normative rhythms (Jordan, 1995: 128–130). In this sense, rave events resemble the Temporary Autonomous Zones (TAZ) described by Hakim Bey, who argues that certain ephemeral spaces enable autonomous social relations outside state capture (Bey, 1991: 98–102). They also parallel the autonomous environments generated through urban squat/occupation practices, where unstable and reclaimed spaces become zones of experimentation (Bey, 1991: 105–110). The political dynamics of rave culture further align with James C. Scott's notion of "infrapolitics" and "everyday resistance," where dispersed, anonymous, and non-programmatic actions subtly undermine dominant forms of power (Scott, 1990: 188–192). From this perspective, rave culture occupies an ambivalent position: it cannot be reduced to radical politics, yet it cannot be dismissed as mere leisure. Instead, it constitutes a shifting assemblage that oscillates between deterritorialization and reterritorialization, producing both lines of flight and new forms of capture.

While raves exemplify schizoanalytic spaces that disrupt fixed identities through affective intensities, they ultimately lack political continuity and are often reterritorialized into commodified cultural forms. This aligns with Gammon and Reid's (2010: p.324) critique of Deleuze and Guattari's individualistic tendencies, arguing that schizoanalysis offers little guidance for structured collective action. Badiou (2000: p.78) further suggests that Deleuze's ontology of desire remains trapped in immanence. This prevents it from articulating a clear notion of political rupture or revolution. These critiques raise important concerns about whether schizoanalysis can provide a viable strategy for political transformation or whether it remains a descriptive model with limited applicability in structured political struggles.

A final key concept in Deleuze and Guattari's political ontology is the War Machine, which they introduce as a counter-force to the State apparatus. The State, according to Deleuze and Guattari, functions by organizing power into striated, hierarchical structures, while the War Machine operates through smooth, decentralized, and deterritorialized movement (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.351). They associate the War Machine with nomadic formations, indigenous resistance, and guerrilla tactics, namely forces that exist outside of, and against, the State. However, Crogan (1999: p.144) argues that in the contemporary era of digital warfare and algorithmic governance, the distinction between the War Machine and the State collapses. This makes it difficult to maintain their opposition. Similarly, Virilio (1998: p.67) critiques Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on speed and deterritorialization and argues that acceleration itself has become a mode of capitalist control rather than liberation. Gammon and Reid (2010: p.324) further challenge the viability of the War Machine and suggest that its abstract formulation makes it difficult to distinguish from market-driven deterritorialization. It raises questions about whether it can still function as a radical force. If nomadic and deterritorialized resistance can be easily absorbed into capitalist networks, then does Deleuze and Guattari's politics of becoming still hold emancipatory potential? Or has the War Machine itself become another mechanism of control within global capitalism?

A compelling illustration of these dynamics can be found in the political trajectory of the Occupy movement, which embodies both the potentials and limitations identified by Deleuze and Guattari's political ontology. Occupy's horizontal assemblies, leaderless organization, and reliance on affective collective presence enacted a clear deterritorialization of traditional political forms, breaking away from party structures, fixed identities, and hierarchical decision-making. Yet, much like the patterns described by Deleuze and Guattari, this initial line of flight was soon reterritorialized through media

commodification, policing strategies, and the institutional absorption of its discourse into mainstream electoral politics (Juris, 2012: 267–273). The movement thus exemplifies how assemblages of desire and resistance may generate powerful political ruptures while remaining vulnerable to capture. As such, Occupy provides a concrete case through which the theoretical debates surrounding schizoanalysis, the war machine, and political affect become legible in practice, demonstrating that Deleuzoguattarian concepts are not merely abstract devices but tools for understanding contemporary political transformations.

In sum, Deleuze and Guattari's political ontology offers a radical departure from traditional models of power. However, this framework faces significant critiques, particularly regarding its lack of structured organization, its susceptibility to capitalist co-optation, and its failure to provide a clear mechanism for political change. While their concepts of deterritorialization, assemblages, schizoanalysis, and the War Machine have been influential across disciplines, their practical applicability remains a matter of ongoing debate. The next section will engage more deeply with these critiques and explore the limitations of Deleuze and Guattari's political vision and its relevance for contemporary struggles against state control and biopolitical governance.

## **CRITICAL ENGAGEMENTS WITH DELEUZE AND GUATTARI: LIMITS AND CONTRADICTIONS IN THEIR POLITICAL THOUGHT**

Scholars have questioned whether their framework, centered on deterritorialization, rhizomatic structures, and schizoanalysis, is truly capable of sustained political transformation or whether it simply describes processes of flux without offering a coherent strategy for resistance. Critics have also pointed out how capitalism's ability to absorb and reterritorialize disruptive forces undermines the effectiveness of their proposed models of resistance. Furthermore, some scholars argue that their conceptual opposition between the State and the War Machine collapses under contemporary technological and geopolitical realities. This section synthesizes critiques from seven key scholars such as Protevi (2008), Zayani (2000), Günzel (1998), Crogan (1999), Gammon and Reid (2010), Wiley and Wise (2019), and Jordan (1995), who challenge different aspects of Deleuze and Guattari's work and offer insights into its limitations.

### **The Paradox of Deterritorialization: Liberation or Capitalist Co-optation?**

One of the central critiques of Deleuze and Guattari's work concerns their emphasis on deterritorialization as a mechanism of resistance. Deterritorialization disrupts established structures and it does not necessarily guarantee freedom from power. As Protevi (2008: p.25) points out, deterritorialization can function in ways that reinforce systems of control rather than subvert them. He notes that capitalism itself is a deterritorializing force. It constantly dismantles traditional structures while integrating new flows into its logic of production. This echoes Zayani's (2000: p.99) argument that Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy, despite its radical aspirations, risks describing a world where resistance is futile because power is always in flux. Instead of offering concrete strategies for political struggle, deterritorialization becomes a continuous process of displacement that capitalism can endlessly accommodate.

Similarly, Crogan (1999: p.141) critiques Deleuze and Guattari's assumption that capitalism and the State are inherently opposed to deterritorialization. He argues that in contemporary neoliberalism, deterritorialization has become a central mechanism of economic expansion, digital surveillance, and military control. The development of financial markets, data capitalism, and algorithmic governance demonstrates that capitalism does not merely reterritorialize deterritorialized flows but rather thrives on constant deterritorialization. As Gammon and Reid (2010: p.324) observe, contemporary capitalism operates through networked governance rather than centralized state structures. This means that deterritorialization no longer necessarily leads to emancipation. This suggests that Deleuze and Guattari's concept of deterritorialization needs to be rethought in light of contemporary power structures, particularly in digital capitalism and biopolitical governance.

### **Assemblages and the Problem of Political Organization**

Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on assemblages as fluid, contingent formations of power has been widely adopted in political and cultural studies. However, several scholars have pointed out the ambiguity and limitations of this concept as a political tool. Wiley and Wise (2019: 81) argue that assemblage theory has been selectively incorporated into cultural studies, often in ways that strip it of its original radicalism. Instead of functioning as a theory of resistance, it has been used as a descriptive

framework to analyze how power operates. This raises concerns about whether assemblages can offer a real political alternative to hierarchical forms of organization or whether they merely describe already-existing structures.

Furthermore, Gammon and Reid (2010: p.324) critique the lack of structured organization in Deleuze and Guattari's political thought, arguing that their anti-hierarchical vision makes it difficult to sustain collective struggles. Without a clear strategy for political transformation, assemblages risk becoming temporary, fleeting formations that dissolve before they can effect meaningful change. Similarly, Günzel (1998: p.141) contends that Deleuze and Guattari's reluctance to theorize stable forms of organization weakens their ability to account for lasting resistance movements. Unlike Marxist and Gramscian approaches, which emphasize structured counter-hegemonic struggle, Deleuze and Guattari's model remains too fluid to serve as a long-term political program.

### **Schizoanalysis and the Limits of Affect as Political Strategy**

Another major critique of Deleuze and Guattari concerns their concept of schizoanalysis, which seeks to liberate desire from repression. While schizoanalysis provides a powerful critique of psychoanalysis and ideology, it has been criticized for failing to translate into structured political engagement. Jordan (1995: p.132) applies schizoanalysis to rave culture. He argues that raves function as schizoanalytic spaces where fixed identities are dissolved through affective intensities. However, he also notes that these spaces lack political sustainability and are quickly reterritorialized within capitalist entertainment industries. This raises the question: Is affect-based politics sufficient for sustained resistance, or does it need to be supplemented with more structured forms of political organization?

Protevi (2008: p.29) expands on this critique and argues that Deleuze and Guattari's focus on desire and affect overlooks the role of structured institutions in shaping political subjectivity. While affect plays a role in mobilization, it does not replace the need for long-term organizational strategies. Gammon and Reid (2010: p.324) reinforce this point by noting that while Deleuze and Guattari emphasize fluidity and non-hierarchical networks, real-world political movements often require some degree of structure and coordination to be effective. Without these elements, schizoanalysis risks becoming a theory of disruption without a pathway toward meaningful political transformation.

### **The Collapse of the War Machine and the State**

A final major critique concerns Deleuze and Guattari's opposition between the State and the War Machine. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they present the War Machine as an autonomous force that resists State capture (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: p.351). However, Crogan (1999: p.144) argues that in an era of digital surveillance, algorithmic governance, and militarized capitalism, the distinction between the State and the War Machine has collapsed. Instead of functioning as a separate force, the War Machine has been absorbed into the very logic of contemporary power. Virilio (1998: p.67) similarly critiques Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on speed and argues that acceleration has become a tool of control rather than liberation. This raises doubts about whether Deleuze and Guattari's framework can still account for contemporary geopolitical realities. Virilio's critique of Deleuze and Guattari that acceleration inevitably reinforces domination, can in fact be reversed. Contemporary developments show that slowness is not inherently emancipatory and can itself become a modality of control. The global spread of the "slow city" (Cittaslow) movement demonstrates this paradox clearly: what began as a critique of capitalist acceleration has increasingly been commodified as a lifestyle brand, integrated into urban marketing strategies, and forms of regulated cultural consumption (Mayer and Knox, 2006: 321–324). In this sense, slowness no longer escapes capitalist capture but is reterritorialized as part of its symbolic economy. The example suggests that Virilio's accelerationist critique may rest on an overly rigid binary between speed and resistance, whereas both speed and slowness can be mobilized for either liberation or control. Thus, the limitations he attributes to Deleuze and Guattari's political ontology may not be as decisive as they initially appear.

Gammon and Reid (2010: p.324) further question whether the War Machine's emphasis on nomadic resistance is still viable in the face of global capitalist integration. If capitalism has already deterritorialized traditional political structures, then does the War Machine still offer an alternative, or has it been fully absorbed into globalized neoliberalism? These critiques suggest that Deleuze and Guattari's framework may need significant revision to address contemporary political struggles effectively.

The critiques outlined in this section highlight key limitations in Deleuze and Guattari's political thought, particularly in their reliance on deterritorialization, affect, and assemblages as mechanisms of

resistance. The next section will explore whether their framework can be updated to address these concerns or whether it remains fundamentally limited in its ability to offer a viable political strategy.

## **DELEUZE AND GUATTARI'S POLITICAL LEGACY: CAN THEIR PHILOSOPHY BE MADE POLITICALLY ACTIONABLE?**

The critiques outlined in the previous section reveal fundamental challenges in applying Deleuze and Guattari's political philosophy to contemporary struggles. Their concepts of deterritorialization, assemblages, schizoanalysis, and the War Machine offer a radical critique of power, but their applicability to structured political action remains a point of contention. This section explores whether Deleuze and Guattari's thought can be revised to offer a more actionable political strategy and considers how their work has been reinterpreted in contemporary movements.

### **From Deterritorialization to Strategic Reterritorialization**

One of the main criticisms of Deleuze and Guattari's work is their emphasis on deterritorialization as a mode of resistance, without sufficiently addressing the problem of reterritorialization. As Protevi (2008: p.25) notes, not all deterritorialization is emancipatory, as capitalism itself relies on the constant deterritorialization of markets and social relations. Similarly, Crogan (1999: p.141) argues that the digital acceleration of financial and information flows has made deterritorialization a central mechanism of capitalist governance rather than a means of escape.

Given these critiques, some scholars argue that political action requires not just deterritorialization but also strategic forms of reterritorialization. This means reclaiming and reshaping territorial and organizational structures rather than simply dissolving them. For instance, Wiley and Wise (2019: p.82) suggest that instead of viewing deterritorialization as an end in itself, movements should focus on building alternative assemblages that are resilient to capitalist capture. This could mean constructing non-hierarchical but structured political formations that resist co-optation while maintaining long-term viability. Such a shift would move beyond the romanticized vision of fluidity and embrace the need for material grounding in political struggle.

### **Can Assemblages Offer a Viable Political Alternative?**

As Gammon and Reid (2010: p.324) observe, assemblage theory has often been used more as an analytical tool than as a guide for political action. Assemblages effectively describe how power operates in fluid and dynamic ways, but they do not necessarily indicate how resistance should be organized.

One possible way forward is to integrate assemblage theory with theories of hegemony and counter-hegemony, as found in the work of Laclau and Mouffe (1985). Laclau and Mouffe's model of articulatory practice and discursive hegemony suggests that while political formations are contingent and fluid, they still require a certain level of stabilization to become effective agents of change. If assemblages were understood not just as descriptive entities but as potential sites of counter-hegemonic articulation, they could provide a means of constructing politically organized networks that resist co-optation.

Similarly, Günzel (1998: p.141) suggests that Deleuze and Guattari's concept of assemblages could be refined by incorporating insights from post-Marxist traditions, which emphasize the importance of material conditions and economic structures in shaping political agency. By doing so, assemblages could be transformed from a purely theoretical construct into a tool for organizing decentralized but effective political formations.

### **Beyond Affect: Toward Sustainable Political Subjectivity**

Affect and desire play a crucial role in Deleuze and Guattari's political philosophy, particularly in their critique of psychoanalysis and ideological interpellation. However, as Jordan (1995: p.132) demonstrates in his study of rave culture, affective intensities alone do not create lasting political transformations. While raves offer a temporary escape from hierarchical subject formation, they are quickly reterritorialized by commercial interests and lose their disruptive potential.

This critique suggests that while affect can mobilize people, it must be coupled with institutional or organizational forms that sustain resistance over time. Gammon and Reid (2010: p.324) similarly argue that affective politics needs to be supplemented by structures that allow for continuity and collective memory. This does not mean reverting to rigid ideological structures but rather developing adaptive political practices that harness affect while maintaining coherence over time.

A potential avenue for strengthening Deleuze and Guattari's framework is to integrate schizoanalysis with contemporary theories of political subjectivity and social movements. For example, Hardt and Negri's (2001) concept of the "*multitude*" builds on Deleuzian ideas but attempts to offer a more structured vision of collective agency. Similarly, Rancière's (1999) theory of *political dissensus* provides a way to think about how affective disruptions can translate into structured challenges to power. Through these perspectives, Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on affect and becoming could be reoriented toward a more sustainable theory of political engagement.

### **The War Machine in the Age of Digital Capitalism**

Perhaps the most pressing challenge for Deleuze and Guattari's political thought today concerns the relevance of the War Machine. Originally conceptualized as an exterior force that resists State capture, the War Machine has increasingly been absorbed into globalized capitalism and digital governance. As Crogan (1999: p.144) argues, modern algorithmic governance and financial systems have rendered the distinction between the War Machine and the State obsolete. The decentralized, networked, and mobile nature of corporate power, AI surveillance, and financial capitalism suggests that deterritorialization has become a primary tool of control rather than resistance.

If this is the case, then Deleuze and Guattari's model of nomadic resistance must be rethought. Instead of assuming that decentralization automatically resists hierarchy, contemporary movements may need to embrace hybrid strategies that combine mobility with targeted forms of institutional engagement. Wiley and Wise (2019: p.83) suggest that hacker movements and digital activism could serve as updated versions of the War Machine, but they also caution that these movements risk being co-opted into neoliberal frameworks if they lack structural grounding.

One way to address this challenge is to move beyond the binary opposition of the State and the War Machine and instead focus on how resistance can function within, against, and outside of existing structures simultaneously. This would mean acknowledging that not all engagement with institutions leads to co-optation and that strategic alliances can be formed without compromising autonomy.

## **CONTEMPORARY APPLICATIONS: DELEUZE AND GUATTARI IN POLITICAL MOVEMENTS, DIGITAL ACTIVISM AND POST-CAPITALIST RESISTANCE**

Having explored the critical limitations of Deleuze and Guattari's political philosophy, it is essential to assess how their ideas continue to shape contemporary struggles. While their framework faces significant challenges in terms of organization and sustainability, it remains deeply influential in fields such as digital activism, environmental movements, post-capitalist theory, and decentralized political mobilization. This section explores how Deleuzian concepts, particularly deterritorialization, assemblages, affect, and the War Machine, are being reinterpreted in contemporary political contexts. This offers both opportunities and new dilemmas for radical politics.

The paradoxical relationship between deterritorialization and reterritorialization can be observed across contemporary political movements that embody both liberation and capture. For instance, digital activism—as seen in decentralized hacktivist collectives such as Anonymous—illustrates how deterritorialized networks can momentarily evade state control yet remain vulnerable to surveillance and commodification through digital capitalism. Similarly, environmental movements like Extinction Rebellion operate through fluid, rhizomatic forms of organization that challenge hierarchical governance, while also facing reterritorialization when their imagery and discourse are absorbed by institutional politics or corporate sustainability rhetoric. In the domain of post-capitalist experiments, initiatives such as community-supported agriculture and platform cooperativism reveal how deterritorialized flows of labor and value can be rearticulated within new assemblages that seek autonomy from capitalist axioms. These examples demonstrate that the very processes of becoming that Deleuze and Guattari describe are not confined to abstraction but actively shape the evolving topography of contemporary political resistance.

### **Digital Activism and the Deleuzian War Machine**

One of the most striking applications of Deleuze and Guattari's War Machine in contemporary politics is found in digital activism, cyber resistance, and hacker movements. Groups such as Anonymous, WikiLeaks, and decentralized hacktivist networks operate outside traditional state structures and function as nomadic and deterritorialized forces that challenge centralized power. These movements align with Deleuze and Guattari's vision of a non-state form of resistance that is constantly shifting, mobile, and resistant to capture (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: p.351).

However, as Crogan (1999) and Virilio (1998) argue, the fusion of technology with state surveillance and neoliberal governance has blurred the distinction between the War Machine and state power. Today, the very tools used by activists, social media, encryption networks, digital platforms, are also mechanisms of control and surveillance. The rise of algorithmic governance, AI-driven propaganda, and corporate platform capitalism demonstrates that deterritorialized digital spaces are not inherently emancipatory. As Wiley and Wise (2019: p.83) caution, the digital War Machine must be critically reassessed to avoid becoming merely another reterritorialized tool of corporate and state power.

Thus, while Deleuze and Guattari's nomadic resistance model remains relevant for understanding digital activism, it must be adapted to account for the shifting nature of control in the digital age. Instead of assuming that decentralized resistance automatically leads to liberation, activists must develop hybrid strategies that combine deterritorialized tactics with structural engagement to avoid co-optation.

### **Deleuze, Guattari, and Post-Capitalist Political Economy**

Beyond activism, Deleuze and Guattari's critique of capitalist axioms, deterritorialized financial flows, and the schizophrenic logic of late capitalism has been influential in post-capitalist thought. Scholars such as Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams (2015) in *Inventing the Future* and Maurizio Lazzarato (2014) in *Signs and Machines* have extended Deleuzian ideas into economic and labor struggles. They argue that capitalism's deterritorializing function, rather than being resisted through romanticized pre-capitalist or anti-modern frameworks, must be harnessed for post-capitalist transition.

Protevi (2008: p.29) supports this claim, arguing that rather than resisting deterritorialization, the Left should explore how to manipulate and redirect it. This involves rethinking Deleuze and Guattari's ideas in light of automation, universal basic income, post-work economies, and alternative technological infrastructures. Instead of seeing capitalism's breakdown of traditional structures as purely negative, some theorists suggest that radical politics should focus on reconfiguring economic flows rather than attempting to return to static forms of labor organization.

However, as Gammon and Reid (2010: p.324) warn, Deleuze and Guattari's reluctance to engage in class analysis or economic structures makes their work difficult to operationalize in post-capitalist strategy. While their concept of capitalism as an axiomatic system is useful, it lacks a concrete proposal for how political agents can strategically intervene within or beyond capitalism. This raises the need to integrate their philosophy with Marxist, post-Keynesian, and anarchist economic models to create a more actionable political economy.

### **Environmental and Ecological Struggles: A Deleuzian Ecosophy?**

Another field where Deleuze and Guattari's work has been applied is ecological and environmental politics. Félix Guattari's later work on ecosophy in *The Three Ecologies* (2008) extends their framework to examine the intersection of social, mental, and environmental ecologies. He argues that capitalism's deterritorialization of nature and the production of ecological crises must be countered through non-hierarchical, interconnected, and immanent responses.

Günzel (1998: p.141) suggests that Guattari's ecosophy represents an important but underdeveloped extension of their political thought and offers a way to link affect and environmental resistance. However, as Jordan (1995: p.134) points out, affective responses alone are not sufficient to counter large-scale climate governance failures. Movements such as Extinction Rebellion, Indigenous land defenders, and degrowth activism embody some of Deleuze and Guattari's anti-hierarchical and non-state-driven resistance models, but they also struggle with the same problem of sustainability and long-term political organization.

To make their framework useful for ecological politics, some scholars argue for integrating Deleuze and Guattari with deep ecology, eco-Marxism, and Indigenous philosophies that emphasize reciprocity, material limits, and alternative land governance. Relying solely on deterritorialization as a means of resistance is not enough, ecological struggle may require a strategic combination of deterritorialization (breaking from capitalist production systems) and reterritorialization (reclaiming land, community governance, and ecological sustainability).

### **Tactical Revisions: A More Actionable Deleuzian Politics?**

Given these contemporary applications, how can Deleuze and Guattari's work be revised to offer a more coherent, sustainable political strategy? Several scholars have proposed hybrid approaches that retain the rhizomatic, affective, and deterritorialized insights of their work while incorporating elements of strategic organization and counter-hegemony.

1. Repoliticization of deterritorialization: Instead of seeing deterritorialization as an end in itself, movements must strategically decide where, when, and how to deterritorialize or reterritorialize (Protevi, 2008: p.30). This means recognizing that some territorial structures (e.g., local economies, worker cooperatives, Indigenous governance) should be reinforced rather than dissolved.
2. Hybridization of assemblages with hegemonic struggles: Assemblage theory can be combined with post-Marxist ideas to create networked but durable forms of political action (Gammon and Reid, 2010: p.325). Movements can use temporary assemblages to build coalitions without falling into rigid hierarchies.
3. Beyond affect: Affect remains a powerful mobilizing force, but it must be paired with organizational memory, strategic alliances, and sustainable movement-building (Jordan, 1995: p.134). This means thinking about how movements transition from spontaneous uprisings to long-term institutions of resistance.
4. Rethinking the War Machine in the digital age: The War Machine must be adapted to counter neoliberal digital control. This requires a combination of decentralized resistance and targeted institutional engagement (Crogan, 1999: p.144). This might mean blending hacktivism with labor organizing, digital anonymity with local community governance, and technological sabotage with legislative pressure.

By incorporating these strategic revisions, Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy could move beyond its limitations and become a more actionable framework for contemporary struggles.

### **CONCLUSION: TOWARD A MORE ACTIONABLE THEORY**

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's political philosophy continues to offer one of the most imaginative vocabularies for thinking about resistance and the production of subjectivity. Yet its influence does not lie in providing ready-made strategies; rather, it opens conceptual pathways that must be adapted and sometimes challenged. As this article has shown, the tensions surrounding deterritorialization, assemblages, affect, and the War Machine reveal both the strengths and fragilities of their political ontology. While scholars such as Protevi (2008), Günzel (1998), Crogan (1999), Jordan (1995), Gammon and Reid (2010), Wiley and Wise (2019), and Zayani (2000) highlight these limitations, their critiques also point toward productive directions for rethinking Deleuzoguattarian concepts in light of contemporary struggles.

Concrete political developments reveal the stakes of this revisionary project. Movements such as Black Lives Matter and Extinction Rebellion exemplify how embodied affect, and decentralized tactics can generate powerful moments of deterritorialization capable of disrupting normalized structures of racial and ecological violence. Yet these same movements also show how quickly such ruptures can be reterritorialized, through media commodification, NGO-ization, algorithmic filtering, and intensified policing. Similarly, the Occupy movement demonstrates the dual nature of assemblages: their ability to produce unprecedented forms of collective subjectivity and their difficulty maintaining continuity without some form of strategic organization (Juris, 2012). These examples illuminate the core problem: deterritorialization alone is insufficient. Without intentional reterritorializations, counter-institutions, shared narratives, durable infrastructures, lines of flight risk collapsing into ephemeral intensities or being recaptured by the very systems they seek to escape.

This reveals a broader lesson: Deleuze and Guattari's concepts must be mobilized alongside other theoretical frameworks to become politically actionable. Strategic reterritorialization, as suggested by Protevi (2008: 30), offers one direction by emphasizing the need to reclaim and fortify alternative spaces rather than abandoning structure altogether. Assemblage theory can likewise gain political traction when combined with post-Marxist models of hegemony (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985), which emphasize coalition-building, articulation, and sustained political projects. Even schizoanalysis, so often criticized for privileging affect over organization, can be reconceived when paired with analyses of infrastructural politics, digital governance, and economic institutions. And as digital capitalism transforms into an increasingly militarized, algorithmic apparatus, the War Machine must be reimagined not as an external nomadic force but as a hybrid formation capable of navigating, hacking, and contesting networked power (Crogan, 1999; Virilio, 1998).

In this sense, the future of Deleuzian political philosophy depends not on a return to the pure rhizome, nor on the romanticization of deterritorialization, but on a creative synthesis: combining fluidity with strategy, affect with organization, escape with construction. Rather than abandoning Deleuze and

Guattari's framework, we can reinterpret it to meet the demands of the 21st century, where power circulates through platforms, codes, supply chains, and data infrastructures. The challenge is not merely to deterritorialize, but to assemble new institutional forms, cultivate durable counter-hegemonies, and engineer alternative modes of collective life.

If their concepts are to inspire genuinely transformative politics today, they must be reassembled in ways that respond to material realities—ecological collapse, racial injustice, digital surveillance, and economic precarity. Deleuze and Guattari remind us that politics is a field of continuous becoming, but becoming must also take shape. The task ahead is therefore not only to open lines of flight, but to craft new grounds upon which collective transformation can endure.

## REFERENCES

- Badiou, A. (2000). *Deleuze: The clamor of being*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bey, H. (1991). *Temporary autonomous zone*. New York: Autonomedia.
- Crogan, P. (1999). Theory of state: Deleuze, Guattari and Virilio on the state, technology, and speed. *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 4(2), 137–148.
- Deleuze, G. (1994). *Difference and repetition*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1983). *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and schizophrenia* (R. Hurley, M. Seem, & H. R. Lane, Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia* (B. Massumi, Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1994). *What is philosophy?* New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Gammon, E., & Reid, J. (2010). Whither Deleuze and Guattari: A critical introduction. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 13(4), 323–324.
- Günzel, S. (1998). Immanence and deterritorialization: The philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. *Paideia*, 20(6), 137–143.
- Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2000). *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Jordan, T. (1995). Collective bodies: Raving and the politics of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. *Body & Society*, 1(1), 125–147.
- Juris, J. S. (2012). Reflections on #Occupy Everywhere: Social Media, public space, and emerging logics of aggregation. *American Ethnologist*, 39 (2): 259–279.
- Laclau, E., & Mouffe, C. (1985). *Hegemony and socialist strategy: Towards a radical democratic politics*. London: Verso.
- Lazzarato, M. (2014). *Signs and machines: Capitalism and the production of subjectivity*. Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e).
- Mayer, H. & Paul L. K. (2006). *Cities and the creative class*. New York: Routledge.
- Protevi, J. (2008). Deleuze, Guattari and emergence. *Paragraph*, 29(2), 19–39.
- Scott, J. C. (1990). *Domination and the arts of resistance: Hidden transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Srnicek, N., & Williams, A. (2015). *Inventing the future: Postcapitalism and a world without work*. London: Verso.
- Virilio, P. (1998). *The information bomb*. London: Verso.
- Wiley, S. B. C., & Wise, J. M. (2019). Guattari, Deleuze, and cultural studies. *Cultural Studies*, 33(1), 75–97.
- Zayani, M. (2000). Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari and the total system. *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 26(1), 93–114.