

Real World Economics

The Political Economy of Anarchism

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Anarchism is all about power!

deeply engrained scepticism towards all forms of domination

Anarchism seeks not only to uncover and question these forms of domination, but eventually to erode and overthrow them.

Anarchist writings

- = ghettoised within academia & activist subcultures!
- = very diverse and heterodox collection of ideas and political theorizing;
- = rich, sophisticated intellectual tradition;
- = open ended, constantly evolving, flexible and undogmatic body of literature;
- = often accused to be theoretically shallow, and to lack the necessary 'conceptual clarity'.

Tensions/Antagonism between Marxists & Anarchists

Commonalities?

- principal commitment to a more just & egalitarian society
- dedicated to understanding social life & committed to social change
- anti-capitalist (most anarchists)
- Anarchists have no distinct analysis or critique of capitalism
- Utopia of communist order (at least some versions of anarchism)

Different Views on Social Change

(Classical) Marxism	(Classical) Anarchism
top-down: vanguard party	bottom-up: grassroots struggles
seeking state power	breaking rather than taking state power
total & instantaneous revolution, liberate 'all humanity at once'	non-reformist, non-revolutionary politics non-totalizing philosophy and practice
systemic focus (capitalism as a system) → changing macro-structures	changing macrostructures = matter of changing micro-relations; focus on everyday lives; ethos of direct action, DIY
Communist market: conscious human planning (based on human needs)	not subsume all humanity under a common project; no concrete iron-clad blueprint or programme for a post-capitalist society; free experimentation in the organisation of production
direct democracy?	direct democracy

Outlook of an anarchist economy?

- horizontally & democratically managed forms of production (workers should control work)
- socialised communal ownership structures (the 'commons' as a way of regulating activity without the state or the market (substitute for free market and the state))
- economic growth has no primacy
- different organisational forms of production might operate side by side
- humanising the economy: focus on conscious creation of our everyday lives: everyone's personal development and work satisfaction = high priority! !
- make optimal use of the now largely unused creativity, knowledge and insights of the people