Author/s:
Brinn, Gearoid

Title:
From the Riot to the Ballot Box: Political Realism in Anarchist Theory

Date:
2023-08

Persistent Link:
https://hdl.handle.net/11343/339438

From the Riot to the Ballot Box: Political Realism in Anarchist Theory

Gearóid Brinn
ORCID: 0000-0001-9038-4404

Doctor of Philosophy

December 2023

Faculty of Arts
School of Social and Political Sciences

Submitted in total fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Abstract

Anarchism is subject to many misrepresentations. Leaving aside popular images of anarchism as violent lawlessness, serious academic treatments as well as ostensibly sympathetic radical accounts, perpetuate a simplistic stereotype of anarchism as the most naïvely idealistic of radical perspectives. The standard representations in political theory cast anarchism as committed to an overly optimistic view of human nature, a simplistic view of sudden, total revolution, and a purist rejection of the state and any interaction with political institutions. This thesis demonstrates, however, that within the diverse field of anarchist thought there exist tendencies and thinkers which together reveal the inaccuracy of this representation of anarchism as a whole. Drawing on examples from across the modern and contemporary eras of anarchism it shows that, rather than a universally moralist, idealist, and unrealistic perspective, there are expressions of anarchism which should be considered politically realist. Anarchists who are realists broadly hold the collection of positions commonly employed to define the realist disposition, though their interpretations of these 'central tenets of realism' often differ to those of other realist theorists, (such as those of a liberal or conservative orientation). The recent revival of realism in political philosophy has also included attempts to defend the potential of a radical form. This thesis argues that a radical conception of realism is best appreciated by consideration of the application of a realist perspective within an existing radical ideology. Though frequently alluded to in the realist discourse through the use of classic anarchist slogans and occasional citation of anarchist thinkers, anarchism is still usually represented as paradigmatically non-realist. Therefore, recognition of this 'realist anarchism' is useful for appreciating the true scope of anarchist thought, action, and potential and to contextualise other contemporary radical theoretical discourses, especially radical strains of political realism and radical democratic theory. Beyond radical theory it also contributes to clarification of the scope and possibilities of both anarchism and realism in contemporary political theory.

Declaration of Originality

This thesis is comprised only of original work towards the degree of PhD – Arts, except where indicated in the preface. Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all material used. The thesis is below the 100,000 word-limit in length.

Gearóid Brinn

December 2023

Preface

Sections of the introduction and chapter two have been published as parts of the article 'Smashing the State Gently: Radical Realism and Realist Anarchism' in the *European Journal of Political Theory*, *19*(2), 206–227, https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885119865975

Acknowledgments

My sincere gratitude firstly to my supervisors. Associate Professor Sana Nakata has been the best principal supervisor that I could have hoped for, and I have often found myself struck by how lucky I have been to have her generous support, attention, and kindness. Her clarity, attention to detail, and critical insight have been both invaluable resources and a constant source of inspiration. Many thanks also to my associate supervisors Dr Clayton Chin and Professor Adrian Little, who, through their generosity with time and attention, as well as their experience and depth of knowledge, have both gone far beyond what could be reasonably expected of them in their supporting roles.

My deepest appreciation also to those friends and colleagues with whom I've had conversations and debates that contributed more to this thesis than they could know. This is especially the case for my fellow PhD candidates who endured my rambling rants over countless coffees and hallway chats. Thank you to Ross Barham, Marko Beljac, Lucas Grainger-Brown, Kennedy Mbeva Liti, Susan Wright, Hamza Bin Jehangir, Kelly Soderstrom, and Cassie DeFillipo. And thanks particularly to Priya Kunjan whose stalwart support and encouragement has had an incalculable impact on this thesis.

And many thanks to my partner Georgina, daughter Saoirse, and mother Olive for their love, support, and patience.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Anarchism has a long-held reputation as utopian, idealistic and paradigmatically non-realist. It is accused of naïve idealism,[1] moralistic theoretical purism and even 'schoolboy asininity'.[2] Marxists (and also Marx) have traditionally seen it as the exemplar of idealistic utopianism that presents a vision of an alternate society with no realistic strategy for its realisation.[3] Academic accounts generally present anarchism as underpinned by a naïve view of human nature, a simplistic and uncompromising rejection of the state and an unswerving commitment to sudden total social revolution.[4] Bernard Williams, for instance, offers anarchism as the paradigmatic example of non-realist politics. Without reference to any actual anarchist to substantiate his characterisation, he claims that 'we need not take seriously' anarchism as it opposes 'any political system or any state whatsoever' and therefore is 'not a political position...and not interesting'.[5]

This non-realist reputation is not completely without basis. There are varieties of anarchism which are openly and defiantly non-realist in the sense that they are explicitly 'anti-politics' and refuse to accept the need to recognise such things as the 'realities of history and politics', the permanence of disagreement or even the centrality of considerations of power in political action.[6] This reputation is also reinforced in some introductory texts written by anarchists which, given an incredibly diverse field of thought, present a simplified and reductive account that leaves aside the more controversial debates within the literature, thereby erasing some of its theoretical diversity.[7] Similarly, some accounts of contemporary radical movements take the non-realist strain to be

[1] Davide Turcato, 2015, *Making Sense of Anarchism: Errico Malatesta's Experiments with Revolution, 1889-1900*, AK Press, p. 1.
[2] Karl Marx, 2000, 'On Bakunin's Statism and Anarchy', In: McLellan, *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, Oxford University Press, p.607.
[3] See: Nick Soudakoff, et al., 2001, *Marxism Versus Anarchism*, Resistance Books.
[4] E.g.: Ian Adams, 1993, *Political Ideology Today*, Manchester University Press, Ch. 6; Eric J. Hobsbawm, 1999, *Revolutionaries*, Abacus, pp.89-90.
[5] Bernard Williams, 2005, *In the Beginning Was the Deed: Realism and Moralism in Political Argument*, Princeton University Press, p.82.
[6] Albert Meltzer, 1993, *Anarchism: Arguments for and Against*, Lancaster Press, p.11; Saul Newman, 2015, *Postanarchism*, Polity Press.
[7] E.g.: George Woodcock, 1962, *Anarchism : A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*, Penguin.

constitutive of the anarchist position and, rather than challenge this representation, defend it as though they defend anarchism in general.[8]

However, despite the non-realist tendency within anarchism, there are some who conceive of anarchism in a way that challenges the applicability of this characterisation to all forms of anarchism, and therefore its accuracy as an image of anarchism in toto. This realist countertendency rejects the 'anti-power/anti-politics' perspective and the purist strategy of withdrawal from mainstream politics that it entails. Instead, it seeks to be realistic and pragmatic[9] in the pursuit of uncompromised goals such as the replacement of the nation-state with another form of social organisation. Therefore, it advocates challenging and engaging with current institutions and practices in order to transform and ultimately replace them. Realist anarchism is not a theoretical perspective that has previously been fully articulated, or a generally recognised sub-type like anarchist-communism, anarcho-syndicalism or anarcha-feminism. It is merely a disposition that is expressed contextually in a variety of specific debates, from various anarchist strains and across different historical eras.[10] Realist anarchism then is not a term that anarchists use to self-describe, nor is it a perspective that has produced standalone theoretical accounts, but is rather a collection of positions that are produced in critical response to common idealistic and unrealistic anarchist positions. These anarchist statements of realism closely correspond to those cited as the defining beliefs of realism in accounts of realist political theory, and strongly challenge the standard representations of anarchism in political theory more broadly. These positions, which I refer to as the 'central tenets' of realism, include such statements as 'politics is about power', 'conflict and disagreement are ineradicable', and 'we must engage with the realities of history and politics'.

[8] E.g.: Richard J. F. Day, 2005, *Gramsci Is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements*, Pluto Press; John Holloway, 2005, *Change the World without Taking Power*, Pluto Press.

[9] I use this term only in its common sense and do not intend any reference to the formal philosophical doctrine.

[10] E.g.: Errico Malatesta, 1965, *Errico Malatesta, His Life & Ideas*, Freedom Press; Wayne Price, 2006, 'Confronting the Question of Power', *anarkismo.net*, [Online] Available from: http://www.anarkismo.net/article/2496 ; Murray Bookchin, 1979, 'Anarchism: Past and Present', In: Ehrlich, *Reinventing Anarchy, Again*, AK Press; Noam Chomsky, 1996a, *Powers and Prospects: Reflections on Human Nature and the Social Order*, South End Press; Abdullah Öcalan, 2011, *Democratic Confederalism*, International Initiative Edition.

The debate within the recent revival of realism in political theory[11] as to its capacity for radicalism has focused on the potential for realism to be employed towards radical ends, rather than whether or not it is actually employed within existing radical theory or practice.[12] It is asked how a realist approach can be "both 'realistic' and strongly critical of the existing state of things",[13] or how it can balance the tension between 'demanding the impossible' and accounting for the 'concrete' realities of politics and history.[14] An alternative approach, taken up here, is to ask whether there is a realism that is radical, and if there is a radicalism that could be considered realist. That is, to frame the inquiry without the implicit assumption that there are no actually-existing[15] forms of radicalism that are realist by the standards used to distinguish the perspective in academic debates, and that do 'demand the impossible' while also 'being realistic'.[16] This thesis argues affirmatively: yes, there is at least one actually-existing form of radical realism, and its example can be brought to bear in dispelling the apparent 'special difficulty' some see in combining radical and realist perspectives.[17] I will demonstrate that there is a coherent radical variety of realism evident in an account of a generally unrecognised perspective within the diverse field of anarchist thought and action, which I will refer to as 'realist anarchism'.

---

[11] This thesis is constrained in its focus to the realist discourse in political theory, as opposed to debates over realism in International Relations (IR), though there are similar implications. For instance, Noam Chomsky is treated as a 'realist anarchist' in this thesis and also described as a radical realist in IR literature, with a similar acceptance of central IR realist tenets under a different interpretation. For introductory overviews of the recent revival of realism in political theory see, for e.g.: Enzo Rossi and Matt Sleat, 2014, 'Realism in Normative Political Theory'*, Philosophy Compass*, vol:9, (10); and William A Galston, 2010, 'Realism in Political Theory'*, European journal of political theory*, vol:9, (4). On the continuity between IR realism and the contemporary field in political theory see: Alison McQueen, 2017, *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times*, Cambridge University Press. For Chomsky as a realist anarchist in an IR context, see: Ronald Osborn, 2009, 'Noam Chomsky and the Realist Tradition'*, Review of International Studies*, vol:35, (2).

[12] E.g. Alison McQueen, 2020, 'Political Realism and Moral Corruption'*, European Journal of Political Theory*, vol:19, (2); Janosch Prinz, 2015, *Radicalizing Realism in Political Theory,* University of Sheffield; Enzo Rossi, 2010, 'Reality and Imagination in Political Theory and Practice: On Raymond Geuss's Realism'*, European journal of political theory*, vol:9, (4).

[13] Lorna Finlayson, 2017, 'With Radicals Like These, Who Needs Conservatives? Doom, Gloom, and Realism in Political Theory'*, European Journal of Political Theory*, vol:16, (3), p.265.

[14] Enzo Rossi, 2019, 'Being Realistic and Demanding the Impossible'*, Constellations*, vol:26, (4).

[15] The term 'actually-existing' is borrowed from Barry Hindess to denote the practical as opposed to purely theoretical expression of a theory or ideology, and it recalls the phrase 'actually-existing socialism', a device used to compare socialist societies with socialist theory in 20th-century Marxist thought. In this thesis, it denotes the 'real politics' of radical political actors and movements. See: Barry Hindess, 2008, 'Political Theory and 'Actually Existing Liberalism''*, Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, vol:11, (3).

[16] 'Be realistic: demand the impossible!' (originally Soyez-re´alistes: demandez l'impossible!), a famous graffiti slogan from the 'May Days' uprising in Paris 1968, has long been used in anarchist literature to express a defiant commitment to utopian politics. Consistent with recent realist literature, it is used here to suggest a realist position that does not compromise its utopianism and remains 'as radical as it gets', Rossi, 2019, p.3.

[17] Alex Bavister-Gould, 2013, 'Bernard Williams: Political Realism and the Limits of Legitimacy'*, European journal of philosophy*, vol:21, (4) p.608; Piki Ish-Shalom, 2006, 'The Triptych of Realism, Elitism, and Conservatism'*, International Studies Review*, vol:8, (3).

The term 'realist anarchism' refers to a construction composed of dispersed and contextual anarchist positions, collected with regard to their relation to the 'central tenets' of realist political theory and their demonstration of the falsity of the standard academic image of anarchism. Individual anarchists are included for their contributions to this construction, rather than due to any assertion that each represents a complete exemplar of the perspective or agrees with all of its constitutive positions. This thesis then presents a reading of anarchism as containing a strain that defies the standard academic image of anarchism, though it does not challenge the assertion that there are some strains of anarchism that do embody certain simplistic and idealistic perspectives on politics and advocate unrealistic and utopian approaches to political change. This introductory chapter will introduce the research problem, explain the method, outline the significance and originality of the study, and provide a chapter overview.

Research problem/question

This thesis begins with a recognition of the particular representations of anarchism in academic political theory that is not itself explicitly anarchist. That is, the common representations of anarchism as a political philosophy by scholars of political thought who are not themselves anarchists. As demonstrated in chapter one, this 'standard academic image' casts anarchism as a whole as paradigmatically non-realist and committed to a suite of beliefs and values that constitute the conceptual opposite of the approach to politics described as political realism. This positioning then not only represents a particular reading of a particular strain of radical political thought, but also underpins widely held assumptions within the discipline as to the spectrum of existing political orientations and so the landscape of contemporary political thought itself. The initial research question therefore asked: 'how accurate is this standard, non-realist, academic image of anarchism – do any existing anarchist theorists or movements challenge this representation?'.

Having determined that there are indeed some examples of anarchist theory that defy the standard image the further questions arose as to how such anarchists not only challenged the non-realist representations of anarchism but actually conform with the realist disposition. That is, not only whether the non-realist representation is inaccurate, but also: 'whether or not some anarchists should properly be situated within the conceptual bounds of the broad approach to political thought referred to as political realism'. As the title of the thesis suggests, this research affirmed both of these inquiries, the explication of which forms the primary focus herein. As the standard representation plays a significant role in determining the bounds of the perceived spectrum of political thought, the question: what is realist anarchism's relation to other forms of radical political

thought?' also underlies the study. The analysis of other forms of radicalism found particular resonances between some expressions of realist anarchism and agonist radical democratic theory, which has also been characterised as exhibiting a realist perspective.[18] Therefore this research also sought to answer the question: 'how closely do realist anarchism and radical democratic agonism align, and can their interaction serve to clarify their respective strategic approaches to the state?'. This final question is especially relevant in later chapters which address one of the most persistent elements of the standard image: the claim of anarchism's supposed non-realist disengagement from the current dominant political institutions in its strategic approaches to the state.

Method and methodology

Radical Realism

In this section I will outline the specific method and broader methodological orientation of this thesis. Firstly, this research is theoretical and text-based. Though it makes claims in part regarding contemporary anarchist movements it does not interact with these movements as objects of study through ethnography, surveys, questionnaires etc., but through their written self-representations – articles, books, pamphlets, and various forms of radical propaganda[19] - and by drawing on some other research that does engage ethnographically with a variety of these movements.[20] As this is a purely theoretical thesis it does not need to go beyond consideration of the written output of anarchist thinkers. But there are also ethical, practical, and methodological reasons for limiting engagement with anarchist groups to their texts. Firstly, many anarchist groups do not wish to be subjects of academic study. Secondly, as my primary claim regards the existence of a particular theoretical position in anarchist thought which is evident in theoretical analysis of texts, ethnographic engagement would only serve to confirm this. And as the focus of this thesis is the theoretical implications of this position, such a confirmation would add little to this project.

[18] Galston 2010, p.386.

[19] I use this term throughout in its neutral sense – as a descriptor for material used to propagate ideas and spread radical theory, models, strategy, analysis, such as pamphlets and radical books, magazines, and journals, rather than as a label for deliberately misleading information designed to manipulate and weaponise popular opinion.

[20] E.g.: Nicholas Apoifis, 2016, *Anarchy in Athens: An Ethnography of Militancy, Emotions and Violence*, Oxford University Press; Mark Bray, 2013, *Translating Anarchy: The Anarchism of Occupy Wall Street*, John Hunt Publishing; Uri Gordon, 2008, *Anarchy Alive! Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory*, Pluto Press; David Graeber, 2009, *Direct Action: An Ethnography*, AK Press; David Graeber, 2013, *The Democracy Project: A History, a Crisis, a Movement*, Allen Lane; Jeff Shantz, 2011, *Active Anarchy: Political Practice in Contemporary Movements*, Lexington Books; Jonathan Matthew Smucker, 2017, *Hegemony How-To: A Roadmap for Radicals*, AK Press; Dana Williams, 2017, *Black Flags and Social Movements: A Sociological Analysis of Movement Anarchism*, Manchester University Press.

Finally, directly engaging with groups that are minority factions in radical movements in various different locations across the planet presents overwhelming practical obstacles. The existence of various ethnographic engagements with anarchist movements in different locations in recent years however serve as supporting texts that affirm interpretations of theoretical texts and their implementation by activists, as well as confirm that the 'realist anarchist' perspective exists in practice, and not merely in theory. To this end some ethnographic and social scientific engagements are employed in this thesis, and are introduced in the next chapter.

In this thesis, realism is a disposition rather than a comprehensive standalone theory of the world.[21] This disposition is normatively variable, by which I mean that it does not have an intrinsic normative character, and it can be underpinned by (at least) a conservative, liberal, or (as demonstrated in chapter two) a radical pre-disposition. A realist disposition might serve conservative maintenance of tradition, gradual liberal improvement of the status quo, or its radical transformation. From these very different starting points different realists will seek a 'realistic' understanding of the actual conditions and salient facts that the attainment of their goals will need to contend with, and a practical approach to achieving these goals that satisfactorily addresses those conditions and facts.

In attempts to delineate the bounds of the realist disposition, it is usual for theorists to outline definitive views or positions that hold different realists in a 'family' of resemblance despite often significant disagreement and difference. William Galston for example, casts realism "as a kind of community stew where everyone throws something different into the pot",[22] and Mark Philp describes realism as "a multi-coloured beast of precisely the type of which Plato disapproved" and which is characterised by opposition to particular "ways of thinking more than it is a unified movement with agreed principles, methods, or aims".[23] It is often noted then that across different types of realism in political theory there are some positions (which are usually seen as inescapable realities) that are shared by all.[24] This approach is understandable considering the character of realism as a disposition or attitude towards politics and political thought rather than a coherent

[21] Matt Sleat, 2011, 'Liberal Realism: A Liberal Response to the Realist Critique', *The Review of Politics*, vol:73, (3), p.471; Rob BJ Walker, 1987, 'Realism, Change, and International Political Theory', *International Studies Quarterly*, vol:31, (1), p.68.
[22] Galston 2010, p.386.
[23] Philp 2012, p.3.
[24] Galston, 2010, pp.394-400; Mark Philp, 2012, 'Realism without Illusions', *Political Theory*, vol:40, (5), p3; William E. Scheuerman, 2013, 'The Realist Revival in Political Philosophy, Or: Why New Is Not Always Improved', *International Politics*, vol:50, (6), p.802.

theory with specific normative implications in itself. It is also defensible as many of those who adopt the realist stance do not explicitly self-describe as such and are focused on theoretical areas other than the articulation of a coherent singular theory of realism, and so therefore those theorists who do wish to determine the bounds of realist thought must turn to consideration of particular shared principles. While this attempt to corral different theorists into a broad set by outlining their shared views is often problematic and ultimately misleading, I will initially draw on this approach in order to frame a rather simple method of categorising different forms of realism.

The definitive realist positions often differ between different analysts, who usually only use a small few, or even one, view as that which defines the stance. For example, for David Runciman, "one thing that connects much writing in the realist vein is its emphasis on legitimacy";[25] for Matt Sleat the central issue[26] is that realists hold that "disagreement and conflict are ubiquitous in social life"[27] which gives the political realm a distinct and irreducible character sometimes referred to as defined by the 'autonomy of politics'.[28] This autonomy is often diminished or ignored by non-realists, and William Galston sees "the belief that high liberalism represents a desire to evade, displace, or escape from politics" as that which "unites realists at the threshold".[29] For Enzo Rossi realists are those who reject political moralism – "political judgment is not to be derived from pre-political moral commitments",[30] while Duncan Bell adds to anti-moralism an insistence on "the importance of contingency [and] historical context".[31] Lorna Finlayson affirms the centrality of the realist opposition to the 'displacement of politics' (otherwise put as opposition to an 'ethics first' or 'applied ethics' approach, or as recognition of the 'autonomy of politics'), as well as listing a concern for the "concrete realities" of the political realm, including institutions, order, pluralism, conflict, and "an emphasis on the emotions or 'passions'" as central elements of the "realist impulse".[32] In the following section and in chapter two I address a comprehensive collection of these views which are commonly taken to be constitutive of the realist disposition in the contemporary literature. I refer to these as the 'central tenets' of political realism and will demonstrate that all are views which can be found amongst anarchists, although their

[25] David Runciman, 2012, 'What Is Realistic Political Philosophy?', *Metaphilosophy*, vol:43, (1-2), p.66.
[26] Though he also engages with many of the other tenets listed.
[27] Matt Sleat, 2016, 'Realism, Liberalism and Non-Ideal Theory or, Are There Two Ways to Do Realistic Political Theory?', *Political Studies*, vol:64, (1), p.31.
[28] Ibid; Carlo Burelli, 2022, 'Political Normativity and the Functional Autonomy of Politics', *European Journal of Political Theory*, vol:21, (4).
[29] Galston, 2010, p.386.
[30] Rossi 2019, p.1.
[31] Duncan Bell, 2017, 'Political Realism and International Relations', *Philosophy Compass*, vol:12, (2).
[32] Finlayson, 2017, pp.266-267.

interpretations and applications are often very different to that which they are assumed to imply from the usual liberal or conservative analytic viewpoint.

Another of the basic positions that most varieties of realism agree on is that politics is in large part about the struggle for and exercise of power.[33] What this means and how it should inform action will vary, however. For a conservative IR realist it might mean that the actions of states cannot be effectively brought under moral control, and such efforts should be abandoned;[34] for a radical realist it might mean that revolutionary efforts must take seriously the threat of violent reaction from incumbent powers.[35] But different approaches and focuses will also entail different emphases on specific elements of reality as particularly pertinent. So while radical realists accept these commonly articulated 'central tenets' of the realist disposition - such as: the centrality of power and self-interest in politics; its inherently conflictual nature; its embeddedness in contingent historical, geographical and cultural contexts; that is should be 'concrete and oriented towards action'; and that it should not attempt to 'displace' politics or otherwise be seen as 'applied-ethics' - these tenets will have specific meaning in a radical setting. They might also be combined with recognition of, and emphasis on, other important facts, such as the reality of precarious environmental conditions, the realities of inequality, and the fact that social and political change is an historical constant. While I will address here those radical interpretations of realist tenets with specific relevance to the methodological approach adopted in this thesis, I will leave further explication of these tenets until the second chapter where their interpretation from a realist anarchist perspective will be outlined.

One other position acknowledged by the realist disposition is that the production of knowledge is itself a political activity, and that therefore there can be no neutral, objective, political theory – all political thought is inescapably partisan, whether acknowledged or not.[36] Due to the ineradicability of disagreement between humans, the role of passions and non-rational influences in shaping beliefs, and the centrality of power in political action, politics and political theory cannot be

[33] Raymond Geuss, 2008, *Philosophy and Real Politics*, Princeton University Press, pp.25-28.
[34] Kenneth Waltz, 1979, *Theory of International Politics*, Mcgraw-Hill; John Mearsheimer, 2001, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, W.W. Norton and Co.
[35] Murray Bookchin, [2002] 2015a, 'Anarchism and Power in the Spanish Revolution', *The Next Revolution: Popular Assemblies and the Promise of Direct Democracy*, Verso Books, pp.139-144; Noam Chomsky, 2005a, *Chomsky on Anarchism*, AK Press, p.154; Abdullah Öcalan, 2017, *The Political Thought of Abdullah Öcalan: Kurdistan, Woman's Revolution and Democratic Confederalism*, Pluto Press, pp.44-45, 135-138.
[36] Apoifis, 2016, p.52; Geuss, 2008, p.29; Max Weber, 1949, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, The Free Press, p.72; Barry Hindess, 1977, *Philosophy and Methodology in the Social Sciences*, Harvester Press, p.18.

undertaken in a non-partisan manner – it is not and cannot be neutral, objective and disinterested.[37] People take sides – and the sides that they take are not entirely the product of rational inquiry and calculated weighing of options. People often (and arguably always) have normative political pre-dispositions formed by a variety of different influences including culture, community and family socialisation, particular individual experience, emotional inclinations, personality, as well as rational reflection on arguments advocating alternative normative perspectives. These various influences and drives exist in complex inter-relation and there are no hard divisions between them, regardless of the simplistic binary constructions of liberal rationalists or pessimistic conservatives. And of course, this applies to political theorists, even realists, as much as anyone else. Accordingly, this research is conducted from an openly partisan perspective. It does not attempt to present as neutral research on radical politics but is situated in a critical yet sympathetic position in relation to the ideas examined.

We come to the realist perspective, or 'disposition',[38] and interpret its tenets from an existing personal normative foundation. Realism itself has no intrinsic normative character. Thus, it can serve different normative commitments, motivations, goals and focuses, and can underpin a conservative desire to maintain traditions and resist change; a liberal wish to gradually improve the current dominant forms of organisation; or a radical aspiration to fundamentally change them. From these very different starting points each will seek a 'realistic' understanding of the actual conditions and salient facts that the attainment of their goals will need to contend with, and a practical approach to achieving these goals that satisfactorily addresses those conditions and facts. The conception of realism as a normatively variable disposition is standard in contemporary accounts. It is for instance the image of realism presented by Raymond Geuss, whose work is useful for explaining the approach employed in this thesis.[39] Geuss's 2008 *Philosophy and Real Politics* is widely considered the pivotal work in an ongoing attempt to carve out a radical form of political realism, and his provocative counter-labelling of realism as 'neo-Leninism'[40] clearly signals that Geuss sees realism as compatible with a radical pre-disposition. It is also a position that is implicitly accepted by the many who recognise that there are both liberal realists and realists who are radical (or at least try to be).[41] There has, however, been some confusion in the recent revival of realism

[37] Geuss, 2008, p.95.
[38] Sleat, 2011, p.471; Walker, 1987, p.68.
[39] To be clear, while Geuss's work is useful for understanding radical realism as it is a central point of reference within the recent realist revival, this thesis is not however directly based on Geuss's work or claimed to be a faithful application of his method.
[40] Geuss, 2008, p.99.
[41] E.g. Galston, 2010, p.400; McQueen, 2020, p.158n5.

in political theory as to whether a realist position can truly be radical. For example, Lorna Finlayson argues that although they need not be conservative, realists generally have difficulty in navigating the tension between the realist recognition of current conditions and a radical commitment to alternatives.[42] In *Reality and its Dreams*,[43] Geuss attempts to clarify a radical realist approach to this tension by drawing on the German anarchist Gustav Landauer's concept of utopian thinking, which makes a distinction between utopia that is presented as a fixed, unchanging, perfect society, and utopian thinking that is open-ended.[44] This latter form is compatible with Geuss's radical realism as it begins from dissatisfactions with current reality and uses the utopian vision that overcomes that dissatisfaction as a motivating guide to challenging it. Geuss gives an effective example when he suggests that a realist might consider the idea that the current socio-economic system is driving the existential threat of catastrophic climate change as a 'fact worth taking seriously'.[45] They may be motivated by the utopian vision of a different, sustainable, system despite how vague the vision, or impossible its attainment, might currently seem. Motivated by both the appraisal of the threat and the utopian vision of an alternative, the realist could then turn their attention to determining what practical political action in the present could help move towards their utopian goals.

However, the implications of this 'disposition' approach are not usually drawn out, particularly the problems of obfuscation created by defining realism according to the 'central tenets' that all realists accept. One such problem with this 'shared tenets' approach to defining realism is that it obfuscates the divergences between different forms of realism concerning their attention to 'reality', that is, which actual conditions and salient facts they variously prioritise. It is true that all realists advocate 'engaging with reality' while prioritising different things within 'the real' as particularly important.[46] However, if realists do have varying focuses on particular aspects of reality, then ignoring this variation and focusing instead on the fact that all realists recognise the importance of reality (whatever that might be) obscures the very differences that might distinguish approaches and therefore the actual scope of the realist disposition. Or put another way, how does treating the fact that two realists agree on the importance of 'reality' help us understand anything about realism when one sees as the most important aspect of reality the 'fact' that capitalism is the

[42] Finlayson, 2016, p.265.
[43] Raymond Geuss, 2016, *Reality and Its Dreams*, Harvard University Press.
[44] Ibid., p.46.
[45] Ibid., pp.24, 115-116.
[46] Finlayson, 2017, p.265; Adrian Little, et al., 2015, 'Reconstituting Realism: Feasibility, Utopia and Epistemological Imperfection', *Contemporary Political Theory*, vol:14, (3), pp.277–278.

only viable form of social organisation[47] and another the 'fact' that the threat of catastrophic climate change demands a global anti-capitalist revolution?[48]

A second problem with a 'shared tenets' approach is that even when different realists do have shared commitments, they will often mean very different things to each. Take the supposedly shared concern above, that all realists accept that politics is a partisan activity driven by both rational calculation and passions and non-rational influences on belief, and that ultimately conflict and disagreement are ineradicable. For a conservative, liberal or radical realist, these positions can connote very different 'salient facts' about political action in relation to achieving their particular goals. A conservative might see in the statement that people are driven by passions and non-rational influences an implicit assertion that 'the masses' cannot be reasoned with, cannot democratically self-manage and must be compelled, cajoled and ultimately coerced into accepting enlightened rule by intelligent, educated elites who have mastered the habit of conscious, rational, decision-making.[49] For a liberal realist, this recognition might connote the need to consider more the actual day-to-day machinations of political action within the status quo in order to improve its operation, rather than seeking to perfect liberal society with reference to abstracted theoretical models.[50] And for a radical, the assertion might suggest that despite our loftiest goals, and the wide scope of potential for future social alternatives, hope must be abandoned of realising a fully 'reconciled society' without disagreement, exclusion or oppression[51] – that, regardless of the extent of future radical social change, there will always be a need for vigilance and further radical struggle.[52] In this thesis (especially chapter two), I will explore some of these radical interpretations of central realist tenets from a realist anarchist perspective. This will both highlight the problems of a superficial application of the 'shared tenets' approach to defining realism, and demonstrate that there are (both in theory, and in reality) radical forms of realism and specifically, a realist anarchism.

The positions considered in this thesis as the 'central tenets' of realism are: 'politics is about power'; 'conflict and disagreement are ineradicable'; political thought should be 'concrete and oriented towards action'; it should recognise the importance of 'history, contingency, and context'; and

[47] Glyn Morgan, 2005, 'The Realism of Raymond Geuss', *Government and Opposition*, vol:40, (1), p.120.
[48] Geuss, 2016, pp.115–116.
[49] J. Brennan, 2017, *Against Democracy*, Princeton University Press.
[50] Sleat, 2011, p.490.
[51] Chantal Mouffe, 2018, *For a Left Populism*, Verso Books, p.3.
[52] Alison Edgley, 2000, *The Social and Political Thought of Noam Chomsky*, Routledge, p.73; Gordon, 2008, pp.5, 40.

should not be seen as 'applied ethics' – that is, political philosophy and theory should not be 'displaced', or seen as derivative of, morality or ethical philosophy. So, the term 'realist anarchism' refers to a construction composed of dispersed and contextual anarchist positions, collected with regard to their relation to these 'central tenets' of realist political theory. Drawing on these positions, which are strewn across different sub-groupings, locales, and thinkers in both academic and non-academic anarchist literatures, this thesis demonstrates the existence of a tendency in anarchism that conforms to these central tenets of realism. This tendency of 'realist' anarchism also challenges the standard image outlined above and detailed in chapter one. So, to be clear, this thesis will advance both negative and positive claims. It will defend against the claims advanced by the standard academic image and demonstrate that it constitutes a misrepresentation. And it will argue the positive case that there does exist a realist anarchism. The central tenets will first be addressed briefly in chapter two, and will subsequently inform considerations throughout the thesis. The standard academic image will be outlined in chapter one and addressing the different elements of the image will form the bulk of the thesis.

The radical realist orientation of this thesis is both derived from and driven by a certain normative pre-disposition. Firstly, it is radical in the sense that it is sees radical change of (at least, but not limited to) the current socio-economic system as possible, desirable, and in many ways, necessary. Secondly, it is democratic in the sense that it rejects authoritarianism and sees non-authoritarian, democratic means and ends as those best in line with the effective achievement of such change. This focus on democratic radicalism should not be taken to imply a pre-existing moralistic commitment. It may be thought for instance that any radical commitments imply an underlying commitment to a specific radical ideology or to either a critique of current conditions or an advocacy of a particular radical alternative based on a moralistic principle, which would contradict the realist opposition to politics as 'applied ethics'.[53] However, as Geuss's climate change example shows, this need not be the case.

Taking the threat of catastrophic climate change seriously means accepting the reality that some form of radical political change may be necessary, and that therefore political theorists must soberly and earnestly engage with the challenges of radical political and socio-economic change regardless of the seeming impossibility of that task under current conditions. The broad shared radical goal of a sustainable alternative to capitalism (whatever that might be) demonstrates how a radical realist

[53] McQueen, 2020.

can accept a broadly normative radical position without endorsing a particular radical ideology, moralistic principle, or a comprehensive and fully prescriptive alternative normative vision. The standard realist prioritisation of safety, security and order can clearly lead to a realist conclusion that supports radical change in the context of a climate crisis that appears genuinely existential and seems fairly obviously driven by our current social and economic systems.[54] But even leaving aside the specific case of climate crisis, by the same logic a realist can hold broader radical commitments without appealing to ethical or moralistic principles, instead proceeding from a realistic recognition that injustice and oppression are unsustainable and ultimately undermine stability and order.[55] This is an example of a position that is radical and accepts a broad radical normativity, but is non-sectarian, and does not seek timeless or universal solutions, while still being able to address broad general strategic issues, and not merely local tactical ones.

A focus on democratic radicalism may also be taken to imply a moral or ethical pre-commitment, but again this is not so. This focus is instead driven by non-moralistic realism. Firstly, the role of the state in the forms of radical social change advocated by non-democratic forms of radicalism are not particularly interesting due to the fact that they are mostly well-understood. In authoritarian forms of socialism, from Blanquism through to all the modern varieties of Leninist vanguardism, the state is simply seized and employed by a dictatorship (whether of one, a party, or ideally a class) to bring about revolutionary change.[56] The conceptions of the state that they employ range from the Leninist 'withering' state to permanent Stalinist state and the anti-colonial socialist states that followed the latter's model. The role of the state in the strategic visions of contemporary democratic radicalism however is much less clear. As we will see in the first chapter, many contemporary forms of democratic radicalism advocate complete withdrawal from current political institutions, especially the state, and those who do propose engaging with the state are rarely clear about what that engagement is to consist of.

Secondly, the vast majority of contemporary radical movements articulate their demands and visions in democratic language.[57] This reflects not only the ideological hegemony of the democratic

[54] Geuss, 2016, pp.115-116; Benedikt Werner, 2012, *Is Earth F**Ked? Dynamical Futility of Global Environmental Management and Possibilities for Sustainability Via Direct Action Activism,*
[55] Malatesta, 1965, pp.74-78; Jeff Shantz and Dana M. Williams, 2013, *Anarchy and Society : Reflections on Anarchist Sociology*, Brill, pp.108-110.
[56] Carl Boggs, 1995, *The Socialist Tradition: From Crisis to Decline*, Routledge, pp.55-56.
[57] Graeber, 2013, pp.30, 33-34; Wayne Price, 2000, 'Anarchism as Extreme Democracy', *The Utopian*, Vol:1, [Online] Available from: http://www.utopianmag.com/archives/anarchism-as-extreme-democracy ; Randall Amster, et al., 2009, *Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy*, Routledge, p.1.

discourse in radical circles, but also suggests that broader populations are resistant to radical discourses advanced in anti-democratic language or with anti-democratic undertones (or at least that radicals assume this to be the case).[58] This should be an uncontroversial assertion in relation to many wealthy, (post-)industrial nations with democratic traditions – to those living in countries like Australia[59] the idea that a violent, anti-democratic, vanguardist revolution could, under current conditions, prevail against the vastly superior military strength of the modern state, or occur with any meaningful level of support from the general population seems patently absurd and the opposite of a realist acceptance of current conditions. But similarly, as we will see in later chapters of this thesis, the assumption that non-'western' radicals are less committed to democratic values is also not a realistic appraisal of contemporary currents in radical thought and action. This is not to say that there are not many who criticise democracy and advocate for non-democratic political systems, rather that there is a widespread acceptance, especially in wealthier countries, that non-democratic radical strategies and rhetoric are not conducive to mobilising widespread support. Therefore, a focus on democratic radicalism is defensible as a realistic accommodation to prevailing conditions and attitudes in contemporary contexts.[60]

It is, then, coherently realist to limit focus to democratic radicalism due to the fact that nondemocratic forms of radicalism are well understood and unambiguous, as well as impracticable and unpopular in many contexts. Democratic forms however are hegemonic in the contemporary radical milieu reflecting a broader hegemonic status of democratic language in general populations. This is not to say of course that non-democratic radicalism is completely unrealistic in all contexts, or that there is no value in studying such perspectives, merely that this thesis's limited focus on democratic radicalism is a reasonable constraint from a radical realist perspective, and that it is not based on a moralistic normative commitment.

Realism also has the capacity to facilitate a broad partisanship without commitment to a particular radical ideology, which underpins one of its most important potential contributions to radical politics – a ruthlessly opportunist focus on strategy. We can consider radical political theory as, in broad terms, operating on 3 sites: 'here', 'there', and 'the path between the two' – or, critique;

[58] This is explicated in more detail in the following chapter.
[59] As do I.
[60] For global attitudes to 'democracy', see: Richard Wike, et al., 2017, 'Globally, Broad Support for Representative and Direct Democracy', *Pew Research Center*, [Online] Available from: https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2017/10/16/globally-broad-support-for-representative-and-direct-democracy/.

normative proposals for alternatives; and tactics and strategy for the implementation of these alternatives. Within this simple schema one of the particular values of realism is its recognition of the importance of the conceptual level of action, implementation, and strategy. Realism in all its forms is a perspective which argues that neither critique of current conditions, nor elaborate visions of alternatives, are sufficient in themselves to achieve change in politics. Some understanding of where you are and where you want to go are important, but they are essentially meaningless without some idea of how to get from here to there. This position is for instance a central part of Geuss's rejection of liberal normative theory, but it is also essential to previous expressions of the realist perspective in the radical tradition, for instance in the critique of utopian socialists who held that the elaboration and propagation of utopian social visions was sufficient to achieve revolutionary change.[61] This is the theoretical level that I want to bring a radical realist perspective to bear on: the level of implementation, action, and strategy.

More specifically, I bring this perspective to bear on implementation, action and strategy not to prosecute the 'correct' path but to outline the existence of an unrecognised form of anarchism and its approach to radical change, and in the final chapter of the thesis, to clarify the role of the state in this transformative process. Even leaving aside the fact that radical realists usually reject the attempt to layout detailed complete utopian 'blueprints' or universal strategies,[62] this limited focus on the role of the state is entirely in line with radical realist priorities. In accordance with the standard realist tenet that to be realistic means taking proper account of the realities of politics and history including the current dominant political institutions and organisational forms,[63] the radical realist perspective demands an account of the approach to actually achieving radical transformation of existing institutions, rather than merely critiquing the status quo or articulating possible radical alternatives. This is not to suggest that any realistic strategy must be primarily concerned with the state. For example, reflecting the anarchistic tendencies in contemporary democratic radicalism,

[61] The classic statement of this position is in Marx and Engels' critique of 'utopian socialism' in the communist manifesto. See: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, 1978 [1848], *The Communist Manifesto*, Penguin, pp.114-118.
[62] In the radical tradition this position is one of the centrally important features of the realist perspective. Marx famously eschewed writing "recipes for the cook-shops of the future", see: Karl Marx, 1971 [1887], *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*, Progress Publishers, p.26. For anarchist examples see: Emma Goldman in Martha Solomon, 1987, *Emma Goldman*, Twayne, p.51; Gordon, 2008, p.5; Errico Malatesta, 2014, *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, p.140. This position is also recognised as a key feature of the radical perspective in the contemporary revival of realism in political theory. See, e.g.: Rossi 2019, pp.7-8; Geuss 2016, p.46.
[63] Geuss, 2008, pp.59-60.

'prefiguration'[64] is a commonplace approach to radical change in the contemporary radical milieu. And indeed, some contributions towards radical realist theory have focused on articulating a realistic approach to employing prefigurative methods.[65] So, a radical realist can also turn attention to realistic approaches to the many aspects of a diverse radical project that works outside of current institutions. But even then, the most successful prefigurative efforts and alternative institutions will still have to deal with the current dominant institutions, such as the state, at some stage in a successful process of radical change. Therefore, as in earlier eras of radical thought, the role of the state in radical change and the conception of the state that this role entails are centrally important issues in determining and articulating radical strategies and theoretical concepts that can contribute to realistic paths to radical change.

Significance and Originality

The scope of anarchism and realism

The realist anarchist perspective challenges assumptions about both realism and anarchism. It challenges ideas of realism as inherently conservative, and therefore contributes to the ongoing efforts in the current revival of realism to argue that radical forms exist. It thereby contributes to understandings of the scope of political realism in general. It also contributes to expanding understanding of the scope of expressions of anarchism. By dispelling the assumptions and misunderstandings that comprise the standard academic image of anarchism it contributes to academic understandings of the scope of both anarchism and radicalism in broader terms. And by drawing together the specific elements of realist anarchism into a coherent, previously unconsidered, construction it contributes to understandings of the scope of anarchist perspectives within the field of anarchist theory itself. And finally, as one of the strategic expressions of realist anarchism in the liberal democratic context forms a central focus of the study, this thesis also contributes to understandings of the scope of democratic theory, especially radical democratic theory.

[64] 'Prefiguration' is a tactic for radical politics that calls for the 'creation of the new world in the shell of the old': it aims for radical social change by constructing alternative institutions, organisations and practices that 'prefigure' the forms that radicals wish to see a future society embody. See: Benjamin Franks, 2018, 'Prefiguration', In: Franks, et al., *Anarchism: A Conceptual Approach*, Routledge, pp.28-43.

[65] For example, Eric Olin-Wright suggest one possible approach to pursuing realistic radical change through prefiguration of alternative institutions in *Envisioning Real Utopias,* Verso (2010); and Paul Raekstad and Sofa Saio Gradin and Paul Raekstad consider in detail the history and debates around the approach in *Prefigurative Politics: Building Tomorrow Today*, Polity (2019).

To be clear: I am not claiming that all forms of anarchism are realist, nor that the approaches and theorists listed herein are the only realist anarchists. Neither do I advocate or defend realist anarchism as 'the best' perspective in democratic theory, or in radical theory, or as the most correct or coherent form of anarchism. I merely aim to show that the perspective exists, that its existence demonstrates the falsity of the standard representations of anarchism as a whole in academic political theory as paradigmatically non-realist, that it disturbs assumptions about political realism and its scope, and it enhances our appreciation of the scope of democratic radicalism.

Realist anarchism is also not claimed to be the only form of radical realism. There are several theorists who argue that realists can be radical (and vice versa). Raymond Geuss[66] a widely-known proponent of radical realism, articulates realism as a variable disposition without inherent normative content. His primary aim, however, is to counter the dominance of non-realist approaches in contemporary political theory, rather than the systematic defence or explication of a distinctly radical variety of realism as such.[67] Other contributions that more explicitly outline a radical variety of realism primarily confine themselves to arguing for the potential of such a position to exist, or that a particular form of radical thought might be considered realistic according to one or two issues within the literature. These contributions are usually based on the relatively modest claim that radical realism cannot logically be excluded from accounts of realism, rather than the stronger claim that radical forms do exist and should be included in conceptualisations of realism. That is, they argue that radical forms of realism cannot be 'ruled out', rather than they should in fact be 'ruled in'.

For instance, Finlayson[68] argues that although realists often take certain realist positions to imply a conservative bias, they need not do so, and there remains logical space in realism for a potential radical interpretation. Likewise, Alison McQueen[69] argues that realism technically need not imply conservatism, but there might be strong reasons that it often does. Rossi considers the "prospects for a radical realism",[70] by distinguishing a radical realist approach from non-ideal theory (with its feasibility constraints) and 'utopianism' that offers a prescriptive model of an ideal society. Rossi goes slightly further than others in presenting a positive argument for a particular form of radical

[66] Geuss 2008; 2016.
[67] Geuss 2008, p.1
[68] Finlayson, 2017.
[69] McQueen, 2020.
[70] Rossi 2019, p.2.

realism, specifically a Marxist form that avoids prescriptive accounts of an ideal alternative society, and focuses on 'ideology critique' from a stance of "distinctively negative normativity" that "can inform open-ended social critique as well as lend support to concrete forms of prefigurative politics".[71] Again, the overall aim is to establish that realists need not accept feasibility constraints or a status quo bias,[72] rather than highlighting existing radicals who, despite their realism, do not accept such constraints or bias.

Rather than merely arguing the *potential* for realist perspectives to be expressed from a radical perspective, realist anarchism serves as an actually-existing example of such a radical perspective.[73] Therefore the establishment of realist anarchism does not only challenge and expand understandings of anarchist theory, but also similarly clarifies the scope of the realist perspective, and affirms that despite realism's conservative reputation, radical forms of realism are not only theoretically possible but do actually exist. The establishment of this perspective then serves as a contribution to understandings of anarchism, of radicalism, and of the potential realist expression of both specifically anarchist and broadly radical theoretical perspectives. And while recognition of the existence of anarchist realism expands and clarifies the scope of both anarchism and of radical realism, recognition of the existence of radical realism similarly expands and clarifies the scope of realism broadly.

In addition to these contributions, there have also been engagements by contemporary political realists regarding the (potential) existence of a specifically anarchist form of radical realism. Paul Raekstad directly counters Williams' specific reason for dismissing anarchism. Confining his argument to the limited task of showing that anarchism cannot be ruled out as potentially realist by mere 'methodological stipulation', he accepts that there may be other reasons that do indeed rule it out.[74] Oscar Addis argues that the anarchism of Errico Malatesta (one of the anarchists drawn upon in this thesis) constitutes a form of utopian realism due to its rejection of prescriptive blueprints for an ideal society, and for its directive to engage with, and challenge, prevailing realities by direct action that prefigures potential future alternatives.[75]

[71] Rossi, 2019, p.2.
[72] Rossi 2019, p.1.
[73] This argument, for the potential rather than the actuality of radical realism, is currently the norm in radical realist literature. See, e.g.: Rossi 2019; Prinz, 2015; Finlayson 2017, p.265; McQueen, 2020.
[74] Paul Raekstad, 2018, 'Realism, Utopianism, and Radical Values'*, European journal of philosophy*, vol:26, (1).
[75] Oscar Addis, 2017, The Utopian Realism of Errico Malatesta, Association for Social and Political Philosophy (ASPP) Conference, Sheffield.

This thesis contributes to this project of articulating a radical conception of realism by offering a more comprehensive and positive account of such a perspective. It will argue that radical forms of realism should indeed be included in general accounts of the realist disposition, and it will defend this assertion with reference to several of the commonly cited 'central tenets' of realism. Realist anarchism constitutes a meaningful addition to radical conceptualisations of realism both for its example as a theoretical perspective and as practice in the 'real politics' of anarchist social movements.[76] This thesis clarifies the scope of the realist disposition by demonstrating how an existing radical perspective interprets the 'central tenets' of realism. It also demonstrates that a radical perspective can 'be realistic' while 'demanding the impossible'.

Anarchism and democratic theory

Just as the contributions of this thesis are of significance to realism, they are also significant to understandings of anarchism, and its scope, strategies and concepts. These contributions to anarchist theory are arguably more noteworthy than those to realism considering the importance of the state in anarchist thought as well as in representations and scholarly understandings of anarchism in general. The centrality of simplistic and uncompromising anti-statism in representations of anarchism, as well as its characterisation as inescapably idealist,[77] moralistic, and paradigmatically non-realist, means that the realist form of anarchism outlined herein, with its nuanced approach to the state, significantly challenges current understandings and expands appreciation of the scope of potential expressions of the anarchist perspective, especially its attitude to the state and radical change.

[76] Gordon, 2008; Tadzio Mueller, 2003, 'Empowering Anarchy: Power, Hegemony, and Anarchist Strategy', *Anarchist Studies*, vol:11, (2); Jeff Shantz, 2010, *Constructive Anarchy: Building Infrastructures of Resistance*, Routledge.

[77] In this thesis the terms 'idealism' and 'idealistic' refer to a few related criticisms of anarchism as non-realist: (1) a perspective that sees ideas as the primary driver of social change, especially that which explicitly suggests that the mere articulation of an ideal alternative social arrangement is enough to bring it into being; (2) approaches that focus primarily on designing 'blueprints' for an ideal society with little or no consideration of implementation, or which present highly unrealistic plans for implementation, such as those which wholly avoid conflict; and (3) positions based on commitment to alternative models which are themselves considered unachievable by any means or over any timescale, such as those that imagine a fully just society or one without conflict or disagreement. This latter usage often also includes an ideal view of human nature as naturally 'good' that assumes that all antisocial, or even competitive, behaviour would disappear under the correct social model. Utopianism has similar connotations and is often used interchangeably with idealism. Here it denotes a commitment to an alternative social model that currently appears impossible to achieve, whether or not implementation is also considered. These representations will be challenged, particularly in chapter two, but also throughout the thesis.

So, this thesis will also give a clearer account than currently exists of a realist tendency in anarchism whose existence is of significance not only to realism broadly and radical realism specifically, and to anarchist theory and study of anarchist thought, but also to considerations in political theory more broadly of the scope and form of contemporary radical currents. Therefore, the main contributions in relation to this theoretical perspective are exegetical: 1) establishing the existence of this form of political thought at all; 2) that it is a genuine expression of the realist disposition; 3) that it is a coherent form of *anarchist* thought; and 4) that the expression of the realist anarchist disposition in a liberal democratic context represents an unrecognised element with the broad field of radical democratic theory. Foremost however, these contributions extend and clarify understandings of anarchist thought, specifically in the sense that they falsify the commonplace representation of anarchism as paradigmatically non-realist.[78]

Originality

The claim of originality in this thesis is primarily that of an original articulation of an existing but unrecognised perspective. That is, as mentioned earlier, realist anarchism is a construction created out of elements drawn together with regard to their adherence to the realist disposition and their demonstration of the falsity of the standard image of anarchism. Realist anarchism is not a pre-existing form of anarchism that anarchists self-identify in relation to, nor has it otherwise been articulated as a coherent tendency. Therefore, the construction and the claim of a coherent tendency represents an original contribution, while the elements from which it is comprised already exist within anarchist theory. And as detailed above it is precisely the fact that these elements exist but are unrecognised that represents the main elements of significance of the study.

Another point worth emphasising here is that realist anarchism is not claimed as a completely original position of pre-existing anarchist theory because it is not claimed as a fully formed school of anarchism in the same sense as say anarchist-communism, anarcha-feminism, or any of the many other sub-divisions of anarchism. Realist anarchism is instead only claimed to be a tendency within anarchism that is present across the various anarchist schools. This accords with political realism more broadly, which is generally conceived as a broad disposition, or methodological orientation – a way of thinking about politics - which can accommodate various, often conflicting positions. Realist anarchism then is a theoretical construction based on a broad conceptual division

[78] Williams, 2005, p.82; Judith Shklar, 1989, 'The Liberalism of Fear', In: Rosenblum, *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, Harvard University Press, pp.36-37.

between realist and non-realist perspectives and so is a categorisation that more closely resembles such conceptualisations as individualist or social tendencies in anarchism.[79] Such perspectives do not constitute discrete schools of thought but cut across different schools and are represented to different extents within and between different schools and even within individual theorist's work. It is therefore meaningless to speak of comparing realist anarchism with existing schools of anarchist thought, instead it should be recognised as a tendency towards a particular disposition that exists to degrees across the broad field of anarchism. Therefore, the theorists listed here as realist anarchists are not claimed to be the only ones to conform to the realist designation. Many other anarchists could be included within the tendency, and the ones chosen here are included as they are useful for explicating the perspective and for understanding the particular strategic approach the perspective has generated in the context of modern liberal democracies.

Chapter Overview

Following this introductory chapter, this thesis will proceed as follows:

Chapter one - Anarchism - will provide an introduction and overview of the diverse field of anarchist thought and action and situate realist anarchism in relation to other forms. It will also provide an account of the standard representations of anarchism in academic political theory, the falsity of which is demonstrated by the mere existence of realist anarchism.

Chapter two - Realist Anarchism – will begin a more detailed account of the realist anarchist perspective. This chapter will demonstrate that realist anarchism is a perspective that accords with the central tenets of political realism. It will also begin to address the most substantial elements of the standard image of anarchism by detailing the realist anarchist conception of human nature.

Chapter three – Modes of Realist Anarchism – will briefly explain the different strategic modes of operation of realist anarchism in different historical, social, and political contexts. This chapter will also detail realist anarchism's stance in relation to other forms of anarchism and radicalism more broadly, drawing particular attention to the resonances between realist anarchism and 'agonist' radical democratic theory and the usefulness of some radical democratic terminology for situating

[79] For a brief explanation of this conceptual split see: Colin Ward, 2004, *Anarchism : A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, p.2, and chapter 7; for classic examples of each see Giovanni Baldelli, 1971, *Social Anarchism*, Transaction Publishers, and Max Stirner, 1995, *The Ego and Its Own*, Cambridge University Press.

and explicating the realist anarchist approach to radical change in the specific context of contemporary liberal democracies.

Chapter four – Realist Anarchism Within the State – will continue explication of the ways that realist anarchism defies anarchism's standard representation in political theory, in particular by outlining the realist anarchist approach to radical action within the liberal democratic state.

Chapter five – The Radicalising State, Part 1: A Radicalising Tool – will begin a detailed exposition of the realist anarchist approach to the state and its possible roles in the process of radical change in liberal democracies. The final two chapters form a conceptual whole but are divided into two for the sake of clarity and readability. This first part will give an overview of the realist anarchist attitude to the state and its role and explain the realist anarchist approach to the boundary problem of defining a state in a process of transformation to another, non-state, form of political organisation.

Chapter six – The Radicalising State, Part 2: The Radical Roles of The State – will provide a detailed account of the different specific roles for the state which are entailed in the approach outlined in chapter five, and which are implied by the general realist anarchist approach to radical change in liberal democracies outlined in previous chapters. This final substantive chapter will demonstrate the falsity of that most enduring of the standard misrepresentations of anarchism as a whole – that it is committed to a simplistic and uncompromising rejection of any and all engagement with the state.

Conclusion

The conclusion will summarise the thesis and consider some implications of the realist anarchist perspective regarding the scope and spectra of radical strategy, especially its approach to the liberal democratic state, and suggest some directions for future research.

1 Anarchism

Introduction

Contemporary anarchism is a large, diverse field of radical thought, and it is beyond the scope of this project to provide a comprehensive account of the contemporary global anarchist movement. This thesis will describe and employ a strain of anarchism that, while detectable in various thinkers and eras, is increasingly evident in modern[1] and contemporary anarchist theoretical developments, and is also discernible in contemporary anarchist and anarchistic grassroots activism and social movements. This strain of anarchism challenges many of the widespread assumptions about anarchist political theory, especially in academic discourses, and conforms to the disposition and previously mentioned central tenets of political realism. In what follows I will provide some broad context within which to situate this particular tendency of anarchism, before outlining it in more detail across the following chapters. I begin with a brief consideration of the difficulty of defining anarchism and defence of an approach based on a definition of anarchism as a broad category of thought and action within which to situate various other varieties, strains, schools, and tendencies. I then move to a brief outline of the realist anarchist tendency within that broad milieu, before providing an account of its standard representations in academic literature.

A history of 'what is anarchism?'

Anarchism is a much maligned, misrepresented, and misunderstood political philosophy. The history of anarchism is one of repression, both physically of anarchists themselves, and of the very idea that society might be cooperatively organised non-hierarchically and without recourse to coercion.[2] The variety, diversity, and anti-dogmatic nature of anarchism(s) also creates a resistance to simple definition. As such anarchist histories, the explication of anarchist positions, biographies, and even novel contributions to anarchist literature usually commence in a defensive posture; with the perceived necessity to 'dispel myths', to defend an unfairly maligned position, contextualise a dizzying array of sub-doctrines, or otherwise enact defensive interventions in a highly politicised

[1] For the sake of simplicity, I divide anarchist history into the broad eras: classical, modern, and contemporary, corresponding roughly to the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries respectively.
[2] For the classic example of the physical and ideological repression of anarchism in practice, see: Burnett Bolloten, 1991, *The Spanish Civil War: Revolution and Counterrevolution*, Univ of North Carolina Press.

narrative. It is almost a tradition therefore to begin any significant piece of writing relating to anarchism with a section devoted to answering the question 'what is anarchism?'.[3]

Answers to this question often begin with etymology. It is explained that the term anarchy is derived from the Ancient Greek term 'anarkhia' which is composed of 'an' meaning 'without' or 'contrary to' and 'archia' meaning 'ruler' or 'authority'.[4] This is noted as a neutral description that has, since its first use, referred to both positive and negative scenarios – chaos in the absence of authority, and a situation where no authority is required.[5] 'Anarchist' has a similar history of dual meaning. It began as a political exonym[6] and a term of abuse, in the French Revolution, usually applied to those one wished to characterise as promoting destruction and chaos without any positive program.[7] While this usage has never fully disappeared, in 1840 Pierre Joseph Proudhon, a French philosopher and propagandist printmaker, became the first to defiantly and provocatively adopt the term in a positive self-description.[8]

Historically, the terms 'anarchy' and 'anarchist' have each had both positive and negative connotations. 'Anarchy' can refer to chaos in the absence of authority, as well as denoting a situation where no authority is required.[9] It is an essentially value-neutral word describing a condition, either positive or negative. Similarly, 'anarchist' is someone who advocates anarchy, again either negatively or positively, and both of these words can be used as terms of insult. 'Anarchism', however, is a word with less of an ambiguous history of use, connoting a conscious belief in the possibility, and desirability, of society's organisation without coercive authority such as the state.[10] Not merely an opposition to the state however, this orientation is usually explained as an expression of a basic human impulse towards liberty, self-governance, etc. and against domination and illegitimate authority, and therefore anarchism is more broadly a conscious

[3] E.g.: Amster, et al., 2009, p.2; John P Clark, 1978, 'What Is Anarchism?', In: J. Roland Pennock, *Anarchism: Nomos Xix*, Vol: 19, New York University Press p.3; Newman, 2015, p.1; Berkman 1929, p.182; David Miller, 1984, *Anarchism*, J.M. Dent, p.2; Howard J. Ehrlich, 1996, *Reinventing Anarchy, Again*, AK Press, p.1.
[4] Pyotr Kropotkin, 1975, *The Essential Kropotkin*, Palgrave Macmillanp.108; Daniel Guerin, 1970, *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice*, NYU Press, p.11; George Woodcock, 1977, *The Anarchist Reader*, Fontana, p.11; Peter Marshall, 1993, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, PM Press, p.3; Jim MacLaughlin, 2016, *Kropotkin and the Anarchist Intellectual Tradition*, Pluto Press, p.1.
[5] Woodcock, 1962, p.8.
[6] A name applied only to another, not oneself.
[7] Marshall 1993, p.432
[8] Ward, 2004, p.4; Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, 2011, *Property Is Theft!: A Pierre-Joseph Proudhon Anthology*, AK Press, p.133.
[9] Woodcock, 1962, p.8.
[10] Robert Graham, 2005, *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Vol:1*, Black Rose, p.xi.

opposition to all domination.[11] Noam Chomsky famously states it as "an expression of the idea that the burden of proof is always on those who argue that authority and domination are necessary".[12] In other words, the various forms of anarchism are different expressions of a shared basic anarchist impulse - that all forms of authority and domination should be approached sceptically, with the assumption that they are illegitimate unless proven otherwise. This idea can be expressed in various ways, however, to be considered anarchism (that is some form of 'ism' as a distinctive practice or philosophy, however broadly conceived) this expression should be conscious and deliberate rather than merely reactive.[13]

The briefest history of anarchism

The usual narrative of anarchist history casts it as arising as a political theory and movement in Europe in the mid 19th century within the nascent socialist movement. It developed to become, along with Marxism, one of the two broad orientations in radical labour movements in industrial societies.[14] An array of different varieties of anarchism have developed since its emergence, such as mutualism (an early form of market-socialism), anarchist-communism (a very broad and influential current aiming towards a libertarian communist economy), anarcho-syndicalism (another centrally important perspective in the anarchist socialist milieu which employs a union-based strategy with the eventual aim of an anarcho-communist society), anarcha-feminism, green anarchism, anarcho-nihilism, and insurrectionary anarchism, among many others.[15] Across its history anarchist communists and syndicalists created mass political organisations and unions and have been under-recognised participants in revolutionary movements and events worldwide. Following the Bolshevik takeover of the 1917 Russian revolution, within which anarchists were originally a leading element,[16] anarchist influence within the global labour movement began a precipitous decline in most regions, aside for some notable strongholds. One such stronghold was

[11] Süreyyya Evren, 2008, 'Notes on Post-Anarchism', *Talk on Anarchism*, Group for Logistical Support.
[12] Noam Chomsky, quoted in Robert F. Barsky, 2007, *The Chomsky Effect: A Radical Works Beyond the Ivory Tower*, MIT Press, p.156; Noam Chomsky, 2002, *Understanding Power: The Indispensable Chomsky*, New Press, pp.201-202.
[13] Pre-modern examples of revolt against particular forms of domination without generalising this response into a philosophical scepticism towards all forms of authority are usually referred to as 'anarchistic' rather than anarchist. See: Woodcock, 1962, p.7; Graham, 2005, p.xii.
[14] See, e.g.: Marshall, 1993; Woodcock 1962; Ward 2004; Hobsbawm, 1999.
[15] Ward 2004, pp.2-3.; see, for a detailed account of various different varieties, C. Levy and M.S. Adams, 2018, *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, Springer International Publishing, pp.211-303; and Ruth Kinna, 2005, *Anarchism: A Beginner's Guide*, OneWorld, pp.15-16.
[16] David Goodway, 2013, *For Anarchism*, Taylor & Francis Group, p.13; Paul Avrich, 1973, *The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution*, Cornell University Press.

Spain, where mass organised anarchism had become the dominant radical tendency by the early twentieth century, and where European anarchists came closest to implementing their social vision in the 1936 revolution during the Spanish Civil War, which culminated in the victory of the fascists under Franco and the subsequent destruction of Spanish anarchism. The War is seen by some as the opening skirmish in the Second World War as it represented the beginning of the military struggle against European fascism. The following conflagration that consumed Europe led to a drastic decline in anarchism's presence and influence not only in European labour but in the broader global movement. In the post-war context anarchism was largely considered a non-factor in radical movements, with historians declaring it dead.[17]

However, labour-based elements had never comprised the entirety of anarchism, with other elements such as spiritual forms like Tolstoy's Christian anarchism and lifestylist forms focused on issues like art, free love, radical family-raising and education, communal living experiments, environmentalism, and vegetarianism, as well as individualist and philosophical expressions.[18] These non-labour based forms continued to exist in the anarchist landscape during in the post-war decline of organised labour-based anarchism, but some attempted to keep the tradition of class-inclusive anarchism alive and relevant in that era and have been referred to as 'New' anarchists. This New anarchism (which as I discuss below is among many strains and tendencies in anarchism's history to earn that particular adjective), includes US anarchists such as Chomsky and Bookchin and UK anarchists like Colin Ward and Herbert Read.[19] This generation of theorists had a significant influence in resurgent anarchist movements which themselves grew to become a major influence in what are sometimes referred to as New Social Movements such as feminism, environmentalism, and radical race politics which rose to prominence in the mid-twentieth century.[20] As the Stalinist dominance within the global radical left began to wane, around the same time anarchism continued to gain influence in the radical left, and by dissolution of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the 'alter-globalisation movement' (AGM) towards the end of the century, anarchism had again become the predominant orientation in the radical milieu.[21] The AGM was a global 'movement of movements' which was facilitated in large part by the widespread acceptance of anarchistic organisational models of horizontal, and non-hierarchical federation and

[17] Marshall, 2010, p.539; Woodcock, 1962, p.443. Hobsbawm, 1999, p.82.
[18] Woodcock, 1977, pp.45-56.
[19] Graham 2009; Marshall, p.585-601.
[20] Dupuis-Déri, 2019; David Ernest Apter and James Joll, 1971, *Anarchism Today*, Macmillan; Colin Ward, 1973, *Anarchy in Action*, Freedom Press, p.26.
[21] David Graeber and Andrej Grubačić, 2004, 'Anarchism: Or the Revolutionary Movement of the 21st Century', *Znet|Vision and Strategy*, [Online] Available from: https://zcomm.org/znetarticle/anarchism-or-the-revolutionary-movement-of-the-twenty-first-century-by-david-graeber/.

loose networked association.[22] The anarchist influence within the global radical left was again demonstrated in the Arab Spring and the subsequent global wave of uprisings and movements of occupation of public spaces that included the Occupy Wall Street movement.[23] Recently anarchism has again come to the attention of mainstream media and political classes due to the resurgence of far-right and openly fascist politics and the anti-fascist response that these developments have motivated,[24] and there has also been a gradual scholarly recognition of the importance of anarchism in contemporary radicalism and concomitant engagement with anarchism in academia.[25]

Contemporary anarchism then is a complicated and hard to define category of various different forms. Many have tried to explain the defining characteristics of contemporary anarchism and what distinguishes it from earlier iterations, often focusing on the non-labour focused social movement expressions that arguably dominated the late-twentieth century AGM. However, in recent years there are signs of a resurgence of both traditional organised forms or labour focused anarchism as well as radical Marxist (and even openly Stalinist) elements within the radical milieu.[26] Therefore, there arguably exists within the contemporary milieu versions or expressions of all of the main tendencies in anarchist history, and this thesis will not attempt to advance a narrow definition of contemporary anarchism.

The term 'anarchism' then, is best seen as a category of radical thought and action - a collective name for those ideas, doctrines, practices, struggles and movements based on opposition to coercion and domination, that seek to (and advocate that others also) apply the 'anarchist impulse' in a way that would enable anarchy to be peaceful and orderly, rather than chaotic and violent. Attempts to rigidly define anarchism in relation to any particular narrow selection of thinkers, movements, locales, or eras, results in a definition that is problematically sectarian as it necessarily excludes significant tendencies from what is an inescapably diverse conceptual 'space'.[27] Therefore, the various strains and tendencies of anarchism must be seen as various iterations or expressions

[22] Francis Dupuis-Déri, 2019, 'From the Zapatistas to Seattle: The 'New Anarchists'', *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, Springer.
[23] Laura Galián, 2019, 'Squares, Occupy Movements and the Arab Revolutions', In: Levy and Adams, *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, Springer.
[24] E.g.: Nicholas Bogel-Burroughs and Sandra E Garcia, 2020, 'What Is Antifa, the Movement Trump Wants to Declare a Terror Group'*, New York Times*, vol:28, .
[25] E.g.: Amster, et al., 2009, p.94; Graeber 2002; Barbara Epstein, 2001, 'Anarchism and the Anti-Globalization Movement'*, Monthly Review*, vol:53, (4).
[26] Immanuel Ness (ed.), 2014, *New Forms of Worker Organization: The Syndicalist and Autonomist Restoration of Class Struggle Unionism*, PM Press.
[27] E.g.: Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt, 2009, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism*, AK Press.

of a shared impulse. There is no true 'Anarchism', only various 'anarchisms', and all anarchisms are particular.[28] They are but an interpretation, an application of the principle. It is for these reasons that this research approaches anarchism as a label for a category of radical political perspectives, and will therefore not attempt a comprehensive definition of anarchism beyond this categorical usage. Neither will it assert that the particular perspective utilised is the best or most 'pure' form of anarchism, merely that it is one tendency among many types of anarchism (albeit one generally unrecognised).

There is of course a long-running debate in the literature regarding the meaning and proper use of the term 'anarchism'. Approaches vary from narrow conceptions of 'true' anarchism, focused on the labour organisations of 19th and 20th-century European and US anarchism and their descendants,[29] to broader accounts that consider anti-organisational tendencies,[30] lifestyle-based elements and cultural expressions.[31] Academic accounts usually frame anarchist movements and their 'real politics' as slavish actualisation of the theories of a few,[32] or more reductively as a theoretical stance based on a simplistic anti-statism.[33] This thesis assumes a broad definition of anarchism across labour and nonlabour, organised and non-organised tendencies, and treats the theoretical tradition as composed of diverse strains that are not always in agreement with each other, created through a complex interplay of scholarly theorisation and direct political action, and not reducible to a limited canon of 'main' thinkers. This thesis presents 'realist anarchism' as but one tendency within this diverse field.

Varieties, strains and eras of anarchism

> *Anarchism is not, as some may suppose, a theory of the future to be realized through divine inspiration. It is a living force in the affairs of our life, constantly creating new conditions. The methods of Anarchism therefore do not comprise an iron-clad program to be carried out under all circumstances. Methods must grow out of the economic needs of each place and clime. – Emma Goldman*[34]

From this perspective, the history of anarchism can be seen as the application of the basic anarchist impulse to a particular area of human activity, in a particular time. Different eras of anarchism can

[28] Simon Critchley, 2013, 'Introduction', In: Blumenfeld, et al., *The Anarchist Turn*, Pluto Press, p.4.
[29] E.g. Schmidt and van der Walt, 2009.
[30] E.g. Apoifis, 2016.
[31] E.g. Uri Gordon, 2007, *Anarchism and Political Theory : Contemporary Problems,* University of Oxford.
[32] E.g. Alan Ritter, 1980, *Anarchism: A Theoretical Analysis*, Cambridge University Press.
[33] E.g. Robert Paul Wolff, 1970, *In Defense of Anarchism*, University of California Press - for a survey and critique of similar, see: Nathan J Jun, 2016, 'On Philosophical Anarchism'*, Radical Philosophy Review*, vol:19, (3).
[34] Emma Goldman, 1911, *Anarchism: What It Really Stands For*, Mother Earth Publishing Association.

be seen as the reapplication in a new socio-historical setting. Innovations within anarchism can be seen as the progressive identification of the applicability of this principle in a previously unconsidered area. And of course, considering the universality of the basic impulse, and the prevalence of misrepresentation of the field, it shouldn't be surprising that anarchism is frequently re-invented, under a different name, by those ignorant of the history of expressions of this basic impulse. In this sense anarchism is continually being invented, renewed, updated, and reinvented in different cultures, times, places and areas of activity. This fact is easily discernible by looking at efforts to define 'eras' of anarchism. All the movements and thinkers before Proudhon's (re)appropriation of the term are variably lumped together as 'primitive', 'archaic', latent; the first 'formal' era of anarchism in the 19th century is most often called Classical Anarchism, but also 'capital 'A' Anarchism', 'old-school', and simply 'old' anarchism, which is of course contrasted with one of the many and varied conceptions of 'New Anarchism'. The fact that there are at least 4 eras of anarchism in the last century that get referred to as 'New' anarchism is indicative of the trend in this era-labelling – anarchism is continually 're-newed' for each new social, political, or historical development, with theorists and historians struggling to catalogue and contextualise theoretical developments that are expressed in anarchistic action and perpetual and self-reflexive theoretical reinterpretation and renewal, from below.[35]

For instance, one of the recent trends of contemporary anarchist discourse – postanarchism – was first referred to as 'New' anarchism, and the current debate within anarchist theory between postanarchists and their detractors, now usually referred to as 'classical' vs 'post' anarchisms, was originally referred to as a debate between 'old' and 'new' anarchisms.[36] However, there is also a division between 'new' global anarchism as represented by the AGM and related descendants, and 'old' national anarchist movements of the 19th and 20th centuries.[37] But before the contemporary era, 'new' referred to the anarchism of the New Left of the 1960s and '70s,[38] and before that it was post-war anarchists such as Chomsky and Bookchin who were 'New',[39] or the pacifist anarchists

[35] Albert Meltzer, 1996, *Anarchism: Arguments for and Against*, AK Press, p.18.
[36] Süreyyya Evren, 2011, 'Introduction: How New Anarchism Changed the World (of Opposition) after Seattle and Gave Birth to Post-Anarchism', In: Rousselle and Evren, *Post-Anarchism: A Reader*, Pluto Press, p.4.
[37] David Graeber, 2002, 'The New Anarchists', *New Left Review*, (13).
[38] David Ernest Apter, 1971, 'The Old Anarchism and the New - Some Comments', In: Apter and Joll, *Anarchism Today*, Macmillan.
[39] Paul McLaughlin, 2008, *Anarchism and Authority : A Philosophical Introduction to Classical Anarchism*, Taylor & Francis, pp.161-162; Robert Graham, 2009, *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Volume Two: The Emergence of the New Anarchism*, Black Rose Books; Benjamin Pauli, 2015a, 'Noam Chomsly and the Anarchist Tradition', In: Edgley, *Noam Chomsky*, Palgrave Macmillan.

during the War,[40] and before them the anarcho-syndicalists of the SCW were the 'new anarchists' in contrast to the 'old' generation that preceded them.[41] One of the unfortunate outcomes of this approach is the reduction of a particular temporal expression of anarchism to certain central characteristics (always, by necessity and usually quite openly, a significant simplification of the heterogeneousness of any era of anarchist thought and action) and the comparison of this image to a previous era of anarchism (to which a similarly reductive process had already been applied in earlier analysis). This creates a false impression of continual linear theoretical progression, sharp differences between eras and sub-sects, and broad movement coherence and widespread adoption or engagement with particular theoretical innovations or debates (and the assumption of grassroots acceptance or agreement with the historically recognised 'winners' of these debates). For instance, one of the eras of 'New' anarchism includes some who I include among the realist tendency, however, historians who refer to the post-war anarchists as New admit that the elements of that perspective they identify as novel in fact had long existed within anarchism (with Malatesta a prime cited example),[42] and have continued to be present in anarchism since.[43] The novelty of the tendency I identify then lies not in its prevalence in any particular era, but in its *realism,* which characterises the perspective across eras.

As Michael Freeden, who himself is sometimes listed amongst contemporary realists,[44] has argued, this variability and difference is an inescapable element of any political ideology. Ideologies are most realistically understood as clusters of concepts drawn together and given specific meaning by their relation to the other concepts in that cluster. Ideologies are "combinations of political concepts, arranged in a particular way"[45] but they are also "like a set of modular furniture that can assembled in *many* ways".[46] Any broad ideological label, such as anarchism, socialism, liberalism, etc., will contain a variety of different iterations - some very similar and others differing greatly, and the boundaries between different broad ideologies often blur considerably. Even when the centrally important concepts within an ideology are agreed upon, the definitions of these concepts and the way that they are employed can and will vary considerably, leading to different emphases and ideological constructions that result in varying strains and tendencies within broad ideological

[40] Andrew Cornell, 2011, 'A New Anarchism Emerges, 1940-1954'*, Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, vol:5, (1).
[41] Peter Arshinov, [1923] 1974, *History of the Makhnovist Movement (1918-1921)*, Solidarity; Guerin, 1970, p.77-81.
[42] McLaughlin, 2008, pp.160-162.
[43] Pauli, 2015a.
[44] Bell, 2017, p.3.
[45] Michael Freeden, 1998, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*, Clarendon Press, p.75.
[46] Michael Freeden, 2003, *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, p.52, my italics.

families. This is an unavoidable feature of political thought, defined as it is by the interpretation and application of concepts which are 'essentially contestable' – that is, concepts which are not reducible to singular definitions, but which are given specific meanings (or 'decontested') in such a way as to give different ideologies, or tendencies within ideologies, their particular character.[47] Depictions of anarchism then might be said to represent a particularly stark example of this tendency in categorising and analysing political thought. Attempts to definitively characterise anarchism as a whole, in the dismissive standard image offered by political theorists or by sectarian anarchists themselves, is to mistake the necessary reduction of political thought which enables analysis and comparison for the actual messiness and constant modification and reformulation of concepts and their interrelation which characterises any existing political ideology in their response to political reality.

There are then many different types of anarchism, many different forms that these various types take, and many different ways of categorising, cataloguing or otherwise analytically engaging with these different elements within the diverse field of anarchism. For the sake of simplicity, we can divide anarchist historical eras into the Ancient (examples of anarchistic precursors often included in anarchist histories, but which preceded those who adopted the label), Classical (19th century), Modern (20th century), and Contemporary (21st century). We can also divide anarchism into such categories as schools (referring to schools of thought or action - such as anarcho-communism, mutualism, or anarcha-feminism), strains (referring to specific variants of those schools – such as platformist anarcho-communism, or Proudhonian mutualism), and tendencies (referring to broad orientations such as individualist or socialist, organised or lifestylist).[48] From here we can then say that schools of anarchism as well as specific strains emerge, disappear, and re-emerge, and like tendencies which exist across eras, rise and fall in prevalence in different eras and locations in anarchist history.

Broad conceptual, philosophical and political tendencies, however, are usually present across eras and often transect different schools and strains. For instance, though often represented as discrete entities, individualist and social orientations are to be found across eras and schools of anarchism, with more or less emphasis on one or the other in different contexts. And while it has been argued that a 'new' aspect of the 'New Anarchism' of the post-1960s American radical social movements was its emphasis on individual spirituality, cursory examination anarchist history beyond an

[47] Freeden, 1998, pp.55-60.
[48] See: Levy and Adams, 2018.

extremely narrow selection of theorists reveals a spiritual anarchistic tendency running through all anarchist eras.[49] Various broad orientations are expressed more or less commonly, or are more popular or visible, in different temporal and geographical contexts and in different specific formal schools and strains. And so it is with the orientation or tendency that I refer to as realist anarchism. It is not to be considered as a particular school or strain of anarchist thought and action, but as a dispositional tendency which runs through the diverse anarchist milieu and is expressed more or less in different eras, schools and strains. Such broad, cross-cutting conceptual divisions such as between realist and non-realist (or idealist) expressions of anarchism can be useful in highlighting particular issues or perspectives within a diverse milieu without resorting to (or appearing to) defend one particular school or strain, or seeking to establish one anew. In the context of dispelling a misrepresentation such as that of anarchism as paradigmatically non-realist this approach avoids the potential counter-argument that realist anarchism is merely an unrepresentative minor, isolated strain, or that what is offered is a completely novel construction opposed to the core attributes of previously existing anarchist schools. However, the acceptance of a broad definition of anarchism as a field should not be seen as an attempt to enable the construction of a realist form of anarchism out of fringe elements which misrepresent the core of anarchist history. The thinkers drawn from are primarily theorists from the mainstream of anarchism as an organised worker-based tradition.

Introduction to realist anarchism

The diversity in anarchist history and the contemporary movement is such that both realist and non-realist expressions exist and so examples can be found to confirm almost all elements of the standard academic image of anarchism as idealist or non-realist. For instance, there are indeed some anarchists who do oppose systems of law,[50] and formal organisational structures whether in current movements or proposed post-revolutionary models.[51] These positions, though detectable in different eras and schools, could not be said to be more than minor tendencies in contemporary and historical anarchist theory, and certainly the majority of those within anarchist movements do not hold such positions.[52]

[49] Marshall, 1993, pp.6-7; Erica Lagalisse, 2018, *Occult Features of Anarchism: With Attention to the Conspiracy of Kings and the Conspiracy of the Peoples*, PM Press.
[50] Emma Goldman, 1972, *Red Emma Speaks: Selected Writings and Speeches*, Vintage, pp.70-72.
[51] See: Apoifis, 2016.
[52] While it is of course extremely difficult to quantify the relative strength of organised and anti-organisational anarchism, those ethnographic studies of movements in particular areas, such as Apoifis's (2016), generally reveal that the majority in such 'spaces', even in the notoriously insurrectionist Athenian anarchist milieu, are of the organised variety. See, Apoifis 2016, especially pp.117-119.

There is a however major tendency in contemporary anarchism and anarchist-influenced radicalism that explicitly presents as 'anti-power'[53] and anti-realist,[54] and aims to replace power or even politics in social organisation.[55] This approach proposes disengagement and defection from the status quo with the implied expectation that capitalism and the state could wither away through lack of support and without confrontation.[56] Realist anarchists oppose this view and instead see 'power' (and therefore hierarchy, privilege, and inequality) as existing in various forms, and as ultimately ineradicable.[57] Therefore they argue that realistic efforts to 'change the world' unavoidably entail the acquisition and exercise of some forms of power;[58] that the state and capitalism will not disappear without confrontation;[59] and that ignoring the current mechanisms of power in the hope that they will go away is not a realistic strategy for radical social change.[60] Similarly, there are anarchists who advocate the complete withdrawal and disengagement with formal political institutions, and propose a future radical alternative based on absolutely no formal political structures.[61] Realist anarchism is not one of these forms of radical thought. [62]

As with other forms of political realism, realist anarchism is a label that connotes a disposition or attitude to politics, with a collection of thinkers that share a 'family resemblance' rather than identical beliefs or complete agreement on all issues.[63] This realist tendency of anarchism is discernible in various thinkers and across different eras. While it is not a tendency associated with a singular, coherent, statement of orientation by one specific theorist, it is present in the combination of elements and perspectives. To be absolutely clear then, realist anarchism is my construction, and while it is not claimed to be completely original as it is constructed from the

[53] Peter Marshall, 2010, *Demanding the Impossible : A History of Anarchism*, PM Press, p.679; Meltzer, 1996, p.59; William Gillis, 2020, 'Anarchy and Transhumanism', *The Routledge Handbook of Anarchy and Anarchist Thought*, Routledgep.426-427.
[54] Holloway, 2005, p.18.
[55] See, e.g.: Anonymous, 2015, *Collective Process: Overcoming Power*, The Common Wheel Collective; Saul Newman, 2011b, 'Postanarchism: A Politics of Anti-Politics', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, vol:16, (3).
[56] For a survey of such contemporary radical perspectives see: Day, 2005.
[57] Mueller, 2003, pp.136-137; Allan Antliff, 2011, 'Anarchy, Power, and Post-Structuralism', In: Rousselle and Evren, *Post-Anarchism: A Reader*, Pluto Press.
[58] Mueller, 2003, p.128.
[59] Milan Rai, 2015, 'Chomsky and Revolution', In: Edgley, *Noam Chomsky*, Palgrave Macmillan, p.177.
[60] Errico Malatesta, [1922] 2014a, 'Further Thoughts on Revolution in Practice', In: Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, p.425; Pauli, 2015a, p.47.
[61] Apoifis, 2016, p.118; Bob Black, 1997b, 'On Organisation', *Anarchy after Leftism*, Columbia Alternative Library Press, pp.29-36.
[62] For a detailed discussion of the two broad approaches to power in contemporary anarchist movements, see: Mueller, 2003.
[63] Walker, 1987, p.68; Sleat, 2011, p.471.

work of other theorists, neither is it suggested that all the theorists employed would or should agree with all of the other contributors to the position outlined, or that any should accept the conclusions that I draw. Therefore, where I refer to realist anarchists as a group I do so primarily regarding broad principles shared amongst most if not all of those I include within the designation, rather than with more specific positions which vary among different thinkers. Where a more specific generalisation is made for the group on, for example, a detailed strategic and tactical point, it should be read as referring to those particular theorists cited during the discussion of that issue, rather than applying to all theorists included in the thesis.

I am also not claiming that the perspective outlined here is completely unique to the theorists cited – anarchist theory is such a diverse field in itself that there are doubtless many other thinkers who could be employed to outline this perspective in addition to those I have chosen. However, those included have been selected for deliberate reasons. Firstly, despite the use of a broad definition of anarchism outlined in the previous section, the primary group of theorists employed are drawn from the mainstream of anarchist thought. This avoids the potential critique, were the bulk of the claims drawn from less central thinkers, that the realist anarchism described here is a misrepresentation 'cherry-picked' from outliers and fringe elements. Secondly, theorists selected were those found to offer the most explicit and clear statements on the particular issues focused on to outline the perspective. As some of the positions outlined here are controversial within anarchist thought, explicit clarity from the main theorists employed reduces the need to rely only on those whose realism is implicit and arguable to demonstrate the existence of a realist anarchism. It might be possible, with considerably more space than reasonable to indulge in the current study, to argue that *most* anarchists are realists. However, the more limited aim herein is to demonstrate that there exist at least some realist anarchists, and that it is not a fringe orientation. This is based as much as possible on the use and analysis of quotations to enable the direct attribution of controversial ideas without undue reliance on attribution through drawing out strategic and tactical implications from theoretical work that does not directly address the specific issues of concern of this study. One of the limitations of such an approach is that, in focusing on mainstream anarchist theory and explicit statements relevant to the focus on political realism, the theorists found to be most relevant happen not to be representative of the diversity which characterises the contemporary anarchist milieu. This unfortunate but unavoidable limitation has been countered by the inclusion of theorists from non-dominant social identities within anarchist theory where possible.

Some of the main anarchist theorists drawn on in this thesis include: Errico Malatesta from the early 20th century; Murray Bookchin and Noam Chomsky from the mid to late 20th century; and contemporary theorists like David Graeber, Uri Gordon, and Jeff Shantz. Others include Emma Goldman, Cindy Milstein, Ruth Kinna, Tadzio Mueller, Gustav Landauer, and Abdullah Öcalan.[64] Malatesta was an agitator and propagandist whose output was largely in the form of pamphlets and radical newspaper articles on a wide range of topics of direct practical relevance to the anarchist movements he was involved in over a period of more than fifty years, from the early 1870s to his death in 1932. Therefore, his is the only anarchist theory substantively employed in this thesis whose work does not address the prime contextual focus of the thesis which is contemporary liberal democracies. However, he is an influential thinker in the realist tendency in anarchism[65] and his contributions are primarily in relation to dispositional elements of this perspective, that is realist attitudes and principles intended to be applicable and adaptable to different circumstance, and there is precedence in Malatesta scholarship for doing so.[66]

Bookchin and Chomsky have both expressed their anarchism in novel ways. Bookchin focused on reimagining anarchism in the context of environmental issues in works such as *Post-Scarcity Anarchism,*[67] *Towards an Ecological Society,*[68] *The Ecology of Freedom,*[69] and *The Philosophy of Social Ecology,*[70] and elaborating the 'libertarian municipalism' strategy that targets local government for democratic radicalisation as a means to implement his eco-anarchist vision.[71] Although he disavowed the label towards the end of his life he is treated as an anarchist here as his theoretical work was developed as anarchism and his disavowal of that label was more to do with his disenchantment with the dogmatism he perceived in the US anarchist movement, rather than with any substantive change to his proposals.[72] Abdullah Öcalan is a Kurdish theorist and leader of the Kurdish Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê – PKK) who draws heavily on Bookchin's work, adapting it to the question of Kurdish independence and radical strategy in the Middle East. Like Bookchin he

[64] Though Öcalan is not himself quite an anarchist, he is included here for the influence of his anarchism-adjacent theory of state dissolution on many contemporary anarchists.
[65] And is recognised as such, see: Raekstad, 2018; Addis, 2017.
[66] Turcato, 2015, p.245.
[67] Murray Bookchin, 1971, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, Ramparts Press.
[68] Murray Bookchin, 1980, *Toward an Ecological Society*, Black Rose Books.
[69] Murray Bookchin, 1982, *The Ecology of Freedom : The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy*, Cheshire Books.
[70] Murray Bookchin, 1990, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology: Essays on Dialectical Naturalism*, Black Rose Books
[71] Murray Bookchin, [1991] 2015, 'Libertarian Municipalism: A Politics of Direct Democracy', *The Next Revolution: Popular Assemblies and the Promise of Direct Democracy*, Verso Books.
[72] Janet Biehl, 2015, *Ecology or Catastrophe: The Life of Murray Bookchin*, Oxford University Press, pp.293, 300–302.

avoids the anarchist label, describing his position as 'democratic confederalism'. His work has been categorised as both a form of anarchism and of radical democratic theory, and is often considered in contemporary anarchist debates regarding the potential for legitimate uses for the state in processes of radical change,[73] and is therefore also useful in elaborating the realist anarchist approach which includes a nuanced view of the potential the role of the state in radical anti-state change. Despite Chomsky's famous prolificacy and anarchist reputation, his explicitly anarchist output is confined to a handful of articles, speeches, and essays,[74] and interviews with students and activist groups.[75] Notwithstanding this limited output Chomsky has been called the most coherent and advanced modern anarchist theorist despite his protestations otherwise, and is one of the most comprehensive and consistent representatives of the realist anarchist orientation.[76] As mentioned above both Chomsky and Bookchin are also included by some in the designation 'New' anarchism, referring to post-war anarchists who adopt a pragmatic non-insurrectionist approach to radical change in liberal democracy. This tendency has also been referred to as 'practical anarchism'[77] and its strategic approach informs the radicalising democracy strategy outlined in chapter four.

This realist anarchist tendency of thought and action is also present in anarchistic radical democratic movements, groups, events, etc., as revealed in 'militant ethnographies' of grassroots anarchist movements like Tadzio Mueller's *Empowering Anarchy*[78] and Nick Apoifis' account of contemporary Greek anarchism, *Anarchy in Athens.*[79] It is also detectable through the work of anarchist activist/academics like Canadian sociologist and participant/organiser in anarchist community organisations, Jeff Shantz. Shantz has for several years been an activist and organiser with anarchist community groups like the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) and has written widely on contemporary anarchist movements and issues within them, as well as two auto-

[73] Dilar Dirik, 2021, 'Stateless Citizenship:'Radical Democracy as Consciousness-Raising'in the Rojava Revolution'*, Identities*, vol:29, (1); Ahmet Hamdi Akkaya and Joost Jongerden, 2012, 'Reassembling the Political: The Pkk and the Project of Radical Democracy'*, European Journal of Turkish Studies. Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey*, (14); Almut Woller, 2018, 'Self-Mediation Practices of Arab Anarchists', *Digital Media and the Politics of Transformation in the Arab World and Asia*, Springer VS; Michiel Leezenberg, 2016, 'The Ambiguities of Democratic Autonomy: The Kurdish Movement in Turkey and Rojava'*, Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, vol:16, (4).

[74] Collected primarily in: Chomsky, 2005a; and Noam Chomsky, 2013, *On Anarchism*, New Press, but also in other places scattered throughout his considerable corpus, such as: Chomsky, 1996a, Chomsky, 2002; Noam Chomsky, 2005b, *Government in the Future*, Seven Stories Press, and Noam Chomsky, 2015b, *What Kind of Creatures Are We?*, Columbia University Press.

[75] E.g.: Chomsky, 2002.

[76] Carlos Peregrín Otero, 2003, *Radical Priorities*, AK Press, pp.24-25; Carlos P. Otero, 1994, 'Introduction', In: Otero, *Noam Chomsky : Critical Assessments*, Routledge, p.1.

[77] Kinna, 2005, p.142-143.

[78] Mueller, 2003.

[79] Apoifis, 2016.

ethnographic works on such movements: *Active Anarchy: Political Practice in Contemporary Movements*[80] and *Constructive Anarchy: Building Infrastructures of Resistance.*[81]

Other academics involved in activism, such as the late David Graeber, or activists who have subsequently entered the academy like Occupy Wall Street (OWS) participants Mark Bray and Jonathan Smucker, have produced works that reveal the existence of this strain. Auto-ethnographies like Graeber's *The Democracy Project,*[82] and Bray's *Translating Anarchy: The Anarchism of Occupy Wall Street*[83] explains the activities and goals of OWS from a participant's perspective. Smucker is also a veteran of OWS working within academia. While Graeber[84] and Bray do not primarily focus on or defend this realist strain of anarchism, their works do reveal and confirm the existence of the perspective within OWS and the broad milieu of contemporary democratic radicalism. Smucker's *Hegemony How To: A Roadmap For Radicals*[85] however is itself representative of this tendency within contemporary anarchism that is motivated by a desire make "main stage interventions",[86] with the ultimate goal of "winning".[87] This tendency is also of course discernible in settings other than the US. Uri Gordon for instance is an activist/academic in the Israeli anarchist movement, whose *Anarchy Alive!*[88] presents an account of the contemporary anarchist movement based on participant observation primarily in the Middle East, which affirms the existence of this realist strain of anarchism outside of Europe and North America.[89]

---

[80] Shantz, 2011.
[81] Shantz, 2010.
[82] Graeber, 2013.
[83] Bray, 2013.
[84] Graeber himself is a complicated case who is arguably realist in some ways but much of his work is also arguably supportive of non-realist positions. For example, Wayne Price argues that Graeber advocates an approach to radical change which is naive and non-realist with regards to the likelihood for violent repression by the state of anarchist prefigurative efforts and which advocates withdrawal from political contest and conflict. But in seeming conflict with that position, Graeber was also rumoured to have smuggled drones into North East Syria to assist with the military defence of Rojava – see, Wayne Price, 2007, 'Fragments of a Reformist Anarchism', *anarkismo.net*, [Online] Available from: https://www.anarkismo.net/article/4979 and Rebecca Solnit, 2020, 'David Graeber Pushed Us to Imagine Greater Human Possibilities', *The Guardian*, [Online] Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/sep/08/david-graeber-pushed-us-to-imagine-greater-human-possibilities?CMP=gu_com.And while Graeber has argued for anarchist withdrawal, he has also railed against pessimistic radicalism that expects to lose and so does not aim for radical social transformation. Compare: David Graeber, 2004, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, Prickly Paradigm Press, pp.60-63, and David Graeber, 2016b, 'Foreword', *Revolution in Rojava: Democratic Autonomy and Women's Liberation in Syrian Kurdistan*, Pluto Press.
[85] Smucker, 2017.
[86] Jonathan Matthew Smucker, 2013, 'Occupy: A Name Fixed to a Flashpoint'*, The Sociological Quarterly*, vol:54, (2), p.221.
[87] Jonathan Matthew Smucker, 2014, 'Can Prefigurative Politics Replace Political Strategy'*, Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, vol:58, (7), p.75.
[88] Gordon, 2008.
[89] Ibid., pp.7-9.

Another source for the existence of this perspective in contemporary movements is literature produced by the actual movements themselves. As many of the above sources are by activists who are also academics (and whose 'participant observer' role often preceded their status as academics) they can in some ways be considered 'movement texts' in the sense that they are written from an insider perspective, while still conforming to formal academic standards. Some anarchist theory is non-academic but self-consciously written in an academic manner and conforming to formal expectations. Such 'independent academic' movement literature whose target audience is either non-academic radical audiences or both academic and non-academic audiences, such as that by Emma Goldman and Murray Bookchin, are routinely treated by contemporary anarchist theory as practically equivalent to formal works of academic political theory,[90] and are treated as such here. Some non-academic movement literature such as zines and pamphlets are also drawn upon, demonstrating the grassroots existence of theoretical perspectives outlined primarily through considerations of more formal works of anarchist theorists, whether technically academic or non-academic, independent, anarchist theorists.[91]

In this thesis these sources will be utilised to describe a tendency in anarchist thought and action which conforms with the central tenets of the realist disposition, but also defies and falsifies the standard representation of anarchism in political theory and philosophy, the elements of which are detailed in the following section of this chapter. To reiterate: realist anarchism is not a pre-existing, discrete school of anarchist thought or action, but is a construction composed of dispersed elements existing within anarchism which highlights a tendency towards a particular disposition toward politics that cuts across different anarchist schools, eras, and theorists. The sources outlined in this chapter and employed in this thesis to explicate the realist anarchist tendency are not claimed to be its only or necessarily even its best exemplars, merely those most useful for explaining the perspective and outlining its strategic approach in the particular context which is the focus of this thesis explained in the introduction.

Popular, sectarian, and academic Images of anarchism

[90] E.g.: Penny A Weiss and Loretta Kensinger, 2007, *Feminist Interpretations of Emma Goldman*, Penn State Press; Best Steven, 1998, 'Murray Bookchin's Theory of Social Ecology: An Appraisal of "the Ecology of Freedom"', *Organization & Environment*, (3); and regarding Gelderloos: Brian Martin, 2008, 'How Nonviolence Is Misrepresented', *Gandhi Marg*, vol:30, (2).

[91] For example, pamphlets drawn on include those by groups such as 'Workers Solidarity' from Ireland, 'Black Rose Federation' from North America, and 'Libertarian Workers for a Self-Managed Society' from Australia.

Definitions necessarily try to fix the 'meaning' of something at any given point, and they imply that I, who do the defining, have the power to identify the limits of 'anarchism', to say what is legitimately anarchist. – Tadzio Mueller[92]

Despite the widely accepted difficulty (and even the illegitimacy)[93] of narrowly defining anarchism (at least within anarchist literature)[94] there exists within anarchist history and theory, and within mainstream political theory more broadly, a standard representation of anarchism that is dogmatic, reductionist, Eurocentric, and underpinned by an implicit elitism which glorifies Great Thinkers and canonises their Great Texts.[95] In its extreme this image results in the belief that anarchist ideas "have not developed much since Kropotkin's time. Hence, to comprehend anarchism as a political theory, the writings of more recent anarchists need not be considered".[96] While this attitude has recently softened in recognition of both the theoretical and grassroots resurgence of anarchism, the standard image of anarchism as essentially unchanged since the 'Classical' era forms its almost ubiquitous characterisation in academic political theory, and underlies the widespread dismissal of all anarchist thought as an historical irrelevancy.[97]

There are three standard images of anarchism: the popular image of a bomb-throwing antisocial nihilist; the sectarian misrepresentations of radicals who oppose anarchism; and the academic image of anarchism which includes elements from the others, but also some unique features. The popular account is widely and effectively addressed in introductions to anarchism;[98] likewise the sectarian representation in various anarchist responses.[99] The standard academic image of anarchism however goes largely unchallenged, especially its representation of anarchism as paradigmatically and axiomatically non-realist, and even anti-realist in the sense of being self-consciously and defiantly opposed to the core elements of the realist disposition. It is this academic image then that will serve as the main focus of this thesis, with the elements of the non-realist account attracting the most detailed attention. I will not challenge the assertion that there are indeed strains within contemporary anarchism that conform to this standard image.[100] Neither will

[92] Mueller, 2003. p.122.
[93] Ibid.
[94] E.g.: Newman, 2015, p.1; Jamie Heckert, 2010, 'Listening, Caring, Becoming: Anarchism as an Ethics of Direct Relationships', In: Franks and Wilson, *Anarchism and Moral Philosophy*, Palgrave Macmillan, p.186; Gordon, 2007, pp.25-28.
[95] Süreyyya Evren, 2012, 'There Ain't No Black in the Anarchist Flag! Race, Ethnicity and Anarchism', In: Kinna, *The Continuum Companion to Anarchism*, Continuum, pp.301-305; for example, see: Ward, 2004, p.3.
[96] Ritter, 1980, p.5.
[97] Hobsbawm, 1999, pp.83-89. Adams, 1993, pp.172-173.
[98] E.g. Alexander Berkman, 1937, *Now and After: The Abc of Communist Anarchism*, Vanguard Press; Marshall, 1993, p.ix; Woodcock, 1977, pp.11-12; Goldman, 1911.
[99] E.g. Paul Raekstad, 2016, 'Understanding Anarchism: Some Basics', *Science & Society*, vol:80, (3).
[100] For a survey (and defence) of such contemporary orientations see: Day, 2005.

I offer an alternative definition of contemporary anarchism that claims universal applicability. Instead, drawing on a variety of sources, primarily historical and contemporary theoretical literature, but also ethnographic, auto-ethnographic, and 'movement literature' outlined below, this thesis will outline a tendency that challenges the claim to universality of this standard image of anarchism and its essential traits.

In the broadest sense this representation comes down to a reputation for uncompromising purism and idealism. The main elements of this standard image of anarchism include: the claims that anarchism is based on a simplistic and 'rosy' view of human nature as essentially social, cooperative, peaceful, and non-authoritarian;[101] that anarchism is 'anti-power', seeing power in simplistically negative terms and seeking to organise society 'without power'[102] and even calling for 'the abolition of politics'[103] that therefore anarchists believe that a 'consensual' society based on compromise and cooperation, and without conflict could exist under anarchist conditions.[104] So for instance, a striking example of the portrayal of Anarchism as being 'anti-power' or even 'anti-politics', and that rather than seize power it aims to eliminate it, comes from Foucault. In defence of a stance that assumes the lack of intrinsic legitimacy of any form of power, Foucault says:

> *You will say: this is anarchism, but … if we define anarchism by two things –the thesis that power is essentially bad, and the project of a society in which every relation of power is to be abolished – you can see that what I am proposing is clearly different….*[105]

Without reference to any specific thinker or theory he summarises anarchism as simplistically and wholly anti-power.

Anarchism is similarly cast as committed to a naïve and idealistic alternative social model where all forms of conflict and coercion have been eliminated, and an unrealistic strategy for achieving this end which relies on uncompromising commitment to either sudden total revolution, or complete withdrawal from mainstream politics and formal institutions. So, for instance: Bernard Williams says that anarchism is 'not interesting' because it "opposes any political system or state whatsoever".[106] And Judith Shklar asserts that anarchists advocate a lawless society with informal

[101] Shklar, 1989, p.36; Williams, 2005, p.82.
[102] Michel Foucault, 2014, *On the Government of the Living: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1979-1980*, Springer, p.78.
[103] Newman, 2011b, p.323.
[104] Benjamin Barber, 2003, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*, University of California Press, p.6; Andrew Heywood, 2012, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, Palgrave Macmillan, pp.60, 193.
[105] Foucault, 2014, p.78.
[106] Williams, 2005, p.85.

social pressure as an "acceptable substitute for law".[107] Anarchists are therefore cast as being opposed to any form of political organisation either in the pursuit of radical change or in their proposed utopian alternatives. It is suggested for instance that anarchism sees all forms of organisation as entailing hierarchy and oppression and that it therefore rejects the formation of formal organisations as either elements of radical movements for revolutionary change, or as prefigurative models for future social alternatives.[108]

A core element in the standard image then is the idea that anarchists are first and foremost wholly and uncompromisingly opposed to the existence of the state, and even more that they oppose any and all engagement with it, or anything that could be seen as an endorsement – such as taking part in electoral politics by running as a candidate, joining a political party, or even voting, and are instead committed to non-reformist, revolutionary action. The conflation of anarchism with anti-statism is so pervasive in political theory that for many it serves as the entirety of the meaning of the term. AJ Simmons for instance simply characterises anarchism as anti-statism, claiming to have "located the essence of anarchism in its thesis of state illegitimacy".[109] Likewise for Robert Paul Wolff's 'In defence of anarchism', and Crispin Sartwell's 'Against the state', there is a prevailing perspective in political theory that the meaning of anarchism is simply that the state is illegitimate and does not generate political obligation.[110]

All of these elements of the standard image largely derive from assumptions about anarchism's approach to human nature, and they lead to a related group of assumptions about the anarchist approach to the state. It is claimed that anarchism is founded on a simplistic, naïve and overly rosy view of human nature. For instance, that anarchists think of humans as inherently good – that for a completely harmonious society free of conflict and coercion we only need to abolish hierarchical institutions that pervert our natural goodness. Ian Adams says that "anarchism can be said to rest upon certain basic assumptions about human nature … Humanity is essentially good, but is corrupted by government".[111] And Andrew Gamble claims that "anarchists believe that human

[107] Shklar, 1989, p.36.
[108] Jackie DiSalvo, 2015, 'Occupy Wall Street: Creating a Strategy for a Spontaneous Movement', *Science & Society*, vol:79, (2), p.282; John P Pittman, 2015, 'Introduction: Red on Black Marxist Encounters with Anarchism', *Science & Society*, vol:79, (2), p.149.
[109] A John Simmons, 1996, 'Philosophical Anarchism', In: Sanders and Narveson, *For and against the State: New Philosophical Readings*, Rowman & Littlefield.
[110] Robert Paul Wolff, 1998, University of California Press, pp.xxvii-xxviii; Crispin Sartwell, 2008, *Against the State: An Introduction to Anarchist Political Theory*, State University of New York Press, pp.14-15, 95-96, 101-102.
[111] Adams, 1993, p.172.

beings are by nature cooperative and benevolent, and that … societies could function without conflict, without disorder, and without inequality".[112]

It is this supposedly ubiquitous anarchist perspective on human nature that leads to many of the other elements of the standard image. So, the 'anti-power' position is based on the idea that systems of overt political power are against our nature and a society in harmony with our true nature would require the elimination of power or even politics as such. Similarly, anarchist strategy based on such a position sees any engagement with political systems as corrupting, and so effective change must be wholly purist and disengaged from them. And as this perspective supposedly sees human nature as corrupted and constrained by the state, all that is required for successful social transformation is to destroy that institution and allow this underlying repressed nature to flourish, whereas any efforts at reform or improvement of existing institutions simply preserves those corrupting influences and so must be resisted in favour of spontaneous, total revolution.[113]

Importantly, these claims are rarely substantiated – there is hardly ever any reference to any particular anarchist theorist to back them up, and this itself has some problematic implications. For example, when Foucault describes anarchism as opposed to all forms of power and committed to its abolition, he then goes on to describe his own stance which he distances from anarchism. However, his own position is arguably practically indistinguishable from the actual stance on power endorsed by many anarchists, and so rather than clarifying his own position in relation to anarchism he unintentionally introduces more ambiguity and vagueness around the boundary between anarchism and his own thought. This may seem of little importance, or even as a petty, defensive point. However, as we will see in later chapters (especially chapter three which covers realist anarchism's relation to other existing radical perspectives), it is an oversight that has wide-reaching ramifications, especially in attempts to understand the scope and spectrum of radical theoretical perspectives and how they relate to each other.

These positions attributed to anarchism in the standard image have also often been denounced in radical debates, especially by Marxists, as 'idealistic' or 'utopian' and leading to unrealistic approaches to social change.[114] And so, the standard academic image of anarchism adopts some of the elements of the standard sectarian representation in radical theory, in which anarchism and

[112] Andrew Gamble, 1981, *An Introduction to Modern Social and Political Thought*, Macmillan, p.109.
[113] Adams, 1993, p.172; Mouffe, 2018, p.46.; Heywood, 2012, p.191.
[114] For a compilation of critiques of anarchism by leading Marxists, see: Soudakoff, et al., 2001.

its revolutionary strategies are cast as simplistic, naïve, and disproven in practice. It characterises anarchists in much the same way that Marx dismissed 'utopian socialists'[115] and Proudhonian and Bakuninist anarchism,[116] and Lenin rejected 'left-wing communists':[117] as proponents of idealistic visions of an alternative society without a realistic plan for their realisation. It depicts as intrinsic to anarchism 'non-realist' strategic approaches based either on a simplistic belief in spontaneous revolution, or on 'strategies of withdrawal': non-confrontational visions of radical social change which, rather than engage with oppressive institutions and political systems in order to change them, instead withdraw from direct political contest.[118]

These impressions though are not completely inaccurate – there are some anarchists who do endorse many of the idealistic and non-realist elements of the standard image and there are some anarchists who reinforce this perspective and see it as constitutive of anarchism. For example, as mentioned in the previous section, many elements of the standard image are reproduced by the so-called 'postanarchists', such as Saul Newman and Lewis Call, who then proceed to 'fix' anarchism by undermining these naïve and unrealistic elements in an encounter with poststructural philosophy.[119] But there are also anarchists and anarchism-adjacent radical theorists who don't attempt to fix the supposed failing of classical anarchism and who see anarchism according to the standard image, but defend it. Recent examples of this perspective include John Holloway's 'changing the world without taking power', and Richard day's 'Gramsci is dead'.[120] Despite the fact that there are indeed anarchists who do indeed accept many of the elements of the standard academic image of anarchism, it is generally presented as a sweeping categorical statement regarding the essential and ubiquitous elements that define all forms of anarchism. Regardless, therefore, of the existence of occasional anarchists who confirm isolated elements of the image, it is a misleading misrepresentation that obscures the true scope and spectrum of anarchist theory and of radical orientations more broadly.

Some of the elements of the standard image are easy to deal with summarily. Paul McLaughlin for instance notes that:

---

[115] Marx and Engels, 1978 [1848], pp.72-75.
[116] Karl Marx, 2008 [1847], *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Cosimo; Marx, 2000.
[117] Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, 1999 [1920], *"Left-Wing" Communism : An Infantile Disorder*, Resistance Books.
[118] E.g. April Carter, 1971, *The Political Theory of Anarchism*, Routledge, p.29; Mouffe, 2018, p.46; Hobsbawm, 1999, pp.89-90; Saul Newman, 2009, 'Anarchism', In: Pugh, *What Is Radical Politics Today?*, Springer.
[119] Lewis Call, 2002, *Postmodern Anarchism*, Lexington Books; Saul Newman, 2001, *From Bakunin to Lacan: Anti-Authoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power*, Lexington Books.
[120] Holloway, 2005; Day, 2005.

> *according to the academic stereotype, anarchism is theoretically nugatory. Anarchists, it appears, reject theoretical enterprise as a whole, considering all intellectual activity distracting or even reactionary. Hence there is lack of anything like an adequate theoretical formulation of the anarchist case (if one were even conceivable).*[121]

Obviously such a claim must go unsubstantiated, as any engagement with anarchist theoretical literature could only demonstrate its existence, regardless of the opinion of the strength of theoretical endeavour. And of course, any serious engagement with anarchist theory, as in this thesis, also demonstrates the baselessness of such derisory falsehoods. Likewise, the claim that anarchists oppose all organisation for instance is an absurdity that doesn't stand the most cursory examination of anarchism and the centrality of organisational experimentation in its history. Division within the anarchist movement is often largely defined by, and the history and development of anarchism is told through, the use of different organisational structures and methods. And though there are and always have been disorganised and anti-organisational anarchists,[122] formal anarchist organisations have historically been the dominant tendency within the anarchist movement,[123] and indeed have also often been the most numerous and influential organisations within the wider radical milieu.[124]

Some other elements of the standard image are primarily the result of semantic debates over interpretation of particular terms, such as power, or law. Here some will offer a narrow and technical definition of a term to describe something that is indeed opposed, but which definition is perhaps in conflict with broader more intuitive definitions, thereby inviting misunderstanding. For example, to 'law' as a system of rules violently imposed from above many anarchists are indeed opposed, though fewer would suggest that an anarchist society could function without systems of even collectively determined rules and horizontal forms of enforcement which would be recognisable as systems of law in some form.[125] Other elements of the standard image require, to varying degrees, a more substantial engagement to dispel and will form the main focus of the following chapters. Again, while there are examples of minor tendencies in anarchist history that

---

[121] McLaughlin, 2008, p.13.

[122] For a defence of anarchist organisation which acknowledges and details the anti-organisational position, see: Errico Malatesta, [1897] 2014b, 'Organization', In: Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, pp.233-245.

[123] Luigi Fabbri, 1907, *The Anarchist Organization*, Biblioteca Libertaria.

[124] Eric Hobsbawm, 1994, *The Age of Extremes: The Short 20th Century, 1914-1991*, Abacus, p.74; Hobsbawm, 1999, p.61.

[125] George Crowder, 1991, *Classical Anarchism: The Political Thought of Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin*, Clarendon Press, pp.1-2.

confirm the existence of most of the elements of the standard image, this thesis will demonstrate that as descriptors of the entirety of anarchism each element represents a falsehood.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a brief introduction to the broad field of anarchist theory and history, as well as addressing some of the difficult issues around definitions and terminology when discussing such a diverse array of radical thought and action. It also offered an initial positioning of the theoretical construction 'realist anarchism' in relation to other tendencies and strains in anarchism across its many historical eras. Realist anarchism is a tendency in radical political thought that is present in different specific schools and thinkers to varying degrees, and taking somewhat different expression in different contexts and between different theorists who exemplify the disposition. The existence of this tendency alone defies the standard representations of anarchism in academic political theory in its particular elements, as well as in the overall claim that anarchism is paradigmatically non-realist in that it represents the opposite of a politically realist perspective.

The following chapter will further introduce the realist anarchist disposition and provide more detail regarding its relation to other anarchist perspectives. It will then turn to outlining the ways that the perspective aligns with a realist stance in its interpretation and application of several common positions that together are often taken to characterise the essential elements of the disposition of political realism. These 'central tenets' of realism reflect the fact that realism is not a neatly bounded political theory or analytical method, but rather an attitude to politics and political thought that holds its adherents together in a loose family resemblance. The realist anarchist interpretation of these tenets demonstrates not only the existence of a realist form of anarchism, but also the level of variety in ideological and normative predispositions which can embody the realist stance. This chapter will also begin the explication of the ways that realist anarchism defies some of the particular elements of the standard image of anarchism. The first and most conceptually foundational is the anarchist approach to human nature, the explication of which will comprise the final section of the chapter. The remaining substantive elements of the standard image, such as the claim that anarchism is uncompromisingly anti-statist, and either wholly committed to insurrectionary revolution or withdrawal from engagement in political contest, will be addressed in subsequent chapters.

2 Realist anarchism

Introduction

As established in the previous chapter, representations of anarchism in academic literature and in many introductory anarchist texts are dominated by a 'standard image', which sees it as underpinned by an idealistic, naïve view of human nature, a simplistic and uncompromising rejection of the state and any engagement with it, and an unswerving commitment to sudden total social revolution. The diversity of modern and contemporary anarchism alone gives lie to the standard image of anarchism. But rather than attempt to give an account of this diverse field, I wish to concentrate on one tendency of anarchist thought among the others that challenges central elements of the standard image. Elements of this strain, the 'realist' anarchism suggested in chapter one, are arguably also present in close readings of the 'classical' anarchists that the standard image is usually based on, suggesting that there are grounds to challenge the standard image according to its own account of the theorists that it draws on.[1] However, these 'realist' elements are clearer, more prevalent, and more developed, in the work of the modern and contemporary anarchist theorists who are mostly ignored, and even explicitly dismissed as insignificant,[2] by standard academic accounts of anarchism. Therefore, this chapter will draw primarily from anarchists such as Errico Malatesta, Emma Goldman, and Gustav Landauer from the early 20th century, Murray Bookchin and Noam Chomsky from the mid-late 20th Century, and from the 21st century thinkers such as Tadzio Mueller, Jeff Shantz, Wayne Price, Uri Gordon, David Graeber, and Cindy Milstein, the latter group also demonstrating that the perspective exists not just as a theoretical stance, but also as a 'live' current in contemporary radicalism. These realist anarchist thinkers are employed due to their explanatory strengths regarding particular elements of this minority strain of radical thought and its contrast with the standard image of anarchism, as well as for their compatibility with the central tenets of political realism.

The chapter will begin by identifying the specific tendency of anarchism employed, with particular focus on its realism and the type of perspective it is in comparison with other forms of anarchism. I then proceed by addressing the question of realist anarchism as a form of realism by outlining

[1] Indeed, there are several critiques of postanarchism which argue as much. See, e.g.: Jesse Cohn and Shawn Wilbur, 2003, 'What's Wrong with Postanarchism?'', *The Anarchist Library*, [Online] Available from: http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/jesse-cohn-and-shawn-wilbur-what-s-wrong-with-postanarchism; Benjamin Franks, 2007, 'Postanarchism: A Critical Assessment', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, vol:12, (2).
[2] Ritter, 1980, p.5.

the way that realist anarchists interpret the central tenets of realism. This will demonstrate the misguidedness of the standard image's account of anarchism's position on the previously identified central tenets of political realism: the centrality of power and self-interest in politics; its inherently conflictual nature; its embeddedness in contingent historical, geographical and cultural contexts; that political theory should be 'concrete and oriented towards action'; and that it should not be seen as 'applied-ethics'. I then turn to the remaining and most substantial elements of the standard image - the realist anarchist approach to human nature, its attitude towards the state, and the reputation for uncompromising commitment to revolution. The first of these key elements – the realist anarchist account of human nature will be addressed in the second half of this chapter. This may seem an abstract issue with which to begin given the focus on strategy, but it is an issue that underpins practically all of the other elements of the standard image of anarchism. Realist anarchism's account of human nature leads it to reject class essentialism, economic and historical determinism, and the idea of total and final revolution in favour of a pluralistic, multi-axis approach which sees radical change as a never-ending project of action at multiple sites and in a variety of ways across a spectrum of reform and revolution. The next chapter will briefly outline the different strategic modes that realist anarchists adopt in different social and political contexts, particularly post-industrial liberal democracy. This context serves as the primary setting for responding to the most substantial elements of the standard image - absolutist opposition to any engagement with the state, and an uncompromisingly revolutionary attitude opposed to any reformist political action. These two remaining key elements of the standard image will be covered in the following chapters.

Identifying Realist Anarchism

Realist anarchism is not a formally recognised sub-type like anarcho-communism, syndicalism, pacifism, platformism, etc. No notable anarchists self-describe by this label, and there is no particular individual who is a representative realist anarchist in the way that, say Kropotkin is in relation to anarcho-communism. As no-one has yet sought to outline and defend this strain of anarchist thought as a distinct form, or in relation to the specific theoretical issues that I have grouped together, those who I argue are examples of this tendency have generally not presented coherent and complete statements on its details. Instead, the tendency is discernible in isolated and piecemeal contributions by various thinkers and in various different places. In offering what I believe to be the first explicit and coherent account of this type of anarchist thought it will be necessary to draw together some of these disparate elements from different sources. In doing so I

will utilise contributions from modern and contemporary anarchists, demonstrating that this tendency, while perhaps not the most prevalent anarchist position, is nonetheless present in a variety of contexts, theorists, and actions in anarchist history, and also that it is a live, current tendency in the contemporary milieu. As foreshadowed, the assemblage of theorists here are held together by a 'family resemblance' and their adherence to the realist disposition, and so individual contributions are not extracted in isolation without consideration of their relation to the other elements of a realist anarchist outlook. There is however, as with other examples of political realism, no claim that all of the theorists employed here agree on all elements, or that any would accept the particular constellation of positions that I have drawn together. The term 'realist anarchist' then refers to one who makes a contribution to this position and exhibits the disposition in regard to one or more issues, rather than a label that is given to one who wholly exemplifies this anarchist theoretical perspective. And while I also make no claim that the perspective outlined here is unique to these particular anarchists and could not be articulated by drawing on others, the sources that are selected to demonstrate one or another element of the realist anarchist perspective are chosen primarily according to the clarity with which they address the issue of focus.

One example of an issue that divides anarchist theory, and on which realist anarchists are not in complete agreement, is the use of the term 'democracy'. Some anarchists see anarchism as 'democracy without the state', or 'extreme democracy',[3] others see it as something qualitatively different but wish to 'reclaim' the radical potential of democracy, and others see democracy as irretrievably corrupted by its liberal statist associations.[4] These debates however are largely terminological rather than substantive disagreements.[5] Apart from a small minority,[6] all of the anarchists in these debates support the existence of formal organisations and collective decision-making bodies that are 'democratic' in the sense used in this thesis, and those that oppose the use of that word do so because they see it as conceptually tainted, not because they are 'anti-democratic' in any meaningful sense.[7] For instance, after a thorough survey of 19th century anarchist theorists and movements historian Zoe Baker concludes that "the pro and anti-democracy anarchists … are advocating the same system with different language", and that despite

[3] Cindy Milstein, 2010, *Anarchism and Its Aspirations*, AK Press, pp.97-107.
[4] See chapter three of Markus Lundström, 2018, *Anarchist Critique of Radical Democracy: The Impossible Argument*, Springer.
[5] Mark Bray, 2018, 'Horizontalism', *Anarchism*, Routledge, online copy available at - https://blackrosefed.org/horizontalism-mark-bray/.
[6] E.g. Bob Black, 2012b, 'Debunking Democracy', *Defacing the Currency: Selected Writings 1992-2012* LBC Books.
[7] Wayne Price, 2016, 'Are Anarchism and Democracy Opposed?', *Anarchist News*, [Online] Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/wayne-price-are-anarchism-and-democracy-opposed; Lundström, 2018

the tendency to associate with contemporary anarchists the characterisation of anarchism as 'democracy without the state', that conceptualisation was also used by classical anarchists.[8] In the 1930s Russian anarchist Georgi Maximoff referred to anarchism as "democracy in its purest and most extreme form".[9]

It is also perhaps worth restating here that my goal is not to describe the 'true' or 'best' form of modern or contemporary anarchism, or to claim the perspective to be particularly influential. Questions of relative influence or acceptance of particular anarchist positions in the contemporary worldwide anarchist milieu are difficult if not impossible to substantiate. Instead, my aim is limited to demonstrating the very existence of one particular anarchist outlook that is generally overlooked to the point of being logically impossible according to the essential elements of anarchism in its standard academic representation. Nor is this an attack on other forms of anarchism, or an implicit claim that the approach outlined, or that the theorists employed, are the only realistic interpretations of anarchism, or that other thinkers not employed here are unrealistic, idealistic, naïve, or any of the similar dismissive critiques sometimes levelled at anarchists in general. In other words, 'realist' is not used here as synonymous with 'good' or 'sensible', or as a slight against contrasting perspectives.

This tendency of anarchist thought is realist in at least two ways. It is realist inasmuch as it defies the idealist and non-realist reputation and standard representation of anarchism, but it is also realist in the sense that it conforms to the depiction of realism as a disposition towards politics characterised by a power-focused approach that begins not from abstract ethical principles but a realistic appreciation of existing conditions. This disposition is often delineated via the acceptance of certain shared 'central tenets', such as the idea that politics is about power and that political theory should reflect that; and that political theory should also recognise the historically and culturally particular nature of politics, the influence of irrationality and emotion of politics, and the ineradicability of conflict and disagreement, among other related positions.[10] Though this disposition has traditionally had a reputation for conservatism, the recent revival of realism in political theory[11] has seen an emphasis that this disposition does not have an intrinsic normative character and can accommodate radical applications.[12] Realist anarchism is an example of the

[8] Zoe Baker, 2022, 'Anarchism and Democracy', *Anarchopac*, [Online] Available from: https://anarchopac.com/2022/04/15/anarchism-and-democracy/.
[9] Georgi Maximoff, [1930] 1988, *Constructive Anarchism*, Monty Miller Press, p.17.
[10] See, e.g.: Finlayson, 2017, p.266; Philp, 2012, pp.2-3.
[11] Scheuerman, 2013.
[12] Prinz, 2015; Rossi, 2010; Rossi, 2019.

radical expression of the realist disposition. It is therefore both a form of *Realist* anarchism as well as Realist *anarchism* – by which I mean that it is both a form of realism which is anarchist and exemplifies the radical application of the realist perspective; and it is also a form of anarchism which is realist and challenges the idealistic and non-realist reputation of anarchism as represented in the standard image. So, it is realist both in comparison to other expressions of the realist disposition, as well as in contrast with the non-realist reputation of anarchism generally.

The following sections will first outline realist anarchism as a form of realism by outlining the ways it accepts and enacts various 'central tenets' of the realist disposition. Some of these realist anarchist interpretations of the realist tenets are also elements of the standard image and are both more substantial and more controversial than the others. They are more substantial in the sense that they require more detailed refutation than the brief treatment I give below in direct relation to the realist tenets. And they are more controversial in that they are more likely to draw criticism and disagreement from anarchists and so require more careful explication to defend the claim that the perspective is a realism that is too a form of anarchism.

Therefore, in the latter half of this chapter I will turn towards addressing these remaining key elements of the standard academic image of anarchism, beginning with the realist anarchist approach to the issue of human nature that underpins all these other positions. The next chapter, three, will outline the nuanced approach to the state that realist anarchists advocate, and address the claim that anarchists are uncompromisingly revolutionary by detailing the different strategic modes of realist anarchism's approach to social change – to reform and revolution – including the 'radicalising democracy' strategy that some realist anarchists advocate in post-industrial liberal democracies and that follows from their general approach to the state.

Realist anarchism as a form of realism

Realist anarchism and the central tenets of realism

In defining realism as a disposition that various normative perspectives can employ, rather than a particular theoretical perspective, it is understandable that we consider the positions that realists of different persuasions accept in common. However, we undermine this effort, and give the impression of a normatively prescriptive theory when we fail to give explicit account of the varying interpretations of those shared tenets that are so widely endorsed. The radical interpretations of

realist tenets can be quite different to those interpretations associated with conservative or liberal realist perspectives. This section will outline the realist anarchist interpretation of common realist tenets. It will show that, rather than entailing pessimistic interpretations such as that democracy is unworkable,[13] or that the best that can be hoped for in terms of democratic organisation is a liberal democracy shorn of its idealist illusions and resigned to accommodating social pluralism in a 'modus vivendi',[14] these radical interpretations entail distinctly radical implications.

In the radical context, the statement 'politics is about power' challenges not only a perspective that neglects this insight, but one that expressly rejects it. There is a major tendency in contemporary anarchism and anarchist-influenced radicalism that explicitly presents as 'anti-power',[15] and anti-realist.[16] This approach proposes disengagement and defection from the status quo with the implied expectation that capitalism and the state could wither away through lack of support and without confrontation.[17] Realist anarchists oppose this view and argue that realistic efforts to 'change the world' unavoidably entail the acquisition and exercise of some forms of power;[18] that the state and capitalism will not disappear without confrontation;[19] and that ignoring the current mechanisms of power in the hope that they will go away is not a realistic strategy for radical social change.[20]

For a realist anarchist the statement 'conflict and disagreement are ineradicable' similarly holds its greatest relevance as a corrective to a mainstream position in radical thought across its history including in the contemporary milieu. Orthodox Marxism, and many of its descendants, held to a long-term vision of a communist utopia where conflict had been reconciled and politics as such had been replaced by 'the administration of things'.[21] Many contemporary anarchists share a similar vision of a post-revolutionary utopia where conflict has been eradicated and where decision-making systems that allow for ongoing disagreement are replaced with those that accept only consensus.[22] Some, like the anti-power tendency discussed above, go beyond the expectation of a

[13] Carl Schmitt, 1988, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, MIT Press.
[14] Galston, 2010, p.398; John Horton, 2010, 'Realism, Liberal Moralism and a Political Theory of Modus Vivendi'*, European journal of political theory*, vol:9, (4).
[15] Marshall, 2010, p.679; Meltzer, 1993, p.11.
[16] Holloway, 2005, p.18.
[17] For a survey of such contemporary radical orientations, see Day, 2005.
[18] Mueller, 2003, p.128.
[19] Rai, 2015, p.177.
[20] Malatesta, [1922] 2014a, p.425.
[21] Richard Adamiak, 1970, 'The "Withering Away" of the State: A Reconsideration'*, The Journal of Politics*, vol:32, (1), p.16.
[22] See Graeber, 2013, pp.210–231.

future without disagreement and presume the absence of conflict even in the realisation of their utopia. Here 'everybody' is made aware of the pressing need for radical social change either through rational argument, or by a sudden realisation or change of consciousness based on the recognition that 'we are all one' and have universal shared interests.[23]

So, the realist anarchist perspective on the idea that 'conflict and disagreement are ineradicable' is not that conflict is universal and inescapable as with the conservative take, but that conflict cannot be completely eradicated, and that no future post-revolutionary society will be free from antagonisms.[24] Nor does the radical interpretation imply that we must forgo radical aims for an uneasy acceptance of pluralism under a liberal democratic modus vivendi. The realist anarchist perspective, however, is not primarily directed at these conservative defences of dictatorship, or at liberal realist pessimism. Instead, it is aimed at anarchists and other radicals who see the possibility of a conflict-free utopia and propose confrontation-free strategies for its realisation that are based either on withdrawing from political struggle, or on successfully convincing all, through education and rational argument, that the proposed radical alternative is in their best interest. The realist anarchist interpretation means that direct and active struggle for positive change, and against oppression, are necessary; that they will continue to be in any future society; and that future visions and current strategies should reflect this.[25]

The idea that political thought should be 'concrete and oriented towards action'[26] stands in opposition to anarchist theory that focuses on the articulation of a comprehensive vision of an alternative system of social organisation, with the implied belief that the mere articulation of such a vision should be enough to bring about its realisation. It also counters anarchist perspectives that present as a position of permanent critique without any attempt, or serious belief, that an alternative could actually be achieved, or those similar (in practice) perspectives which posit a revolutionary future based on awaiting some precondition that precipitates radical social change, such as the spontaneous collapse of capitalism due to the unfolding of an inevitable process.[27]

[23] This position is today seen most frequently in radical environmental literature, see e.g. J.G. Speth, 2008, *The Bridge at the Edge of the World: Capitalism, the Environment, and Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability*, Yale University Press, p.199.
[24] Edgley, 2000, p.73.
[25] Edgley, 2000, p.73; Gordon, 2007, pp.64–68.
[26] Geuss, 2008, p.95.
[27] Malatesta, [1922] 2014a, p.425; Errico Malatesta, [1924] 2014c, 'Individualism and Anarchism', In: Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, p.461.

This entails recognising the imperfectability of radical action and rejecting 'purist' revolutionary perspectives. Realist anarchism recognises that all action 'before the revolution' is necessarily and unavoidably compromised. Anti-capitalists must survive and resist under capitalism while subject to its demands, yet this does not entail that they cannot take any action against it that is not a direct and immediate contribution to the 'final revolution'.[28] While many anarchists disdain any and all forms of political action that could be construed as reformist, realist anarchists accept that reformism is unavoidable in radical politics. This should not be taken to suggest that realist anarchists exclusively advocate, or even particularly prioritise, reformism. They still, as anarchists, advocate a 'diversity of tactics', from prefigurative construction of radical institutions and direct action against oppression, to insurrection and revolution. And as realists they determine the appropriate form of action according to context.

They also argue that, as anarchism is not a fixed idea but a 'living force' that constantly responds to and creates 'new conditions',[29] there will always be a need for struggle against oppression, and vigilance against exclusion and subjugation, even after the seemingly most comprehensive and progressive revolutionary change. Any revolution then can only ever be partial, and there can never be a 'final' phase of radical social change.[30] Therefore, purist opposition to all reformist struggle is based on an unrealistic hard division between reform and revolution, as revolutions can themselves be seen as 'the radical reform of institutions, achieved rapidly'.[31] So, while recognising the importance of revolutionary rupture and upheaval, they also argue that between such events radicals should take "all possible reforms with the same spirit that one tears occupied territory from the enemy's grasp in order to go on advancing".[32]

However, to the extent that realist anarchists endorse reform, they do so only under certain conditions. Firstly, they support reforms that have the capacity to move directly towards radical goals, or to position for future radical gains. To this end they sometimes invoke a distinction similar to that between 'reformist' and 'non-reformist' reforms articulated by Andre Gorz. Gorz argued, in relation to labour reforms, that some reforms can have the effect of securing the status quo and others can in fact challenge the status quo and serve as progressive steps towards radical change.[33] Likewise, Malatesta claimed that reforms:

[28] Malatesta, [1922] 2014b, pp.432–433; Rai, 2015, p.180.
[29] Emma Goldman, 1969, *Anarchism: And Other Essays*, Kennikat Press, p.70.
[30] Gordon, 2007, p.67; Malatesta, [1922] 2014a, p.427.
[31] Malatesta, 1965, p.82.
[32] Malatesta, 1965, p.83.
[33] André Gorz, 1967, *Strategy for Labor: A Radical Proposal*, Beacon Press.

> *either consolidate the existing regime or undermine it; assist the advent of revolution or hamper it and benefit or harm progress in general, depending on their specific characteristic, the spirit in which they have been granted, and above all, the spirit in which they are asked for, claimed or seized by the people.*[34]

This distinction has also been employed by various others in relation to issues such as prison abolition,[35] ecosocialist transformation[36] and the generalised radicalisation of democratic institutions.[37]

Secondly, realist anarchists endorse reforms that can have a direct effect on alleviating suffering and hardship. They argue that anarchist opposition to all forms of oppression demands support for efforts towards the effective amelioration of its effects, even if by means of reforms that originate from or are implemented by ultimately illegitimate institutions.[38] This position also rejects the 'worse is better' stance of crude radicalism which accepts inaction against suffering in the hope that it will lead to a crisis that precipitates widespread revolution.[39] For realist anarchists then the directive that political thought should be 'concrete, and oriented towards action' counters radical theory focused on articulating alternative social models without considering their implementation, or which counsels inaction in anticipation of a prophesied perfect moment for enacting a total, final revolution. As we will see in the following chapter, these positions have particular relevance to the realist anarchist approach to managing the tension between extremely radical goals and realistic strategy and analysis. As foreshadowed, the realist anarchist approach to radical change is one of the more complicated and controversial aspects of the perspective, and will be outlined in further detail in the following chapter.

The directive that we should recognise the importance of history, contingency and context in political thought[40] also has particular radical interpretations and implications. The acceptance that 'politics is historically located'[41] might inspire recognition of moments of historical rupture – of reform, revolt and revolution – and serve as a reminder of the constancy of social change, the

---

[34] Malatesta, 1965, p.81.
[35] Ruth Wilson Gilmore, 2007, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*, Univ of California Press, p.183.
[36] Hans A Baer, 2017, *Democratic Eco-Socialism as a Real Utopia: Transitioning to an Alternative World System*, Berghahn Books.
[37] Mouffe, 2018.
[38] Errico Malatesta, [1925] 2014a, 'Gradualism', In: Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, p.472–473.
[39] Chomsky, 2005a, p.213.
[40] Alice Baderin, 2014, 'Two Forms of Realism in Political Theory'*, European Journal of Political Theory*, vol:13, (2), p.144; Rossi and Sleat, 2014, p.7.
[41] Geuss, 2008, p.13.

ubiquity of resistance against illegitimate authority and that society could be radically otherwise.[42] This perspective on historical contingency is also relevant to one of the most longstanding disagreements in revolutionary thought. Anarchists have long opposed the teleological view of history associated with orthodox Marxism, and contemporary anarchists especially reaffirm the contingency of historical processes, and that history does not unfold according to a predetermined schedule.[43] For realist anarchists this means that radicals must act – they must recognise their agency in history and that there is nothing necessary about the currently dominant social, political and economic forms, nor anything inevitable about revolutionary change.

This action, however, must recognise and respond to context. Realist anarchists "cannot impose an iron-clad program or method on the future" but must "leave posterity to develop its own particular systems, in harmony with its needs".[44] There cannot be a single revolutionary strategy or utopian model that is generally applicable regardless of political, economic, historical and cultural contexts. Radical action and efforts towards social change must conform to particular, contingent requirements.[45] For those committed to radically democratic and generally emancipatory politics, this implies that the details of radical actions and organisational models that apply in particular contexts that action must conform to are not merely to be determined by elites, but by the democratic self-determination of the peoples within those contexts.[46] So for a realist anarchist the recognition of context also calls radicals to humility – to the acceptance that the detailed construction of universal models of (even radical) democracy by intellectual elites goes beyond the legitimate set of tasks that a radical political theorist can undertake.

One tenet within the recent re-articulation of realism in political theory might appear an insurmountable obstacle to the reconciliation of anarchist radicalism and the realist disposition. Both radical and liberal realists in the recent realist discourse argue against an 'ethics-first' approach to political theory.[47] An ethics-first approach to political theory is described as the view that 'politics is applied ethics' – where a priori ethical principles are first determined, and politics subsequently framed as the application of those principles. Those familiar with standard representations of anarchism would be forgiven for assuming that all forms of anarchism are based

[42] Chomsky, 1996a, p.85–86.
[43] Angela Wigger, 2016, 'Anarchism as Emancipatory Theory and Praxis: Implications for Critical Marxist Research', *Capital & Class*, vol:40, (1), p.134.
[44] Goldman, 1969, p.49.
[45] Malatesta, [1924] 2014d, p.453.
[46] Chomsky, 2005a, pp.221–222; Turcato, 2015, pp.217–218.
[47] Geuss, 2008, p.9; Williams, 2005.

on just such an ethics-first approach. Anarchism is often defined as the application of the principle that all authority is illegitimate.[48] Many anarchists also advocate a purist application of this position which equates to the implementation of the implicit principle 'never engage with, or endorse by cooperation with, any illegitimate institution' which is clearly a non-realist moralistic principle on the order of Kant's 'never lie even to save a human life'.[49] This position is indeed prevalent in contemporary anarchism. It is associated with the stance suggested above by the non-realist perspectives that realist anarchist positions are often levelled against (i.e., the anarchist tendency which aims for a conflict-free utopia through universalist strategies that neglect considerations of power, history and context).

Realist anarchism, however, is not the application of a moral belief that all coercion is immoral or that all authority is illegitimate, nor does it proceed from an a priori moral principle of any kind. Instead, realist anarchism is based on a sceptical stance towards all authority based on a realist appreciation of one of the qualities that humans appear to exhibit across history and independent of culture. That is, that people generally do not seem to accept being controlled, dominated and oppressed, and history suggests that the attempt to do so will usually draw some form of resistance and, in time, be seen as an illegitimate form of authority. Rather than a moral or ethical principle, this is a realist observation much like that which sees humans as driven not only by rational calculation, and this insight is similarly derived from the interpretations of the central tenets of a realist disposition described above. Attention to history, the actual realities that drive people to political action, the ubiquity of resistance, struggle and change, lead realist anarchists to see it as a realistic and pragmatic stance to be sceptical towards all forms of authority.[50]

This point is also pertinent to another perceived barrier to radical realism recently articulated by McQueen, who argues that due to their suspicion that all moral arguments for justice are likely based on motivated interests, realists might find themselves lacking any grounding for political action and so become 'paralysed' into inaction, thereby inadvertently supporting the status quo.[51] The realist anarchist perspective, however, demonstrates that a realist need not base radical action on any moral reasoning. Instead they can proceed from a realistic recognition that injustice and oppression are unsustainable and ultimately undermine political order and social stability.[52]

[48] E.g. Newman, 2015, pp.1–2.
[49] Kant in Geuss, 2008, p.8.
[50] Noam Chomsky, 1970, 'Notes on Anarchism', In: Guerin, *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice*, Vol: 175, Monthly Review Press, p.viii.
[51] McQueen, 2020.
[52] Malatesta, 1965, pp.74–78; Shantz and Williams, 2013, pp.108–110.

Important to note on this point is that the realist opposition to moralism does not entail the attempt to purge all moral judgments from political thought, as though such a project were possible, but that morality not occupy the wrong place in political thinking. To moralise, writes Geuss, "is to make a moral judgment in an inappropriate context, that is, to propound it in a context or in a way which seems to ascribe to it too much of the wrong kind of weight or effectiveness".[53] The realist perspective demands that abstract moral principles not form the foundation of normative frameworks as in the 'applied-ethics' approach, and that morals not form the basis of political argument in the sense that it is assumed to be a sufficient or effective political argument to 'preach' that something is either morally good or evil.[54]

Although there certainly have been anarchists who advocate anarchy on the basis of an appeal to moral principles, and most of the anarchists designated here as realist arguably have many instances of moral judgement in their work, their arguments generally proceed on instrumental and material bases. For example, one of the longest standing arguments in anarchism has been that "anarchy is order, whereas government is civil war"[55] - that the 'order' of the state is an unstable and politically unsustainable arrangement analogous to the chaotic social precarity of war when compared to the durable order of 'anarchy' conceived as a complex system of non-hierarchical, non-coercive social organisation.[56] This is based on the idea that any relation of class or coercive hierarchy generates tensions and antagonisms that rely on violence or its threat to be maintained, and that this itself is a state of disorder but also that it is a situation that cannot be maintained indefinitely and so is also precarious and unstable. And conversely that a society based on equal, non-coercive relations removes the tensions that constantly threaten to turn to violence and overturn the existing social order, and so is more durable and politically sustainable. Recently, many anarchists have also advanced the instrumental argument that anarchist society which takes seriously human exploitation of nature as an axis of domination would also constitute an environmentally more sustainable and stable order.[57]

[53] Geuss 2016, p.96.
[54] Geuss 2016, pp.26, 31, 50.
[55] Anselme Bellagarrigue, 1850, 'Anarchy Is Order', *Anarchy, A Journal of Order*, 1(1), [Online] Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/anselme-bellegarrigue-the-world-s-first-anarchist-manifesto.
[56] Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, 1994, *Proudhon: What Is Property?*, Cambridge University Press, p.208; Bellagarrigue 1850; Jeffrey Shantz, 2005, 'Anarchy Is Order: Creating the New World in the Shell of the Old', *M/C Journal*, vol:7, (6).
[57] Bookchin, [2002] 2015c, p.155; Peter Gelderloos, 2017a, 'Chapter 4: Environment', *Anarchy Works: Examples of Anarchist Ideas in Practice*, Active Distribution.

Therefore, the realist anarchist scepticism of authority does not entail a moralistic opposition, but derives from an historically informed recognition of the violence and disorder that is entailed in unequal social and political relations. If it comes close to universalism it is at most akin to Judith Shklar's, whose liberal realism is underpinned not by a universal high moral principle, but by a universal aversion to cruelty, while realist anarchism's scepticism reflects an aversion to domination and oppression more broadly than only cruel tyranny. Though they may seem similar, complete opposition is importantly distinct in its implications when compared with scepticism towards all forms of authority. Scepticism entails that the onus of proof should be placed on those that see unequal power relations as legitimate, and no form of authority should be considered immune from the requirement to justify its necessity on the terms of those subject to it. It also entails, however, the recognition that some forms of authority can indeed be accepted as legitimate, and beyond this, that even illegitimate institutions and practices can, under some circumstances, be considered relatively acceptable when compared with other currently available alternatives.[58]

As should be clear, realist anarchists conform to the particular focus on issues of political legitimacy that some argue constitute a central concern for contemporary realism.[59] This focus however again demonstrates the potential scope of interpretation and application of such shared concerns. As liberal realist Matt Sleat argues, the realist concern with legitimacy is not a defence of force or domination, but is based on the stance that "power does not self-justify and hence any form of rule that is properly speaking political must be appropriately legitimated".[60] This formulation, drawn from Bernard Williams' 'basic legitimation demand',[61] is very close to the anarchist scepticism of authority, however, anarchists generally take this demand much further than other realists in that they see it as applying to all forms of power and authority beyond the state form upon which Williams and most realists focus. Anarchist realists are then arguably more consistent and thoroughgoing in their realism in that they take the basic legitimation demand that other realists accept as a centrally important issue concerning the state to be the same basic demand

[58] Chomsky, 1996a, pp.73–74.
[59] Runciman 2012, p.66.
[60] Sleat 2014, p.6.
[61] Williams sees "the securing of order, protection, safety, trust, and the conditions of cooperation" as "the 'first' political question", and a necessary but not sufficient condition of legitimacy. For a political authority to be legitimate it must secure order as well as meeting the 'basic legitimation demand' (BLD). For the BLD to be met some form of "justifying explanation" must be offered as to why the authority is legitimate, and "that cannot simply be an account of successful domination … the power of coercion cannot justify its own use". Put simply, "might does not imply right". If the authority cannot meet the BLD it is to be considered illegitimate. Williams, 2005, pp.3-6.

that should guide all forms of relations and the base upon which any relational legitimacy is founded.

And while most realists tend to see the ineradicability of conflict as entailing a state or state-like "political authority that can provide commonly binding decisions through law, with the legitimate right to employ coercion to ensure obedience with those decisions",[62] realist anarchists do not accept that such a requirement inevitably entails a state. The statist assumptions common within realism's concern with legitimacy are challenged by some radical realists in a way quite similar to the realist anarchist approach to legitimacy and coercion. Rossi and Raekstad for instance argue, drawing on anthropological and sociological resources, that while some forms of coercion and rule are inescapable in any human society it does not follow that the imposition of authority 'vertically' from a political institution arrayed above and separate from the general population is the only form that political rule can take. They define 'vertical' coercive authority as "a ruler/ruled hierarchy; a distinct ruling entity; that this ruling entity has supreme power to make decisions and enforce obedience. A distinct entity wielding systematic vertical coercion over those subject to it".[63] There are forms of political organisation that long predate the formation of states wherein only 'horizontal' forms of coercion prevail. That is, where there is no distinction between ruler and ruled and there is no coercive institution that stands separate from society itself. Like realist anarchists they accept that it is unrealistic to call for the complete abolition of coercion because as there is no record of any human society without at least horizontal forms they can be considered 'natural'. Conversely however, as the ubiquity of vertical forms such as the state is a relatively recent development in human history it is also unreasonable to cast anarchistic horizontal forms as unfeasible and to suggest statism as the marker of a realist view.[64] Further, it arguably conflicts with the realist historically informed perspective to presume the necessary existence of the state for politics.

This position has long represented a point of misunderstanding and misrepresentation of anarchism not so much in the academic image but more in sectarian Marxist critiques such as

[62] Sleat, 2014 p.6.
[63] Enzo Rossi and Paul Raekstad, April 2020, Political Naturalism: Legitimacy without Sovereignty Anarchist Research Group Seminar Series, presentation notes available at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/14EXhXIX8AeSpMcBP9vsKQVUxm0gbNOTR-ZQllWAzij4/edit.
[64] Ibid.

Engels' 'On Authority' and Stalin's 'Socialism and Anarchism'.[65] It is also still quite a widespread misread[66] and so worth briefly explaining further.

This stance is unambiguously opposed to all forms of domination and oppression, and is sceptical of all authority and unequal power relations. That is, it presumes that relations of authority or unequal power are also likely to be relations of domination or oppression and so are illegitimate, unless proven otherwise. It is a stance of permanent sceptical and critical orientation where the default assumption is that any form of coercion, authority, or unequal power relation however conceived is illegitimate and should be opposed, abolished, or replaced from below. And likewise, the 'proof' of legitimacy should also come 'from below', in the sense that any form of authority accepted as legitimate should be deemed so by the relatively 'lower' party in the relation - with the justification coming from, and resting on the judgment of, those with less power or authority.

While this attitude entails the possibility for some forms of authority or power to be considered legitimate, they are generally seen as such only in very limited senses and under particular conditions. Common examples are Bakunin's acceptance of the authority of the bootmaker regarding boots, or Chomsky's defence of physical coercion of a young child running into traffic as legitimate:

> *Bakunin – When it is a question of boots, I refer the matter to the authority of the cobbler; when it is a question of houses, canals, or railroads, I consult that of the architect or engineer. For each special area of knowledge I speak to the appropriate expert. But I allow neither the cobbler nor the architect nor the scientist to impose upon me.*[67]

> *Chomsky - If I'm taking a walk with my grandchildren and they dart out into a busy street, I will use not only authority but also physical coercion to stop them. The act should be challenged, but I think it can readily meet the challenge.*[68]

Other examples of the acceptance by anarchists of limited authority include the temporary authority of a captain on a pirate ship during battle,[69] or of the voluntarily accepted influence of

---

[65] Frederick Engels, 2001, 'On Authority ', In: Soudakoff, *Marxism Versus Anarchism*, Resistance Books; Joseph Stalin, 1950, *Anarchism or Socialism?*, Foreign Languages Publishing House.

[66] This misreading is, according to some, due to the phrasing of Chomsky's formulation of this stance and its misinterpretation by some contemporary anarchists – see: Ziq, 2018, 'Anarchy Vs Archy: No Justified Authority; or, Why Chomsky Is Wrong', *The Anarchist Library*, [Online] Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/ziq-anarchy-vs-archy-no-justified-authority.

[67] M.A. Bakunin, 1910, *God and the State*, Freedom Press, p.19.

[68] Chomsky, 2005a, p.178.

[69] Peter T Leeson, 2007, 'An-Arrgh-Chy: The Law and Economics of Pirate Organization', *Journal of political economy*, vol:115, (6).

some activists based on greater relative experience.[70] The most common application of this conception of limited authority is in the temporary and explicitly delimited authority of a local delegate in a higher level of coordination in an anarchist federation - "there is no way that each man can do everything for himself … even if it were possible … Hence, we agree to the division of labour, the delegation of roles and trusting others to represent our own views and interests."[71]

These examples demonstrate what is not entertained by this perspective – the technical possibility for some forms of authority to be judged legitimate from the realist anarchist sceptical perspective does not open the door for permanent systems of political hierarchy enforced violently from above to be cast as just. This stance is not a cover to construct an argument for 'justified hierarchies' or state-like structures[72] argued to be legitimate from a pseudo-Leninist perspective. To do so is to reverse the stance from scepticism towards authority to a scepticism towards anarchy and a default acceptance of authority, and to relitigate the legitimacy of the state in the name of anarchism. Realist anarchists generally agree with other anarchists (and most political theorists) that a separate and distinct entity with a monopoly on violence and coercion is the defining element of a state. Therefore, their approach to anti-statism is not one that advocates simply destroying all forms of formal political institutions, but instead aims to replace the form based on a coercive apparatus distinct from the self-governing populace with a form of social organisation that does not fit that definition. Though they are not prescriptive regarding the detail that future alternatives might take, leaving much to the needs of each particular context, realist anarchists generally accept the loose framework of the classic anarchist vision of freely federated councils and associations, sometimes referred to as the 'commune of communes' and do not suggest that liberal democracies, 'minarchist' states, or Leninist 'proletarian dictatorships' are justifiable forms of authority or hierarchy.[73]

This position could be outlined by strict definitions of particular terms so as to allow for more bold and powerful slogans. If we define 'authority' strictly as top-down political authority backed by coercion, or hierarchy as formal political structures of command, again resting on coercive

[70] Errico Malatesta, [1926] 2014, 'Let's Demolish - and Then?', In: Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, p.479.
[71] Malatesta, [1897] 2014a, p.214.
[72] C.f. Ziq, 2018; Bob Black, 2012a, 'Chomsky on the Nod', *Defacing the Currency: Selected Writings 1992-2012*, LBC Books; John Zerzan, 2002, 'Who Is Chomsky?', *Running on Emptiness: The Pathology of Civilization*, Feral House.
[73] E.g.: Murray Bookchin, [1998] 2015, 'A Politics for the 21st Century', *The Next Revolution: Popular Assemblies and the Promise of Direct Democracy*, Verso Books, p.63.

violence, then opposition to all authority and hierarchy would be useful shorthand for the general anarchist perspective. However, anarchism is particularly prone to misrepresentation and previous use of such slogans has allowed for disingenuous representations of anarchism of the type this thesis aims to avoid. The reason for the phrasing 'scepticism towards authority' then is twofold. Firstly it is to avoid such simplistic and bad-faith misrepresentations and misguided misunderstandings, and to allow conceptual space for scenarios that while perhaps easily explainable with strict terminology, could generate confusion due to intuitive or common usage of terms (such as Chomsky's parenting example of hierarchy or authority, which arguably does not conform to a strict definition of either hierarchy or authority).[74] Secondly, the phrasing is not intended to question the established illegitimacy of the state from an anarchist perspective, but rather to broaden the focus from established systems of oppression and domination to include all other potential problems and previously unrecognised forms.

This scepticism then is levelled not at one form of authority, such as the state, but at all forms, and it is combined with a concrete, action-orientated realist perspective which, in its radical iteration, entails immediate opposition to oppression rather than awaiting a teleological unfolding of history or the idea that 'the worse, the better' for radical politics.[75] Therefore, the realist anarchist perspective recognises the unavoidable tension in radical positions which oppose various forms of illegitimate authority simultaneously. Rather than proceeding according to the application of a moralistic principle such as 'never engage with an illegitimate institution', the realist anarchist must compare and balance tensions between their oppositions to different forms of illegitimate authority according to the particular historical and political contexts. This weighing of relative priority between opposition to different forms of illegitimate authority, for example those associated with capitalism and the state, leads realist anarchists to perhaps their most controversial and challenged stance – a nuanced and pragmatic approach to the state. As noted, there are anarchists who advocate the complete withdrawal and disengagement from formal political institutions, and propose a future radical alternative based on absolutely no formal political structures. Realist anarchism is not one of these forms of radical thought. The nuanced realist anarchist stance towards political institutions and engagement with them is, as we will see in the next chapter, central to understanding realist anarchism as an actually-existing form of realism that is based on both an unflinchingly realistic attitude to political thought and action, as well as a far-

[74] For an example of this narrow definition approach that advances an absolutist opposition to all authority by reassigning some usages to other words, and which argues that Chomsky's usage is inaccurate, see: Ziq, 2018.
[75] Chomsky, 2005a, p.213.

reaching, utopian radicalism that calls for social change that appears, in current contexts, to be patently impossible. The following section turns from the elaboration of the realist perspective in relation to the broader realist disposition in general, towards more direct explication of the way that the realist anarchist tendency contradicts the specific elements of standard academic image of anarchism.

Realist anarchism and the standard image

Realist anarchism and human nature

The first element of the standard image of anarchism which the realist strain belies is the belief that anarchism is universally committed to a simplistic and 'rosy' view of human nature as essentially peaceful, cooperative, and 'good',[76] and that this essential nature is repressed and corrupted by capitalist and hierarchical society.[77] While rejection of this position is one of the elements of a realist anarchist perspective, it is by no means restricted to those anarchists that I designate as 'realist'. So this is a necessary but not on its own a sufficient element to define a realist anarchist perspective.

The standard image's representation of the anarchist position on human nature is perhaps the most commonly challenged misrepresentation of anarchism in contemporary anarchist literature.[78] This is partly due to the response in anarchist thought to the emergence of the academic discourse known as 'postanarchism', especially the representation by postanarchists of the 'classical' anarchism which they claimed to have transcended.[79] Postanarchism, particularly the work of Saul Newman,[80] is constructed on the foundation of the standard image of anarchism, especially the 'classical' anarchists and their supposed shortcomings regarding the issue of human nature. Postanarchists argue that 19th century anarchists such as Bakunin and Kropotkin based their anarchism on a simplistic, humanist, conception of human nature as inherently cooperative and 'good', albeit corrupted by authoritarian social forms such as the state, the church, and capitalism.[81]

---

[76] Thomas Swann, 2010, 'Are Postanarchists Right to Call Classical Anarchists 'Humanist'?', In: Franks and Wilson, *Anarchism and Moral Philosophy*, Palgrave Macmillan, p.232.
[77] Peter Marshall, 1989, 'Human Nature and Anarchism', In: Goodway, *For Anarchism: History, Theory, and Practice*, Routledge, p.127.
[78] Leaving aside, that is, propagandistic misrepresentations of anarchism as chaotic, lawless, violence.
[79] Saul Newman, 2015, *postanarchism*, pp.12-13; Todd May, 1994, *The Political Theory of Poststructualist Anarchism*, Pennsylvania State University Press, p.87; Lewis Call 2002, *Postmodern anarchism,* pp.21-23.
[80] Newman, 2001; 2011a, *The Politics of Postanarchism, Edinburgh University Press*; 2015, *Postanarchism*.
[81] Perhaps the first statement of this postanarchist acceptance of the standard image of anarchism was made by May, 1994, p.64.

So for Saul Newman, in the classical anarchism of the 19th and early 20th centuries: "there lies a natural commonality, a rational and moral sociability, which is inherent to the human subject".[82] And likewise for Lewis Call "classical anarchism purports to liberate some kind of authentic human essence which has supposedly been repressed by capitalism and/or the state".[83] Postanarchists then seek to 'fix' this shortcoming of classical anarchism by supplementing the anarchist position with a post-structuralist, anti-essentialist account of human nature.[84] This has drawn criticism from several anarchists on the grounds that postanarchists present a strawman account of classical anarchists' position on human nature in order to 'update' anarchism with a position that in reality is not a novel one, but merely a restatement of an already existing anarchist position. So it is argued that rather than needing an encounter with postmodern and poststructuralist philosophy in order to be 'fixed' and 'updated', much anarchist philosophy, including classical anarchism but especially that of the modern era which is uniformly ignored by postanarchists, can be considered at least a familial precursor of anti-essentialist radical philosophy such as poststructuralism and 'postmodernism',[85] or even as an early form of poststructuralism.[86]

So according to the anarchist defenders of classical anarchism against its representation in postanarchism, anarchism is not universally committed to an essentialist view of human nature. This they demonstrate with reference to various anarchists from the classical era as well as to anarchist thinkers in the eras since, which postanarchists generally ignore.[87] So, this perspective has continued to exist and develop across the various eras of anarchism since the classical era of the nineteenth century, and it is also evident in the work of the anarchists that I have classified as realist, such as Malatesta,[88] Bookchin,[89] Graeber,[90] and Chomsky,[91] among others.[92]

[82] Newman 2015, p.6.
[83] Call 2002, pp.14-15.
[84] Newman 2015, pp.8-9; May 1994, pp.12-13; Call 2002, pp.23, 101.
[85] Swann 2010, p.241; Jesse Cohn, 2002, 'What Is Postanarchism 'Post'?', *Postmodern culture*, vol:13, (1).
[86] Nathan Jun, 2012, *Anarchism and Political Modernity*, Continuum.
[87] Swann 2010; Daniel Colson, 1996, 'Anarchist Subjectivities and Modern Subjectivity', *The Anarchist Library*, [Online] Available from: http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/daniel-colson-anarchist-subjectivities-and-modern-subjectivity; Benjamin Franks, 2012, 'Anarchism and Analytic Philosophy', In: Kinna, *The Continuum Companion to Anarchism*, Continuum, p.61.
[88] Errico Malatesta, [1931] 2014b, 'Peter Kropotkin: Recollections and Criticisms by One of His Old Friends', In: Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, p.514.
[89] E.g.: Bookchin, 1979, p.27.
[90] E.g.: David Graeber, 2011, *Revolutions in Reverse: Essays on Politics, Violence, Art and Imagination*, Autonomedia, p.71.
[91] E.g.: Chomsky, 2015b, p.62.
[92] For more see: Marshall, 1989.

Understanding this realist anarchist anti-essentialism requires recognition of two different approaches to the idea of human nature, and different conceptions of 'essentialism'. The essentialism of Enlightenment thought, and arguably of some early anarchists such as Kropotkin, which is the target of post-structuralist and postanarchist anti-essentialism, is, as the label suggests, a vision of human nature as underpinned by a singular 'essence', of which all other qualities are merely epiphenomenal expressions (whether faithful or perverted).[93] Classic examples of this perspective are Rousseau's belief that humans were by nature 'good' and were only corrupted by the influence of society,[94] or Kropotkin's view that humans are by nature cooperative and that competitive behaviour was a result of the perversion of this underlying nature by repressive social institutions such as private property, the state, and the church.[95] This is a view of human nature as reducible to a singular essence, which is taken as the motive force behind all human action to the point where it can lead to predictive and deterministic theories. It is also a common element in liberal and Marxist thought, where it is either rational self-interest or creative productivity that forms the 'true' essence by which all other human action can be understood.[96]

An alternative approach is to accept that humans have numerous qualities that are found across cultures and history that are not wholly formed by social and discursive processes, though they may be affected and shaped by them. The collection of qualities in this category might include such things as the capacity for language, abstract and creative thought, our productive or 'tool-making' capacity, our classification as a social rather than solitary animal, and both our capacity for rational, logical reasoning and the influence of our emotions and non-rational thought processes. This perspective is not true essentialism, as it does not posit a singular essence as more important, influential, or determining than any other. People can be rational and irrational, competitive and cooperative, and none of these qualities point to a 'true' underlying essence, nor to any particular model for a perfect form of social organisation based on that essence. Neither, however, does it see humans as completely 'blank slates' upon which social and discursive processes play out without constraint. While social and discursive identity-construction cannot be denied as playing a major role in the various manifestations of 'humanness', these processes, similarly undeniably,

---

[93] Alan Ryan, 2012, 'The Nature of Human Nature in Hobbes and Rousseau', *The Making of Modern Liberalism*, Princeton University Press, p.221.

[94] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 2002, 'The Second Discourse: Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Mankind', *The Social Contract and the First and Second Discourses*, Yale University Press, pp.118-122; Ryan 2012, pp.229-230.

[95] Pyotr Kropotkin, 2006 [1902], *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, Dover, pp.230-231; Marshall, 1993, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, PM Press, pp.16-17; Marshall, 1989, pp.136-137.

[96] William Dixon and David Wilson, 2013, *A History of Homo Economicus: The Nature of the Moral in Economic Theory*, Routledge.

take place upon a biological[97] foundation of a collection of fundamental, or in a sense 'essential', human traits and qualities that both constrain and provide the conditions for the expression of 'human nature'. An example of this perspective is the common anti-essentialist position that identity and subject-hood is a product of linguistic, discursive processes, which relies on an implicit acceptance of human nature that includes the capacity for language as one of its fundamental qualities. Many, and arguably most,[98] anarchists assume this 'collection of qualities' conception of human nature, and consider the very attempt to rigidly define human nature in any singular, deterministic or predictive sense as a meaningless and naïve endeavour.[99]

Therefore, the charge of essentialism levelled at classical anarchism is inaccurate. For example, Bookchin argues that the representation of anarchism as founded on '"natural man' and 'instincts for mutual aid'… is to grossly misread anarchism as a historical movement"[100] and to treat anarchism as something created and developed by a handful of philosophers. Ironically, however, the strongest evidence against anarchist essentialism comes from those who decry the prevalence of simplistic views on the issue within the anarchist movement. That is, historical arguments against such essentialism often themselves admit to its widespread existence among other anarchists. Malatesta for example consistently challenged such views in the anarchist milieu within which he was active over his long political life. Despite his long friendship with Kropotkin Malatesta criticised what he saw as significant sections of the anarchist movement who "luxuriated in that blessed Kropotkinian optimism",[101] and regretted the "evil effect"[102] which he believed that optimism to have had on the movement. He felt that the prevalent view among anarchists that they needed only to remove the barriers to the full expression of humans' naturally benevolent and cooperative nature led to an inattentiveness to the actual obstacles facing successful anarchist revolution, and similarly promoted an unwarranted optimism that myriad technical challenges and social issues could be resolved "on the morrow' of revolution".[103] To be fair to Kropotkin, close reading of his work shows that he too has a complex view of humans, holding that "man [*sic*] is nothing but a resultant, always changeable, of all his diverse faculties".[104] Regardless, Malatesta found that Kropotkin's work evoked an idealist conception of human nature which was so

[97] I use this term in a broad non-specialist sense to refer to human traits that might in some cases be described in other more specific ways, for instance as encoded in DNA or genetic sequences.
[98] Marshall, 1989; Clark, 1978.
[99] Edgley, 2000, p.26; Noam Chomsky, 1988, *Language and Politics*, Black Rose Books, p.236.
[100] Bookchin, 1979, p.27.
[101] Malatesta, [1924] 2014d, p.453.
[102] Malatesta, [1931] 2014b, p.520.
[103] Malatesta, [1924] 2014a, p.452.
[104] Pyotr Kropotkin, 1993, *Fugitive Writings*, Black Rose Books, p.102.

influential that he made its critique the central focus of a memorial piece he authored following Kropotkin's death.[105]

Malatesta's alternative casts any attempt to define human nature by a single essence or "explain everything according to the same principle"[106] as on the one hand an expression of the unrealistic idea that one person could "comprehend the whole truth"[107] of such complex issues, and on the other, patently contradicted by the "terrible and murderous disharmonies"[108] of human history – "violence, wars, carnage (besides the ruthless exploitation of the labour of others) and innumerable tyrannies and slavery".[109] Such a "simplistic notion of human nature" that attempted to reduce all to a single essence or historical drive could not account for

> *"love as well as hate, passions good and bad, the condition of women, ambition, jealousy, racial pride, any sort of relations between individuals and peoples, war and peace, mass submissiveness or rebelliousness, sundry forms of family and society, political regimes, religion, morality, literature, art, science".*[110]

Instead, it should be recognised that human nature is "multi-faceted";[111] that "man is the product of physiological heredity and of his cosmic and social environment";[112] and that "between man and his social environment there is a reciprocal action. Men make society what it is and society makes men what they are, and the result is therefore a kind of vicious circle. To transform society men must be changed, and to transform men, society must be changed".[113] So rather than a single natural cooperative essence, for Malatesta, human nature includes both (at least) a "harsh instinct of wanting to predominate and to profit at the expense of others" as well as "another feeling" an 'anarchist impulse' to resist the imposition of coercive authority, and which draws us closer to each other and fosters cooperation: "the feeling of sympathy, tolerance, of love".[114] This capacity for cooperation exists as but one capacity among many, with its ascendency over other traits by no means assured.

---

[105] Malatesta, [1931] 2014b, p.511.
[106] Ibid., p.514.
[107] Ibid., p.511.
[108] Ibid., p.520.
[109] Malatesta, 1965, p.76.
[110] Malatesta, [1924] 2014b, p.445.
[111] Errico Malatesta, [1884] 2014, 'Program and Organization of the International Working Mens' Association', In: Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, p.41.
[112] Ibid., p.53.
[113] Errico Malatesta, [1899] 2014a, 'An Anarchist Programme', In: Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, p.284.
[114] Malatesta, 1965, p.74.

Like Malatesta, Chomsky's view is of a multi-faceted human nature that is grounded in a biological reality that is itself both changeable and a force for change. The anarchist impulse is not an essence that is the key to our 'true' selves, or which points to our 'natural' disposition, or which is necessarily more influential than other impulses such as those towards competition, domination, and voluntary servitude, or which can serve as a deterministic guide to social reorganisation, or which can be expected to simply flourish 'after the revolution', or indeed which will inevitably lead to revolutionary change. It is but one trait among many present in humans.[115]

The realist anarchist view of human nature then is one which relies on a universal biological base, but which is defined not in relation to one natural 'essence' or single most important element, but instead by its very variety of expression and by its capacity for adaptation.[116] The view is not that humans are mostly good, social, kind, cooperative, rational, etc. with some 'bad' elements, as the standard image of anarchism would suggest. Nor are they essentially selfish, driven by passions, violent, and competitive, with some 'good' elements. Instead, while humans are fundamentally similar in their biological nature and potential, their social and political orientations are so heavily influenced by social conditioning, discursive processes, environment, and existing social and political institutions that, in social and political terms, there is, for all intents and purposes, no clear, definable, essence of human nature. There is no idealised state of nature which we can recover or re-establish. We have changed ourselves and our environment to an almost inconceivable extent, and there is no ability to return to any original, foundational, or essential state.[117] This is far from an essentialist view of a singular and immutable human nature, such as Rousseau's belief that humans had an intrinsic 'natural goodness', or Kropotkin's similar position that evolution had endowed humans with an essential cooperativeness.[118]

The standard image of anarchism's position on the radical role of the state is directly underpinned by this idealistic and 'rosy' view of human nature. If our 'true' nature is benevolent, peaceful, cooperative, etc., and yet corrupted by the state (and other hierarchical institutions) then all that is required to release humans from their shackles and usher in a perfect, harmonious, cooperative,

---

[115] Noam Chomsky, 1998, *On Human Nature,*

[116] This biological essentialism and social anti-essentialism is not Chomsky's position alone, and is advocated by many anarchists, especially those I have designated 'realist', as well as other sympathetic critics of anti-essentialist postmodern perspectives. E.g., for a non-anarchist advocacy of this position see: Jeff Noonan, 2003, *Critical Humanism and the Politics of Difference*, McGill-Queen's University Press; for another anarchist perspective see: Marshall, 1989, pp.140-141.

[117] Malatesta, 2014, pp.110, 473; Chomsky, 2015b, pp.60-61; Murray Bookchin, 2015, *The Next Revolution: Popular Assemblies and the Promise of Direct Democracy*, Verso Books, pp.39-42, 133-134.

[118] Marshall, 1993, p.643.

society is the removal of the barriers to such a condition emerging from our essential nature. However, if human nature is only knowable in extremely limited ways, defined more by its mutability rather than a singular essence - if the numerous and diverse, but not unlimited, ways that humans' potential attributes and characteristics are expressed are inescapably influenced by their environment in a constant process that can never be overcome - then the task for anarchism is not simply the removal of obstacles to reveal our universal social nature. Instead, an anarchist with such a perspective must recognise that there is no singular universal essence to be simply revealed, and that the anti-essentialist position, especially in the context of politics and social change, is largely inarguable – an inescapable biological human nature does not translate to an essential underlying social or political human nature.[119] People are shaped by their environments, they are not all 'good' beneath the corrupting influence of authority, therefore the simple removal of the state is not sufficient to achieve an harmonious, cooperative, society.[120] Social and political institutions must be based not on a determinist and essentialist view of human social nature, but on recognition of the inescapable variety of expression of 'humanness' and, especially, recognition of the effects of social environment on human behaviour, beliefs, and identity.[121]

This view of human nature leads realist anarchism to a particularly pluralistic stance on the process of radical change. Humans are complex and variable and so irreducible to single most important drives, therefore society, radical action, and the alternatives that it advances must be pluralist and multi-polar. As there is no one true human essence such as our creative productivity or our impulse against authority and towards free cooperation, no single axis of struggle will suffice and no single revolutionary rupture such as the overthrow of capitalism or the state can deliver complete emancipation, a conflict free utopia, and the end of the need for radical action. Radical change cannot be seen as an event,[122] but a never-ending process of action against all existing forms of oppression and those yet to emerge.[123] It cannot occur "in one go" against "so many centres of power, so many enemies, so many struggles".[124] Similarly, as there is no true underlying nature it cannot be presumed to 'win out in the end'- no axis or site of struggle is the privileged key to the

[119] Marshall, 1993, p.642-644.
[120] Turcato, 2015, pp.214-215; Malatesta, [1925] 2014a, pp.473-474.
[121] Marshall, 1989, pp.140-141; Murray Bookchin, 1995, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm*, AK Press, pp.30-31.
[122] Malatesta, 1965, pp.156, 162, 171; Gabriel Kuhn, 2009, 'Anarchism, Postmodernity, and Poststructuralism', In: Amster, et al., *Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy*, Routledge, p.18.
[123] Mueller, 2003, p.139; Williams, 2017, p.17; Chomsky in Rai, 2015 pp.179-180; Chomsky in Edgley, 2000, p.73.
[124] Mueller, 2003, p.126.

truth of human history. And so, history and radical struggle cannot be seen as the revelation of our essence through the removal of unnatural fetters,[125] or as proceeding along any deterministic path, or toward any 'natural' destination - "if it is true that the law of Nature is harmony … why has Nature waited for anarchists to be born?".[126]

This pluralism also leads the perspective to a democratic orientation within and between radical groups, between societies and cultures, and before, during and after any radical change. Irreducible diversity and difference must be accepted in society in general, within the global radical milieu, as well as in its local and regional expressions. This means that radical change cannot be conceived as the application of a universal model. In a radical milieu where numerous different sub-projects of action along different axes and at different sites of struggle coexist without any one considered the central or most important aspect, and where this diversity is valued rather than seen as something to be replaced by a centralised 'unity', then interaction and cooperation must occur on the basis of equality and autonomy. If pluralism is to be respected within and between groups, then self-determination and democratic decision-making and dispute resolution mechanisms are in practice unavoidable. Both in the struggle and in any imagined radical alternatives, radical groups must make decisions, accommodate difference and disagreement, and the existence of other groups, struggles, priorities, approaches, and visions, as well as social, cultural and geographical contexts.[127] Likewise, as this pluralism means that no revolution can ever deliver a conflict free society or remove the need for radical vigilance and further action against remaining or emergent forms of oppression, then democratic mechanisms must exist for the mediation of that conflict and to provide avenues to resist and overcome that oppression – "no social life would be possible if we should never take any united action without unanimous agreement".[128]

As I will demonstrate in detail in the next chapter, this stance leads to a realist anarchist conception of the process of radical change that is controversial in anarchism and contradicts the standard academic image. And as we will see, this pluralism is also evident in the realist anarchist conception of the relationship between anarchism and other radical perspectives and movements, and also influences all levels of realist anarchist strategic and tactical theory. Realist anarchism does not

[125] Malatesta, 1965, p.162.
[126] Malatesta, 2014, p.520.
[127] Wayne Price, 2017, 'What Is an Anarchist? Am I an Anarchist?', *anarkismo.net*, [Online] Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/wayne-price-what-is-an-anarchist-am-i-an-anarchist.
[128] Errico Malatesta, 2016, *The Complete Works of Malatesta Vol. Iii: "A Long and Patient Work": The Anarchist Socialism of L'agitazione, 1897–98*, AK Press, p.18.

present its goals as political blueprints to be universally applied, or the process of radical change, or post-revolutionary arrangement, as things that could expect any level of uniformity. Therefore, radical pluralism is also reflected in many of the key theoretical concepts upon which their approach to radical change is founded, such as their vision of the role of the state in this process and the concept of the state that such a role implies, as we will see in later chapters. Before proceeding however, I will first briefly outline the different strategic modes of realist anarchists in different historical and geographical political contexts, and establish the primary context of focus for the remainder of the thesis – post-industrial liberal democracies.

Conclusion

This chapter identified and introduced the tendency in anarchist theory that I refer to as 'realist anarchism'. It has demonstrated that although there are some anarchists and tendencies within anarchism which do exhibit elements of the standard image, there are also influential theorists across anarchism's history who not only defy the standard non-realist representation but also adopt a specifically politically realist stance. This was shown through an explanation of the ways that realist anarchists interpret the positions that are commonly taken to be the central tenets of the realist disposition. Though realist anarchists accept the central tenets of realism such as that politics is fundamentally about power, that conflict and disagreement are ineradicable, etc., they interpret these tenets quite differently than liberal or conservative realists read the same statements. Often these different interpretations reflect the particular context of radical theory and exist as counters to rival radical stances which exemplify idealistic, moralistic, or otherwise non-realist approaches, much like those ascribed to anarchism in its entirety by the standard image.

This explication of realist anarchism as a form of realism also served as an introduction and overview of the kind of radical perspective it is and the general sense in which it defies the standard image. The chapter then turned to the primary focus of the remainder of the thesis, that is explicitly responding to the different elements of the standard image outlined in the previous chapter. This final section of the chapter focused on the issue of the anarchist view of human nature which is the first of the substantive elements of the standard image, and one which underlies the other elements covered in following chapters.

As shown, there is a realist tendency of anarchist thought whose approach to human nature challenges the standard image presented in academic accounts of anarchism as well as many non-

academic and sympathetic overviews of anarchist thought. We have seen that realist anarchists accept only a basic biological sense of human nature as a collection of fundamental qualities, such as that implicit in any political position that is normative in even the simplest sense, and as is also implied by poststructuralist opposition to subordination. This non-essentialist view of human nature leads realist anarchists to conceive of radical social change, or revolution, in a much more nuanced way than the standard image of anarchism represents. The lack of a singular axis of oppression and a sole revolutionary agent equates to framing the idea of revolution as an open-ended, never-ending, process of radicalisation and social transformation.[129] This position accepts the pragmatic importance of pushing conditions through reform towards social goals and positioning for advancement of revolutionary goals;[130] of engaging with the current political institutions with the aim of transforming them,[131] rather than withdrawing from political institutions and maintaining a principled but impotent total rejection of formal political contestation. This conception of human nature and the pluralist perspective it entails leads to a pragmatic and adaptive approach to radical change that operates in different strategic modes in different contexts. It also entails a pluralist stance towards other anarchist perspectives and other orientations within the broader radical milieu, which also feeds into their strategic visions. The following chapter will detail the different strategic modes of realist anarchism and outline the particular contextual focus of the thesis, that is the liberal democratic context and the 'radicalising democracy' strategy that the realist perspective adopts in that context. It will also explain how this pluralist stance positions realist anarchism in relation to other radical perspectives, especially 'agonist' radical democratic theory with which it shares some striking similarities.

[129] Mueller, 2003, p.126.
[130] Malatesta, 1965, pp.81-83.
[131] Shantz, 2010, pp.85-88.

3 Modes of realist anarchism

Introduction

This short chapter will outline the realist anarchist approach to radical change in different contexts and the different strategic modes that it employs, particularly that generally unrecognised approach within liberal democracies which is sometimes referred to as 'radicalising democracy'. It will first explain the contextual stance that derives from the realist perspective and how that relates to the different approaches variously endorsed. Then it will outline how the pluralist radicalism of realist anarchism translates to a pragmatic approach to engagement, alliance, and co-existence with other radical perspectives and its resonances and similarities with radical democratic theory in general and with radical agonism in particular. Finally, it will briefly demonstrate how this stance again reflects the realist disposition in its rejection of idealistic narratives of radical change and models of alternative utopias, and through the centrality in its theoretical and strategic frameworks of the inescapability of pluralism, conflict, and disagreement.

Realist anarchism is a form of realism, and so it acknowledges the importance of contingency and context in political thought,[1] and accepts that 'politics is historically located'.[2] One of the implications of this for realist anarchist strategy is that efforts towards radical change cannot proceed according to a universal program and must conform to particular circumstances. Political organising under a repressive autocratic regime is a quite different prospect than in a liberal democracy, and likewise action in a wealthy post-industrial society presents different challenges to action in a developing economy whether classified in the global capitalist system as subsistence, extractive or industrial. Although there are a number of contemporary geographic and political contexts which might be considered reasonable focuses for a study of realist anarchist radical strategy, this thesis focuses primarily on the context of contemporary post-industrial liberal democracy and where the occasional example is provided from a different context it will be in order to better illustrate a particular point or to show broader applicability or compatibility with other approaches. There are a few reasons for this primary focus on liberal democratic contexts. First is the relative novelty of the realist anarchist strategy in that context compared with others. As with the broad focus on democratic forms of anarchism, the strategies for radical change by non-democratic methods or in non-democratic contexts are better understood and therefore less

[1] Baderin, 2014, p.144; Rossi and Sleat, 2014, p.7.
[2] Geuss, 2008, p.13.

interesting than those by democratic means in democratic systems. The second and arguably more consequential reason for a focus primarily on liberal democracies is the threat of climate change, which may warrant a brief explanation.

One of the presumptions underpinning this thesis is that radical strategy - that is, political theory that openly aims to contribute to efforts towards transformation of fundamental elements of contemporary society and seek methods and strategies for doing so - should be seen as serious and important tasks for political theory as a discipline. This position is arguably defensible in the abstract for a variety of reasons, but in the context of looming, potentially catastrophic, climate change the argument hardly needs lengthy explication. If some of the most reliably non-alarmist and realistic scholars[3] argue that a radical transformation of social and economic systems is required to avoid catastrophic climate change and potential civilisational collapse, then it is incumbent upon political theorists to take the threat seriously and earnestly engage with the attendant challenges of radical political transformation.

Therefore, as one of the underlying rationales for a focus on strategy in the first place is that pressing challenge of climate change and the political upheaval that it is set to deliver one way or another, a focus on strategy within wealthy post-industrial liberal democracies is also defensible for the reason that such societies are generally considered those which are primarily responsible for the current dire environmental situation and also the best placed to afford the costs (whatever forms or amount they might be). And so, if it is true that transformation on the level of revolutionary change is necessary, and that the primary drivers, of that need - historically and systemically - are the actions of wealthy liberal democratic states, then regardless of what can or does happen in other contexts, radical change that does not in some ways extend into the core economies of wealthy post-industrial liberal democracies will likely have little chance in the long run of delivering the transformative outcomes required to avert long-term crisis and potential collapse.[4] This is not to suggest of course that strategy designed for other contexts is not meaningful or interesting, or that outcomes and actions in developing or non-liberal societies are

[3] e.g., the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the international climate research clearing house is notoriously conservative in its estimates as it is a very large organisation with long turnaround times and a consensus process that tend towards the downplaying of extreme potentials. Nonetheless the IPCC now claims that we need to stop economic growth to stop climate change, which by any conceivable path would constitute a revolutionary change to economics and therefore politics and society in general, see: IPCC, 2022, *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA.

[4] Christian Parenti, 2011, *Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence*, Nation books.

not important for addressing the threat of climate change, only that it is a reasonable and defensible focus for this thesis. To be clear however this is not intended as a contribution to environmental political theory and the thesis will not consider at length the issue of climate change except to list it among the material realities that political realists should be concerned with. Indeed, it is based on the acceptance that climate change and environmental issues more broadly are serious enough to inform all contemporary political theory whether or not it be explicitly focused on the climate threat.

Strategy and Context

Realist anarchist strategy also of course has had differing implications in different time periods. For instance, the political context in the early European anarchist movement was of course quite different to that of the post-World War period, with both the anarchist movement and the state taking very different forms in the different eras. Anarchism was a mass organised movement in the 19th century classical era, with its influence usually seen as reaching its peak in the Spanish Revolution and subsequent Civil War in 1936. The defeat of Republican Spain and its allied anarchist movement by Spanish fascism under Franco, the broader European rise of fascism, and the Second World War that followed, as well as a range of other factors including the continued rise of Stalinism in the global left, practically destroyed anarchism as a mass organised movement.[5] In addition to the decline of anarchism itself, the remaining Western anarchists faced a very different political context and a very different state in the post-war context. The state faced by classical anarchism was less democratic and so less concerned with courting the approval of their populations with social welfare systems; they were perhaps more prone to using force for social control and yet comparatively less powerful than the more heavily militarised and technologically advanced states (including 'superpowers') that populated the post-war liberal democratic landscape. Post-war Western anarchists like Noam Chomsky, Murray Bookchin, and Colin Ward (and others drawn on comparatively less in this thesis, such as Paul Goodman and Herbert Read) responded to this very different context by developing anarchist strategy that attempted to respond to this changed reality. Rather than aiming for violent upheaval and insurrectionary revolution, the 'New Anarchism' of this era turned more towards non-violent strategies that attempt to continue to work towards anarchist goals, including a stateless, self-organised society, within the (increasingly obviously non-revolutionary) context of post-war liberal democratic welfare states.[6]

[5] Marshall 2010, p.539; Woodcock 1962 p.443. Hobsbawm, 1999, p.82.
[6] Benjamin J Pauli, 2015b, 'The New Anarchism in Britain and the Us: Towards a Richer Understanding of Post-War Anarchist Thought', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, vol:20, (2).

In the early post-war period anarchists were also faced with a dramatic decline in influence in the global organised labour movement and increasingly focused on other areas of organisation that had always been aspects of anarchism, but which had been deemphasised in the Classical era. These included struggles against non-class based social injustice, community organising, and prefigurative experimentation in anarchist spaces and organisations outside of the labour sphere. As the post-war international order began to disintegrate in the following decades with the concomitant decline in the industrial base and influence of the Western organised proletariat, anarchism continued to grow in primarily non-labour-based areas and has been influential in the history of feminism, radical environmentalism, and other 'New Social Movements', and was the primary organisational orientation in the late 20th century 'alter-globalisation movement'. In this context some theorists developed a long-term strategic vision that seeks to work towards radical transformation within the liberal state and democratic systems.[7]

Radicalising Democracy

Following the occasional usage by some anarchists from this era that I have included as realists, such as Noam Chomsky and Murray Bookchin,[8] I refer to this broad approach to radical change within liberal democracies as 'radicalising democracy', and the remaining chapters of the thesis will mostly consist of explication of this strategy, which will demonstrate the falsity of the two most enduring elements of the standard image of anarchism: its attitude to the state and to radical change. The term 'radicalising democracy' and related terms such as radical democracy are of course also used by other radical perspectives. It has a long history on the radical left as a broad descriptor for democratic models that are in some way 'more democratic' than liberal representative democracy, as well as a label for radical leftist transformational goals that aims to avoid the negative associations of terms such as socialism and communism. Usages have varied, but it is most often used to refer to the classic leftist model of federated council democracy. So, for many anarchists and socialists 'radical democracy' serves as an imprecise collective label for democratic systems implemented at local levels such as workplaces and/or communities, and organised according to the principles of direct, participatory, or other more-than-liberal democratic

[7] Graham, 2009, pp.ix-x; Kinna, 2005, p.142-143.
[8] Noam Chomsky, 1996b, *Radical Democracy: Noam Chomsky Interviewed by John Nichols,* Capital Times; Murray Bookchin, 1985, *Radicalizing Democracy,* Kick It Over; Murray Bookchin and Dave Foreman, 1991, *Defending the Earth: Debate between Murray Bookchin and Dave Foreman*, Black Rose Books, p.86.

models.[9] This is the basic federated council model that is traditionally favoured in radical theory and is widely accepted as the natural democratic form that radicals tend towards. It was, for instance, the originally articulated model of the Leninist Soviet (trans: council) system, was the primary focus of the early twentieth century ultra-left council communists, and was the organisational form aimed at by Antonio Gramsci's idiosyncratic synthesis of ultra-left and vanguardist strategy.[10] It is also the practically ubiquitous model advocated by anarchists, since the first explicit form of anarchism – Proudhon's 'mutualism' (a market form of anarchism) – to the early 20th century anarcho-syndicalists, the situationist 'New Left' of the mid 20th century, Murray Bookchin's eco-anarchism and libertarian municipalism, and contemporary movements such as OWS and its descendants, and revolutionary enclaves such as those in the Syrian civil war.[11] And it is also the default model for contemporary radicals who are not explicitly anarchist.[12] Chomsky sees it as a common element not only in anarchism and left-communism, but also in G.D.H. Cole's 'guild socialism', and the work of John Dewey and Bertrand Russell.[13] Indeed, Hannah Arendt claims that it belongs to no particular tradition as it re-emerges again and again throughout history in disparate and unconnected revolutionary movements who "spontaneously organised themselves"[14] into radical democratic councils. And this perspective is affirmed in studies of historical (including pre-modern) revolts and uprisings.[15] These radical democratic council models, especially in the anarchist tradition, are also usually seen as a system where decision-making is devolved to the lowest level possible and where decisions made at local levels are transmitted to higher levels of political organisation through mandated and recallable delegate representation.[16] In the most basic and long-used sense then, 'radical democracy' is a collective name for the forms of democracy (usually a federated council-model) favoured by radicals.

---

[9] Shmuel Lederman, 2019, *Hannah Arendt and Participatory Democracy: A People's Utopia*, Springer International Publishing, pp.173-180. See, e.g.: Bookchin, 1985; Chomsky, 1996b; Gustavo Esteva, 2007, 'Oaxaca: The Path of Radical Democracy'*, Socialism and Democracy*, vol:21, (2); Simin Fadaee and Camilla Brancolini, 2019, 'From National Liberation to Radical Democracy: Exploring the Shift in the Kurdish Liberation Movement in Turkey'*, Ethnicities*, vol:19, (5).

[10] Boggs, 1995, pp.47-55.

[11] See: Marshall, 1993, pp.7, 552; Ruth Kinna, 2012b, *Anarchism: A Beginner's Guide*, Oneworld Publications, p.2.

[12] See: Chris Dixon, 2014, *Another Politics: Talking across Today's Transformative Movements*, Univ of California Press, pp.85-88, 205.

[13] Chomsky, 1996a, p.76.

[14] Hannah Arendt, 1965, *On Revolution*, Viking Press, p.265.

[15] Yves Frémion, 2002, *The Orgasms of History : 3000 Years of Spontaneous Insurrection* AK Press.

[16] Marshall, 1993, pp.7, 552; Kinna, 2012a, p.102; Chomsky, 2005a**,** pp.126, 133.

Around the end of the Cold War, the term was used and advocated by some as an alternate to 'socialism' as label for 'the left'.[17] This was essentially a form of 'rebranding' of radical left politics in a way that sought distance from the negative associations and apparent failures of existing authoritarian and social democratic socialist projects.[18] This re-labelling also recast the focus of radical politics as democratic in nature, and gave a name to an emerging leftist theoretical project that sought to address the apparent inadequacy of orthodox Marxism or mainstream social democracy to explain or effectively respond to the suite of challenges the political left faced by mid-late 20th century, sometimes referred to as the 'crisis of socialism'.[19] Radical democracy is a collective name for a politics that is radical, but determinately non-authoritarian and opposed to the legacy of 'actually-existing'[20] socialist regimes. But while it is democratic it is not satisfied with liberal expression of democracy or the reformist social democratic project, and aims still for the traditional uncompromised goals of radical transformation of the state and the abolition of capitalism, but also feminist, anti-racist, anti-colonial, environmentalist, and other radical projects of social transformation. And as the term 'socialism' is unavoidably associated with the authoritarian socialist experiments of the 20th century, and with a radical approach that prioritises economic analyses and class-based politics, 'radical democracy' can better function as a broad descriptor for the heterogeneous mix of radical leftist theories and social movements that, since at least the late 20th century, have turned decisively towards anti-authoritarian and democratic methods and ends.

It is also of course used in deliberative, autonomist, and agonist strains of radical democratic theory, especially the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, who also frequently use the term 'radicalising democracy' to refer to the process of radical transformation within contemporary liberal democracies.[21] These convergences in terminology are not entirely coincidental and do reflect some parallels, resonances, and complementarities. Noting the similarities between the

[17] Stanley Aronowitz, 1993, 'The Situation of the Left in the United States', *Socialist Review*, vol:23, (3), pp.26, 43-44; Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, 2001, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, Verso, pp.xiii-ix, 176-179; Chantal Mouffe, 1993, *The Return of the Political*, Verso, p.10.
[18] Mouffe, 1993, p.9.
[19] Moya Lloyd and Adrian Little, 2008, 'Introduction', In: Little and Lloyd, *The Politics of Radical Democracy*, Edinburgh University Press, p.1; Sarah S. Amsler, 2015, *The Education of Radical Democracy*, Taylor and Francis, p.77.
[20] The term 'actually-existing' is used to denote the practical as opposed to purely theoretical expression of a theory or ideology. It recalls the phrase 'actually-existing socialism', which was a device used to compare socialist societies with socialist theory in 20th century Marxist thought. I borrow this phrase from Barry Hindess. See: Hindess, 2008.
[21] Mouffe, 2018, p.69; Mouffe, 1993, p.103.

realist anarchist perspective and the 'radical agonism' of Laclau and Mouffe (in addition to the resonances between the realist anarchist approach and such strategies as Gorz's 'non-reformist reforms' and Öcalan's democratic confederalism) is important here for a few reasons.

The first is to explain and further contextualise the aptness of some of the terminology of radical democratic theory in the explication of the process of radical change advocated by realist anarchists in liberal democracies. Second is the fact that the aptness of the terminology indeed reflects a deeper resonance and similarity between the approaches, and as I will argue below there are sound politically realist reasons to resist sectarian isolation in radical theory, especially between those whose explicit pluralism arguably demands as much. Finally, the unrecognised nature of realist anarchism alone reflects a lacuna in radical democratic theory regarding the scope of the field. Acknowledging the similarities between the perspectives not only helps to situate and understand both the unrecognised realist anarchism and the notoriously misinterpretable radical agonist position, but it also contributes to appreciation of the spectrum of existing democratic radicalism more broadly. The following section will outline some of the resonances, similarities and differences between anarchism and radical democratic theory broadly, and then radical agonism and realist anarchism specifically.

Anarchism and Radical Democratic Theory

Anarchism's resurgence in radical activism and street politics, like the emergence of radical democratic theory, is largely a result of the 20th century 'crisis of socialism'.[22] And, in many ways, the aims, concerns, and methods of radical democrats are mirrored in the rise of anarchism at the grassroots level of radical politics and social movements. There has been an increasingly prevalent anarchistic tendency in western radical politics since the New Left's rejection of the Soviet Union's authoritarian Marxist-Leninism and its centralised, hierarchical organisational model during the 1960's. In the following decades, anarchism's wide-ranging critique of authority fostered its spread through the environmental, feminist, anti-nuclear, anti-apartheid, anti-war, and anti-capitalist movements.[23] When authoritarian communism collapsed in the late twentieth century, "anarchism's major competitor for a theory of organisation imploded".[24] As capitalism entered its triumphalist 'neoliberal globalisation' phase the essentially pluralistic nature of anarchistic

[22] Bray, 2013, p.4; Graeber and Grubačić, 2004.
[23] Epstein, 2001, pp.6-7; Adams, 1993, pp.166-167.
[24] Todd Gitlin, 2011, 'The Left Declares Its Independence' *The New York Times*, 2011-10-09 p.2.

organising provided a perfect vehicle to unify the diverse groups that made up the anti/alter-globalisation 'movement of movements' (AGM) which attempted to resist the neoliberal 'reform' agenda.[25] The development of the Internet allowed large-scale organisation of the AGM along essentially anarchist lines, further "breathing life into anarchist philosophy"[26] and entrenching anarchism as the primary organisational model for the radical sub-culture that gave rise to 'Occupy Wall Street' (OWS) and related movements of radical democratic assembly.[27] The resurgence of anarchism in the grassroots has been followed by a resurgence in academic anarchist theory and anarchist studies.[28] However, while there has been some recent engagement with contemporary anarchism and anarchistic street politics within some strains of radical democratic theory,[29] such an engagement is absent from radical agonism,[30] where the standard image of anarchism as universally committed to 'strategies of withdrawal' is unquestioningly maintained.[31]

The broad field of radical democratic theory and activism has much in common with the diverse milieu of modern and contemporary anarchism. Both the radical democratic and anarchist tendencies in radical leftist politics emerged in response to the mid-20th century 'crisis of socialism' and each respond to elements of this crisis in ways that while sometimes subtly different, are more often strikingly similar. Anarchism and radical democratic theory share remarkably similar positions on issues such as class and 'identity politics' economic and historical determinism, pluralism in society broadly and in the radical milieu, and democracy – both the radical council model and the radical potentials within liberalism. These shared positions are partly due to their similar underlying principles, such as their similar anti-essentialist view of human nature. But it is also partly due to the fact that they both respond to perceived weaknesses in the dominant 20th century Marxist strains of radicalism.[32] Both reject class essentialism, determinism, and the idea of

[25] Todd May, 2010, 'Introduction', In: Jun, *New Perspectives on Anarchism*, Lexington Books, p.1; Critchley, 2013, p.2.
[26] Alasdair Roberts, 2012, 'Why the Occupy Movement Failed'*, Public Administration Review*, vol:72, (5), p.756.
[27] Such as, for e.g.: the 'Arab Spring', the Spanish 'Indignados', and the French 'Nuit Debout' movements. See: Evren, 2011, p.1; Randall Amster, 2012, *Anarchism Today*, Praeger, p.xxii.
[28] See, e.g.: Amster, et al., 2009; Ruth Kinna, 2012c, *The Continuum Companion to Anarchism*, Continuum.
[29] Alexandros Kioupkiolis and Giorgos Katsambekis, 2014, *Radical Democracy and Collective Movements Today the Biopolitics of the Multitude Versus the Hegemony of the People*, Ashgate Publishing Ltd; Judith Butler, 2015, *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, Harvard University Press.
[30] The only explicit engagement with anarchism by an agonist radical democrat I have been able to find is Judith Butler's short article considering Israeli anarchists. However, that article is in the context of a collection considering the contemporary relevance of anarchism, and Butler does not relate her comments to the radical democratic discourse. See: Judith Butler, 2013, 'Palestine, State Politics and the Anarchist Impasse', In: Critchley, et al., *The Anarchist Turn*, Pluto Press.
[31] Chantal Mouffe, 2013, *Agonistics : Thinking the World Politically*, Verso, pp.77, 135; Mouffe, 2018, p.46.
[32] Though of course anarchist responses to 20th century trends continues the responses that anarchism had already developed many much earlier and indeed that fact itself is partly responsible for the resurgence of anarchism since the crisis began.

a sudden total revolution which overturns all oppression and creates a fully reconciled society. They are instead perspectives that acknowledge the irreducible pluralism in society and in radical struggles and so abandon the fantasy of complete final emancipatory rupture which ends social conflict, and advocate radical action against multiple axes of subjugation, domination, and oppression, in a never-ending, inexhaustible process. They privilege human agency and historical contingency rather than any teleological schema, and reject both authoritarianism and social democratic reformist capitulation, as well as the simplistic binary of reform or revolution for a long-term gradual approach that nonetheless retains an undiminished commitment to genuinely radical structural transformation including, but not limited to, the implementation of radical democratic forms such as the federated council model.[33]

The landscape of radical democracy then is complicated and heterogeneous - there is no unified theory but a spectrum of positions represented by a variety of theorists and activists. The academic discourse of radical democratic theory was initiated in 1985 by Laclau and Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*[34] (HSS) in an attempt to create a 'post-Marxist' political theory combining poststructuralist philosophy with leftist politics.[35] In HSS and subsequent works[36] Laclau and Mouffe advocate a radical politics they label 'agonistics' or 'agonism'[37] which emphasises conflict and the "struggle for hegemony"[38] within liberal democracy. However, agonistic radical democratic theory cannot be reduced to the contributions of Laclau and Mouffe or those that they have inspired. Other thinkers who adopt similarly agonistic approaches within radical democratic theory include: Jacques Rancière, Sheldon Wolin, Bonnie Honig, Claude Lefort, Judith Butler, and William E. Connolly.[39]

Radical Agonism and Realist Anarchism

[33] Davide Turcato, 2019, 'Anarchist Communism', In: Levy and Adams, *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, Springer.
[34] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, 1985, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, Verso.
[35] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, 1987, 'Post-Marxism without Apologies', *New left review*, (166); Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, pp.ix-xi.
[36] E.g.: Ernesto Laclau, 1994, *The Making of Political Identities*, Verso; Ernesto Laclau, 2005, *On Populist Reason*, Verso; Mouffe, 1993; Chantal Mouffe, 2000, *The Democratic Paradox*, Verso; Chantal Mouffe, 2005, *On the Political*, Routledge; Mouffe, 2013.
[37] Mouffe, 2013.
[38] Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p. 49.
[39] Lloyd and Little, 2008, p.4.

Most of these similarities, resonances, and engagements between radical democracy and anarchism generally also apply to the realist strain. Realist anarchists, like most other anarchists, also reject class-essentialism and economic determinism, and recognise multiple axes of oppression against which radical politics must act. Realist anarchism recognises the importance of cultural difference and the role of emotions in human life and is therefore a progressively pluralist radicalism that seeks to uncover all forms of exclusion and oppression, aims to accept all forms of social difference, and extends this pluralist outlook to ideological difference in radical movements. It is also, like most forms of anarchism, committed to the deepening and extension of democracy, and the implementation of democratic self-management in areas where applicable, especially through variations on the federated council model of organisation at the local, workplace, and other levels. Some realist anarchists, like agonists, also see some potential for the rehabilitation of the values at the heart of liberalism, in their reformation in a libertarian-socialist and radical democratic form.[40]

There are also some similarities that exist between agonists and some other anarchists, but are particularly pronounced in the realist strain. For example, many strains of anarchism from across its history have a complex view of human nature that recognises social influence on the construction of identity, and the validity of multiple axes of radical action, and therefore also accept the importance of identity politics and the unending nature of struggle.[41] However, these positions have become more important and emphasised in later eras of anarchism and are central to the realist strain. There are, however, in addition to these similarities, also some resonances that are peculiar to the realist strain. One of the elements of realist anarchism that distinguishes it from other forms of anarchism is its pragmatic approach to representative democracy. While realist anarchists have, like other anarchists, a predilection for the federated, direct, council model of democratic organisation, they differ from many strains, and the standard image, in that they pragmatically accept the need to engage with current representative forms in order to achieve anarchist ends, and recognise the relative validity of representation in some contexts. It is common in anarchism to reject any involvement with representative politics, including abstaining from voting, and dismissing out of hand the idea of anarchists standing in elections.[42] Realist anarchists however support voting in elections when abstaining might allow policies with a relatively negative

[40] Chomsky, 2005a, p.122-123; Rudolf Rocker, [1949] 1973, *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*, Freedom Press, p.5; Ward, 2004, p.1.
[41] Marshall, 1989, pp.139-146.
[42] Colin Ward, 1987, 'The Case against Voting'*, Freedom*, vol:48, (6); Elisée Reclus, 1913, 'Why Anarchists Don't Vote'*, Mother Earth*, vol:8, (5).

impact on social exclusion, suffering, and oppression;[43] and even support standing as candidates in representative electoral politics in certain contexts, such as local municipal elections,[44] but also in some other settings.[45] And while some advocate a future anarchist society of purely localised direct democracy, realist anarchists accept the continuing need for some forms of centralised representational coordination.[46] Some suggest that this basic model could extend to the global level. Thomas Giovanni of the US 'Black Rose/Rosa Negra Federation' lays out this model, based on neighbourhood assemblies as the base level:

> *Clusters of neighbourhoods might send their mandated delegates with specific votes on each issue to do the same for sub-regional assemblies, regional assemblies and a global assembly. If each of those four levels of directly democratic assemblies were around 300 people, you could have directly democratic self-governance of 8.1 billion people.*[47]

The greatest difference of realist anarchism compared to all other forms of anarchism is its complex view of the state and acceptance of its relatively positive aspects. This nuanced view of the state and its radical use is also the basis for another similarity between radical democratic agonism and realist anarchism. Both are 'black sheep' in their respective theoretical families. Agonism is one of a collection of positions that seeks to accommodate NSMs in radical politics, but while it endorses the importance of NSMs, civil society, and radical action outside of the state, etc., it is accused of statism, conservatism, and capitulation on radical values for its insistence on the continued importance of the state in a reformed and renovated radical politics.[48] Likewise, realist anarchism, while retaining its opposition to the state, is also denounced as statist, reformist, and 'not-really-anarchism' for its tentative and pragmatic consideration of engagement with state institutions in the effort to improve or replace them in line with anarchist goals.[49] Both are pragmatic realist perspectives in a radical milieu dominated by purist idealism; both accept the need

---

[43] Gordon, 2008, p.97; Ryan Conrad, 2016, 'I'm an Anarchist and I Vote', *Truthout* ; Chomsky, 2005a, p.241; Noam Chomsky and John Halle, 2016, 'An Eight-Point Brief for Lev (Lesser-Evil Voting)', [Online] Available from: https://chomsky.info/an-eight-point-brief-for-lev-lesser-evil-voting/.

[44] This approach is central to Bookchin's libertarian municipalism but is also common in other approaches across anarchist history. See: Biehl, 2015, p.240-241.

[45] Some anarchists for instance have run in provincial or state-level elections as a propaganda exercise- that is as a counter-hegemonic effort to spread anarchist ideas without expectation of winning, or intention to assume office if somehow elected. For example, Australian anarchist Joe Toscano has stood in several elections with slogans such as 'Don't vote' and 'direct democracy not parliamentary rule'. See: Suzanne Carbone, 2010, 'He Never Votes but Wants You to Vote for Him' *The Age*, July 27.

[46] Malatesta, [1884] 2014 p.63; Errico Malatesta, [1923] 2014, 'Anarchists' Line within the Trade Union Movement', In: Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, p.439; Chomsky, 2005a, p.137; Bookchin, [1998] 2015, p.63-64.

[47] Thomas Giovanni, 2017b, 'Who Are the Anarchists and What Is Anarchism?', *Black Rose Blog*, [Online] Available from: https://blackrosefed.org/who-are-the-anarchists-and-what-is-anarchism/.

[48] Andrew Robinson and Simon Tormey, 2008, 'Is 'Another World' Possible?: Laclau, Mouffe and Social Movements', In: Little, *The Politics of Radical Democracy*, Edinburgh University Press, p.133.

[49] Black, 2012a, p.61.; Zerzan, 2002.

for *some* engagement with the currently dominant form of political organisation, the state, in order to effectively pursue (even ultimately anti-state) radical objectives. One of the outcomes of this approach to the state in both agonism and realist anarchism is a similar nuanced approach to radical social change – reform, revolution, and radicalisation – which is the focus of the following section.

There are of course many similarities between the two perspectives due to their realist stance.[50] Leading radical democratic agonist theorist Chantal Mouffe is well known for advancing an approach to radical politics with centres the 'ineradicability of conflict' in analysis and strategy. She has written several books advocating a conflict-centred approach through concepts such as 'the political' and 'agonistics'.[51] And in this focus on conflict and 'the political', she has, like many other contemporary realists, targeted John Rawls specifically for his applied-ethics approach which not only displaces politics, but amounts to a 'political philosophy without politics'.[52] However, like realist anarchism, Mouffe's agonism also generally conforms to the other central tenets of realism outlined in chapter two. She highlights, for instance, the role of 'passions' in collective identity formation and radical democratic politics[53]. Since *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*[54] her work has been based on a focus on power and hegemony, with a concomitant advocacy of engagement with existing institutions for the achievement of radical goals.[55] Her agonism is also an openly partisan[56] perspective which developed, in part, in opposition to movements towards neutral, non-partisan political theories such as Anthony Giddens' 'Third Way' that advocated a dissolution of left/right divides in political thinking.[57] Her most recent work, *For a Left Populism*,[58] is also an openly partisan, leftist, intervention.[59] And Mouffe recognises that politics is inescapably embedded in contingent historical, geographical and cultural contexts and her left populist, agonist, project of radical democratisation is conceived as taking various different forms, including '"ecosocialism', 'associative democracy' or 'participatory democracy"' depending on circumstance.[60]

[50] Though she does not self-describe by that label, Mouffe's radical agonism is often recognised as realist. See, e.g.: Bell, 2017., pp.3, 7-8; Bavister-Gould, 2013., p.609.; Galston, 2010., p.386., Finlayson, 2017 p.267.
[51] Mouffe, 1993; 2000; 2005; 2013.
[52] Mouffe, 1993, pp.41-57.
[53] Mouffe, 2005, pp.6, 24, 120.
[54] Laclau & Mouffe, 1985.
[55] E.g. Chantal Mouffe, 2009, 'The Importance of Engaging the State', In: J., P., *What Is Radical Politics Today?,* Palgrave Macmillan.
[56] Mouffe, 1993, p.10.
[57] Mouffe, 2000, pp.108-112.
[58] Mouffe, 2018.
[59] Ibid., p.33
[60] Ibid., p.141.

In terms of practical outcomes for radical action the most important aspect of compatibility between radical agonism and realist anarchism is the approach they advocate for pursuing radical social change in contemporary democratic societies.[61] Due to their recognition of the various axes of oppression and exclusion, and subsequent acceptance of the unending nature of radical struggle, and their recognition of the unavoidability of meaningfully addressing the issue of the role of the state in radical politics, both radical agonism and realist anarchism reject simplistic revolutionary visions that seek to ignore the state, or sweep it and all other oppressive institutions away in a sudden cataclysmic revolutionary event. Instead, they attempt to chart a path between the conceptual poles of ineffectual, status quo supporting reform, and sudden, total social and political revolution.[62] While they are far from the first to argue that revolution is a process,[63] radical agonists and realist anarchists make this point central, and focus primarily on what this means for advancing towards radical goals in particular contexts, notably modern, 'post-industrial', liberal democracies.

This process is a complicated and ambitious, long-term vision of radical change that encompasses democratisation, radicalisation, and radical democratisation of workplaces and communities, civil society, the economy, the state, and all social relations. It includes action by and within traditional vehicles for radical struggle such as unions, revolutionary parties, and social movements, as well as 'New' (and 'Newest')[64] Social Movements, activist groups, community organisations, prefigurative radical projects, and political parties. It is a vision that is in practice impossible to fully detail, however the rest of this thesis will explain the key aspects of the realist anarchist view of this process. The following chapter will outline this approach with reference to their conceptions of reform and revolution. However, the terms radicalisation and democratisation (and their many variations, such as 'democratisation', 'democratic radicalisation', and 'radicalisation of democracy') will also be employed, as once the particular conceptions of reform and revolution are broadly established, these radical democratic terms are arguably more expressive of the actual processes that comprise the realist anarchist approach to radical change in liberal democracies. That is,

---

[61] The fact that their strategies are much the same is recognised, in passing, both by anarchists who support and oppose the approach. See: Simon Springer, 2016, *The Anarchist Roots of Geography: Toward Spatial Emancipation*, University of Minnesota Press, p. 103; Bob Black, 2010, 'Nightmares of Reason', *CAL Press*, [Online] Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/bob-black-nightmares-of-reason.pdf, p.264.

[62] Mouffe, 1993, p.103; Mouffe, 2018, p.45-46; Malatesta, [1925] 2014a.

[63] Elisée Reclus, 2005, 'Evolution and Revolution [1891]', In: Graham, *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas*, Vol: 1, Black Rose; Charles Tilly, 1978, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Addison-Wesley Publishing; James DeFronzo, 2007, *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements*, Westview Press, p.8; Adham Hamed, 2014, *Revolution as a Process: The Case of the Egyptian Uprising*, Wiener Verlag für Sozialforschung.

[64] Richard Day, 2011, 'Hegemony, Affinity and the Newest Social Movements', In: Rousselle and Evren, *Post-Anarchism: A Reader*, Pluto Press; Marina Sitrin, 2019, 'Anarchism and the Newest Social Movements', In: Levy and Adams, *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, Springer International Publishing.

radicalisation and democratisation are particularly apt terms to describe the radical structural reforms that realist anarchists advocate.

The usefulness of the terminology of radical democratic theory however is not only due to the fact that it well describes the processes advocated by realist anarchists despite deriving mostly from another radical perspective, but is in part precisely because of the fact that they are not the usual terms used within anarchism. Though sectarianism and bitter disagreement is the norm between radical ideologies there is value in openly acknowledging resonances and similarities between different perspectives. For one, without such acknowledgement, understandings of the scope and spectrum of theoretical traditions can be problematically limited. In this instance the scholarly accounts of the broad field of radical democratic theory are limited in their representation of the scope of the field by the existence of a form of anarchism with significant parallels and complementarities with radical democratic theory generally and specifically with a central and influential form. Beyond this it limits potentially fruitful interactions in theory and practice and continues the tendency for sectarian theoretical 'silos' into, ironically, radical theory founded on a valorisation of pluralism. Therefore, this thesis will employ some of the terminology of radical democratic theory, especially where particularly relevant such as in relation to the process of radical change and the role of the state in the process, and will acknowledge areas where similarities and complementarities are particularly pronounced. A full account of such resonances however is beyond the scope of the current study.

Before, During, and After the Revolution

Part of the benefit of terminology that is used occasionally within realist anarchism but more prevalently by other radical perspectives is that it serves as a constant reminder of the extent of embeddedness of pluralism within the tendency. Realist anarchism is not only a perspective that values social pluralism in general but one which also explicitly values diversity and difference in the radical milieu. Although there are many historical and enduring sectarian divides in anarchism there is also a tendency – or anti-'school' – referred to as 'anarchism without adjectives'.[65] This position is based on an agnosticism regarding various ongoing debates within anarchism regarding the values and strategies which should orient anarchists in different phases of social change. The simplistic conceptual division between "before, during, and after the revolution" is sometimes

[65] Kinna 2005, p.15; Marshall p.393, 349; Malatesta 2014, p.233.

used by anarchists to discuss the broad phases of radical change.[66] Anarchists-without-adjectives argue that anarchists should not aim for unity or homogenisation in any of these phases – that social upheaval is always constituted by multiple factions; that, even in the most optimistic traditional revolutionary scenario with the overthrow of the state and expropriation of the means of production, these various factions will continue to exist and experimentation with systems and organisational forms should be accepted and encouraged; and that therefore it is pointless to attempt to abstractly determine in advance of action exactly which organisational, strategic, and alternative social models should constitute an anarchist society.[67] Malatesta, who was among the first to advocate this perspective, also extended its logic beyond anarchism to include other radical perspectives.[68]

The realist anarchist approach then is that of advocating its perspective within a broader radical project of democratisation and radicalisation without expectation of convincing all other radicals. 'Before' any political and social upheaval with revolutionary potential, realist anarchists expect to work within a broader radical milieu towards broadly shared radical goals, and to advocate and demonstrate their perspective to other radicals. They also orient towards the government of the day in a stance of opposition while still seeking to extract from whatever regime exists any reforms and improvements possible. During revolutionary change they similarly expect to exist within a heterogenous milieu without expectation of imposing their perspective on others and with a readiness to defend against such attempts at 'unity'. In the wake of radical change they presume that a new system of political organisation will require extensive social, economic, and political experimentation to develop effective alternative models. And, in an explicit recognition of the cyclic nature of social change and the perpetual need for radical vigilance, realist anarchists expect that any revolution will be imperfect. As anarchists do not wish to impose their system on the people but for "people [to] emancipate themselves",[69] and radicals (let alone 'the people') are not all anarchists, then for the foreseeable future revolutions will not be anarchist. So, realist anarchists like Malatesta see themselves 'after the revolution' as continuing to advocate their perspectives within a pluralist context through gradual means, and reorienting themselves towards whatever

[66] Malatesta, [1925] 2014a, p.471; Bookchin, [1998] 2015, p.55.
[67] Kinna, 2012c, p.329; Tarrida del Marmol, 1890, 'Anarchism without Adjectives', *La Révolte* 3(51), [Online] Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/fernando-tarrida-del-marmol-anarchism-without-adjectives.
[68] Malatesta, [1925] 2014a, p.472.
[69] Malatesta, [1897] 2014b, p.243.

new governance regime prevails in a posture of opposition in a new phase of 'before' the next cycle of revolutionary change.[70]

Importantly then, realist anarchists do not see 'the revolution' as the application of a vision that is designed and implemented by realist anarchists, which wins the battle of radical ideas and becomes the singular approach. In short, the revolution that realist anarchists imagine is not (at least not entirely) their own – it assumes the existence of a diverse project of radical action. This radical transformation is not simply the 'anarchisation' of society according to realist strategy, but a broad project of democratic radicalism that realist anarchists see themselves as existing within. This pluralist radicalism again reflects the underlying political realist orientation of this perspective. Their strategies do not assume ideal conditions or uniform movements, and they not only make space for imperfection and non-ideal outcomes but presume elements of failure and build these expectations into their strategies.

Though it has not received extensive consideration in recent realist debates, this perspective on failure has been argued as one of the salient facts that realists should recognise among the important aspects of political reality to take account of in political theory. Drawing on complexity theory, which holds that failure is an ever-present element of planning in complex systems, Adrian Little argues that the expectation of at least partial failure should be incorporated into the conceptions of 'the real' held by political realists.[71] Among anarchists of a realist disposition it is again Malatesta who particularly emphasises this perspective in his 'gradualist' approach to radical change. Malatesta's pessimism does not of course derive from the much later developed field of modern complexity theory, nor from a mere appreciation of the growing power of the modern state, but instead from a recognition of a seemingly paradoxical tension between anarchist goals and the particular challenges their realisation face. As explained above in relation to pluralist radicalism, Malatesta did not advocate for the emancipation of the people but for "the people to emancipate themselves",[72] therefore an anarchist revolution cannot prevail unless 'the people' are anarchists. However, most people are not anarchists and do not have the opportunity in the political context of the state and the economic context of capitalism to undergo the education by experience of anarchistic forms of social and political organisation on which the development of an anarchist consciousness seems to rely. It seemed then, to Malatesta, that a successful anarchist

[70] Malatesta [1925] 2014, pp.472-474; Mueller, 2003, p.139; Williams, 2017, p.17; Chomsky in Rai, 2015, pp.179-180; Chomsky in Edgley, 2000, p.73.
[71] Little, et al., 2015, pp.6, 12.
[72] Malatesta, [1897] 2014b, p.243.

revolution would require conditions that could themselves only be established through revolution. Malatesta's solution to this apparent contradiction was to accept that, although anarchists should not compromise their goals and should aim for anarchy, they should expect failure in this endeavour, and hope only to achieve it gradually and by proceeding through multiple cycles of radical change. And even after such a gradual, iterative process of radical change over multiple cycles it is still expected that the establishment of an anarchist society could never be completely successful in countering all existing forms of illegitimate relations, or in preventing the emergence of new forms.

Another of the central tenets of the contemporary revival of realism is the position that political theory should not be 'applied ethics' and should not attempt the construction of 'ideal' theories.[73] This opposition is often directed at the work of John Rawls and its use of such devices as 'a well-ordered society' with 'strict compliance', where inhabitants of the hypothetical society are all assumed to know and accept the principles of justice. In this ideal scenario dissenters, revolutionaries and criminals are taken out of consideration. The aim is to establish a hypothetical best-case scenario, or 'realistic utopia', and once this had been achieved through this ideal theory then it can serve as a guide for 'non-ideal theory' which brings back in the messy realities of 'partial compliance' to established principles of justice.[74] Realists then of course reject this entire two-step approach in general as it, among other things, relegates political theory to an activity which is derivative from moral philosophy.[75] And they criticise the specific assumption of strict compliance as an attempt to erase from political theory that disagreement and conflict over values and norms which is constitutive of the political realm itself.[76]

Though not generally explicitly acknowledged and labelled as in Rawls's work, radical theory often contains many similar aspects to the approach of ideal theory with assumptions of strict compliance. Alternative utopian models are often presented in the form of a hypothetical small community where all inhabitants accept and value the model, or at most there is resistance from a deposed elite. And likewise, the strategies to bring about such blueprints describe a narrative composed of a single unified movement working in concert according to a universally accepted plan. In some ways of course this is to be expected. It is not unusual that to explain anarcho-syndicalism's goals and strategies they would describe a scenario where their vision played out

[73] Geuss 2008, pp.6-9.
[74] John Rawls, 2001, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, Harvard University Press, p. 4.
[75] Galston, 2010, p.395.
[76] Charles W Mills, 2005, '"Ideal Theory" as Ideology', *Hypatia*, vol:20, (3), p.169.

according to their ideal intentions – a narrative of, for example, the struggle for anarcho-syndicalist organisation within a factory and of how that factory would be run once the struggle was successful, or of how a unified movement might struggle to control industry in general and how a whole economy might operate according to the syndicalist vision. And just as in ideal theorising otherwise, these radical ideal blueprints and strategic narratives, for the sake of explanatory clarity, bracket off and assume away the messiness of political reality - sectarian disagreement and conflict, internal reaction and opposition, as well as complementary pluralism within the radical milieu. From a realist perspective this is problematic as it creates an unrealistically monist depiction of radical struggles and goals with an implicit expectation of purism and unity within radical movements and future social models. This tendency arguably contributes not only to the sectarianism within radical theory but its mirror in the real politics of radical movements.

The realist anarchist stance then accepts the sacrifice of explanatory clarity and simplicity that comes from avoiding the assumption of ideal conditions, as the risks of accepting such assumptions are too great. Not only do such approaches exclude consideration of the very things that constitute politics and which are inextricable from realistic attempts to chart strategic paths towards radical change, but they also risk creating a dangerous mindset that can carry into internecine revolutionary conflict in pursuit of an unobtainable condition. Interestingly, fictional utopias are for this reason arguably both more realistic and more politically realist than many accounts of radical alternative models. Although political utopias can easily be presented as an abstract example of perfection, due to the basic requirements of readable dramatic fiction, since the first utopian novels the genre has been defined by the presence of an outsider, traveller, or dissenter. Therefore, utopian novels are founded on an implicit recognition that to generate the most basic foundation of believable realism in even a fictional utopia requires the abandonment of the theoretical fiction of strict compliance and the absence of enduring conflict and disagreement in the radical milieu.

This particular stance however is exemplary of the earlier described character of realist anarchism as a disposition, and as a construction that is not based on a claim of uniformity among those I associate with the tendency, or that they all accept the same position. Malatesta for example is quite explicit on this point and its implications in many different contexts over his long career.[77] Likewise Chomsky explicitly endorses such a pluralistic and agnostic approach and over a likewise

[77] See, e.g.: Malatesta, 2014, p.140,141 449-450.

very long career.[78] Many others implicitly endorse the stance through application in their theory and strategy.[79] However, one theorist that I have referred to within realist anarchism who arguably implicitly represents the rejection of this position is Murray Bookchin. Bookchin had a reputation for bitter sectarian debates, extremely forceful defence of his proposals and attacks on those with whom he disagreed that at times verged on the personal. Bookchin first came to prominence in US radicalism for his polemic from an anarchist perspective against Marxist elements of the 1960's US radical milieu in 'Listen, Marxist!'.[80] In his disagreements with radical environmentalists from the Deep Ecology perspective he stopped short of accusing his interlocutors of fascism,[81] though his Social Ecology acolytes did not.[82] And in his later life he became so disillusioned with the dominant tendencies within US anarchism that he wrote scathing polemics describing the differences within the movement as constituting 'an unbridgeable chasm',[83] and eventually broke with the anarchism movement and began describing his work in other terms such as 'communalism' (though he did not alter his actual proposals).[84] It is arguable that despite his personality and combative style Bookchin's work implies the value of such a pluralist stance, and that the modification of his proposals in attempt to apply them to a different cultural and political context than he imagined, a process which he happily endorsed,[85] also implies a culturally variable and somewhat pluralistic foundation in his thought. However, such a project of exegesis is beyond the scope of this thesis and is unnecessary for its aim of establishing the existence of the realist tendency in anarchism. Bookchin is included for his contributions in other areas which are not compromised in their realism by his sectarianism.

Again, when I attribute a position to 'realist anarchists' it is a claim that it is a position that is realist and is held by a tendency within anarchism which is exemplified to a varying extent by the theorists I include in the designation. And it is also an assertion that the position is in keeping with a realist anarchist perspective and that the construction I represent, and the elements within in it, though

[78] Chomsky, 2005a, p.118.
[79] Raekstad, 2018; For other anarchist examples see: Emma Goldman in Solomon, 1987, p.51; Gordon, 2008, p.5; Randall Amster, 2009, 'Anarchy, Utopia, and the State of Things to Come', In: Amster, et al., *Contemporary Anarchist Studies*, Routledge, p.292.
[80] Murray Bookchin, 2004, 'Listen, Marxist!', *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, 3 ed, AK Press; Murray Bookchin, 1997, *Deep Ecology and Anarchism: A Polemic*, Freedom Press.
[81] Bookchin, 1997.
[82] Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier, 1995, *Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience*, AK Press Edinburgh.
[83] Bookchin, 1995.
[84] Biehl, 2015, pp.293, 300-302.
[85] Biehl 2015, p.317; Petar Stanchev, 2016, 'The Kurds, Bookchin, and the Need to Reinvent Revolution', *New Politics*, vol:15, (4); Woller, 2018, pp.35-36.

they are not uniformly adopted across the tendency, are worthy of expression and recognition as a coherent tendency. It should be clear therefore that the radicalising democracy strategy is not the only possible strategy that is congruent with a realist anarchist perspective. Just as with the realist disposition more broadly, specific expressions such as liberal or conservative forms of realism can too internally generate different interpretations of, and disagreements over, the most realistic and politically realist path of action in particular circumstances. Of course, as the previous examples suggest, the stance entails very different possibilities in different political scenarios, such as the chaos and crisis of civil war compared to the relatively peaceful status quo of liberal democracy. Therefore, unlike Chomsky or Bookchin's non-violent democratic approaches, Öcalan's proposals place armed community defence as a central element.[86] However, differences of approach can be supported by a realist stance even within the same context. For instance, though most contemporary liberal democracies have relatively low firearm ownership, there are notable exceptions, particularly the US. With increasing polarisation and prevalence of far-right political violence, many US anarchists have recently adopted a strategy that includes armed community defence and militia organisation.[87] A non-armed approach within the US context can be advanced from the realist perspective that US state is too powerful and violent to challenge directly with an armed revolutionary strategy.[88] But it can also support the argument that in a liberal democracy with such a highly armed and polarised population, the realist recognition of the permanence of conflict suggests that efforts towards creation of prefigurative communities and institutions requires consideration of the need for armed defence. While these two positions are not strictly mutually exclusive, they demonstrate the potential for a realist anarchist stance to generate different positions within the same context which may be in tension or disagreement. Therefore, the focus here on the radicalising democracy strategy is not based on a claim that it is the only potential strategy that a realist anarchist perspective can entail in liberal democracies, nor that it is the best or most realistic interpretation of the stance. Instead, the claim is only that it is one of the many potential realist anarchist strategic modes and that it is, like the broader focus on democratic radicalism described in the introductory chapter, a defensible focus for the radical realist strategic analysis of this thesis, and that its mere existence demonstrates the falsity of the most enduring aspects of the standard academic image of anarchism.

[86] Both Chomsky and Bookchin also recognise the likely need for armed defence of revolutionary communities but place on it a less central emphasis. See: Chomsky, 2002, pp193-194; Bookchin, [2002] 2015c, p.183.
[87] Kim Kelly, 2020, 'Meet the Gun Club Patrolling Seattle's Leftist Utopia', *The Daily Beast*, [Online] Available from: https://www.thedailybeast.com/seattles-capitol-hill-autonomous-zone-chaz-has-armed-guards.
[88] Chomsky in Rai, 2015, p.177.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the realist anarchist approach to radical change in different contexts and the different strategic modes that it employs, particularly that generally unrecognised approach within liberal democracies which I refer to as 'radicalising democracy', following the occasional usage of the term by some realist anarchists. The novelty of the radicalising democracy strategy within anarchism defies standard image's representation of the anarchist approach to revolution and engagement with the state. Realist anarchists advocate a pragmatic, pluralist stance before, during, and after any revolutionary event that leads them to work towards anarchist goals of social transformation from within the existing democratic state. This strategy shares similarities with other approaches to radical change in the same context, particularly the radical democratic and left-populist strategies of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, wherein the term 'radicalising democracy' is common usage. The value of employing terminology that is primarily associated with radical democratic theory rather than anarchism lies not only in the fact that it is also employed by some realist anarchists and its use draws attention to the similarities of the strategies of each perspective, but it also draws attention to the explicit pluralism in the realist anarchist view of the radical milieu, their relations to other radicals, and their conception of the process of radical change in its various stages. Despite some, like Bookchin, who embody a strident sectarianism, realist anarchists generally advocate an anarchism-without-adjectives which accepts the ongoing existence of many different types of radicalism before, during, and after radical change. They are therefore agnostic regarding the 'correct' form of social organisation for particular circumstances, leaving such decisions up to democratic self-determination and experimentation. Unlike the 'ideal theory' of mainstream moral political philosophy, realist anarchism rejects the common implicit assumptions of 'full compliance' and monological organisation in radical strategy and hypothetical social models, and indeed opposes the detailed formulation of universal radical alternative social models, or 'blueprints'.

The next chapter will detail the anarchist approach to radicalising democracy in liberal democracies. As foreshadowed, this strategy is a pragmatic adaptation by anarchists to advancing towards anarchist goals in conditions which are not generally perceived to be favourable for revolutionary action, anarchist or otherwise. If there is to be a revolutionary event it is not seen as imminent, and so this strategy is imagined as having several phases, beginning with long stages of organisation and action 'before the revolution', and 'within the state'. The chapter will explain this strategy with regard to the realist anarchist conceptions of reform and revolution. It will outline how the perspective is based on a non-binary conception of change that aims for radical varieties

of reform and conceptualises revolutions as sudden events of sweeping reform which can only ever be partially successful and which will always require further phases of struggle in multiple and unending cycles.

4 Realist Anarchism Before The Revolution

All of us, without exception, are obliged to live, more or less, in contradiction with our ideals - Errico Malatesta [1]

Introduction

One particularly relevant trait of the standard image of anarchism is that it is centrally concerned with opposition to the state, and that the anarchist position on the state is fairly uncomplicated: rejection, opposition, and hostility. While there is some truth in this depiction it also glosses over the reality of much anarchist practice, and the theory that seeks to guide it. Anarchist action and theory for the most part takes place within states. Due to the unavoidable fact of the current widespread existence of states, and their primacy as a political institution, much of contemporary anarchist thought and action can be thought of as 'anarchism before the revolution', or 'anarchism within the state'. While retaining a philosophical and moral objection to the state, it is less concerned with state abolition as a short-term goal than with organisational process, a progressive critique of authority and hierarchies of all types, such as class, race, gender etc., and opposition to all forms of domination.[2] This results in a variety of complex and subtle positions on 'anarchism within the state', that challenge the standard image of anarchism as a simplistic, idealistic, and naïve political orientation.

This chapter will demonstrate the falsity of the most substantial and enduring of the elements of the standard academic image of anarchism – the uncompromising revolutionary, anti-reformist stance and the purist rejection of engagement with the state – through explanation of the realist anarchist 'radicalising democracy' approach to radical change in contemporary liberal democracies. Part of this strategy includes an approach that aims to defy the simplistic binary between reform and revolution, the explication of which will comprise the bulk of this chapter. The first two sections, however, will outline the realist anarchist orientation to the contemporary liberal state and the view of that institution which guides engagement or non-engagement with it, and which underlies the radicalising democracy strategy.

Anarchism within the state

In my view, the state is an illegitimate institution. But it does not follow from that that you should not support the state. … There is a state sector that does awful things, but it also happens to do some good

[1] Malatesta, 'L'Anarchia 1896', quoted in Malatesta 1965, p.71.
[2] Gordon, 2008, p.4.

> *things. As a result of centuries of extensive popular struggle there is a minimal welfare system that provides support for poor mothers and children. That's under attack in an effort to minimise the state. Well, [some] anarchists can't seem to understand that they are to support that. So they join with the ultra-right in saying "Yes, we've got to minimise the state," meaning putting more power into the hands of private tyrannies which are completely unaccountable to the public and completely totalitarian. […] If you care about the question of whether seven-year-old children have food to eat, you'll support the state sector at this point, recognising that in the long-term it's illegitimate. I know a lot of people find that hard to deal with and personally I'm under constant critique from the left for not being principled. […] I think we have to be able to keep those ideas in our heads if we want to think constructively about problems of the future. In fact, protecting the state sector today is a step towards abolishing the state because it maintains a public arena in which people can participate, and organise, and affect policy, and so on, though in limited ways. If that's removed we'd go back to a dictatorship or say a private dictatorship, but that's hardly a step towards liberation. […] Minimising the state means strengthening private sectors. It narrows the domain within which public influence can be expressed. That's not an anarchist goal. I mean people may be seduced by the words "minimize the state" and sort of trapped in them, but think what it means. It's minimizing the state and increasing an even worse power. That's not an anarchist goal. – Noam Chomsky*[3]

The most basic and ubiquitous element of the standard image of anarchism is that it is uncompromisingly opposed to the state and any interaction with it.[4] I am not claiming that this not, by and large, a faithful representation. While the realist anarchist position challenges this representation as universally applicable, I accept that the realist anarchist stance is one of the most controversial and challenged perspectives within anarchist debates. As in many radical subcultures, a significant proportion of anarchist movement literature consists of often bitter and sectarian internal debate and mutual critique. The standard image of anarchism is certainly reinforced by these debates when theorists are denounced for depicting the state in any but the most simplistically negative sense, or for expressing any attitude to the state other than complete rejection, or suggesting the possibility of any interaction with formal political institutions.[5] Understandably, introductory overviews and brief histories of anarchism also reinforce the standard image of anarchism by avoiding such controversial debates within anarchism which complicate the already difficult task of explaining anarchism to the uninitiated.[6] While anarchism is sometimes portrayed as little more than an uncompromising opposition to the state,[7] even those accounts which recognise the multiple-focus of anarchism, and opposition to the state as a derivate rather than constitutive element, tend to cast that state-opposition in simplistic and uncompromising terms. Therefore, a nuanced approach to the state is the most contentious element of the tendency that I have been referring to as realist anarchism. It is implicitly affirmed

[3] Chomsky 2005, pp.212-214.
[4] Carter, 1971, p.28; Ward, 2004, p.2.; Newman, 2015, pp.1-2.
[5] E.g. Zerzan, 2002; Black, 2012a, pp.33-34; Bob Black, 1997a, *Anarchy after Leftism*, Columbia Alternative Library Press, p.37.
[6] E.g. Woodcock, 1962; Ward 2004.
[7] e.g. Wolff, 1970.

by some,[8] and explicitly but without the emphasis by others.[9] However, those who have openly and defiantly stated this position[10] or have been perceived as doing so[11] have courted denunciation and 'excommunication' by other anarchists.[12] Some though are undaunted by the possibility of being accused of treachery by purists, or by the difficulty of explaining such a complicated position in a discourse that is already widely misunderstood. These realist anarchists attempt to address the implications of implementing anarchist goals in existing contemporary conditions, including in liberal democracies, and reconciling elements of anarchism that are sometimes in tension, such as opposition to all forms of oppression and domination including both capitalism and the state.

Of course, this is a controversial position and so a couple of things are worth stating before more fully detailing the realist anarchist approach to the state. Engagements with the state by realist anarchists are not undertaken on the basis of any reduced hostility towards it. They do not represent a capitulation or betrayal of principles, but a realist application of them in particular conditions. The tensions generated by the pluralist opposition to all forms of domination are unavoidable, and so a faithful expression of such principles necessarily entails the weighing of options in specific circumstances, and balancing priorities in order to move as effectively as possible towards uncompromised goals. Realist anarchists do not prioritise consideration and engagement with the state as the most important form of radical action, their primary focus remaining on action focused otherwise. They advocate engagement only where it can be used to contribute to anarchist objectives, position radicals to pursue further gains, or where to refuse engagement would risk reversal of previous gains or worsen the effects of some existing form of domination or oppression. These engagements should be seen then as adaptations which seek to pursue seemingly impossible goals in particular conditions. And as a realist response to conditions this perspective is of course malleable – though it does endorse gradualist approaches where applicable, it also accepts the validity of sudden violent rupture and revolutionary upheaval where circumstances demand.

The identification of this particular tendency of radical thought as a type of anarchism is based on the specific definition of anarchism outlined in the first chapter and elaborated earlier in this

[8] Malatesta, [1925] 2014a, pp.473; Shantz, 2010, pp.85–86.
[9] Gordon, 2007, pp.154–155.
[10] Chomsky, 1996.
[11] Bookchin, 1998.
[12] Chomsky and Bookchin have both been denounced as 'not true anarchists', from a variety of anarchist perspectives, for their arguments that anarchists must engage with the state in order to realistically attempt to bring about its replacement. See: Black, 2012; Zerzan, 2002, pp.140–143.

chapter. This pluralist perspective sees anarchism's opposition to the state as deriving from its broader rejection of all oppression and default assumption of the illegitimacy of all forms of coercive authority. Those who see anarchism as first opposition to the state, and subsequently an extension of this position to opposition to all authority – as opposed to the reverse: that it is first opposition to all forms of domination and its anti-statism emerges from that position – will baulk at any definition of anarchism as containing a strain that has a nuanced approach to the state. For those, any form of radical thought that does not advocate complete rejection and non-engagement will be axiomatically non-anarchist - any strain of radical thought, regardless of its anarchist concerns, aims, or advocates, automatically becomes 'something-other-than-anarchism' when it supports or considers engaging with the state in any way.[13] Indeed some anarchists see the realist anarchist tendency as instances of 'capitulation'[14] where otherwise-anarchists lose their way, and due to the primacy of anti-statism in their definition see any but the simplest rejection of the state as necessarily and by definition 'not-anarchism'. I, on the other, hand see no contradiction between the radical realist approach to the state and its anarchist expression. The position exists as a logical and coherent theoretical position in modern and contemporary anarchist literature and it is implicit in much contemporary democratically inclined anarchist thought and anarchist action accounted in recent sociological and anthropological studies of anarchist movements and (anti-) organisations.[15] Whatever label purist anarchists deem appropriate for this tendency, this thesis classifies it as a form of anarchism, and argues that it is a coherent and realist expression of anarchism in a particular strategic mode and socio-political context.

This approach to formal political institutions, and the state in particular, is drawn from a fairly obvious logical extrapolation of opposition to all forms of oppression including both the state and capitalism, and the insistence that oppression must be actively resisted rather than ignored in the hope that a teleological process will deliver emancipation. As the quote from Chomsky introducing the section demonstrates, the anarchist commitment to the defence of victims of oppression such as those suffering under capitalism can conflict with other anarchist commitments, like the philosophical rejection of the state. Similarly, while the anarchist commitment to democratic principles and the deepening and extension of democracy does not accept liberal democratic

[13] Williams, 2017, p.16; Claude Guillon, 2002, 'The Chomsky Effect or Anarchism of the State', *Oiseau-tempête* (9), [Online] Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/chomskyeffect#toc2.
[14] Price, 2000.
[15] The contemporary anarchist milieu is made up of formal organisational tendencies, informal groups, as well as explicitly anti-organisational 'associations' for want of a better word. For a sociological account of formal organisations see: Williams, 2017; for an ethnographic study that attempts to engage with the anti-organisational elements of a particular anarchist geographical 'space' see: Apoifis, 2016.

institutions as sufficient, neither does it imply accepting their destruction by the neoliberal assault on the democratic state and erosion of social services. Realist anarchists recognise that a flawed but somewhat democratic state system is likely a better platform for achieving the deeper democratic goals of anarchism than a society with a weakened state dominated by rampant corporate capitalism. They also recognise that capitulation to the anti-state, but also anti-democratic, forces of the capitalist right in the current conditions of hegemonic, global, 'late' capitalism and apparent impending ecological catastrophe risks directly and disastrously increasing oppression and suffering on a mass scale,[16] which contradicts anarchist principles of direct-action against oppression, and the rejection of achieving anarchist ends (e.g. libertarian statelessness) through conflicting means (e.g. authoritarianism, increasing oppression and suffering).[17]

Simply then, the realist anarchist does not consider the state to be a legitimate institution, yet still holds that some actions of the state can be positive when they are directed at preventing a relatively greater oppression imposed by another form of illegitimate authority. The primary way that the realist anarchist argues that the state can sometimes be considered relatively legitimate (or at least a 'lesser evil') is in relation to the tension between opposing both contemporary capitalism and the state simultaneously. There are two main ways that realist anarchists argue this tension can lead to anarchist engagement with, and support for, the state: for protecting people from pressing negative social effects of capitalism;[18] and to reform current social, political and economic institutions in accordance with radical goals, or to position radical movements to move further towards radical goals in the most realistic manner possible.[19]

This engagement with the state is not only accepted in order to combat the social symptoms of capitalism in a passive form of harm-minimisation that has given up on the possibility of far-reaching radical social change, but it is also endorsed as a method to pursue such change. So, while realist anarchists argue that state control of social services is preferable when the alternative is neoliberal privatisation and for-profit services, they also see a flawed but somewhat democratic state system as a better platform for achieving their revolutionary goals of social, political and economic re-organisation, including the long-term goal of state transformation and replacement, than a state weakened in its social and economic roles, and dominated by corporate capitalism.[20]

[16] Rai, 2015, p.180; Gordon, 2007, p.120.
[17] Malatesta, 1965, p.171; Malatesta, 2014, p.426; Gordon, 2007, pp.39, 119-120.
[18] Rai, 2015, p.180.
[19] Malatesta, [1922] 2014b, p.433; Brian Martin, 2012, 'Reform: When Is It Worthwhile', *Anarchist Studies*, vol:20, (2).
[20] Chomsky, 2005a, p.213; Shantz, 2010, p.86.

These are not abstract tensions. As the majority of contemporary anarchist action and activism necessarily occurs within the state and under capitalism, it largely consists of direct action against oppression and suffering. Rather than plotting to overthrow the state much anarchist organising is focused on directly addressing issues such as poverty, homelessness, ecological destruction, minority rights, Indigenous claims for justice, etc. For instance, the anarchist social organisation the 'Ontario Coalition Against Poverty' (OCAP) is a long-running group that directly challenges the effects of poverty, provides many services for the socially disadvantaged, and advocates for increased services and social responsibility from various levels of government. One focus of OCAP, and for many other anarchist social organisations, is homelessness and the right to housing.[21] In many areas anarchists have a long-held association with the squatting movement which challenges the capitalist social norm that allows housing to remain empty while people are homeless.[22] Anarchist organisations such as the Manchester Activist Network (MAN) take direct action against homelessness by opening up vacant properties for use by those in need, as well as agitating for homeless rights, squatting rights, and the provision of housing.[23] 'Food Not Bombs' is a global (very loose) anarchist network of collectives that undertake direct-action against hunger resulting from poverty and homelessness by collecting surplus food that otherwise would go to waste, and preparing, cooking, and distributing it for free.[24] Projects like OCAP, MAN, and FNB have been widespread in contemporary anarchist subcultures[25] since the early phases of the anti/alter-globalisation movement, and they underline the importance to activists of social issues and the negative social impact of capitalism. These several decades of local social organising have also imbued the contemporary anarchist milieu with a direct awareness of the relatively positive effect of state-based social provisions considering the increase in suffering created by their withdrawal.[26] Therefore, it has not been unusual for anarchists to oppose the privatisation of public services and other state-owned enterprises in recent decades under widespread hegemony of neoliberal economic ideology.[27] This sensitivity to social issues also leads many contemporary anarchist groups to enter into alliances with non-anarchist radical and non-radical community and

[21] Shantz, 2010, pp.82-83.
[22] Apoifis, 2016, p.90.
[23] Matt Broomfield, 2016, 'The Anarchist Squatters Housing Manchester's Most Vulnerable Homeless People', *Vice*, [Online] Available from: https://www.vice.com/en_au/article/wndkdy/the-anarchist-squatters-housing-manchesters-most-vulnerable-homeless-people.
[24] Williams 2007, p.63; Shantz, 2011, pp.86-89.
[25] Williams 2007, pp.101, 164, 202, 208-209; Apoifis 2016, pp.94, 104, 151; Shantz 2010, pp.135-141.
[26] Shantz, 2010, pp.85-88.
[27] Lucien Van Der Walt, 1996, 'No to Privatisation!', *Workers' Solidarity*, Vol. 2((1)):3. [Online] Available from: https://saasha.net/2012/12/06/workers-solidarity-volume-2-number-1-first-quarter-1996-focus-on-the-unions/.

activist groups including single-issue reformist campaigns that call directly on the state for social provisions, in order to more effectively tackle issues of social exclusion, inequality, and hardship.[28]

There is also much informal anarchist engagement with reformist projects and organisations. That is, individual anarchists rather than the specifically anarchist organisations to which they belong, will often join non-anarchist groups, projects and organisations in order to support their struggles but also, usually, with the further aims of pushing that organisation or project from within towards ever more radical, and eventually anarchist, positions, and of educating its members about anarchism and recruiting them to the separate anarchist organisation. This radicalisation tactic is not uncommon among different anarchist thinkers and has been advocated with regard to unions (existing trade unions but also workplace organising and unionisation struggles), social movements, local community activism, and single-issue reformist groups. Though many different anarchists endorse this tactic, the 'especifismo' (or 'specificism') strain developed primarily in South America make this approach central to their program. Specifists advocate anarchists forming dedicated 'specifically' anarchist organisations (hence their label), but also endorse the infiltrating and radicalising approach described above, which they refer to as 'social insertion'.[29] While many accounts of anarchist strategy focuses on 'prefiguration' (or the construction of alternative institutions 'in the shell of the old' which prefigure the organisational forms of an anarchist society), insertion aims at transforming existing organisations and institutions. And while prefiguration primarily occurs outside of consideration or engagement with the state, insertion can more easily entail engagement, especially when, for instance anarchists 'insert' into a struggle that is partly within the state broadly defined, such as for example a struggle for workplace democracy in a social service which is controlled and funded by the state. Prefiguration and insertion are two of the main ways that realist anarchists approach the process of radicalising democracy, society in general as well as the state itself.

Realist anarchists also engage with the state in more common, less direct ways which are usually considered wholly inimical to anarchism, such as interaction with the electoral system through voting and even, on rare occasion and for limited reasons, standing in elections, usually as independents and without expectation of winning, in an effort to popularise anarchist ideas. For

[28] Gordon, 2007, pp.58-59.

[29] FARJ (Federação Anarquista do Rio de Janeiro), 2008, 'Social Anarchism and Organisation', [Online] Available from: https://libcom.org/library/social-anarchism-organisation, pp.50-54; Adam Weaver, 2006, 'Especifismo: The Anarchist Praxis of Building Popular Movements and Revolutionary Organization', [Online] Available from: https://blackrosefed.org/especifismo-weaver/.

example, in the 2015 UK election an anarchist group called 'Class War' ran candidates in order to "get radical ideas into places where they are not normally present".[30] Some candidates used the opportunity essentially to abuse and ridicule mainstream politicians on the Hustings and in the media, others tried to explain anarchism to a wider audience than they usually had access to. Their slogan was 'by the brick and the ballot box'.[31] Such actions though are usually merely propaganda efforts – winning is not the goal.

In terms of engagement with the state these may seem somewhat trivial engagements, and of course it should be emphasised that actions such as voting or even taking some part in election campaigns are generally considered minor actions which should not take time, resources or attention from more important activities such as direct action, organising, mutual aid, prefiguration etc. They do however indicate an orientation towards the state that is precluded by anarchism's standard representation. And indeed, the very fact of voting does entail other engagements with the state. For instance, in the context of a long running neoliberal assault on the social welfare system, voting for harm reduction in regard to social issues often entails a relative endorsement of the state in contrast to capitalist non-state ownership. For instance, the current condition of several decades of leftist retreat and defeat, including the privatisation of essential industries and social services, have seen some anarchist organisations openly support re-nationalisation efforts.[32] This is an example of how realist anarchists may prefer state control of means of production when the most likely alternative is private ownership. In the wake of decades of privatisation, supporting re-nationalisation as a means for securing publicly-owned industries is viewed as a more advantageous site from which to agitate for direct worker control – a long-held anarchist goal.[33] Realist anarchists argue that when voting might have some positive effect on ameliorating a form of domination or oppression, that action should take priority over purist disengagement and opposition to one particular form of authority. And this should not be seen as a compromise of principle, but instead the unavoidable outcome of balancing the tension between opposing different forms of illegitimate authority simultaneously.

[30] Jon Bigger, 2020, *Class War, Anarchism, and Elections,* Anarchism Research Group Loughborough; Benjamin Franks, 2020, 'Four Models of Anarchist Engagements with Constitutionalism'*, Theory in Action*, vol:13, (1).
[31] Phil Dickens, 2015, 'Electoralism or Class Struggle? ', *Libcom*, [Online] Available from: https://libcom.org/article/electoralism-or-class-struggle-phil-dickens.
[32] Alan MacSimoin, 2007, 'Thinking About Anarchism: Nationalism', *Workers Solidarity,* (100):4. [Online] Available from: https://www.wsm.ie/c/anarchism-nationalisation-corrib-resources; Van Der Walt, 1996.
[33] Price, 2000, p.10; Chomsky in Otero, 2003*,* p.263; Ward, 2004, pp.46-50, Marshall 1993, pp.8, 330.

This strategic engagement with electoralism isn't restricted to just voting. Though most anarchists, including realists, do not advocate creating 'anarchist parties', realist anarchists recognise that regardless of their own rejection of party politics, other radicals will continue to attempt to acquire power through elections. When these parties are seen as relatively positive, or possibly compatible with the advancement of anarchist aims, at least in comparison to conservative and liberal alternatives, realist anarchists argue that it is consistent to support their election. Some anarchists however have picked up Murray Bookchin's suggestion that anarchists should run (and actually try to win) local municipal elections, with the hope of radicalising that level of government, and moving, within the state, towards the classic anarchist model of federated directly democratic councils and assemblies.[34] Bookchin's municipalism then is a reformist or gradualist approach to bringing about an anarchist society within the state.[35] As we will see in the following section Bookchin's is not the only approach with this basic orientation. For instance, this is in line with the basic approach advocated by Chomsky on the basis of the need to balance tension between opposing different forms of illegitimate authority simultaneously,[36] and to that end he also endorses something like the municipalist strategy in his support of André Gorz's 'non-reformist reforms', where structural reforms such as workplace democracy and worker ownership are seen as reforms with radical transformational potential which could "actually be theoretically done by parliamentary means".[37]

The relative positive impact of the state is also recognised by some contemporary anarchists in relation to more controversial issues that strongly challenge the standard image of anarchist state rejection. For instance, some in Israel's anarchist milieu, though ultimately advocating a 'no-state solution' to the political problems of the Middle East, recognise the need to support the creation of a Palestinian state as a pragmatic compromise necessitated by the tension in anarchism between anti-statist ideals and solidarity with oppressed groups.[38] It is argued that as Palestinians' lives are already controlled by a state (Israel) the creation of a new Palestinian state would represent a mere quantitative, not qualitative change, and must be seen as a relatively positive development in comparison to continued military control by the state of Israel. That is, the number of people

[34] Cain Shelley, 2022, 'Murray Bookchin and the Value of Democratic Municipalism'*, European Journal of Political Theory*, vol:0, (0), https://doi.org/10.1177/14748851221128248.
[35] Biehl, 2015, pp.239-242.
[36] Chomsky, 1996a, p.73-76.
[37] Chomsky, 2005a, p.214.
[38] Gordon, 2007, p.154.

living under state control would not increase with the creation of a Palestinian state, but it would likely mean a relative increase in liberty and security for many.[39]

Israeli anarchists are not the only radicals working towards a 'no-state solution' for the Middle East, and in doing so grappling with the difficulty of working towards anarchist goals within an international system organised around states and in a region riven with conflict. In the early stages of the Syrian Civil War the Syrian state withdrew from Kurdish dominated areas of northern Syria (known as 'Rojava') leaving them in local militia control. Soon after, the local branches of the Kurdish Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê – PKK) began implementing a revolutionary project of social reorganisation based on the anarchistic vision of their imprisoned leader Abdullah Öcalan.[40] The revolutionary reorganisation of the Middle East proposed by Öcalan, called democratic confederalism, is an adaptation of the anarchist theorist Murray Bookchin's approach to radical strategy.[41] Öcalan's democratic confederalism suggests that radical movements in the Middle East should organise into federated autonomous enclaves within the shells of already internationally recognised nation states, and use the legislative and constitutive power of the state to ratify and legalise such a federated structure of radically democratic, feminist, and eco-socialist enclaves.[42] In the long-term the strategy advocates the expansion of this model to neighbouring states, at which point these allied national federated structures could further integrate into a regional bloc of democratic self-organisation that had replaced the state form.[43] The implementation of democratic confederalism in Northern Syria has resulted in a poly-ethnic, feminist, ecological, and directly democratic federation of autonomous cantons, which has been, for some years, the most effective force opposing the so-called 'Islamic State' (IS) in the brutal civil war in the region,[44] but it continues to defend its existence against incursions by the Turkish state and challenges by the Syrian state.[45]

---

[39] Ibid., p.155.
[40] Carne Ross, 2015, 'The Kurds' Democratic Experiment', *The New York Times*, [Online] Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/30/opinion/the-kurds-democratic-experiment.html; Stanchev, 2016.
[41] Sirwan Kajjo, 2017, 'Writings of Obscure American Leftist Drive Kurdish Forces in Syria', *VOA*, [Online] Available from: https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/writings-obscure-american-leftist-drive-kurdish-forces-syria.
[42] Dirik, 2021; Nazan Üstündağ, 2016, 'Self-Defense as a Revolutionary Practice in Rojava, or How to Unmake the State'*, South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol:115, (1).
[43] Öcalan, 2011.
[44] Erik Eigland, 2015, 'Statement from the Academic Delegation to Rojava', *New Compass*, [Online] Available from: http://new-compass.net/articles/statement-academic-delegation-rojava.
[45] Center for Preventative Action, 2023, 'Conflict between Turkey and Armed Kurdish Groups', *Council on Foreign Relations - Global Conflict Tracker*, [Online] Available from: https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-between-turkey-and-armed-kurdish-groups.

Attempting to implement this radical vision in such a fraught environment has required pragmatic strategic compromises in the pursuit of anti-state objectives. The medium to long-term strategy for 'revolutionary Rojava' is to seek constitutional autonomy within a reformed democratic Syrian state.[46] Their short-term goal is understandably to survive the current conflict, and to that end they have previously accepted military assistance from the United States.[47] While the revolutionary experiment in Rojava has become a 'cause célèbre' in western anarchist circles,[48] these two compromises of stance towards the state in an attempt to achieve libertarian-socialist goals have created intense debate in western anarchist circles, and predictably attracted critiques that they represent the betrayal of anarchist ideals and mean that the 'Rojava revolution' must be considered 'something-other-than-anarchism'.[49] Other western anarchist supporters of Rojava have defended these supposed capitulations as reasonable and realistic moves by an anarchist movement that actually intends to achieve revolutionary goals in a complex environment, rather than maintaining impotent ideological purity.[50] Though the PKK do not describe themselves as anarchists but 'democratic confederalists', they do draw very heavily on Bookchin and advocate, in the long-term, the replacement of the centralised nation state with federations of autonomous democratic 'cantons', in line with Bookchin's vision, which he first articulated as anarchism before later dropping that label without significantly altering his proposals.[51]

So, realist anarchism engages with the state, and accepts its relatively positive value, in various ways, from voting, to formal and informal involvement of anarchist organisations and individuals with other radical and activist groups, movements and projects which make reformist demands of the state, to 'insertion' in non-anarchist struggles that engage the state or even which takes place

[46] Matt Bradley, et al., 2016, 'Kurds Declare 'Federal Region' in Syria, Says Official', *The New York Times*, [Online] Available from: https://www.wsj.com/articles/kurds-declare-federal-region-in-syria-says-official-1458216404.

[47] Wladimir Van Wilgenburg, 2016, 'Kurds Welcome Us Support, but Want More Say on Syria's Future', *Middle Easy Eye*, [Online] Available from: https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/analysis-kurds-welcome-us-support-want-more-say-syrias-future.

[48] To the extent that many western radicals have travelled to the region in order to assist in the conflict in 'international brigades' of fighters reminiscent of the foreign radical fighters in the Spanish Civil War. See: Seth Harp, 2017, 'The Anarchists Vs. The Islamic State', *Rolling Stone*, [Online] Available from: https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/the-anarchists-vs-the-islamic-state-109047/.

[49] Gilles Dauvé and Tristan Leoni, 2015, 'Rojava: Rhetoric and Reality', [Online] Available from: http://www.troploin.fr/node/83.

[50] David Graeber, 2014a, *No. This Is a Genuine Revolution,* ZNet; Michael Knapp, et al., 2016, *Revolution in Rojava: Democratic Autonomy and Women's Liberation in Syrian Kurdistan*, Pluto Press.

[51] Rojava is also relevant here due to its central place in contemporary western anarchist debates about the acceptable role of the state in anarchist radicalisation. See for example: Dauvé and Leoni 2015; Graeber 2014a; Leezenberg, 2016. For a confirmation of the Rojavan anti-statist aspirations by a current political representative of the region see: Hediye Yusif, 2017, *A Conversation with Hadiya Yusif,* Washington Kurdish Institute.

within some aspect of the state broadly defined. Realist anarchism recognises some relatively positive aspects of the state and the use of state power, and accepts that the question of who controls the state can have significant influence on anarchist action. While not seeking state power themselves, realist anarchists recognise the relative value of state control by 'progressive' parties especially allied elements of a broad pluralist radical milieu with potential to support anarchist democratisation and radicalisation efforts. The need to engage the state in order to transform and ultimately dissolve it is not only recognised in the reformist and gradualist context of stable liberal democracies but also in military occupation or even in the ostensibly revolutionarily ripe conditions of civil war. These approaches to the state will be detailed further in the next section on the realist anarchist view of the state. As should already be evident they entail a different view of the contemporary state than the standard image of anarchism would suggest.

The realist anarchist view of the modern state

> *One can throw away a chair and destroy a pane of glass; but those are idle talkers and credulous idolaters of words who regard the state as such a thing or as a fetish that one can smash in order to destroy it. The state is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently toward one another …We are the state, and we shall continue to be the state until we have created the institutions that form a real community and society – Gustav Landauer*[52]

Realist anarchists recognise the complex nature of the modern liberal democratic state and do not portray it as a simplistic, monolithic institution that is wholly evil (in contrast with our 'true' nature, depicted as wholly good) as do some other anarchists.[53] The often simplistic depiction of the state in early anarchist thought is reasonably understandable, given that anarchism emerged as an explicit stream of political thought during the early formation of the modern nation-state. The European nation-state in this early formation was almost universally non-democratic, usually brutally authoritarian absolutist monarchies or still semi-feudal 'republics'. The early anarchist language around the state reflected this limited development of the institution and this fairly simple image of the state is often maintained in modern and contemporary anarchist thought. Many anarchists define the state in no more detail than the basic Weberian image of a centralised, bureaucratic administration that has authority within a bounded geographical area, and within which exercises

[52] Landauer quoted in James Horrox, 2009, 'Reinventing Resistance: Constructive Anarchism in Gustav Landauer's Social Philosophy', In: Jun and Wahl, *New Perspectives on Anarchism*, Lexington Books, p.192.
[53] Marshall, 1993, p.4; Mueller, 2003, p.126.

a monopoly on the use of violence (though they rarely cite Weber).[54] Anarchist depictions of the state usually emphasise the coercive and punitive elements of state power, such as the military and police; the judiciary and prison system; the bureaucracy and legislative organs.[55] For Malatesta, the state is

> *all that collection of institutions, political, legislative, judicial, military, financial, etc., by means of which the management of their own affairs, the guidance of their personal conduct and the care of ensuring their own safety are taken from the people and confided to certain individuals … [who are] invested with the right to make laws over and for all, and to constrain the public to respect them, making use of the collective force of the community to this end.*[56]

Like Marxists, anarchists see the exercise of state power as largely an expression of class interests; that the liberal-democratic 'national interest' is actually a reflection of the interests of capitalist classes.[57] Unlike some varieties of Marxism however, they do not see the state as reducible to this class expression, and therefore do not see the working-class seizure of state power as a sufficient response to this situation due to the risk of state-based revolutionary socialism devolving into one-party dictatorship – a fear borne out by the authoritarian socialist projects of the 20th century. This critique of all state systems and recognition that national interest reflects ruling class interest is the international aspect of the realist anarchist perspective. Chomsky, for instance, in his extensive work in critiquing the international activities of the government of the United States, deploys a view on states as essentially like-units in their international operations –i.e., that capitalist and socialist states (when there were still arguably socialist states in existence) operate by the same basic logic. This is essentially a standard international relations realist perspective, albeit with inverted moral position (i.e., that because states are essentially amoral they should be replaced, not merely accepted as immutable).[58]

This fairly simplistic view of the state is useful in particular contexts, for instance, in considering the international actions of states, or the historical development of state power, and the real violence and punitive governance that is still absolutely intrinsic to the operation of the state. The essentially similar logic of violence and control of all states is an indispensable anarchist critical device. A realist anarchist perspective however does not entail a rigid adherence to this definition, as a monolithic and static image of the state suggests an entity that is not alterable but entirely fixed

[54] Carter, 1971, p.29; Marshall, 1993, p.18.
[55] E.g. Peter Gelderloos, 2017b, *Worshiping Power: An Anarchist View of Early State Formation*, AK Press, p.14; Malatesta in Marshall, 1993, pp.20-21.
[56] Malatesta 2014, p.111.
[57] Osborn, 2009, p.359.
[58] Ibid.

in nature and which must be either wholly destroyed or accepted. Such an image clearly leads us back to the image of the sudden total revolutionary liberation of humanity in one fell swoop, with the removal of wholly immoral institutions being all that is required for the flourishing of naturally cooperative and benign underlying human nature. It also ignores the aspects of the modern state that are not based on overt violence and control.

Another, less rigid, and oft-quoted anarchist definition of the state is that of early 20th century German anarchist Gustav Landauer quoted at the beginning of this section - "the state is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, we destroy it by contracting other relationships".[59] This relational conception is also implicit in the Malatesta quote above, where the state is seen as all the elements of the apparatus of control arrayed above society and maintained through coercive relations. The relational view makes distinction between the state as the primary large-scale institution of political organisation and the particular relations from which it is comprised. This reflects the fact that anarchists generally do not only advocate the destruction of the state but its replacement by another form of political organisation based on different relations. This entails a view where the state does not have a fixed, unalterable, form, but is alterable and ultimately replaceable with some other form of social organisation that could operate at a similar level of organisation and perform many of the same functions as a state, with some key distinctions.

As explained in chapter one the standard anarchist alternative is the radically democratic federation of free associations of producers and communities which is referred to by many labels, such as the 'federation of federations' or 'commune of communes'. This large-scale unit of political organisation would replace the state and continue to fulfil some of its functions – it would still claim sovereignty within a fixed geographical location and a claim to the monopoly of legitimate violence within, and in defence of, this territory.[60] This primarily decentralised authority would operate with various interlocking and 'nested' levels of democratic decision-making, and while there may exist some centralised administrative and bureaucratic bodies, decision-making would be devolved to the lowest level possible and the whole arrangement would be held together by non-coercive relations of free association and democratic organisation. Therefore, according to the relational anarchist definition of the state this would constitute a non-state form of organisation. This basic vision has formed the backbone of anarchist organisational proposals

[59] Gustav Landauer in Marshall, 1993, p.411.
[60] Price, 2013, pp.4-5.

since Godwin's 'federation of parishes' and Proudhon's international 'federalism',[61] and has been a shared basic feature of anarchist visions up to and including current anarchist-inspired radical social projects, such as the Syrian Kurdish confederalist region mentioned above.[62] It is also arguably the traditional model for Marxists, though most disagree that it does not constitute a state and indeed some accuse anarchists who advocate this model of disingenuousness and endorsement of a 'state by another name'.[63] This definitional boundary issue is addressed in more depth in the next chapter, but for now let it suffice to say that, although there is a strong 'anti-organisational' trend in both historical and contemporary anarchism that rejects some or all of this model,[64] realist anarchists recognise that there is now, and is likely to be into the foreseeable future, a need for formal political institutions on a large scale, including at a level similar to that occupied by the current nation-state, and beyond.

Realist anarchists then see the state as a complex entity. The simple image of the state as centralised, bureaucratic, monopoly on violence is still a useful one in many ways. It is a valuable critical device for appreciating the underlying violence in any state system. As David Graeber suggests, if you are looking for proof as to the inherent violence of even the most liberal democratic state, go to some place where you are ostensibly 'not allowed' to be, refuse to leave, and see what happens.[65] However, realist anarchists also recognise that a state exclusively defined by its coercive and punitive aspects is not a fair representation of the entirety of modern liberal state action. Early anarchists often placed the concepts of the state and society as mutually exclusive polar-opposites,[66] but realist anarchists recognise that in many ways society and the state have become intertwined such that supporting society while opposing the state has become a complex project of disentanglement, replacement, and reconstruction. For Bookchin the modern

[61] Alex Prichard, 2007, 'Justice, Order and Anarchy: The International Political Theory of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809—1865)', *Millennium*, vol:35, (3), p.640.
[62] Si Sheppard, 2016, 'What the Syrian Kurds Have Wrought', *The Atlantic*, [Online] Available from: https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/10/kurds-rojava-syria-isis-iraq-assad/505037/; David Graeber, 2014b, 'Why Is the World Ignoring the Revolutionary Kurds in Syria?', *The Guardian*, [Online] Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/oct/08/why-world-ignoring-revolutionary-kurds-syria-isis.
[63] E.g.: Hal Draper, 1989, *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution Vol Iv*, New York University Press, p.109; for discussion of this tendency see: Wayne Price, 2013, 'Is It a State?', *anarkismo.net*, [Online] Available from: http://anarkismo.net/article/25430?search_text=wayne%20price&print_page=true.
[64] Of course, the actual extent of anti-organisational anarchist action is extremely difficult to quantify, except perhaps by ethnographic approaches which can only give an account of particular anarchist subcultures. See, for e.g. Apoifis, 2016; for historical examples of anti-organisational anarchism, see: Carl Levy, 1999a, *Gramsci and the Anarchists*, Berg, p.9; for defence against anti-organisational anarchism, see: Malatesta, [1897] 2014b.
[65] David Graeber, 2012, 'Dead Zones of the Imagination: On Violence, Bureaucracy, and Interpretive Labor: The Malinowski Memorial Lecture, 2006', *HAU: journal of Ethnographic Theory*, vol:2, (2), p.112.
[66] Marshall, 1993, p.12; Ward 2004, p.26.

state is "a hybridisation of political with social institutions, of coercive with distributive functions, of highly punitive with regulatory procedures, and finally of class with administrative needs".[67]

The modern state has both negative and positive aspects; states can be comparatively better or worse from an anarchist perspective,[68] and therefore can also be made to be better or worse. Some of the elements of a modern state should be abolished, some transformed through radicalisation and democratisation, and some extended. So not only can the state be improved in line with anarchist goals, it is also capable of being modified to the point where it is no longer a state but some other form of large-scale political organisation. In contrast to the standard image of anarchism then, realist anarchists avoid simplistic slogans like 'smashing the state' and emphasise the replacement of illegitimate institutions rather than their simple destruction[69] - "we must not destroy anything that satisfies human need, however badly – until we have something better to put in its place".[70] This position entails efforts towards the prefigurative construction of such alternatives, and indeed much of the energy of contemporary anarchist movements is dedicated to such efforts.[71] However, it also recognises the relatively positive use of state power that many anarchists are reluctant to admit explicitly but that realist anarchists openly acknowledge.[72] So, their recognition of the tension between opposing the oppression and suffering induced by capitalism while simultaneously opposing the state drives realist anarchists away from purist disengagement with the state and towards acceptance of the need to support reformist measures against oppression and suffering. The realist anarchist approach to the state is further detailed in the following sections of this chapter.

While realist anarchists, as anarchists, do not advocate establishing 'anarchist parties' or directly pursuing state control, they do recognise the pluralism of the radical milieu and accept that other radicals will indeed pursue party-based political control. However, when they can contribute to either diminishing a currently pressing form of oppression, delivering 'radical reforms' or positioning radical movements for further gains, realist anarchists advocate supporting radical party-based efforts.[73] Therefore, realist anarchist recognition of the tension between radical opposition to intersecting and even competing forms of oppression extends to support for an

[67] Bookchin, 1982, p.124.
[68] Malatesta, 1965, p.150.
[69] Malatesta in Marshall, 1993, pp.357-358.
[70] Malatesta, [1925] 2014a, p.473.
[71] E.g.: Shantz, 2010.
[72] Bookchin, 1979, p.29; Chomsky, 2002, p.344; Gordon, 2007, p.154.
[73] Malatesta, [1924] 2014c, pp.420, 426–427.

activity usually considered wholly contrary to the anarchist position: engagement with representative electoral politics through voting.[74] This does not mean, however, that realist anarchists forego their opposition to the state. They maintain their philosophical objection to, and rejection of, the state, and also maintain the seemingly impossible demand for its replacement as the primary unit of large-scale political organisation.

Despite this uncompromised goal, however, realist anarchists recognise the need to engage with current political realities, such as dominant institutions, in pursuit of radical change. Therefore, they attempt to devise strategies that can employ the state in efforts towards its own replacement with alternate forms of democratic organisation.[75] These strategies, of course, are not universal but conform to contingent and particular political, historical, and cultural contexts.

For example, the previously mentioned revolutionary movement in 'Rojava', Northern Syria, is currently pursuing one such strategy in the midst of the Syrian civil war.[76] Such a context obviously presents particular challenges and different potential paths for radical political action. Firstly, for instance, the radical change in Rojava occurred during the breakdown of order and central Syrian state legitimacy that precipitated the civil war. As such, the implementation of the Rojavan system mostly did not need to contend with either local elites (who in large part fled the region) or the central Syrian state (whose focus was, at the time, elsewhere). Despite this fairly bloodless establishment however, the ongoing context of the war, increased presence by the so-called 'Islamic State', and the opportunist expansionism of the neighbouring Turkish state, has meant that armed defence, militia organisation, and general social support of an ongoing conflict has by necessity formed a major element of the radical social experiment. Other strategies are suggested in other contexts. Chomsky, for instance, advocates a non-violent approach to radical change, in part due to his appraisal that modern western societies have such overwhelmingly powerful and violently repressive state apparatuses that armed revolution is not a realistic strategy within them.[77] Instead, as mentioned earlier, he endorses Andre´ Gorz's 'non-reformist reform' approach in which certain reforms are considered potential paths to further radical change.[78] The implementation of workplace and/or community democracy through direct action at the site in

[74] Chomsky, 2005a, p.241; Gordon, 2007, p.120.
[75] Shantz, 2010, pp.85–88.
[76] Sometimes known as 'Rojava', this revolutionary region is officially referred to as the 'Democratic Federation of Northern Syria'. The constitution can be found here: https:// civiroglu.net/the-constitution-of-the-rojava-cantons/ (accessed 26 February 2023).
[77] Chomsky in Rai, 2015, p.177.
[78] Edgley, 2015, p.8.

question, combined with support from democratic legislative and constitutional control, is given as an example of non-reformist reform.[79] Chomsky sees this approach as capable of being extended further, to the radicalisation and democratisation of the institutions of democratic organisation and decision-making, to the point where the state is democratically transformed into some other form of large-scale political entity.[80] Realist anarchists do not see this as a short-term strategy that can be achieved in a single step, and neither do they suggest that it could or should be accomplished by anarchists alone (realist or otherwise), but by a broad, diverse, radical milieu with largely shared goals. Within such a 'movement of movements', constituted by a respect for internal difference and disagreement, realist anarchists can advance their case for a realistic democratic strategy for the achievement of radical ends.[81]

These are obviously not direct and immediate, or guaranteed, paths to an anarchist future, and that is the point. Realist anarchists do not hold to a detailed vision of a particular radical alternative, nor to one particular strategy to achieve it, but instead move as realistically as possible from current conditions towards a seemingly impossible radical goal that by necessity must become fully defined in its realisation.[82] So, in contrast with the stereotypical image of anarchist destruction of the state, realist anarchists wish to replace the state through its radical democratisation, supported, ratified and generalised by democratic control of the state and its re-constitutive powers. Therefore, rather than the typical pessimism associated with realism, realist anarchism implies a comparatively optimistic stance towards the possibility of radical change. And in contrast to the pessimism suggested by radicals who maintain their ideological purity through inaction and uncompromising disengagement, realist anarchists are optimistic enough about the possibility of actually achieving seemingly impossible radical goals that they endeavour to be realistic about what it would take to move towards those goals from current conditions.

The realist approach to radical change in liberal democracies is neither a simple conception of revolution nor reform, but rather, an attempt to devise an approach to social transformation that defies this dualistic schema. Though realist anarchists occasionally frame the pursuit of radical social change as "democratisation of the republic and then the radicalisation of democracy",[83] they

[79] Gorz, 1967, pp.8n, 60–62.
[80] Chomsky, 1996, p.75.
[81] Gordon, 2007, p.59; Malatesta, [1925] 2014b, pp.466–467.
[82] Rai, 2015, p.179.
[83] Bookchin and Foreman, 1991, p.86; western anarchists of the OWS generation are, according to their own accounts, also committed to the 'radicalisation of democracy', see: Lundström, 2018, p.56; David Graeber,

mostly describe this process by adapting and expanding the traditional conceptions of both revolution and reform. The remaining sections of this chapter will outline the realist anarchist approach to radicalising democracy through explication of its conceptualisation of reform and revolution.

Radical reformism

> *Apart from the unpleasantness of the word which has been abused and discredited by politicians, anarchism has always been, and can never be anything but, reformist. We prefer to say reformative in order to avoid any possible confusion with those who are officially classified as "reformists" and seek by means of small and often ephemeral improvements to make the present system more bearable (and as a result help to consolidate it).- Errico Malatesta*[84]

One of the elements of the standard image of anarchism, as well as a common element in the 'official line' adopted by some anarchist theorists, is that anarchism is uncompromisingly revolutionary, that it rejects all reformist programs, and sees the achievement of radical social change as relying on sudden insurrectionary events that sweep away all hierarchical institutions of the status quo;[85] or comprehensive projects of radical withdrawal and prefiguration that seek to directly realise a radical social alternative without reference to already existing institutions.[86] This image suggests a traditional view of revolution as sudden total social upheaval and reorganisation, mass insurrection, general strike, mass defection, etc., that not only appears increasingly unlikely and irrelevant to modern post-industrial liberal democracies,[87] but is also in conflict with realist anarchist conceptions of the types of social change compatible with a complex view of inequality, exclusion, and oppression. The fact that the state is just one type of illegitimate institution, and the insistence that anarchism is best seen as an opposition to all oppression, hierarchy and illegitimate authority,[88] entails a recognition of the relative interplay and tensions between forms of oppressions, and sensitivity to this in the struggle against them. It also means that the standard image and official line of anarchism as uncompromisingly revolutionary (in the sense of a sudden, violent, insurrection or total withdrawal) is misleading.

2007, *Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion and Desire*, AK Press, pp.330-333; Graeber, 2013, pp.154, 229; Springer, 2016, p.101.

[84] Malatesta, 1965, p.82

[85] Holloway, 2005, pp.12, 21; Amster, 2012, pp.24-27.

[86] Newman, 2009; Carter, 1971, p.29; Mouffe, 2018, p.46; Hobsbawm, 1999, pp.89-90.

[87] Chomsky, in: Rai, 2015, p.177; Amster, 2012, pp.55-56.

[88] David Weick, 1979, *Reinventing Anarchy*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, p.139.

If anarchism recognises and opposes all forms of oppression, including those generated by issues of social difference and identity, such as gender, race, sexuality, culture, religion, etc., then it clearly demands a more nuanced vision of the process of radical social transformation than a violent overthrow of existing institutions and a rapid reorganisation of society. How do you have a violent insurrectionary revolution against patriarchy, hetero-normativity, or racism? To quote the title of a well-known (within the movement) anarchist pamphlet on violence and radical change from the late 1970s: "You Can't Blow Up a Social Relationship".[89] As some forms of oppression are more amenable to challenge through mass insurrection and violence than others, it is only by recognising that the idea of revolution has to be defined more broadly than as sudden violent insurrection that realist anarchists can maintain their opposition to multiple axes of oppression without privileging some over others. This does not mean that realist anarchists eschew insurrection, violence, and sudden mass revolution in favour of purely reformist approaches. They accept the need to adjust strategy according to the specific context, and the ongoing importance of sudden social rupture, insurrection, and revolution in contributing to the advancement of radical goals and the improvement of social and political organisation. They do not, however, frame it as the only, or even primary, method of pursuing social transformation. Therefore, the standard image of anarchism as uncompromisingly revolutionary and anti-reformist is inaccurate. While accepting the importance of revolution, realist anarchists openly admit that anarchism is also unavoidably reformist (in the specific sense described in the section below) and always has been so.[90] The explicit underlining of the multi-focal or intersectional nature of anarchism unavoidably entails as much.

The particular conception of reformism in realist anarchism is, though, a radical variety. Unlike standard liberal conceptions which see potential for reforms as a method for amending a system in order to preserve it, realist anarchists see some reform as a way to challenge a system, address particular injustices, and move towards radical goals of fundamental social transformation. Like the idea of 'non-reformist reforms' developed by Andre Gorz,[91] realist anarchism sees potential for a radical approach to reform as a method by which to both address particular issues in ways that themselves transform the fundamentals of a system, and also to position radical movements

[89] Libertarian Workers for a Self-Managed Society, 1985, 'You Can't Blow up a Social Relationship: The Anarchist Case against Terrorism', [Online] Available from: http://flag.blackened.net/noterror/cantblowup.html.
[90] Malatesta, [1925] 2014a, pp.469-470.
[91] Gorz, 1967.

to pursue further social transformation. Gorz considered the issue of non-reformist reforms primarily in relation to labour issues, where improvements in wages can serve as reforms that support the status quo, whereas demands such as democratic worker control that seek "restriction of the powers of State or Capital" and "an extension of popular power" can serve as the basis for "a strategy of progressive conquest of power by the workers".[92] According to Chomsky, such measures "may have a potentially revolutionary content" when they are "meaningful structural reforms" that aim to change "the institutional structure of the society".[93] And although it has not previously occurred, "at least the mechanisms are there" for such measures to be implemented legislatively "by parliamentary means".[94]

It is worth noting here that this model of workplace democracy usually implicitly evokes the image of industrial workplaces and factory organisation, and while it is not confined to such settings they remain important elements. Democratisation of workplaces is no less an indispensable element of radicalising democracy in post-industrial society where work has changed and includes much more service work, as well as significant sectors (such as those welfare sectors which have avoided the privatising zeal of the neoliberal era) that operate under the control of the state. This is an important point to remember when considering the radical democratisation of contemporary post-industrial society. As covered in chapters five and six, the democratisation of state workplaces represents both the process of radicalising society and economy, as well as the gradual transformation, and eventual dissolution, of the state through the transformation of its constitutive political and social relations.

Of course, this approach is not confined to labour issues. In fact, consideration of its application in other areas can also help to clarify the sometimes hazy line between radicalism and reformism in this usage. For instance, in environmental thought reformist environmentalism is that which attempts to amend the current socio-economic system in order to preserve it, and radical environmentalism is that which seeks to transform the current mode of social organisation so extensively that it could not reasonably be considered the same as the current model. For example, radical environmentally-motivated reforms to the economic system are those that would significantly alter some of its most fundamental elements, such as its energy, agriculture, and transport systems, and its commitment to indefinite economic growth. Murray Bookchin was one

[92] Gorz in Alison Edgley, 2015, *Noam Chomsky*, Palgrave Macmillan, p.178, emphasis in original.
[93] Chomsky in Edgley, 2015, p.178.
[94] Chomsky, 2005a, p.214.

of the first to argue that radical environmental goals such as these are not only compatible with radical democratisation of society but that any effort to comprehensively address environmental issues without succumbing to authoritarian social control demands the increased democratic control at various levels of society and over processes such as food and energy production, environmental management, and sustainable economic planning.[95] Beyond the mere self-management of workplaces then, Bookchin's vision suggests democratic workplaces imbedded within democratic communities, which together organise a variety of local issues, and in federation with other communities plan and organise on larger scales.

Bookchin argued that an anarchist opposition to domination and oppression entailed an alteration of our approach to nature from one of heedless destruction and exploitation to one of respect and sustainable management.[96] He also argued that the form of social organisation required to achieve such an ecological alteration in attitude is a radically democratic system founded on local assembly democracy that exerts direct control on local industry, agriculture, energy, waste, and of course political administration.[97] This is not an attempt to revert to a pre-industrial system of bucolic village life. Bookchin's vision is based explicitly on the ability of modern technology to provide abundant but sustainable resources for the provision of the needs and desires of a democratic people, and its ability to facilitate decentralisation of industries and institutions and their effective federation and co-ordination. It does not require a mass exodus from cities, the creation of eco-communes, or withdrawal from current political institutions. Instead in an approach to democratic radicalisation he calls 'council-municipalism', Bookchin proposes the pursuit of radical hegemony at the level of local government and the use of this hegemony to further democratise local political institutions into genuine organs of community control. From here the radicalisation of society is to be pursued through the federation and empowerment of localities to the extent that they would represent a fundamental alteration to the institutional structures of society, and serve as a foundation capable of, and positioned to, challenge, displace, abolish, and transform elements of the state and facilitate an ongoing transformation of social, economic, political, and environmental relations.[98]

[95] Bookchin, 1971.
[96] Bookchin, 1980; Bookchin, 1982.
[97] Murray Bookchin, 1998, *The Politics of Social Ecology: Libertarian Municipalism*, Black Rose Books.
[98] Murray Bookchin, [1989] 2015, 'The Meaning of Confederalism', *The Next Revolution: Popular Assemblies and the Promise of Direct Democracy*, Verso Books.

Again, this is not to suggest a preference for reform over revolution, or a rejection of insurrection, riot, uprising, etc. as valid approaches. Realist anarchism accepts the need for a diversity of tactics and strategies according to circumstance. While some contexts reduce the applicability or desirability of generalised uprising and violent insurrection, in other contexts such approaches remain the best or only option. For example, workplace and community democracy could be established by long slow reform efforts by a grassroots movement combined with a sympathetic party in control of the legislative elements of the state. But it could also be established during a popular uprising, with occupations and the formation of democratic councils forming part of the exertion of popular control and sovereignty. And yet, even if such an insurrectionary event could establish such a dual power situation between mass council democracy created during an uprising and the state, for such a form to remain and replace the previous order would require the declaration of sovereignty by the new system and some response by the old. Obviously various outcomes are possible, however all entail some move by the state. For instance, in the face of a declaration of sovereignty by a radically democratic system of federated councils in a revolutionary situation the state might: accept the futility of resisting the new order (perhaps due to a disparity in population loyalty, an imbalance of forces in favour of the new order, or control of the state by sympathetic forces); pursue a renewed relationship through negotiation; offer some partial reform with the hope of undermining the new order by responding to its perceived underlying grievances and also with the aim of creating conflict within the ranks of the revolutionaries; or it might reject outright the revolutionary claims and crush the new system by any means necessary and at all costs (up to and including the idea of 'destroying society to save it').

So whether an aspect of democratisation or radicalisation, such as workplace or community democratic models, are achieved by patient reform in 'normal times' or implementation during times of insurrection or uprising cannot be prioritised one way or another. Each must be determined according to context, and both require the negotiation of some constitutional re-organisation and entails some response by the state. Neither approach then is intrinsically superior, they are instead variously applicable in different contexts. For instance, the Rojavan revolution described briefly earlier emerged in the midst of a nation-wide uprising, breakdown of state control, and civil war. In this context the establishment of local councils did not occur via legislative reform by a sympathetic party but by revolutionary seizure of local control and the declaration of sovereignty by federated councils. That is, they were established by direct-action, as 'facts-on-the-ground' without the permission or forbearance of the state, and they have asserted their sovereignty through defensive force and diplomacy for several years. Nonetheless, for the

system to survive it still must negotiate a renewed relationship with the Syrian state once the conflict has ended, and so while in this context violent revolutionary efforts are more applicable than in the North American context of Bookchin's council municipalism, it can still be seen as an extreme event of constitutional reform. Realist anarchism then endorses both radical reformism and insurrectionary revolution in pursuit of state-transformation, depending on the particular context.

This attitude is reflective of the realist anarchist view of political change not as a binary between reform and revolution, but a spectrum of action where reforms can secure or challenge the status quo and even revolutionary rupture is seen as an extreme form of reform and merely a waypoint in a perpetual process. As detailed further in the next two chapters on the role of the state in radicalising democracy this view is based on the realist anarchist nuanced view of the state and the recognition that in the context of the modern state there is no practical capability for purism – no space for purely revolutionary action, or withdrawal that can truly hope to escape the state's reach in terms of its capacity for reactionary or reformist response.

Hegemonic struggle and propaganda by the deed

The realist anarchist approach to radical reform does not of course merely focus on the transformation and creation of formal institutions. Realist anarchists recognise the importance of widespread understanding and acceptance of anarchist ideals and methods in order to facilitate their adoption.[99] In anarchist theory the attempt to demonstrate anarchist organisational methods or to give examples of anarchist ideals in action is often referred to as 'propaganda by the deed'.[100] Though this phrase has come to be specifically associated with acts of assassination and terrorist violence,[101] the belief that acts and deeds spread understanding of anarchism more effectively than written propaganda is a common position in anarchism, including the realist variety.[102] Malatesta labels as 'anarchy as a method' all associations, events, or processes that educate their participants in the potential, efficacy, and value of democratic self-determination and self-management.[103] For example, like, Gorz, Malatesta sees self-management of workplaces and other spheres of society

[99] Malatesta, [1922] 2014a, p.426; Malatesta, [1931] 2014a; Chomsky, 2012, p.59.
[100] Marshall, 1993, p.9; Errico Malatesta, [1889] 2014, 'Propaganda by Deeds', In: Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, pp.79-83.
[101] Harry Roderick Kedward, 1971, *The Anarchists: The Men Who Shocked an Era*, American Heritage Press
[102] Gordon, 2008, pp.38-39; Turcato, 2015, pp.73-76.
[103] Turcato, 2015, pp.55-56, 223-225.

as potentially radical reforms that can represent a fundamental structural transformation when widely adopted, and also support further radical moves as self-management can help to develop an anarchistic consciousness that recognises the value and broader applicability of democratic self-management.[104] Similarly Bookchin, sees democratisation as itself a potential radicalising effect on the individuals and communities who experience it. Drawing on the Ancient Greek concept of 'paideia' (the educational and "character-building" effect of direct involvement in the *polis*) he argues that participation in democratic deliberation, debate and decision-making can help to cultivate active citizens who are "capable of […] self-management" and self-determination, and that participation in small-scale, face-to-face democracy in workplaces and communities, neighbourhoods and city-blocks, fosters solidarity (or *philia*) between participants by partially undermining the social atomisation inherent to capitalism and facilitating the recognition of shared experiences, grievances, values and goals.[105] These effects - individual democratic character-formation and democratic solidarity - can in turn facilitate a recursive radicalising process where both individuals and collectives develop raised democratic expectations and an appreciation for the desirability, effectiveness and power of collective organisation, and the confidence to undertake further, and more ambitious, democratisation and radicalisation projects.

In contemporary anarchist theory this approach has also been referred to as 'translating anarchy'[106] a process whereby the actual goals and methods of anarchists, as opposed to its stereotypical public image as violent lawlessness and its standard academic image as naïve idealism, are countered with practical example. For instance, OWS has been framed as such an educational effort by anarchists that sought to demonstrate to the wider public the anarchist decision-making processes and social values that have long been prevalent in radical circles.[107] Again, this process is not limited to grassroots organisational models. Technological developments related to the Internet, such as non-hierarchical networking, open-source programming, and collaborative public creations such as Wikipedia have also been suggested as ways in which anarchist goals, ideals, and methods have been, by practical example, shown to be sensible, desirable, and effective to non-anarchists.[108] In this way the realist anarchist approach to radical reform extends beyond formal institutional elements to recognise the importance of various levels of political action, including the

[104] Turcato, 2015, pp.216-217.
[105] Murray Bookchin, 1992, *Urbanization without Cities: The Rise and Decline of Citizenship*, Black Rose Books, pp.249-251.
[106] Bray, 2013.
[107] Bray, 2013, p.112.
[108] Roberts, 2012; Graeber and Grubačić, 2004.

understanding and acceptance of radical ideas required to establish the political and ideological hegemony necessary for their realisation.

Two of the main ways that this process of education and radicalisation through direct experience is pursued are by 'prefiguration' and 'insertion'. Prefiguration is the creation of organisations and institutions in such a way that they anticipate and embody, or 'prefigure', the organisational forms and social relations that participants wish to see forming the basis of a radically democratic society. Insertion is when anarchist individuals or groups enter non-anarchist movements and organisations in order to assist in their struggles and to radicalise them from within – to encourage them towards more radical positions and radical democratic organisational structures. In these ways realist anarchists seek to educate and radicalise through example and direct experience which demonstrate the value of non-coercive, democratic relations on the basis of equality. They form organisations to fight oppression and exploitation and create new alternative institutions that address social needs and which prefigure a radically democratic anarchist society. They enter, or 'insert' themselves, into social movements, unions and community groups, reformist campaigns, radical organisations, and particular sites of struggle, and any space or site which can facilitate the proliferation, adoption and understanding of anarchist ideas and methods within radical struggles and the broader public with the goal that their logic becomes 'common-sense'.

Reformist revolution

Realist anarchists generally refuse to give detailed prescriptions on the shape of a future society[109] and see the pursuit of anarchism as a long and gradual process of trial and error that can never be fully exhausted[110] - it "is not whether we accomplish anarchy today, tomorrow, or within ten centuries, but that we walk towards anarchy today, tomorrow and always".[111] For realist anarchists then, revolution is a perpetual process that can be pursued through various approaches including reforms – a never-ending radicalisation that responds to the conditions within which it finds itself. This of course means a progressive and sustained project that takes gains where it can on issues of suffering, inequality, and exclusion, while always seeking to protect previous gains and position for future advances.

[109] Turcato, 2015, p.55.
[110] Malatesta, [1925] 2014a, p.470.
[111] Malatesta, [1899] 2014b, p.300.

Realist anarchists, however, while defying both the standard image of anarchism and its own 'official line' in their insistence that anarchism can and must pursue its radical ends through reformism, also retain an explicit recognition of the importance of sudden social upheaval and insurrection, even in modern post-industrial democracies.[112] Though they do not see radical upheavals and revolutionary moments as the essential element in social change, they accept that social progress moves by both crawling and leaping. Neither do they see revolutions as final, total, events of utopian restructuring, but as occasional events that can only ever advance partially towards radical ends, and must be seen as transitionary events in a perpetually unfolding process.[113] In this way realist anarchists can be seen not only as believers in revolutionary reformism, but also in a type of partial 'reformist' revolution.[114] This reflects their view of a spectrum rather than binary of change, the impossibility of revolutionary 'purity', and their pragmatic approach to reform.

This position again stems from their underlying values – their pluralism, respect for agency and autonomy, and recognition of multiple axes of domination, oppression and radical action. Realist anarchism is a pluralist radicalism that accepts that not all people are radicals, not all radicals are anarchists, and anarchists do not all agree. In any radical milieu, explicit anarchists are likely to be a minority, and even if not, they are likely to be composed of adherents of a variety of anarchist strains.[115] For instance as anarchists like Malatesta do not wish to impose anarchism on non-anarchists,[116] then, as long as most people are not anarchists, any revolution or insurrectionary rupture that occurs cannot be a truly anarchist revolution.[117]

Therefore, any radical movement needs to respect and value difference within, and individual strains must accept the inability for the final theoretical victory of one particular strain, and the need to argue the case for particular approaches in specific contexts. The way will never be clear nor the conditions perfect for the establishment of any particular radical model without contestation and disagreement. Realists must work with the realities within which they find themselves and respond pragmatically to those conditions in order to move realistically towards their goals. This of course means that realist anarchists accept that in radical reform efforts or sudden insurrectionary upheavals their goals are likely impossible to comprehensively achieve and they must be content with democratically advocating their position and demonstrating its

[112] Gordon, 2008, pp.107-108, 159; Amster, 2012, pp.25-26, 55-56.
[113] Solomon, 1987, pp.51-52; Gordon, 2008, pp.5, 40.
[114] Malatesta, [1925] 2014, p.470.
[115] Turcato, 2015, p.55.
[116] Malatesta, [1897] 2014b, p.243.
[117] Malatesta, [1922] 2014a, p.427.

applicability through deed, and ultimately seeing even revolutionary events as merely another waypoint in the radicalisation process.[118] They must advance their cause as much as possible, educate other radicals and the wider public regarding its value, and attempt to position themselves to defend gains and pursue further advances after the post-revolutionary establishment of an (unavoidably) imperfect new form of social organisation. This radical pluralism is not only derived from a recognition of the composition of the radical milieu, but also from realist anarchism's normative humility, and its recognition of multiple axes of oppression and the concomitant image of radical social change as a perpetual process of revelation of, and struggle against, inequality, exclusion and domination that can never be complete. Realist anarchists then create their own organisations and movements, enter into alliances with other groups, insert into them to radicalise them from within, always seeking ways to advance radical democratic politics and push movements and organisations to more radical positions and radically democratic organisational structures within and between different sub-elements of the radically democratic milieu. They aim to position for future radical gains, and prepare, in the event of any revolutionary moment or radically reformist event, always to reset and raise ambitions and expectations for further cycles of radical change in a never-ending, recursive and iterative process.

Similarly, realist anarchists do not find it hypocritical to celebrate the achievements of other, non-anarchist, radical projects, or even non-radical successes that are relatively progressive and supportive of moves towards broad radical goals. For instance, Malatesta supported socialist electoral victory over bourgeois parties, but also republican over monarchist, and "liberal monarchist over clerical monarchist".[119] This means that, again, over purist adherence to any radical dogma, realist anarchists prioritise the broader advancement of radical ideas and goals of challenging suffering and domination, and positioning radical movements for progressive moves towards the political and social hegemony required for continued radical change. So then realist anarchists do not argue that their own preferred radical actions are the only forms that radicals should employ, and accept that there may be some radical tactics that are valuable but not necessarily advocated in general by anarchists; that different elements of the radical milieu can employ different approaches and fill different roles. For example, most anarchists, even of the realist variety, would not argue that anarchists should form political parties and present candidates in representative elections. Realist anarchists do however accept that other radicals will do so and celebrate their victories should they come. They believe that though ultimately insufficient for

[118] Malatesta, 1965, p.88.
[119] Turcato, 2015, p.157.

radical goals, important support for a broad, multi-level radical project can be facilitated by genuine leftist control of representative government, and that political parties can be comparatively better or worse from an anarchist standpoint and so can be a legitimate target of anarchist influence and support inasmuch as they can help to advance and position radical movements for further gains.[120] In this way realist anarchists demonstrate their pragmatic approach and rejection of ideological purity – a willingness to 'break the rules' of anarchism - in the pursuit of anarchist ends.

The realist anarchist approach to reform and revolution then is a complex and nuanced approach to social change. It seeks to transform society in line with radical ideals in a constant progressive process of trial and error utilising a diversity of tactics; directly struggling against suffering, exclusion, inequality, and domination; the defence of previous gains and the extraction of the maximum possible concession from whatever constitutes the current order; the creation of new prefigurative organisations and institutions, as well as insertion, radicalisation and transformation of existing movements, organisations and institutions; and the use of reform to advance structural transformations and position for future radical advances. And it sees radical social change as a perpetual process rather than event, and sees democratisation and radicalisation as essential elements of that process. It retains an acceptance of the importance of periodic social upheavals that can advance radical movements more drastically than gradualist change, but ultimately only partially, so that even revolutions come to be seen as an extreme type of reform. It also sees radicalisation, in both the sense of reform and revolution, as an inherently pluralist endeavour that one strain of radical thought cannot hope to dominate (nor should they wish to). This entails an acceptance of the right of various radical orientations to agonistically argue for their position within radicalisation efforts and revolutionary moments, while respecting the rights of other radicals to pursue their own goals in a broad project of pluralist radical experimentation which seeks to develop superior forms of social organisation and radical action through practical application and experimentation.[121] This position also entails an acceptance of broadly shared goals and ideals across radical democratic movements, but also values difference, disagreement, and the value of some forms of a 'division of radical labour' across the multiple axes and organisational levels in the radical milieu. For realist anarchists this extends to an acceptance of the value of some non-anarchist radical actions to anarchist goals and movements, and so the pragmatic breaking of commitment to anarchist ideological purism in support of non-anarchist actions that contribute to advancing the broader radical project.

[120] Shantz, 2011, pp.122-124; Malatesta, 1965, pp.81-83.
[121] Malatesta, [1922] 2014c, p.421.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the standard image of anarchism as wholly committed to either sudden, violent revolution or purist disengagement and withdrawal from the state is false. Realist anarchists, as covered in the previous chapter, endorse a variety of strategies according to particular context, including the 'radicalising democracy' approach to change within liberal democracies. Radicalising democracy entails engagement with the existing institutions of liberal democracy in the pursuit of anarchist social and political transformation. The chapter explicated this approach with reference to the realist anarchist conceptions of reform and revolution, which were described through the concepts of radical reformism and reformist revolution. The realist anarchist approach to reform is of a radical variety that pursues social improvements where it can but always with a view to structural reforms that aim to radicalise and democratise relations between different organisational elements of social and political institutions and the eventual transformation of the state into a non-state form of political organisation. This approach is also based on a stance that sees radical change as a perpetual process consisting of unending cycles of reform and revolution. This perspective sees even the most thoroughgoing transformation imaginable from current conditions as merely a waypoint in this perpetual process and so sees revolution as itself as a form of sudden reform, denying a strong conceptual divide between the reformist revolution and radical reform. As realist anarchists do not wish to impose their views or organisational models on others, and because most people are not currently anarchists let alone realist anarchists, they do not imagine any foreseeable revolutionary event under current conditions in liberal democracies as anything approaching a satisfactorily anarchist change. That is, realist anarchists do not imagine the next revolution to reflect their own long-term goals and visions, which are based on the expectation of advancing their proposals within a broad radical milieu and experimenting with various radical democratic forms according to context and through a number of cycles of both sudden and more gradual phases of radical action.

Therefore, realist anarchism also accepts the need to strategically engage with the state in the pursuit of its destruction, and overall advocates an approach that defies the standard image of anarchism as wholly committed to insurrection and sudden revolutionary upheaval. However, this chapter also demonstrated that the realist anarchist approach to 'radicalising democracy' too entails a variety of radical organisational activities outside of formal political institutions, including propagation of, and education about, anarchist models and methods. Referred to by various terms such as 'propaganda by the deed', 'translating anarchy', or Bookchin's use of the Greek term

'paideia', this approach is based on the belief that people can better come to understand the value and potential of anarchist organisational methods and models through experience rather than through written propaganda. This stance reflects both their anti-authoritarian rejection of imposing their ideas on others, and their acceptance of the ongoing pluralism of the broad radical milieu. It also however denotes a perspective that is committed to a long-term, gradual project of positioning and transformation through prefiguration, insertion, democratisation and radicalisation of all relations within the liberal democratic state prior to (and if possible, instead of) any violent revolution.

As the following, and final, chapters will demonstrate, the realist anarchist engagements with the state leads to a particular conception of, and role for the state in their nuanced approach to social change, especially in the 'radicalising democracy' mode within post-industrial liberal democracies. Realist anarchists have a complex view of the modern state which accepts that it combines relatively (when compared with private capitalist control) positive social functions with its inherent violent nature, and that anarchist commitments to opposing oppression and suffering demands a nuanced engagement with political institutions. Realist anarchists aim not to destroy but to democratise and radicalise political institutions and society in general. Where institutions meet social needs, but are ultimately deemed illegitimate, realist anarchist emphasise their replacement with legitimate alternatives rather than advocating their simple destruction. This approach extends to the point where the state itself is transformed into another form of political organisation. And so, far from the image of anarchists as opposed to any engagement with the state, realist anarchists implicitly see a quite important potential role for the state in social change under certain circumstances, including a role in its own destruction.

5 The Radicalising State - Part 1

Introduction

As outlined in chapter four realist anarchism has a nuanced, controversial and easily misunderstood approach to the state, so it is worth reiterating and pre-emptively addressing a couple of issues here before detailing its most controversial positions. Firstly, the realist anarchist perspective is constructed from an assemblage of positions strewn through a variety of anarchist sub strains and theorists. They are held together by a 'family resemblance' and their reflection of the realist disposition. Individuals are included for their contributions on one or more aspects of the construction, rather than with the claim that they each hold all positions associated with the perspective or that any would necessarily endorse the assemblage presented here. Therefore, realist anarchists do not agree on all aspects of the perspective, and as these final two chapters outline its most controversial aspects, the positions here are drawn from comparatively fewer thinkers and activists than other aspects outlined in previous chapters.

Secondly, though the anarchists I identify as realist in this context are more explicit and detailed on the role of the state in the radicalisation process, they are still not always completely explicit, and some of the implications of their positions are drawn out here. For example, though they detail and defend an approach to radical action that includes or implies state action, they do not generally use such language as 'role of the state'. So, if it is argued that radicalisation and democratisation efforts at the grassroots could be legislatively supported by an allied political party, emphasis is usually placed on the grassroots action rather than the fact that legislative support entails a role for the state in the process.

Thirdly, rather than a retreat from hostility to the state, all of the positions outlined in this chapter, from limited and indirect engagements with the state to the acceptance of more direct and active state roles, should be seen as representing an undiminished desire to see the state and all other illegitimate authority dismantled despite seemingly overwhelming obstacles. It reflects a concern to respond to existing conditions rather than be dogmatically tied to tactics from previous eras.[1] Rather than a capitulation to the seeming impossibility of destroying the contemporary state, the

[1] Bookchin in Biehl 2015, pp.238-241, 251; Chomsky, 2005a, p.214.

stance is a tactical adaptation that seeks a way forward regardless of the practical inescapability of the contemporary state and the apparent improbability of the long-term goal of non-state social organisation. By inescapable here I do not mean in the sense that there are no spaces or possibilities for action outside of state control, but rather that there is almost no place left in the world, and certainly not in wealthy liberal democracies where a meaningful challenge to the authority of the state could escape a forceful response. And in such a confrontation the balance of force so strongly favours the contemporary militarised democratic police state that to meet its violence with violence would be either suicidal or at best entail a commitment to a prolonged and potentially immensely destructive process such as a civil war or violent insurgency. To pursue such a strategy without exhausting all possible existing non-violent means, or at least seeking to rebalance the weight of forces in such a confrontation through a widespread radicalisation process, seems foolhardy to put it mildly. And so, as the state is in this sense inescapable, even actions that wholly reject the state or do not engage with it in any way must remain cognisant of the state and its potential responses.

Therefore (fourthly), realist anarchists conceive of radical action as occurring on a spectrum rather than a binary of reform and revolution. As demonstrated in the previous chapter they see revolution as an event of extreme reform and a mere waypoint in a perpetual process of radical change, and reform as having potentially radical implications. They see no possibility for revolutionary purity and the avoidance of compromise, and so advocate reformism and revolution, and state engagement and non-engagement, depending on what most effectively advances anarchist goals in particular circumstances.

Fifthly and finally, realist anarchists do not generally seek to, or advocate that other anarchists seek to wield state power themselves. However, they see the radical milieu as a diverse, pluralist space with various approaches, and that other elements in that milieu will do things such as create political parties and seek state power. Even though they generally do not seek to utilise it directly, realist anarchists still recognise that control of the central executive and legislative levels of governance by allied radicals can be advantageous to broader radical, and even anarchist, efforts,[2] and so see some roles for the state in the diverse, multi-level, multi-site, multi-axis radical democratic project of which they are part.

[2] Chomsky, 2005a, pp.213-215.

Again, the fact that realist anarchists endorse some positive roles for the radical state, and even see value in the achievement of the highest levels of state power by radicals, does not mean that they advocate this as the primary, or most important aspect of radical action, and they certainly do not reductively advocate this as the only strategy required, or as an approach that is in any way sufficient by itself. It is not based on the belief that there is a 'parliamentary road to socialism' or that the state can be used alone to create a socialist society. It is predicated on the existence of a much broader project of radical social change, and it is a tactical adaptation to current realities with the aim of supporting, advancing, and defending the actions of that broader movement and ultimately of transforming the state into a different form of political organisation.

The realist anarchist perspective then endorses some positive roles for the state under control of radical candidates or parties that are sympathetic to the goals of the broader radical democratic milieu. Put simply, taking as given the existence of effective radical action in other spheres – along other axes, at other sites and levels – the state's role under control of some elements of the radical democratic project, fall into two broad categories: 1) to provide support, ratification, and legalisation of actions undertaken by other aspects of the radical democratic project; and 2) the transformation of society and the state itself, through initiating, enabling, and supporting radical reforms that are difficult or impossible to achieve through grassroots action alone, and – again in concert with a multi-level, multi-site project of radical democracy – by enabling structural changes and the legislative and constitutional procedures they require. This chapter details the specifics of the realist anarchist approach to these potential roles for the state in radical social change.

This final section of the thesis is divided into two chapters for clarity and readability. The first (chapter five) provides a brief overview of the realist anarchist conception of the state as a potential tool in the radicalising democracy strategy. The first part of this chapter highlights the way that realist anarchism's pluralist stance leads it to see the state as a potential radicalising tool to be wielded and controlled by a broader radical movement of which realist anarchists are a part, though usually not directly by anarchists themselves. This is followed by a consideration of the boundary problem that arise in conceiving of gradual state transformation to a non-state form – when is a state no longer a state?

The second chapter of this final section, **chapter** six, will, in three **parts**, detail the specific roles that the state is seen as potentially playing in the process. The first considers the state as a site of resistance, refusal, and opposition. This very briefly covers the ways that the state is still opposed

and resisted by realist anarchism. This does not of course represent an active role for the state in the radicalising process, but it is included here to help give a full account of the spectrum of engagements with the state that this perspective endorses. Realist anarchism is not a state-centric approach which only or even primarily advocates state-capture as a valuable anarchist goal. It is still very much an anarchist position that rejects the legitimacy of the state and accepts that many aspects of the radical democratic project must orient themselves towards the state in a posture of resistance, rejection, and refusal. This also further demonstrates the realist anarchist approach to reform and revolution and argues that, in much the same way that reformist engagement can be underwritten by a radical intent, utter rejection can also imply a reformist demand.

This first part of chapter six having reiterated that the realist anarchist acceptance of the value of state-engagement does not mean that they reject or devalue radical action at other sites and institutions, the final two parts of that chapter will address how the perspective does in fact advocate the radical use of the state, and what roles it sees the state as potentially performing within the broad and multi-level radical democratic project. These parts will be focused around two separate but related roles of the state in the radical democratic project: 1) the state as an instrument by which to pursue the radicalisation and democratisation of society in general, and 2) as a tool to be used to transform the very nature of the state itself, gradually replacing the state with another form of social organisation.

A Radicalising Tool

While realist anarchism does not suggest that anarchists themselves should seek party-control of the state, it is a pluralist perspective that recognises that it exists within a diverse radical milieu. Therefore it accepts that a degree of division of radical labour is unavoidable in such a multi-site and level radicalisation project. In a diverse multi-site and level radicalisation project, realist anarchism recognises that some radical elements, for instance radical democrats employing a left-populist approach, will pursue a party-based strategy, and that under the right circumstance these parties should be supported for their ability to bring state power to bear on the processes of radical social change.

One of the benefits seen by realist anarchists in radical control of the state is in the capacity to use the state as a tool to support demands for, and grassroots action towards, radical reform. A radically controlled state is seen as a tool for social democratisation and radicalisation inasmuch as

it can support, defend and ratify grassroots actions and popular demands. Further, it can incentivise and promote such action and legislate and implement reforms that themselves support further radical action but are difficult or impossible to achieve through grassroots action alone. It can also defend and extend social welfare elements of the state against the neoliberal tendency towards privatisation and market control of social institutions, and beyond this it can instead pursue 'socialisation', i.e., democratisation and radicalisation of these institutions, and to that end seize back from market control those previously lost to privatisation. In the longer term it is hoped to be able to go beyond supporting radicalisation of society and the social elements of the state, to be used as a tool for the progressive democratisation and radicalisation of the institutions of democracy and the state itself through control over legislative procedures and the ability to trigger constitutional rituals. This process is not imagined as a simple or rapid one, or as merely the application of a single general model such as the council model of radical democracy, but as multi-level action against various axes of domination towards the construction of alternatives the form of which are democratically determined from below according to their particular contexts. The realist anarchist approach to radicalisation then is to use every approach and tool possible to transform violent, coercive, social structures, into democratic, non-coercive replacements – and in this way to radically democratise every aspect of society including the state. To the extent that the state can contribute to this process it should be used, and thereby the state becomes a tool for the transformation of society and itself, and by transforming itself beyond the conceptual limits of the state it becomes a state that, as explained in the final section of this chapter, plays a role in the destruction of itself.

This is not to suggest that this goal of complete elimination of coercion and violent, antagonistic relations between individuals and groups is seen as something that is easy, or perhaps even possible, to achieve completely. Realist anarchists' scepticism of all forms of authority and coercion does not equate to a belief that all forms of coercion are unjustifiable. Realist anarchists also do not hold a conception of human nature which suggests that all crime and anti-social behaviour would disappear in a comprehensively anarchist society, and so while supporting efforts to reform coercive institutions such as the police, prisons, and criminal psychiatric facilities, with a view to making them as non-coercive and democratic as possible (and ultimately their abolition), they do accept that some relatively coercive social institutions will continue to be necessary in some forms for the foreseeable future, even after current forms are abolished.[3] Similarly, this approach to using the state as a tool for transformation of political and social institutional relations and long-term

[3] Malatesta, 1965, p.173; Malatesta, [1926] 2014, p.477.

reduction in coercive relations until the state is something else, a radically democratic form of large-scale political organisation, does not entail a belief that the level of political organisation currently occupied by states can be completely abolished and replaced by local democratic organisation. Realist anarchists accept that not all problems of social and political organisation are soluble at the local level and so higher levels of political organisation will continue to be necessary in a post-state form.[4]

Even in situations where the form of social radical democratisation takes the form of widespread community and workplace council democracy and the state is used as a tool to further this project by triggering legislative and constitutional mechanisms to ratify such structures and empower federated autonomous entities, realist anarchists accept the need for some form of ongoing organisation at the higher level. If radical control of various levels of political authority including the state had been used to completely devolve executive and legislative power some form of larger political organisation would still be required to facilitate decision-making on issues that had effect beyond the local sphere, and to manage ongoing relations between different elements within a polity.[5] Such a formation as a completely devolved and federated polity with non-coercive democratic relations between the elements, but still nominally within the framework of a central administrative state, could also be used to protect this experimental form from an international system that respects only states.[6] And, as explained in chapter four, when other states had developed into a similar proto-post-state form such entities could extend the democratic federation of autonomous self-determining polities into a larger, genuinely post-nation-state form of large-scale political organisation, as with the example of Öcalan's vision of a radically democratic 'confederal' Middle-East.

The question arises as to why a state would wilfully undertake or support activities and reforms that would lead to its structural demise, or why a party with the intention of wielding state power would commit to policies to reduce that power once it is attained? To put it another way, why would non-anarchist party pursue anarchist policies? The primary point to consider in relation to these issues is that the destruction of the state should not be seen as a primary intention in the democratisation and radicalisation of society and the institutions of the democratic state, or the ultimate goal of the process for its own sake. Instead, the alteration of the institutional relations

[4] Bookchin, [2002] 2015c, pp.183-184.
[5] Öcalan, 2017, p.43; Chomsky, 2013, p.24; Bookchin, [2002] 2015c, p.184.
[6] Öcalan, 2017, pp.138-139, 141-142.

that comprise the state are undertaken for their own reasons, such as the facilitation of efforts to challenge subjugation, oppression, exclusion, and inequality. And they are advocated from a realist anarchist perspective that is pluralist in general and with specific regard to the constitution of the broader radical democratic milieu, and which recognises the importance of action against various axes of oppression, domination, exclusion, inequality, and suffering. The realist anarchist approach to radicalisation prioritises action against such issues in as direct and effective a manner as possible. Therefore, the deconstruction of the state by the conversion of its constitutive elements from coercive to non-coercive institutions and relations can be seen as an effect of the progressive advancement of the aims and goals of the various separate elements of the broad and diverse milieu of the radical democratic project. The party that adopts and pursues such policies must emerge from, and be continually driven by, the broader movement. The 'anarchisation' of society and the state that realist anarchists advocate is simply the combined democratisation and radicalisation of various sites, institutions, and social structures that are sought separately and collectively by the different elements of the radical democratic project. Realist anarchists recognise the right of different elements of the radical project to have different methods and models, and do not expect uniformity in the implementation of radical experiments, or between the elements of any future collection of radical political organisations.[7] To the extent that the use of the radicalising state to transform itself beyond its current form is adopted as a specific goal for its own sake by the broader radical milieu, realist anarchists accept that this must be the result of agitation, education, and practical example by realist anarchists that it is a feasible and desirable goal for the broader project of radical democratisation of which they see themselves as part.[8]

When is a state not a state?

The radicalising state is an idea that contains conceptual tensions. If the radical change from a state to a non-state form is approached as more of a long-term process, to be achieved, at least in part, through the piecemeal 'radical reform' of institutions and relations between different elements of an increasingly democratically self-managed society, then a definitional boundary problem arises: when is a state not-a-state? In considering a state undergoing the process of radical transformation – a gradual transition into a non-state form – we must navigate the tension between conceptions of the state at different stages of the process. Though the boundaries blur between these different stages in the process, these conceptions conform to three basic forms: the state-as-it-is now – an

[7] Malatesta, 1965, pp.149-150.
[8] Turcato, 2019, pp.245-246.

oppressive entity primarily serving as a barrier to radical democratic change; the state-as-radical-tool – the state under control of a radical democratic party, and crucially, in the context of (and allied to) a widespread and influential multi-site and level radicalisation and democratisation project; and the state as non-state, or 'post-state' – that is, as it might become following a radicalisation process that transforms the core of the state itself – a large-scale unit of radical democratic political organisation which exists within the shell of an internationally recognised state.

The realist anarchist approach to radical social change is one which centres the role of conscious human agency in contrast to those radical perspectives which explicitly or implicitly rely on a natural or inexorable teleological process to deliver change. In that sense it does not posit a revolutionary future where the dissolution of one form of inequality or institution (e.g., economic inequality, or the state, respectively), will lead to a perfect political organisation where conflict and disagreement had disappeared. This approach does not see all political conflict as merely the expression of class-issues, and so does not see with the dissolution of class a concomitant dissolution of politics and its replacement with mere administration in a politically reconciled society. As disagreement, conflict, and struggle occurs across various different axes of political value, identity, and organisation, realist anarchists see radically alternative social forms as themselves the subject of legitimate disagreement, and so accept that there can be no end to democratisation and radicalisation, no future fully emancipated resting point where vigilance is no longer required. As detailed in this and the following part of this chapter, this outlook includes the acceptance that radical change will not naturally evolve to a perfect form that is universally applicable and so various levels of political organisation, of democratic institutional means of mediating disagreement and facilitating collective decision-making, will continue to be necessary in any realistic radical alternative form of political organisation. To be clear then, this approach rejects the common anarchist vision of a purely localist political form with higher federated structures existing only temporarily in order to address specific problems. The realist anarchist perspective accepts that the higher levels of political organisation – those currently occupied by the state and international and global institutions – will continue to be required in a post-state future.

This of course raises the question of how these forms of organisation at the higher levels of politics might be conceptualised. The realist anarchist approach to replacing the state by transforming it beyond its standard definition as a centralised coercive institution is based on a view akin to the Weberian concept of the state – it seeks to transform the large-scale level of political organisation

from a state to a non-state form by replacing the large-scale unit of political organisation with another form without the standard Weberian core attributes. However, it is conceivable that the state could evolve to such a non-Weberian entity while retaining the label 'state', for instance, by the ongoing international recognition of an entity that had internally modified its structure beyond the Weberian definition. In a sense this would place the concept of the state as simply the name for that particular level of political organisation (i.e., that between the provincial and the regional or international levels) with the implication that the standard coercive Weberian definition is not actually constitutive in a timeless sense, but has merely formed the character of the state thus far.

This tension is present across the history of anarchist thought. For instance, Mikael Bakunin, a contemporary of Marx and the leader of the anarchist sections of the First International, proposed an anarchist future for Europe. This resonated with the standard anarchist vision of a federated 'commune of communes' replacing the state and the pan-European federation of such entities into a post-state regional form of political organisation. Bakunin however sometimes referred to this model as a "United States of Europe", though this model would not allow for the inclusion of "states as presently constituted".[9] Here Bakunin employs the label 'state' simply as a name for large-scale levels of political organisation, asserting that the state might be transformed into a form acceptable to anarchists – that there is the possibility of creating a type of 'non-state state'. From this perspective anarchists are not technically opposed to the state, merely the state *as currently constituted*. And from this perspective the post-state form towards which realist anarchists aim could in fact be considered merely a different state form, perhaps a 'radical democratic state'.

However, this has not traditionally been the manner in which anarchists conceptualise the alternative form of large-scale political organisation that they propose. Anarchists, including realists, do tend to maintain the Weberian image as the constitutive core of the state, and a target of transformation in the creation of a non-state form. For most anarchists, if the current form of large-scale political organisation were replaced by one which did not conform to the Weberian norm – which was not a centralised, top-down, coercive institution which claimed sole political authority over a bounded area – this would constitute the destruction of the state, as it were. So, for example, if a particular nation-state were replaced by a de-centralised 'commune of communes' composed of the nested federation and free association of self-determining democratic units (such

[9] Mikhail Bakunin in Ward, 2004, pp.83-84; Mikhail Bakunin, [1867] 1971, ''Federalism, Socialism and Anti-Theologism'', In: Dolgoff, *Bakunin on Anarchy: Selected Works by the Activist-Founder of World Anarchism*, Vintage Books.

as workplace and community democratic councils, identity-based associations, unions, civil society, etc.) without a separate mechanism of coercion arrayed above it, most anarchists would argue that this new form of organisation was distinct from the state and so should be referred to by another name. Such a formation may include formal mechanisms of coercion but not as a centralised, bureaucratic Weberian state positioned as a "machine above the rest of society … [as] the federated councils of the workers' commune … is the self-organised people itself, not a distinct institution. It may carry out certain tasks which states have done in the past, but it is not useful to describe it as a state. When everyone governs, there is no 'government"'.[10]

Clearly this is a perspective on state and non-state forms that more intuitively fits with the model of a sudden, total revolutionary transformation – the wholesale and rapid replacement of one thing by another. However, in a long-term radicalisation *process*, we must ask at what point in the replacement of antagonistic, coercive relations between elements of the state and society, and between elements of the state itself, does the radicalising, self-destructive state achieve its objective and become something-other-than-a-state? Consider a hypothetical derived from the revolutionary proposals of Abdullah Öcalan outlined in previous chapters. Öcalan proposes the replacement of the centralised coercive state apparatus by a federation of radically democratic autonomous cantons, but that this system of 'democratic confederalism' should develop within the nominal framework (and borders) of the state. In this way the anarchistic, non-state form of large-scale democratic organisation could still benefit from international recognition as a sovereign state with the protections this can provide from, for example, military aggression by neighbouring states.[11] But would such an entity still be a state? It would lack the standard Weberian features of a separate and distinct centralised institution with a monopoly on legitimate violence but would still claim statehood through the international system. And what of the radical reformist approach, which targets sub-institutions of the state and the relations within which they are bound with democratisation and radicalisation efforts to the point where the Weberian core of the state is itself, thus transformed. At what point in this process would the radicalising state become a completely *radicalised* non-state?

[10] Price, 2013.

[11] For instance, ongoing aggression against the radically democratic Syrian region has led Rojava to call on the Syrian state for assistance in defending the Syrian state's borders and sovereignty, within which Rojava seeks regional autonomy. See: Wladimir Van Wilgenburg, 2018, 'Syrian Kurds Call on Damascus to Protect Manbij from Turkish Invasion', *Kurdistan 24*, [Online] Available from: https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/1b7c816d-564e-4ec2-905c-ca9c7a040b7a.

This distinction however is primarily semantic. As the Syrian example highlights, in the absence of a sudden global revolution where all states are simultaneously replaced by a different form of political organisation, any realistic transition from the current status quo to such non-statist radical alternatives will unavoidably need to transition through some 'grey area' between the state and any future non-state form. Therefore, it matters little whether a decentralised, democratised and radicalised society where all relations between elements of the state and between the state and society had been transformed from coercive to non-coercive foundations is conceived as a non-state form of large-scale political organisation to replace the state, or as a new conception of the state which escapes the bounds of previous definitions. What is important is to recognise that it is in this sense which realist anarchists wish to 'destroy the state', and which in the long-term they seek to implement at the large-scale (currently state) level of political organisation.

For the purpose of this thesis, the concepts will continue to be treated as separate and distinct. It becomes problematic to work with a definition of the state that expands its meaning to include the anarchist non-state form of large-scale organisation. Doing so implicitly defines anarchists as statists of a type, even where the 'state' they aim for is actually a non-state. To collapse meaning in this way would be unhelpful for the argument at hand. Here, the 'radicalising state' is conceived as a state (with still existing coercive centralised authority) under radical control and, or, significant grassroots radical influence, which is undertaking a multi-site and multi-level radical democratic project. Such a form would be considered properly distinct from a state when it had fully transformed all of the central institutions of the state with coercive relations with the other elements of the (post-)state into those founded on a mutually respectful, democratic, and non-coercive basis.

Conclusion

So, realist anarchists see potential for the state to be used as a tool for radicalisation and democratisation of the economy, society in general, and eventually the state itself. They accept that the level of radical organisation required for a thoroughgoing social and political revolution in contemporary liberalism democracies is such that it would require a long-term campaign of action on many fronts and by a broad radical milieu, many of whom will pursue reformist, party-based, and electoral strategies long before the way is clear to more revolutionary actions. As such they recognise that along the way towards their goals, allied radicals may succeed in winning

parliamentary control of the state (or its many levels) and that such a situation might provide opportunities to support and advance the goals of the broader (non-party-based) radical milieu.

Realist anarchists do not therefore advocate prematurely 'smashing the state' but instead seek to transform it into a different, non-state form of large-scale political institution by much the same process of prefiguration of new institutions and democratisation and radicalisation of existing institutions, by which they first aim to transform workplaces, communities, and society in general. This ambitious and long-term project of social change is seen as a necessary precursor to the dissolution of the state and represents the creation of the alternative social system to replace the state. This alternative system, and the movement which creates it, also comprises the entity that will wield the radicalising tool of the state in its final self-destructive act. Realist anarchists generally do not however see the alternative non-state form as simply composed of wholly decentralised and federated local democratic units, but accept the need for ongoing political organisation at the level currently occupied by the state (and beyond). The second part of this chapter will explicate the specific roles that realist anarchists see the state as potentially playing in the long and complex process of radicalising democracy.

6 The Radicalising State - Part 2: The radical role(s) of the state

Introduction

As covered at length in the introduction to the first part of this final section of the thesis, this chapter will detail the specific roles that realist anarchists see the state potentially playing in the long process of radicalising democracy. In addition to the traditional role of enemy to be implacably opposed, the roles for the state in the radicalising process can be seen as falling into two broad categories: 1) as a tool for the radicalisation of society in general through the support, enablement and ratification of actions taken in workplaces and communities and other areas by grassroots elements of the broader radical project of social transformation; and 2) as a tool for the transformation of the various elements of the state itself including, eventually, the core features which define a state, so that it becomes a state that destroys itself. Before detailing these approaches, I will first outline the manner in which the modern state is conceived by realist anarchists and the conceptual model that guides the transformation or social and political relations.

Those roles for the state in the radicalisation process defy the standard image of anarchism but also represent a distinctly realist orientation. As this chapter will further demonstrate, they represent a practical and action focused response to particular historical conditions and political potentials, acceptance of the need to engage with dominant political institutions rather than withdraw from political contestation and conflict, and a pragmatic and non-idealist non-attachment to ideologically dogmatic beliefs and strategies. These roles for the state also represent a stance which is specifically radically realist in its continued commitment to utopian thinking and long-term goals uncompromised in their revolutionary scope.

General attitude to the state

As established in the fourth chapter, realist anarchism has a nuanced view of the state which challenges the standard image of anarchism as a perspective with a simplistic account of the state as a monolithic, oppressive, and wholly negative institution. Instead, realist anarchism sees the modern post-industrial democratic state as a complex entity composed of various elements, arms, institutions, and practices, with both negative and positive attributes. Although realist anarchists accept a view very similar to the standard Weberian image of the state as a bounded territory

administered through a centralised bureaucracy with a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence,[1] they also see this apparatus as imbedded within a larger reality. In addition to the central organs of state governance and the institutions of coercive command and control such as the police and military, on which anarchist thought often focuses, realist anarchists also recognise that the modern state is composed of a variety of different elements. The term 'elements' is chosen here deliberately to avoid a reductionist image. The 'elements' that make up a modern state cannot be reductively or exhaustively explicated, not least because the specific elements vary significantly between different contemporary societies. In addition to the basic parts of the Weberian definition, 'elements' in this sense refers to the various different branches of government (i.e. executive, legislative, and judicial); the different levels of democratic governance from local to provincial to national and federal; the different departments and social institutions of the modern state, such as health, education and others; the variety of institutions run, supported, or established under state statute (i.e. state media, independent statutory bodies like Ombudsmen, etc.); and the various procedures and practices embedded in this complex network and underwritten by (if not explicitly based on) the state's coercive power and monopoly on violence. Just as the perspective acknowledges the various elements of the state beyond its overtly violent and coercive elements realist anarchism also recognises that the state and its agents are not restricted to holders of office, elected legislative representatives, and agents of enforcement and control.[2] It sees all forms of governance and social organisation that are underpinned by the coercive arms of the centralised nation state as aspects of the state to be concerned with, from local and council[3] government to regional and multi-state entities; from disability support to parks administration; public education, arts, and community sport; and all bureaucratic and administrative elements.[4] All of these elements are bound together through a web of social relations that vary from non-authoritarian democratic relations based on mutual acceptance and respect to simple power relations based on command, control and coercion of the weaker party by the stronger. These relations define the nature of the interactions between the individuals and groups who comprise the state, between the various different elements of the state, and between those elements of the state and the individuals and groups outside of the state who are subject to its authority.

[1] To be clear, the anarchist conception of the state mirrors but also predates Weber's, see: Errico Malatesta, [1891] 2014, 'Anarchy', In: Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, p.111. And some argue that Weber's famous definition was influenced by his contact with anarchists, see: Carl Levy, 1999b, 'Max Weber, Anarchism and Libertarian Culture: Personality and Power Politics', In: Whimster, *Max Weber and the Culture of Anarchy*, Macmillanpp.100-104.

[2] Malatesta, [1891] 2014, pp.111-112.

[3] Here the term 'council' refers not to a directly democratic organ of workplace or community self-management, but to the 'local council', or municipal, level of political organisation in liberal democracy.

[4] Malatesta, [1891] 2014, pp.134-136.

So, the state is composed of various types of relationships between itself and its subjects[5] and between elements of itself. The realist anarchist guide for the appropriate direction that transformation of these relations should take – for what constitutes a 'superior' form of relationship – is the question of the applicability of coercive violence in that relationship. A 'superior' social institution then, for realist anarchists, is determined by the character of its formal relationships. A non-violent, democratic, mutually respectful relationship is superior to violent, coercive relationship where disagreements are resolved by the application of force by the stronger party.[6] Therefore the realist anarchist approach to democratisation and radicalisation of already existing elements of the state is essentially that of reforming violent, coercive (and so illegitimate for anarchists) relationships into those founded on non-coercive, democratic, and so legitimate, associations that are not maintained through coercion or its threat. As Gustav Landauer famously stated, the state is a set of relationships and "we destroy it by contracting other relationships".[7] Facilitating this process of radically reforming the relationships between the state and its socially useful institutions, and the individuals and groups that comprise the society which those institutions serve, is the overarching guide for the role for the state in the realist anarchist's conception of radicalising democracy.

Despite this nuanced perspective on the modern state and the variety of elements that it can contain, and the spectrum of relations that can be expressed within it, realist anarchists still generally see the existence of the basic Weberian essentials within this web of diverse elements as that which makes a state a state. Therefore, they aim to replace the state by reformulating it – by transforming the relations between the state and its subjects and between the different elements of the state until what is left no longer conforms to the above definition of the state and so constitutes another form of social organisation defined by different elements bound by non-coercive radically democratic relations. In accordance with the realist anarchist position that radical social change is a perpetual project that can never be exhausted, realist anarchists are not content merely to eliminate the elements and relations of the state which narrowly define the form, for instance by simply decentralising the state's monopoly on violence.[8] While realist anarchists do indeed wish to transform the state beyond its current form so that it can no longer be defined as

[5] By 'subjects' here, I refer to all of the non-state entities such as individuals, groups, businesses and associations under the state's ostensible authority.
[6] Malatesta, 1965, p.173.
[7] Landauer in: Ward, 1973, p.19.
[8] Malatesta [1891] 2014, p.112.

such, they also wish to progressively pursue this strategy indefinitely, and transform all of the coercive un-democratic elements and relations of the modern state beyond the changes that would redefine them as 'something-other-than-a-state', and towards a reformulation of all relations between the individuals and groups in society, and between the various elements of whatever future system of radical political organisation prevails.[9] This approach entails a variety of different specific engagements with, and roles for the different elements of the state in the process of radicalisation and democratisation outlined in chapter four. The following sections of this chapter will outline the ways that realist anarchism engages with these various elements of the modern state, beginning with its traditional role in anarchism as a site of refusal and opposition.

The state as a site of refusal and opposition

While realist anarchists endorse a role for the state that is controversial in anarchist theory, this should not be taken to imply that they do not also accept the traditional anarchist position which sees the state as a legitimate target of direct resistance and opposition. They see the state not as something that radicals can ignore, but something that must, if anarchist goals are to be taken seriously, be struggled against and resisted, influenced and controlled, divided and captured, reformed and transformed – i.e. radicalised and democratised – and eventually abolished.[10] While recognising that radical leftist success in national-level representative party politics is a useful element in the construction of a broad society-wide project of democratic radicalisation[11] (as discussed below), realist anarchists are keen to emphasise the other forms of engagement with the state required in such a multi-level project of social change. This of course entails a variety of different responses to the state and its various elements, which leads to the casting of the state in numerous different roles. Among these is included the traditional anarchist opposition and resistance to the state which sees the role of the state as that of implacable enemy to be confronted, resisted, thwarted, overcome and defeated. As discussed, while not representative of the entirety of their view of the state, realist anarchists still see many functions of the state, especially those based on overt violent coercion, as illegitimate exercise of authority and power. Therefore, they defend the right of individuals and groups to resist the state directly and do not demand that

[9] Gustav Landauer, 2010, *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader*, PM Press, pp.191, 214; Milstein, 2010, p.40-41.
[10] Mueller, 2003, pp.139-140; Bookchin, [2002] 2015a, p.139; Ruth Kinna, 2012a, 'Anarchism and the Future of Revolution', *The Continuum Companion to Anarchism*, Continuum, p.212.
[11] Chomsky, 2002, p.194; Chomsky, 2005a, p.241; Gordon, 2007, p.120; Shantz, 2011, pp.122-124; Malatesta, 1965, pp.81-83.

grievances be addressed only through the 'proper channels' when conflict between the state and subordinate groups is mediated by the application of force by the state.[12]

While this direct action often has less of an explicit rhetoric of demand of the state than the related protest actions referred to as civil disobedience, nonetheless most forms of resistance against the imposition of state power through force logically entail an element of reformism. That is, even direct actions that are motivated by, or accompanied by, an explicit rejection of the state usually still implicitly contain a demand for some form of change that can be achieved by the state either by simply halting some action, taking some alternative action, legislating change, or mediating a conflict in a more democratic fashion than the imposition of force. To be clear, I am not claiming that all radicals and revolutionaries are really just making demands of the state, whether they realise it or not. Rather, that in a world dominated by state power, even the most uncompromising rejection of the state can unavoidably be seen to contain some sense of implicit demand of the state, and certainly entails the ability for some state response (which may be better or worse from a radical perspective).

Most forms of resistance against state power and the various forms of oppression supported by the threat of state violence contain a similar implicit reformist content. Contained within arguably all protest movements, political riots, insurrections, acts of civil disobedience and acts of terrorism, are at least implicit demands and assertions of political value, the advancement of which those acts are usually intended somehow to achieve.[13] These demands can often be met by action of the executive branch of the state or by deployment of its legislative powers. For example, the state is often able to 'capture' and pacify the revolutionary fervour of radical movements by responding to the implicit demands contained within radical critiques. Realist anarchists recognise this, but rather than reject reforms for fear that they might ameliorate suffering and dull revolutionary fervour, accept all reforms offered defensively by the state "with the same spirit as one tears occupied territory from the enemy's grasp, in order to go on advancing".[14]

---

[12] Chomsky, 2002, p.190; Gordon, 2008, pp.17-19.

[13] This point may appear contentious, especially considering the long tradition in social movement theory to see riots as merely an irrational expression of collective madness. However, recent developments in social movement theory have challenged this assumption and argued that riots and other spontaneous collective events have rational foundations and contain elements of political demand, in addition to other aspects such as the establishment and consolidation of collective identities. See, Apoifis, 2016, p.20-32; Vicky Osterweil, 2020, *In Defense of Looting: A Riotous History of Uncivil Action*, Bold Type Books. Indeed this assessment of riots as embodying an inherent, if not always front-and-centre, demand element is confirmed by accounts of those who have taken part in such events, see: Phil A. Neel, 2014, *Why Riot?*, Oplopanax Publishing.

[14] Malatesta, 1965, p.83.

This is not to suggest that the element of demand represents the entire, or the primary, content of resistance against the state. Much direct action and resistance against the force of the state and the oppressive systems that it supports can be seen as primarily expressions of a defensive survival instinct that is motivated by an immediate response to desperate circumstances and could not reasonably be described as motivated by long-term, calculated, reformist demands of the state. Take, for example, movements of resistance against violently enforced development projects, such as the 2016 protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline project in the USA. The project was opposed by direct action and civil disobedience which drew a violent response from the state through the police and National Guard. The core of the resistance movement was the local 'Standing Rock' Sioux Tribe whose motivations for resisting the pipeline included claims based on a cultural and historic connection to the land and the importance of responsible custodianship of the land. So, part of the resistance was based on a claim of specific cultural rights and rights to control of traditional lands, which could be seen as both an attempt to advance reformist demands of the state regarding the rights of First Peoples as well as a refusal of the legitimacy of the state. However, a deeper motivation for the resistance was a fear that (inevitable) pipeline leaks would poison the water table upon which the local tribes relied. In this sense while direct resistance against state coercion can entail a reform demand (i.e., that the state repeal the license on which the project was based), a refusal of the state (i.e., an assertion that the state's claim to sovereignty is invalid), and can at the same time be driven by a more basic survival response.[15]

And this is also true of other current efforts to assert Indigenous sovereignty in the face of large, environmentally destructive industrial projects. Standing Rock is one of many such actions of Indigenous resistance against fossil fuel extraction projects, such as the Wet'suwet'en blockades against the 'Coastal GasLink' pipeline and the Gomeroi resistance against the Santos Narrabri pipeline in (so called) Canada and Australia, respectively.[16] These actions are variously framed as reformist policy demands and complete rejections of the legitimacy of the state, assertions of established cultural rights and of uninterrupted sovereignty, protections of single natural resources,

[15] See: Kyle Whyte, 2017, 'The Dakota Access Pipeline, Environmental Injustice, and U.S. Colonialism'*, Red Ink: An International Journal of Indigenous Literature, Arts, & Humanities*, vol:19, (1); Nick Estes, 2017, 'Fighting for Our Lives:# Nodapl in Historical Context'*, Wicazo Sa Review*, vol:32, (2).

[16] For more on the Gomeroi resistance to the Narrabri pipeline, see: Ian Brown, 2020, *Gamil Means No: An Interview with Gamilaraay Next Generation's Ian Brown,* Sydney Criminal Lawyers; Information on the ongoing Wet'suwet'en resistance by those involved can be found at: https://unistoten.camp/no-pipelines/background-of-the-campaign/.

local ecosystems and the entire global climate.[17] All of these motivations can be true at the same time. Indigenous politics demonstrates the ability to, simultaneously, completely reject the state and pragmatically engage with it, while remaining keenly aware of the reality of the constant threat embodied in its capacity for violent reaction and response.

Indigenous sovereignty is of course an indispensable aspect of the radical transformation of the state. This is especially true in settler-colonies where the anarchist goal of addressing all forms of oppression and subjugation in a non-hierarchical, intersecting, radical project could not meaningfully be said to be possible within the undisturbed form of the colonial state. It is also true inasmuch as actions such as the above-mentioned resistance against fossil fuel infrastructure are an increasingly important element of radical efforts to prevent catastrophic climate change, which is itself an increasingly important aspect of the project. Indigenous politics highlights how the realist anarchist application of the strategy of radicalising democracy cannot be seen simply as the application of a single democratic model, and also that refusal of and engagement with the state can occur simultaneously without contradiction. However, Indigenous politics also offers a keen reminder of the relatively recent construction and imposition of the state, its contingent nature, that political organisation can be radically otherwise, and therefore the need for all forms of radical democratic politics to include conceptualisation beyond the state form.[18]

Even resistance that takes the form of a complete rejection of the authority of the state over a group or region of an existing state, as in the case of secessionist movements, can usually be seen as containing an implicit demand of the state. Through the various legalistic and democratic procedures that secessionist regions undergo to achieve the desired separation from their previous political association, these movements appeal to the state to which they are currently subject, for example, to allow for recognition of democratic will, adherence to agreed mechanisms, or constitutional alteration.[19] Similarly, the increasingly rare case of groups that have not yet come under the control of any state and resist the attempt of a state to exert control over them or their area of occupation can also be seen as embodying the demand that the state limit its claims of

[17] Dallas Goldtooth, et al., 2021, *Indigenous Resistance against Carbon*, Indigenous Environmental Network and Oil Change International, Washington, DC.
[18] For more on the intersection of anarchist and Indigenous decolonial politics see, e.g., J Kēhaulani Kauanui, 2021, 'The Politics of Indigeneity, Anarchist Praxis, and Decolonization'*, Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies*, vol:2021, (1); Adam Gary Lewis, 2020, 'Imagining Autonomy on Stolen Land: Settler Colonialism, Anarchism and the Possibilities of Decolonization?', *Pathways of Settler Decolonization*, Routledge
[19] André Lecours, 2018, 'The Political Consequences of Independence Referenda in Liberal Democracies: Quebec, Scotland, and Catalonia'*, Polity*, vol:50, (2).

political authority and accept the illegitimacy of its rule over that area and group.[20] Realist anarchists then recognise that the struggle for radical transformation requires operation on various organisational and conceptual levels, and the acceptance that radicals must seek to achieve their goals by the most realistic and effective methods that are available to them, including by demands of the state articulated through direct resistance to, and rejection of, the imposition of state power, and the refusal of its legitimacy.[21]

This should not be taken as either a defence or rejection of violence. While realist anarchists generally defend the right of oppressed groups to use violence in self-defence in some revolutionary situations they do not generally see violence as a necessary part of social change,[22] or as a generally viable path in modern democracies. Chomsky for instance considers the use of violence by radicals in modern democracies as patently suicidal due to the imbalance of violent power between the state and any potential armed radical group.[23] So while not a principled non-violent radical perspective, realist anarchism usually sees methods which seek to challenge oppression non-violently and channel conflict out of the realm of force and into more democratic mechanisms as the most effective forms of resistance against threats of coercion and violence.[24] Therefore, the reforms implicitly demanded within much anarchist resistance to the coercive application of state power can be seen as resistance against the descent of democratic politics into violent, antagonistic relations between the state and its subjects, and demands that conflict and disagreement be mediated through non-coercive democratic mechanisms rather than the use of force to impose a resolution. Again, this is the general guide for the transformation and eventual replacement of the state through the conversion of its constituent relations mentioned earlier. If the state is a variety of different elements, bound together by certain forms of relations, and in relations with the different elements of society, then the realist anarchist transformation of the state can be seen as the progressive replacement of the use of the state in violent, and coercive ways, by the democratic mediation of social difference and conflict. This process, in the long run, seeks to thus transform every social relation mediated coercively and not democratically by, and between, elements of the state to the point where the radically democratic large-scale level of political organisation that remained could no longer reasonably be referred to by that label.

[20] James C. Scott, 2009, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, Yale Univ. Press, pp.128-133, 174.
[21] Chomsky, 2002, p.194; Emma Goodman in: Solomon, 1987, p.15.
[22] Berkman, 1937, p.81; Malatesta, 1965, p.108.
[23] Chomsky in Rai, 2015, p.177.
[24] Gordon, 2008, p.79; Springer, 2016, p.103.

At the other end of the spectrum, much refusal, opposition and resistance against the state's violence, and the systems it supports, operates at the level of counter-hegemonic discourse – the attempt to articulate an alternative set of values and meanings to the dominant 'common sense' of the current hegemonic ideology. For example, anticapitalist and radical democratic encampments such as OWS were at once a prefigurative demonstration of an alternative form of democratic organisation, a defiant assertion of the right to direct democratic control and public access to public spaces, as well as a series of (both explicit and implicit) demands for legislative and institutional change in politics and economics, and an attempt to challenge the dominant discourse of neoliberal hegemony and establish a broader public awareness and desire for such change.[25] Arguably the greatest achievement of OWS has been the reintroduction of socialist ideas to a political and media culture where anything sounding remotely collectivist has long been taboo.[26] The slogan 'We Are the 99%' "has been an enormous step forwards in terms of class consciousness".[27] The adoption of 'the 99%' and 'the 1%' as widely understood and accepted class-descriptors in the Western political lexicon have helped destabilise the neoliberal hegemonic 'common sense' that socialism is undesirable and impossible, and that 'there is no alternative' to 'free-market' corporate capitalism. However, OWS was not merely the articulation of an anti-capitalist sentiment in popularly acceptable language, or a defiant statement of refusal without any demands. For example, the radical anarchist elements of OWS who demanded the destruction of corporations[28] were, whether they recognised this or not, implicitly making demands of the state as they were calling for changes in an area regulated and controlled by state power. The abolition of capitalist corporations, even if primarily driven by some form of grassroots radical action, would still require some state action (or even inaction) to fully accomplish. Corporations are 'incorporated' under the sufferance of a state, so the demand to abolish corporations is unavoidably a demand to alter the legal grounds upon which the modern corporation stands – it does not require legislation to make corporations illegal, but the repeal of legislation that allows them to exist in the first place.[29] Therefore, though perhaps counter-intuitive, even those forms of

[25] Smucker, 2013; Noam Chomsky, 2012, *Occupy*, Penguin, pp.45-46.
[26] Jan Rehmann, 2013, 'Occupy Wall Street and the Question of Hegemony: A Gramscian Analysis', *Socialism and Democracy*, vol:27, (1), p.10.
[27] Jonny Jones, 2012, 'The Shock of the New: Anti-Capitalism and the Crisis', *International Socialism*, (134).
[28] See: Chomsky, 2012, pp.39-41.
[29] Steve Tombs and David Whyte, 2015, *The Corporate Criminal: Why Corporations Must Be Abolished*, Routledge; Speed Mosby, 1900, 'The Corporation System-an Argument for Its Abolition', *American Law Review*, vol:34, p.34; Chomsky, 2012, pp.60-61.

resistance against the state which are most defiant or dismissive of the state, are still, if only implicitly, usually based on the need to influence state action.

The state as a tool for the radicalisation of society

One of the primary roles for the state in the radicalisation of democracy and society imagined by realist anarchists is the advancement, support and protection of efforts towards radicalisation and democratisation of various sites and institutions. This includes of course the legalisation and protection of gains achieved by other elements of a broad multi-level project of social radicalisation, such as democratisation and radicalisation of workplaces, communities, educational institutions, etc., as well as the ratification and protection of institutional reforms entailed by the democratic capture and control of elements of the state and its institutions required to carry out these processes. In some cases this approach can be targeted at levels of political organisation such as the local or municipal level, or over particular state-based social institutions, such as educational, health, or welfare systems.[30] However, realist anarchism also entails an acknowledgment that many anarchist goals for radical social reforms require influence over, support from, or control of the central legislative and executive branches of the state. In modern democracies this means an acceptance of the need to engage in some ways with the party-based system of national government and the representative electoral system for establishing control over that level of the state.[31]

One simple concession to this reality is the acceptance by many realist anarchists of the value of strategic voting in elections – a practice rejected by many other anarchists.[32] As detailed in chapter four, realist anarchists usually vote only in order to prevent negative social outcomes where possible, and do not see reliance on radical political representatives as a sufficient means of achieving radical ends,[33] they accept that, when underpinned and driven by a broad and genuinely radical grassroots movement, political parties can also advance radical agendas. They can be used to win control of the highest levels of the state and support radical movements and advance radical policies. Therefore, voting in elections need not merely be an exercise in weighing the relative least-harm potential of a candidate, but can in some circumstances be an active act of support for advancing radical goals. This perspective is also usually combined with a belief that genuine radical

[30] Bookchin, 1998; Malatesta, 1965, pp.171-175; Malatesta, [1925] 2014a, p.473.
[31] Chomsky, 2002, p.344; Bookchin, 1979, p.29; Gordon 2007, p.154.
[32] Ward, 1987; Reclus, 1913.
[33] Chomsky, 2002, pp.190-194; Malatesta, 1965; Malatesta, [1925] 2014a, p.472.

candidates are only possible with, and in fact always emerge from or in response to, an already existing widespread radical movement;[34] that their radical reforms only ever build on and ratify existing grassroots efforts;[35] and that having gained power they cannot be trusted and need to be 'kept honest' by the movement with constant vigilance and pressure, preferably in the form of structurally guaranteed grassroots control over the leadership of any ostensibly radical party.[36]

Again, this is not a suggestion that realist anarchists advocate the creation of an anarchist party or seek to convert the broader anarchist movement to a party-based strategy, and serious attempts by anarchists at gaining political office are usually only considered, even by realist anarchists, at the local level and with the explicit intent to use such power to enact structural change such as with Bookchin's municipalist strategy. However, realist anarchists generally have a pluralist view of the broad radical democratic milieu and recognise that anarchists are unlikely in the foreseeable future to be in a position to exert political hegemony within the radical milieu or to lead a revolutionary movement without alliance with other strains of radical theory and action. Just as one social identity is generally insufficient in modern plural societies to alone secure electoral victory, so it is that no one radical persuasion can hope to dominate the milieu or to convert the entirety of the general population to their particular strain of radicalism.

Realist anarchism recognises and values pluralism in the radical milieu and accepts the possibility of relatively positive uses of state power, and that non-anarchist elements of the broad radical milieu will seek to form radical parties and draw on support from the broad radical movement to achieve legislative and executive control of the state. Therefore, it accepts the need to engage with the state through support of political parties in the pursuit of particular policy outcomes, harm reduction, and advancement and support of grassroots radical action. Realist anarchists do not expect anarchists to form such parties, but they do argue that anarchists should support political parties or particular candidates in certain circumstances. On a harm-minimisation basis, anarchist support for any party should be first based on the potential relative impact on social suffering and oppression. In terms of support for an ostensibly radical or leftist party, judgment on support should still be based on relative positive policy impact on suffering, but also on consideration of radical policy, and potential for positioning for further gains.[37] For a radical party to act as the formal arm of a broad project of radicalisation on many levels, there should be efforts towards

[34] Bookchin, 1971, p.187.
[35] Bookchin 1971, p.188-9; Bookchin, [2002] 2015c, pp.182-183.
[36] Ibid., p.192; Öcalan, 2017, pp.21, 42-43.
[37] Gordon, 2008, p.97; Conrad, 2016; Chomsky, 2005a, p.241; Chomsky and Halle, 2016.

effective grassroots radical, and general popular, influence, and attempts to drive the party towards compatibility with other radical democratic, including anarchist, means and ends. A broad multi-level radicalisation project with non-hierarchical relationship between different elements of the project implies a non-hierarchical relationship between any radical party and its broader grassroots and activist elements. Therefore realist anarchists support grassroots efforts to exert continued influence and democratic control over radical parties, and the establishment of such mechanisms in formal party structures, in order to maximise their usefulness as an effective means of utilising the state as a tool for the radicalisation of society.[38] Realist anarchists accept that other radicals will create political parties, that this is unavoidable and in many ways necessary, and therefore have a number of requirements, suggestions, and expectations, that they hope to have met in order to consider such a party worthy of anarchist support. These designs on the form of radical party for which they have no intention of direct involvement are apparent from the roles for the state that realist anarchists deem acceptable and legitimate uses for a radical party.

The first and most obvious way that realist anarchists recognise the value of radical party control of the state is in the advancement and support of democratisation and radicalisation efforts at various other levels of the broad, multi-level radical project. For example, the implementation of democratisation and radicalisation in the forms outlined above and in the previous chapter can clearly benefit from radical political control at the highest political levels of organisation. Local and direct attempts at community and workplace democratic control are indispensable in the broad project of radicalisation, and the alliance and federation of such sub-elements is valuable for increasing their influence and viability. But to secure such reforms, extend the sites of their application, and protect them from reaction, generally requires the support, or at the least the forbearance, of other levels of political administration. At a minimum a radical party can employ the powers of the state in a relatively passive manner by simply allowing grassroots projects to develop without interference and protecting radical projects from reaction and suppression by other elements of society. The state can then ratify and support grassroots developments by creating legislative frameworks to allow for their expansion and generalisation.[39] Beyond this the state can be used to actively create and foster democratisation and radicalisation action by the grassroots by removing legislative obstacles and creating institutional structures to support and facilitate such action.

[38] Bookchin, [1991] 2015, pp.84; Öcalan, 2017, pp.21, 43.
[39] Chomsky, 2005a, p.214.

In radical environmentalism this is sometimes explained with reference to the relationship between 'scaling out and scaling up'.[40] If a local, decentralised, radical alternative to some social or economic structure is proposed, for example the replacement of industrial agriculture with small-scale, sustainable, community-supported farming, radical environmentalists often present the strategy for achieving such change as 'scaling out' – the gradual proliferation of particular applications of the alternative model. This approach implicitly presents the process of social change as widespread isolated adoption of an alternative model, the particular instances of which can then be connected together to form the new general model, replacing the previous one simply by mass adoption of the new, thereby depriving the previous model of allegiance, market share, etc.[41] Some radical environmentalists, however, point out that in addition to 'scaling out' – increasing particular applications of alternative models – radical efforts to successfully replace large and complex systems also require efforts to 'scale up' the alternative model. In the context of the agricultural example, scaling up entails recognition of structural challenges to general implementation of alternatives, such as state-based agricultural subsidies, regulatory frameworks, transportation and distribution, wealth inequalities within and between countries, and a variety of other issues that must be contended with in order to represent a realistic challenge to the current dominant system.[42] This is also the case for other types of radical experiments in organisational alternatives such as the community and workplace democracy examples considered previously. While direct grassroots applications of such ideas are indispensable and these reforms would be difficult to successfully achieve in a completely top-down manner, there are clearly several aspects of implementing such radical change that would be impossible without sustained and extensive influence, or political control, over various levels of executive, legislative, and administrative governance from local and provincial to national levels. Many forms of radical reform would also require the ability to engage at higher levels of political organisation that are currently only accessible through state mechanisms, i.e., regional and global regulatory, political, and trade-based co-ordination. Scaling up is the attempt to address these multiple levels of obstacles and requirements for converting

[40] Josée Johnston and Lauren Baker, 2005, 'Eating Outside the Box: Foodshare's Good Food Box and the Challenge of Scale', *Agriculture and Human Values*, vol:22, (3), pp.313-325.

[41] See e.g.: Michael Shuman, 2013, *Going Local: Creating Self-Reliant Communities in a Global Age*, Routledge For critical surveys of these approaches, see: C Clare Hinrichs, 2003, 'The Practice and Politics of Food System Localization', *Journal of rural studies*, vol:19, (1); and Keith Warner, et al., 2017, 'Shifting Plates in the Agrifood Landscape: The Tectonics of Alternative Agrifood Initiatives in California', In: Munton, *The Rural*, Routledge.

[42] I am not endorsing this particular project nor suggesting it as a necessary or exemplary type of radicalisation. I merely employ it for its usefulness as a metaphor for considering the issue of scaling out/up. The replacement of the current agricultural system with a sustainable alternative is a focus of much radical eco-activist experimentation, and the concept of scale is sometimes used to analyse the broader potential of such local experiments. See, for e.g.: Johnston and Baker, 2004, pp.318-320; Phil Mount, 2012, 'Growing Local Food: Scale and Local Food Systems Governance', *Agriculture and Human Values*, vol:29, (1).

local, experimental, alternative models for social, political, and economic organisation into generally applicable radical reforms. One of the primary radical roles of the state then is to support and assist in this process of 'scaling up' local, grassroots efforts towards the democratisation and radicalisation of society.

A radical party in democratic control of the state could also take more active steps towards radicalisation and democratisation than merely supporting and protecting grassroots actions, and ratifying them with legislative reform and institutional and structural adaptations. It could for instance, deploy the extensive communicative powers of the state to encourage grassroots action, as well as remove obstacles and incentivise particular actions at other levels of society. For example, returning to the alternative food production context, many radical environmentalists point to the potential role of urban and suburban small-scale food production, community gardening, and 'permaculture'[43] in supplementing food production in an alternative system of sustainable agriculture.[44] However, despite the increasingly crisis-level of urgency in scientific warnings regarding environmental issues,[45] decades of promotion and direct community level action and activism in this local (and sub-local)[46] approach to food production have not developed beyond isolated grassroots experiments.[47] Whereas, historical examples of similar approaches to supplementing food production with local and community gardening that advocates of agricultural alternatives often cite were usually successful due not only to mass grassroots effort, but also its promotion, support, and incentivisation by the state. For instance, the community 'victory garden' effort in the US and UK during the Second World War and the 'organopónicos' mass urban permaculture during the Cuban 'Special Period' in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union,

[43] Permaculture is a system of organic small-scale agriculture that utilises a technique of mixing plants, insects, and animals in a manner so as to imitate the symbiotic relationships found in natural ecosystems in order to maximise efficiency, productivity, and ease of maintenance when compared with traditional western monoculture, fertiliser, and pesticide models. See: B.C. Mollison and D. Holmgren, 1978, *Permaculture One: A Perennial Agricultural System for Human Settlements*, Transworld Publishers.

[44] See, for e.g.: M. Koc, et al., 1999, *For Hunger-Proof Cities: Sustainable Urban Food Systems*, International Development Research Centre.

[45] IPCC, 2014, *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, Geneva, Switzerland; IPCC, 2023, *Ar6 Synthesis Report - Climate Change 2023*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK; James Hansen, 2010, *Storms of My Grandchildren: The Truth About the Coming Climate Catastrophe and Our Last Chance to Save Humanity*, Bloomsbury Publishing USA, p.56; M. Hillman, et al., 2007, *The Suicidal Planet: How to Prevent Global Climate Catastrophe*, St. Martin's Press, p.21; George Monbiot, 2007, *Heat: How We Can Stop the Planet Burning*, Penguin UK, p.5.

[46] Many of these alternative urban and sub-urban food production models extend consideration down to the neighbourhood or suburban block-level of organisation. See, e.g.: David Holmgren, 2018, *Retrosuburbia: The Downshifter's Guide to a Resilient Future*, Melliodora Publishing.

[47] Amory Starr and Jason Adams, 2003, 'Anti-Globalization: The Global Fight for Local Autonomy', *New Political Science*, vol:25, (1), p.26.

both managed to produce significant amounts of food in small backyard and community gardens integrated into residential areas.[48] However, despite their use by radical environmentalists as examples for the power of community direct action,[49] both projects also benefitted from significant campaigns of government promotion, regulatory support, and incentives in the form of access to subsidised tools, seeds, unused land, and educational resources.[50]

Beyond encouraging and supporting, the state can also take direct and active measures towards implementing radical reforms. A state under radical control can also actively pursue policies in support of democratic radicalisation that would be practically impossible to achieve by the encouragement or support of grassroots action. For instance, the general implementation of a 'universal basic income' (UBI) program, which some anarchists are in favour of for its potential to directly ameliorate suffering, de-commodify labour, and make significant gains in positioning towards further radical action,[51] would be difficult to imagine being accomplished by the support or encouragement of grassroots models. More extreme and perhaps long-term aims such as the abolition of police, prisons, or corporate licences, or the implementation of a sustainable, zero-growth economy, are possible aspects of democratisation and radicalisation that could only be achieved through control or overwhelming influence over the highest levels of executive and legislative political power in addition to direct action and popular pressure.

[48] Megan Quinn, 2006, 'The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil'*, Permaculture Activist*, (59); A Bryan Endres and Jody M Endres, 2009, 'Homeland Security Planning: What Victory Gardens and Fidel Castro Can Teach Us in Preparing for Food Crises in the United States'*, Food & Drug Law Journal*, (64).

[49] E.g. Ibid; Richard Levins, 2005, 'How Cuba Is Going Ecological'*, Capitalism Nature Socialism*, vol:16, (3); Jennifer Cockrall-King, 2012, *Food and the City: Urban Agriculture and the New Food Revolution*, Prometheus Books.

[50] John Thompson, 2012, 'Incredible Edible – Social and Environmental Entrepreneurship in the Era of the "Big Society"'*, Social Enterprise Journal*, vol:8, (3), pp.237-50; Victor Rickman Boswell, 1943, *Victory Gardens*, US Department of Agriculture; Amy Bentley, 1998, *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity*, University of Illinois Press, pp.115-127; Carey Clouse, 2014, *Farming Cuba: Urban Agriculture from the Ground Up*, Chronicle Books, pp.132-135, 177.

[51] This is a contentious issue in anarchism, as elsewhere. And again, I am not advocating this particular approach but merely employing it as an example of a potentially non-reformist reform that would be difficult to initiate through grassroots efforts alone. Many anarchists see a UBI as a 'reformist reform' that would protect capitalism and stymie other radical goals, while others see its potential impact on suffering and increase in personal liberty as likely to contribute to further radical goals such as by increasing the generally available free time to pursue a humane and sustainable economic order. For anarchists supportive of UBI see: – David Graeber, 2018, *Bullshit Jobs: A Theory*, Simon and Schuster, pp.196-200; Noam Chomsky, 2017, *Myths of Globalization: Noam Chomsky and Ha-Joon Chang in Conversation,* Truthout. For opposed, see, e.g.: Peter Gelderloos, 2018, 'Diagnostic of the Future: Between the Crisis of Democracy and the Crisis of Capitalism, a Forecast', *Crimethinc*, [Online] Available from: https://crimethinc.com/2018/11/05/diagnostic-of-the-future-between-the-crisis-of-democracy-and-the-crisis-of-capitalism-a-forecast.

Similarly, the realist anarchist position that state-run services are a more conducive setting than privatised institutions for the development of worker-democracy, and which therefore leads to a pragmatic preference for nationalisation,[52] is based on the implicit assertion that states controlled by a radical party can more easily implement the required reforms to establish worker control than grassroots radical action towards workplace democracy in a privately owned workplace. Implementation of radical democratic control of state-run workplaces could come as a response by a radical party in power to grassroots agitation and organisation, but a radical party could also actively propose such democratic radicalisation as policy. Such an approach might be hoped to secure support from radicals and affected workers, but it could also be seen as a step towards further radicalisation through spreading awareness of the possibility of alternative models of democratic management and their application in different areas of society.

Likewise, democratisation and radicalisation of local and provincial levels of government would be likely impossible to achieve without broad popular and grassroots radical support and agitation, however in the absence of widespread grassroots agitation it is likely that a radically controlled state could encourage significant grassroots and popular action by signalling willingness to provide it with state support.[53] Regardless, even the most extensive activist campaign of grassroots organising must, to secure its reforms, either control or significantly influence, or in practice compel, various levels of government. Several anarchist visions of federation of local democratic control, such as Bookchin's libertarian municipalism, essentially entail the devolution of democratic state power.[54] For local government to become a vehicle for radical democratisation of society it would usually require the alteration of the relationship between different levels of government and the redistribution of elements of political authority from one to the other.[55] With the weight of force behind the higher levels of the state, such appropriation of political power logically entails that control or influence is required over both levels of authority to reconfigure the relationship between them. Bookchin argues that many localist radicals assume that once radical local municipalism with designs on executive and legislative power become sufficiently

[52] MacSimoin, 2007; Van Der Walt, 1996.

[53] Again, considering the issue of local urban and community food production, deliberate government signalling of support for grassroots efforts have often encouraged more widespread adoption of an idea that previously saw only patchy grassroots efforts. See, e.g., the effect of local government promotion and legislative accommodation of grassroots efforts on localist food production and urban farming: Thompson, 2012.

[54] Bookchin, [1991] 2015, p.95.

[55] The institutional relationships between different levels of government in modern liberal democracies for instance is usually codified as part of the national constitution. See: Chris Aulich and Rebecca Pietsch, 2002, 'Left on the Shelf: Local Government and the Australian Constitution'*, Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol:61, (4); Bookchin, [1989] 2015, pp.78-79.

widespread, the federal nation-state level of political organisation would simply acquiesce to the new localist hegemony.[56] While this could perhaps happen in some circumstances, recent events around revolutionary movements in the Middle East[57] and secessionist movements in Europe[58] should remind us that such a smooth devolution of power can also be defiantly and violently resisted by states who are fundamentally opposed to such change, regardless of the seeming destructive pointlessness in resisting change. But even if such an imagined peaceful acceptance by the state of its irrelevance in the face of a new local democratic order were to occur as perfectly as imaginable, Bookchin rightly points out that this would still require the assertion of sovereignty at the local level, and the acceptance of that assertion at the national level combined with a re-constitution of the legal relationship between the two levels.[59]

The state's role in democratic radicalisation to encourage, support, and ratify action at the grassroots, is also applicable in settings beyond the common community democracy and private workplace examples. As established in the previous chapter and confirmed by the above discussion of alternative food production systems, democratisation and radicalisation consists of various types of action at a variety of different sites, institutions, and conceptual levels of operation. For instance, Malatesta's rule that no useful social function of the state be destroyed before the existence of a superior replacement entails efforts to devise such replacements.[60] One way to do so is to construct prefigurative alternatives entirely outside of existing models and seek to replace the previous model 'from below' as it were – by making the old model redundant through the gradual conversion of society to allegiance to the new.[61] This is often the standard approach advocated by anarchists, and for it to be successful it logically must lead to a situation where both models exist in competition to become generally applied.[62]

[56] Bookchin, [1998] 2015, pp.64-65.
[57] I refer of course to the many tragic state responses to the 'Arab Spring', including the civil wars in Libya and Syria, executions in Saudi Arabia, and establishment of military rule in Egypt, wherein it has become all too evident that even in the face of widespread popular support for a new political system, those who oppose such changes can resist them by extreme means if they are so inclined. See, e.g.: Jason Brownlee, et al., 2015, *The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform*, Oxford University Press, USA.
[58] Lecours, 2018.
[59] Bookchin, [1989] 2015, p.78.
[60] Malatesta, [1925] 2014a, p.473.
[61] This is perhaps the most common image of the anarchist approach to social change, and one in line with the standard image's depiction of anarchism's strategy of 'withdrawal'. See, for e.g.: Gordon, 2008, pp.12, 34-40; Carter, 1971, p.21; Newman, 2015, p.35.
[62] Graeber, 2009, p.205; Bookchin, [1989] 2015, p.78.

Another, complementary approach is to target existing institutions for transformation rather than attempt to duplicate their function in a prefigurative radical alternative, either by action by the workers already active in these institutions,[63] or if there is no pre-existing radical democratic struggle within them, by the radicalisation of their workers from without and insertion of dedicated radicals within the institution.[64] The clear practical advantage of radicalising and democratising existing social institutions is that through decades of institutional development, extension, and reform, the various aspects of the modern welfare state are incredibly complex and extensive in the sense that they are far-reaching and extremely varied. Efforts to construct alternatives that could successfully achieve the relatively positive social outcomes of current models, even leaving aside the aim of developing superior approaches, would be a monumental organisational task. Therefore, realist anarchists support both the development of alternative models of social welfare as well as the capture and transformation of existing institutions, depending on context.

For example, while local radically democratic activist organising can often impressively construct a local medical centre that meets the needs of its community for general medical care,[65] the community construction of an alternative hospital system capable of out-competing for allegiance the current model, complete with, for example, modern diagnostic and imaging equipment, as well as intensive care and surgical facilities, represents a significantly greater challenge. The accomplishment of such a task in normal circumstances (i.e., absent some social crisis - while current hospital models continue to operate) stretches the bounds of the feasible, even for the most widespread and active grassroots radical movement. While a localised, democratised, and socialised modern hospital system that is superior to the current model is perhaps conceivable after extensive reforms, the current system – which does perform useful social functions - cannot be effectively challenged through construction of local alternatives alone as it operates beyond this level and performs functions that cannot be met in purely local ways.[66] Due to the facts that not all useful social institutions are currently established in a local, democratically controlled model, and not all serious and unavoidable social issues and problems are dealt with institutionally at the local level (and some could not be), realist anarchists accept that not all anarchist goals can be

[63] Malatesta, [1899] 2014b, p.302.
[64] Jeffrey Shantz, 2009, 'Anarchy in the Unions: Contemporary Anarchists at Work', *WorkingUSA*, vol:12, (3).
[65] Apoifis, 2017, p.98, Alexandra Perisic, 2017, 'Overturning Catastrophes', *The Comparatist*, vol:41, p.127; Jon Henley, 2015, 'Greece's Solidarity Movement:"It's a Whole New Model and It's Working"', *The Guardian*, [Online] Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/23/greece-solidarity-movement-cooperatives-syriza.
[66] For example: state-controlled funding allocations, services distribution, flying doctors, etc. While they could be conceivably reformulated into more decentralised systems, they currently are not and so localisation would require duplication of prohibitively expensive services or renegotiation of management and funding models.

pursued purely through action at the local level and construction of alternative community-based social institutions.[67] Indeed, writing in 1924 Malatesta already recognised that "today our needs have multiplied and become enormously complex" and that this complexity, as well as the "unequal natural distribution of raw materials" and the "very density of the human population" makes localism impossible and "forces any agglomeration of men and women to have international relations" and "import from all over the world".[68]

The realist anarchist stance also demands recognition of the relatively positive aspects of the contemporary democratic state. It performs many useful social functions and is open to at least some limited levels of popular influence, and therefore it should be utilised by radical movements and projects as much as possible and targeted for insertion, democratisation, and radicalisation.[69] Mechanisms such as resistance, refusal, and the construction of new alternative institutions, are often insufficient to achieve long-term radical goals, and in such circumstances demands of, and attempts to influence and manipulate the state, must include direct engagement with it and efforts towards its transformation. This includes recognition of the value, and often the necessity, of national-level political control through political party dominance in representative democratic elections (as discussed in the following section).[70] However, it also includes capture and control of various other elements and administrative levels of the state aside from the central executive branch. For instance, realist anarchists support efforts to capture local levels of government for radical democratic control, and the attempt to convert local direct democratic control to generalised local self-management through the assertion of public sovereignty at the local level.[71] Of course, due to the complexity of the contemporary state, efforts to radicalise and democratise workplaces can intersect with those to transform the state, when services are still directly operated by the state. When democratisation and radicalisation is targeted at a workplace within the state sector, and the process is supported and ratified by the central state institutions, then the state's role can be seen as at once transformation of society and the state itself.

[67] Though without such ongoing grassroots efforts, action at other levels such as the state are considered highly unlikely. See: Chomsky, 2012, pp.43-46; Bookchin, [1991] 2015, pp.94-95; Malatesta, 1965, pp.155-156, 186.
[68] Malatesta, [1924] 2014d, 'On "Anarchist Revisionism"', p.456-457.
[69] Chomsky, 2013, p.40.
[70] Bookchin, [2002] 2015c, pp.180-183.
[71] This position is common amongst classical anarchists, but Murray Bookchin is the most committed and detailed modern advocate. See: Bookchin, [1989] 2015, p.78. For an account of Bookchin's attempt to convince 20th century US anarchists of the validity of this tactic, and of his discovery of its precedence in anarchist history, see: Biehl, 2015, pp.239-242.

This form of struggle over the various state institutions and levels of political authority by the assertion of popular democratic control over elements of the state is not confined to the standard anarchist vision of local and work-based democratic control and self-management. This approach can also be applied to other social institutions that are under control of the state and can be seen as democratisation that seeks to de-couple sovereignty from its centralised statist bounds and radicalisation that aims to transform social relations that comprise the state. Again, from a realist anarchist perspective, this entails the demand for, and then the direct enacting of, non-coercive rather than coercive relations between the state and its subjects, and between elements of the state itself.

To be clear, this is a point that usually remains implicit in the strategies and theories of even anarchists who are realists. Most do not spell out the implications of the entirety of the process of insertion in a context where many institutions which provide important social functions are nominally within the state apparatus. Malatesta for instance does not directly state that his gradualist strategy encompasses the entry or infiltration of anarchists into elements of the state in order to move them towards radically democratic, anarchistic, organisation and eventual separation from the state. Nonetheless, his approach undeniably entails as much, especially when transposed to a contemporary context in wealthy liberal democratic countries. For example, he vehemently opposed the blind "optimism that runs counter to present facts and foreseeable ones" by some early anarchists that all problems of social organisation would be spontaneously solved and "that everything would just fall into place, without any pre-conceived planning … on the morrow of a successful insurrection".[72] He recognised that "the life of society accepts no interruptions"[73] and that "all public services administered by the state … serve real needs of the population".[74] For example,

> *the government assumes the business of protecting, more or less vigilantly, the life of citizens against direct and brutal attacks … it organises and directs certain public services, such as the post, preservation and construction of roads, care of the public health, benevolent institutions, workhouses and such like.*[75]

Therefore, before, during, and after events of radical change "people have to eat and clothe themselves and travel around and publish and treat the sick, etc., and these things do not do themselves".[76] "We cannot disrupt them … without reorganizing them in a better way".[77] While

[72] Malatesta, [1924] 2014a, 'Ideal and Reality', pp.451-452
[73] Malatesta, [1897] 2014b, 'Organization', p.244.
[74] Malatesta, [1922] 2014c, 'Revolution in Practice', p.422.
[75] Malatesta, [1891] 2014, 'Anarchy', p.118.
[76] Malatesta, [1897] 2014b, 'Organization', p.244.
[77] Malatesta, [1922] 2014c, 'Revolution in Practice', p.422.

these things are currently often undertaken by capitalist enterprises or the state, in a future anarchist society "the workers are going to have to do them all for everybody's benefit … and how could workers be expected to provide for pressing needs unless they were already used to coming together to deal jointly with their common interests and, to some extent, ready to embrace the legacy from the old society?".[78] To achieve such organisational goals anarchists must recognise "the great significance of the workers' movement and the need for anarchists to be an active driving force within it … We need to get into the unions and start driving them forwards".[79] Clearly, if anarchists wish to avoid "a lurch backwards" due to the "willing renunciation of meager gains made at the cost of past personal or collective sacrifices"[80] which led to the creation of these services, they must begin their transformation prior to any attempts at insurrection or any other process of radical change. To do so they must organise within them, enter the unions of their workers, "driving them forward" to be "as radical as possible" so that they can, when reorganised in a radically democratic, self-managing manner "serve as the essential core vital to continuity in the life of society".[81] Absent the development of conditions conducive to sudden revolutionary upheaval such an approach can only hope to proceed through thoroughgoing transformation of social institutions and radical reform of the political relations which bound them to the state apparatus, coordination with other such organisations and institutions, and the creation of a broader social context where such moves can form the basis of a movement powerful enough to arrange support and ratification from allied sympathetic elements, or resistance against those which are unsympathetic, and eventually to become part of a generalised challenge to the coercive relational organisation of the state itself.

Likewise, the contemporary 'specifists' described earlier, who refer to this approach as 'insertion', also implicitly recognise the need to infiltrate and organise within the social institutions of the state with the aim of creating self-managing collectivities which can separate from the state. Groups such as the US specifists 'Black Rose' recognise the ongoing need for "administrative agencies tasked with developing scientific research or coordinating health care or educating the population" among other things. However, rather than through "top-down governmental control", "these agencies would be accountable from the bottom-up through our assemblies and councils of mandated delegates and filled with voluntary cooperation amongst those active in their field".[82] In

[78] Malatesta, [1897] 2014b, 'Organization', p.244.
[79] Malatesta, [1923] 2014, 'Anarchists' Line within the Trade Union Movement', pp.435,437.
[80] Malatesta, [1922] 2014b, 'Interests and Ideals, p.433.
[81] Malatesta, [1923] 2014, 'Anarchists' Line within the Trade Union Movement', pp.435, 436, 437.
[82] Giovanni, 2017b.

working towards such arrangements they expect "decades of battles- wins and losses in which the popular classes steadily increase their power and continue to demand more and more", but that to begin with their views may not be particularly influential. In time, after "consistent, principled and effective participation" they hope to influence social movements and organisation within institutions "in the direction of being more directly democratic, more combative, more class-conscious, more anti-hierarchical, more infused with a long-term revolutionary consciousness, and so on". Eventually they aim replace existing systems based on "government from above", "with directly democratic, egalitarian, anti-hierarchical and cooperative political, economic and social systems".[83] A similar organisation, the Irish group 'Workers Solidarity Movement' puts it quite plainly in their position papers: "the only way the abolish the state is to take over its valuable functions" replacing top-down hierarchy with radically democratic "libertarian institutions [which] must be formally declared without qualms when it becomes possible".[84]

Chomsky is more explicit on this point than many others, and goes further than most in arguing that anarchists should not only organise within state based social institutions but, prior to using insertion as a foothold towards state transformation, should actually seek to support and strengthen the state. Given the contemporary context of powerful and highly influential private entities such as multinational corporations and pro-capitalist anti-state forces, he argues that efforts towards radical democratisation of state-run services with a view towards their eventual separation from the state should not seek that end-goal hastily. Discussing attempts to exert community and worker control of health services with a Brazilian activist he suggests that such movements should aim to retain socialised state funding of such self-managed and community-controlled services rather than prematurely seeking independence, and should accept that in the short term this may well constitute the relative strengthening of the state against the designs of capitalist entities for privatisation of state services.[85]

Discussion of this aspect of democratisation and radicalisation usually focuses on capture and control of local levels, intermediate institutions, and peripheral elements of the state, rather than on the central institutions of executive and legislative political control. However, some also explicitly acknowledge that which is implicit in much contemporary anarchist action and theory –

[83] Thomas Giovanni, 2017a, 'Building Power and Advancing: For Reforms Not Reformism', *Black Rose Blog*, [Online] Available from: https://blackrosefed.org/for-reforms-not-reformism/.
[84]Workers' Solidarity Movement, *State and Democracy*, Anarchism, Oppression, & Exploitation position paper passed by WSM National Conference July 2017.
[85] Noam Chomsky, 1997, *Expanding the Floor of the Cage,* Z Magazine; Chomsky, 2005a, p.214.

influence over, support from, or control of the central legislative and executive branches of state power is often a necessity for achieving and securing radical social change being agitated for at other levels of the broad project of gradualist democratic and social radicalisation. Chomsky and David Graeber, for example, each endorsed the recent campaigns of both Bernie Sanders (for US president) and Jeremy Corbyn (for UK Prime Minister) precisely due to their connections to non-parliamentary movements for radical change and democratisation, and for the potential for their acquisition of executive state power to contribute to and support the actions of such movements. In an unusual move for someone who still self-described as an anarchist, Graeber even joined Corbyn's Labour Party as the 'Momentum' organisation within it aimed "first and foremost to make the party a voice for social movements once again" with its ultimate goal being "the democratisation not just of the party but of local government, workplaces, society itself".[86]

While the state itself is not seen as inherently an agent of change, one of the potential radical roles of the state is as a tool to be used by a broad, diverse, radical project to protect, legislate, and secure, democratic radicalisation of society in general as well as the radical democratic transformation of its political institutions. However, it should again be emphasised that this potential does not rest with the acquisition of power by individual politicians or their parties, but with those radical movements which they might potentially support. As Chomsky put it in relation to the US presidential campaign, even if Sanders won,

> *He would be alone: he doesn't have congressional representatives, he doesn't have governors, he doesn't have support in the bureaucracy, he doesn't have state legislators; and standing alone in this system, he couldn't do very much. A real political alternative would be across the board … It would have to be a broad political movement … It's a serious mistake to just to be geared to the quadrennial electoral extravaganza and then go home. That's not the way changes take place.*[87]

It is of course quite understandable that the long-term implications of the radicalising democracy strategy, and related approaches such as insertion, do generally remain implicit in the work of anarchists who advocate them. It is an ambitious and long-term strategy which is currently mostly speculative and, despite the resurgence of anarchism in radicalism in recent decades, organised anarchist movements are still far from the point where its implementation is a serious near-term possibility. For instance, Jeff Shantz, discussing anarchist 'insertion' and organising within unions

[86] David Graeber, 2016a, 'The Elites Hate Momentum and the Corbynites, and I'll Tell You Why', *The Guardian*, [Online] Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jul/05/political-establishment-momentum-jeremy-corbyn.

[87] Noam Chomsky, 2015a, 'History Doesn't Go in a Straight Line: Noam Chomsky on Bernie Sanders, Jeremy Corbyn, and the Potential for Ordinary People to Make Radical Change', *Jacobin Magazine* [Online] Available from: https://jacobin.com/2015/09/noam-chomsky-bernie-sanders-greece-tsipras-grexit-austerity-neoliberalism-protest/.

in North America notes, anarchists are a marginalised but "active minority within the working class" which "remain[s] small though growing". Due to the relatively minor role played by anarchists in contemporary workplace organising, and the general lack of understanding of anarchist ideas "much work is still spent in getting anarchist perspectives out there".[88]

Though it is a long-term goal which currently remains distant, the realist anarchist perspective recognises that to effectively replace useful social elements of the state with more democratic systems requires concerted attempts to capture and control existing institutions so as to facilitate their radical reform. In this way all social functions of the state, such as healthcare, welfare, education, disability and psychiatric services, prisons, police, public transport, energy, etc., are targets for democratisation and radicalisation.[89] Of course, the particular form of reform appropriate for each different institution (including eventual abolition of some), or the same type of institution in different societies, is a matter for democratic choice and adaptation to particular, contingent conditions.[90] This means that the process of radicalising democracy does not follow a predetermined path that leads to a universally applicable model of democratic organisation.

The radicalisation and democratisation of all of the various elements of the state cannot for instance simply take the form of a dogmatic conversion to council-models of decision-making and democratic community control. Instead, the innumerable potential paths that democratic radicalisation might take are directed by the above outlined general principle regarding the appropriate relationships between people, and between people and institutions, in a democratic society. It is also guided by the idea that the particular forms of democratisation and radicalisation in any given context or site of oppression should be decided upon by the people embedded in those contexts.[91] The reasons for this contextual and pluralist approach to the applicability of particular models will be further elaborated in the following section, which addresses the final and most significant role for the state in the radicalisation of democracy: the transformation of itself.

The state as a tool for transformation of itself

[88] Shantz, 2009, p.384.
[89] Malatesta, [1925] 2014a, pp.472-473; Malatesta, 1965, pp.171.
[90] Chomsky, 2012, p.66; Malatesta, 1965, pp.21-22, 37, 173; Goodman in Solomon, 1987, pp.51-52; Öcalan 2017, p.43.
[91] Chomsky, 2002, p.223.

The most consequential role for the state suggested by the realist anarchist perspective is as a tool for transformation of the very form, institutions, and structural relations of the state itself. While the democratisation and radicalisation of social and welfare institutions under control of the state would be a major project of radical reform, the extension of this basic approach to the central institutions of the state itself obviously represents an even more considerable challenge. However, it should be noted at the outset that this radicalisation of the state is seen as a long-term, gradual project, and that it is presented as but one element of an extensive, multi-level project of social radicalisation and democratisation. Still, the use of the state as a tool to transform and ultimately transcend the form of the state itself is a project that can be accomplished in much the same way, and for mostly the same reasons, as the state is to be used by radicals as a tool to radically reform other sites and institutions of society. The achievement of any radical reforms that target the central institutions or the specific form of the state require the ability to control, influence, or otherwise direct the actions, and inaction, of the state. In the history of state-based politics, the re-writing of constitutions and re-negotiation of relationships between political institutions has often required the violent seizure of state power to accomplish. Indeed, this is arguably the main the reason for so much focus in radical theory on the issue of revolution, for revolution is conceptually the simplest method for achieving the acquiescence of state power to the demand for its transformation. Within every revolution is contained an implicit demand that (the social elements in control of) the state allow for the reformulation of society and political organisation. That is, that the state accedes to popular pressures and allow itself to be changed - a demand which the state invariably refuses (or perhaps accedes to some elements of in a 'passive revolutionary' attempt to relieve revolutionary pressure). In a violent revolution this demand is imposed by force. In a context where violent overthrow of the state, mass popular uprising, or sudden state collapse are considered unlikely or undesirable paths to reach such a moment of societal and constitutional reformulation, other methods for reaching them must be sought if such large-scale transformation is still thought necessary and desirable.

For instance, many anarchist visions propose the radical democratisation and federation of local community government, and the assumption of sovereign political power at this level in opposition to that exerted at the higher level of the state, i.e., the replacement of the nation-state by this local democratic organisation. For instance, Bookchin advocates this approach with the local municipal level of government forming the basic units of a directly democratic society, while Chomsky adds to this model the self-managed workplaces within such a self-managed local polity.[92] However,

[92] Bookchin, [1989] 2015; [1991] 2015; Chomsky, 2013, p.41; 2012, pp.64-65.

even if such a project of local radical hegemonic political struggle were to succeed in establishing widespread radical democratic community control, with open intentions to challenge for the redistribution of executive and legislative political authority, it could not achieve its aims in practically any modern democracy without first navigating through some form of 'constitutional crisis'. In these situations, the predispositions of the social forces[93] in control of each relevant level of political authority can significantly affect the proceedings and the outcome. If those in control of the central institutions of the state are philosophically and/or practically opposed to the devolution of authority, or other renegotiation of the relationship between central and local government, they can easily thwart, or at least make more difficult, the enactment of such reform.[94] If however, both levels of government are controlled by different elements of a broad, diverse, alliance of radical democratic political groups and movements, the likelihood increases of a smooth, democratic process of implementing reforms rather than a violent, coercive, and antagonistic approach.

Extreme examples of this issue can help to clarify. Attempts at secession by a region or province of a nation-state can instigate a violent confrontation between the secessionist element and the conservative[95] state leading to conflict, uprisings, civil war or complete social breakdown.[96] However, moves towards secession or devolution do not necessarily lead to these crises, and can instead be quite straightforward and peaceful when conducted in a context where the larger state entity is sympathetic to the reformulation of association between the polities, has committed to allowing the process to develop (i.e. holding a referendum), or is constrained by the widespread cultural acceptance of a procedural democratic approach to such issues.[97]

Some realist anarchists then accept that the radical reformulation of political relations that many anarchist visions rely on requires control or influence on the level of political organisation with the authority to trigger procedures of constitutional change. In a world dominated by states and organised around that form of political institution, and where constitutional authority is vested at the state level, even efforts to establish political organisation outside of the state require control of

[93] By which I mean the class, ethnicity, gender, etc. that dominates political authority in a particular context.
[94] E.g.: Owen Hatherley, 2020, *Red Metropolis: Socialism and the Government of London*, Watkins Media Limited.
[95] I mean 'conservative' here not in the ideological sense, but merely in the sense of a state that wishes to conserve its current form against the designs of secessionist elements.
[96] Monica Duffy Toft, 2012, 'Self-Determination, Secession, and Civil War'*, Terrorism and political violence*, vol:24, (4).
[97] Consider devolution in Scotland compared with attempts at secession in Spain. See: Lecours, 2018; Daniel PJ Soule, et al., 2012, 'Scottish Devolution and National Identity'*, National Identities*, vol:14, (1).

or influence over the various state-based constitutional ritual[98] in order to establish non-state constitutions. For example, the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria ('Rojava') was established after the Syrian state withdrew from Kurdish dominated northern Syria at the beginning of the Syrian civil war.[99] With the withdrawal of the state the area came under local democratic self-management and defence, and in 2014 the autonomous federated council-democracy region codified its new political structure in a post-statist constitution.[100] The Rojavan revolutionary movement does not wish to move directly to a completely non-state form of organisation in a context surrounded by aggressive states that would be likely to crush such an isolated, vulnerable, and dangerously suggestive experiment. Instead, the model of autonomous self-governing regions federated under the umbrella of a limited and democratic Syrian state is presented as a model for post-war reconstruction and reformulation. In fact, it is presented as a long-term strategy for the construction of a non-state re-organisation of the entire Middle East. In Kurdish leader and theorist Abdullah Öcalan's vision, the states of the region should be replaced with federations of autonomous, democratic provinces, but rather than seeking total independence from the state these provinces should in the medium-term seek protection from existing states by remaining within the technical sovereignty of already established and recognised states.[101] When current structures have been replaced by such federations within the shells of nominal nation-states, and such arrangements are widespread and defensible, then perhaps steps such as a regional federation of sub-federations that abolished the remaining elements of the state such as borders and central national governments could be considered.[102] However, whether or not the Kurdish version of this radical democratic experiment will survive is largely dependent on which faction is victorious in the ongoing war over control of the Syrian state. While the absence of the central state authority entailed the de facto devolution of control over triggering constitutional mechanisms such as the re-writing of the provincial constitution, the new political form relies on actions between the provincial and nation-state levels in order to ratify its acts of self-determination and secure its ongoing existence.[103]

[98] That is, the particular procedures that a state follows in order to alter or replace a constitution.
[99] Üstündağ, 2016; Stanchev, 2016.
[100] The constitution can be found here: https://civiroglu.net/the-constitution-of-the-rojava-cantons/. Last accessed 26/02/2023.
[101] Öcalan, 2017, pp.42-46.
[102] Ibid., pp.45-56.
[103] Ghadi Sary, 2016, *Kurdish Self-Governance in Syria: Survival and Ambition*, Chatham House for the Royal Institute of International Affairs; Vittoria Federici, 2015, 'The Rise of Rojava: Kurdish Autonomy in the Syrian Conflict', *SAIS Review of International Affairs*, vol:35, (2).

While examples such as secession and devolution can help to clarify the potential radical role of the state as a tool for its own reformulation and eventually replacement, these examples may also have the unintended effect of a more simplistic impression of this role of the state than is intended. Though they are important elements the self-reformulation of the state should not be seen as limited to its 'hollowing out' through devolution and secession, or by the mere implementation and empowerment of radical democratic council model at the local and/or workplace level. The realist anarchist recognition of various axes of oppression, and the retention of useful aspects of the state until superior replacements can be devised, entails acceptance that attempts to transform the state into a legitimate, democratic, form of political organisation requires transformation of various forms of social and institutional relations beyond those suggested by the simple images of provincial devolution and community democracy. For instance, the ongoing subjugation of Indigenous people in settler-colonial states represents an axis of oppression whose radicalisation and democratisation is often incompatible with such approaches. While there are some instances where a straightforward geographical secession from a nation-state is a potentially viable option for self-managing Indigenous groups,[104] for many, such an approach is not a realistic option. For example, in many wealthy settler-colonies such as Australia or Canada, many Indigenous people are not concentrated in a specific region with sufficient demographic dominance that they could implement community democracy as a form of self-determination that could support efforts to secede.[105] For instance, for those whose traditional lands are currently the site of major cities populated by millions of non-indigenous settlers the simplistic approach of geographical secession or even devolution is a practical impossibility. And of course, to suggest that such groups should leave the cities that occupy their traditional lands to concentrate in a specific area in order to pursue secession is a grossly insensitive and frankly repugnant alternative, especially in the context of the usual colonial-settler history of dispossession and removal. Radical control of the state, however, could still seek to transform – to radically democratise — relations between the state and Indigenous peoples to an extent that would too represent an element of the complex and difficult task of democratic state dissolution.

---

[104] One example of such is the 'Zapatista' movement in Mexico. Here the Indigenous inhabitants of the Lacandon jungle in Chiapas rose up against the state and demanded their right to autonomy and self-governance. See: Gustavo Esteva, 1999, 'The Zapatistas and People's Power', *Capital & Class*, vol:23, (2); Neil Harvey, 1998, *The Chiapas Rebellion: The Struggle for Land and Democracy*, Duke University Press; Staughton Lynd and Andrej Grubačić, 2008, *Wobblies and Zapatistas: Conversations on Anarchism, Marxism, and Radical History*, PM Press; Gloria Muñoz Ramírez, 2008, *The Fire and the Word: A History of the Zapatista Movement*, City Lights Books.

[105] Sarah Maddison, 2009, *Black Politics: Inside the Complexity of Aboriginal Political Culture*, Allen & Unwin, pp.48-51; Vojislav Stanovčić, 1992, 'Problems and Options in Institutionalizing Ethnic Relations', *International Political Science Review*, vol:13, (4).

This example demonstrates the problems with demanding from realist anarchists a 'clear model' of the particular social change that is proposed. A radical vision that seeks to accommodate all potential axes of oppression and subjugation is immeasurably more complicated than an approach to social change conceptualised around one, or even a small few, forms of oppression and fields of radical action. The particular form that radical transformation takes must be determined democratically and in response to particular and contingent historical and cultural conditions, and with regard to the specific form of subjugation that is being opposed or institution that is being transformed. Obviously the realist anarchist approach to the state as a tool of transformation of its own institutions cannot simply be envisioned as the application of a single model. It can however, be guided by a general theoretical principle. As suggested above, the replacement of illegitimate state relations with its subjects, or groups thereof, with legitimate relations and institutions based on such relations is guided by the goal of establishing democratic, non-coercive, non-violent, relations between elements of society and the state rather than violent and coercive relations. In the context of the example of state relations with Indigenous people in settler-colonial societies, clearly approaches such as the application of a local council model or regional secession are by themselves insufficient to effectively address the problems of self-determination and representation of a dispersed and minority population.[106] Obviously the form of self-organisation and democratisation appropriate for such groups should be the concern of the groups themselves, but the form of relations between a democratically self-determining group and the state that it exists within require action at a level beyond the group, especially influence or control over the institutional basis for those relations between the group and the state.

For the relationship between such a group and the state to conform to the realist anarchist guide to relatively legitimate social and political relations, however, requires the state to accept the limits of legitimate state interaction with the group and the abandonment of methods and institutions based on coercive authority. Beyond simply valuing conflict and preserving space for its democratic expression, agonistic, rather than antagonistic, relations[107] also require that the more

[106] Again, this is not to say that such approaches are not sometimes applicable, merely that they alone are not usually sufficient.

[107] Anarchists do not generally employ these labels but do address this conceptual division in relations in the same way albeit in different language. For instance, Martin Buber, following of from Landauer's position on the modification of the relations that make up the state from illegitimate to legitimate relations, explains the difference as one between 'social' and 'political' relations, where the latter is defined by domination and violent, coercive use of force, and the former a democratic, non-coercive, form of common action which respects the independence and difference of its constitutive elements. See: Martin Buber in: Ward, 1973, pp.19-20.

powerful party forgo the resolution of disagreement by the mere application of force. In the context of Indigenous relations with the state this would entail the complete relinquishment by the state of its right to impose legislation on the group; abolition of paternalistic and punitive institutions vested with the authority to coercively implement such legislation;[108] and constitutional protection of the group's right to democratic self-management of its own affairs.[109] These antagonistic arms of the state could be replaced with agonistic institutions that accepted the limits of their authority as the democratic negotiation and mediation of the relations between the state and another sovereign democratic body existing within the same territory. This vision could be seen as similar to the relationship between a devolved polity and the state within which they still technically exist, albeit without the strictly bounded territorial element dividing the two sides of the relationship. Therefore, while such a process would begin as a modification of the relations between the group and the state *within the framework of the state,* it aims in the long-term towards dissolution of hierarchical relations between the parties and eventually, by the same process in other areas, towards the dissolution of the state itself.

A similar approach might be employed in addressing the issue of religious, or cultural identity. Again, in some circumstances such groups could perhaps pursue a path of simple geographical secession or devolution in order to alter their relationship with the state from one of subordination and coercion to one of mutual respect and non-coercive, democratic relations. However, for most religious minorities such an option is unviable, given the minority status of the group which makes axiomatically impossible the approach of establishing a claim for secession based on demographic dominance and concentration in a specific democratically self-managed geographical region. Such groups clearly must pursue other strategies in democratising their relations with the state. For example, in Rojava's democratic confederalist system, the issue of democratic relations on a non-coercive basis between religious minorities and the state (and each other) is a major concern. In all of the cantons (sub-regional units of democratic organisation) in the Democratic Confederation of Northern Syria (DCNS) there exists a variety of different religions, sub-sects of individual religions, and cultural groups with a complicated history of interaction (sometimes conflict) with each other. In order to radically democratise relations (and move towards non-coercive coexistence) between these groups and the state in a context where federated self-management

[108] I.e.: the institutional descendants of colonial bodies such as various 'Ministries' and 'Departments' for Indigenous, Aboriginal, or 'Native' affairs in settler–colonial societies. See, e.g.: Maddison, 2009, Black Politics, pp.2-3; James Tully, 2008, *Public Philosophy in a New Key: Volume 1, Democracy and Civic Freedom*, Cambridge University Press, p.226.
[109] Tully, 2008, Vol 1, Ch.8.

based on geographical separation is neither feasible nor desirable, the DCNS instead employs overlapping systems of federation, self-management and democratic mediation of disagreement. This includes both local councils of direct-democratic self-management based on geographical region, which are themselves balanced with permanent representative positions for different religious groups drawn from their own local councils (in addition to there being a constitutionally guaranteed balance of gender roles at all levels of the confederalist system), as well as specific representation for different religious and cultural groups at the other levels of federation and democratic organisation beyond the local councils. Different religious and cultural groups then have their own forms of democratic self-management, according to their own designs, integrated and overlapping with the broader system of federated democratic self-management at every level from the local to overarching regional bodies.[110] While such models of radical democratisation as Indigenous self-management in settler-colonial societies or representation of religious and cultural minorities in general require grassroots action towards democratic self-organisation and assertion of sovereignty, such moves are by themselves insufficient to reformulate the relationship between such a democratic organisation and the state.[111] Just as with the ostensibly simpler idea of geographical secession or devolution, the attitude of the social forces in control of the state to such radical democratisation has significant bearing on the feasibility of the approach. To successfully pursue such a strategy requires the control, by some political force sympathetic to such moves, of the level of state political authority necessary to trigger the constitutional rituals required to ratify and codify the reformation of the relationship on a non-coercive democratic basis.

The strategy of radicalising democracy is a project which is ambitious and never ending, and many other examples could be given to demonstrate its complexity, and particularly that it cannot be conceived as the application of a single model. As well as racial, cultural, and religious identities, subjugation and inequality based on differences in sex, sexuality, gender and ability are so intrinsically socially dispersed that addressing them, as the project must, requires a conceptualisation of radically democratic anarchism that goes beyond decision-making models.

[110] See: Öcalan, 2017, p.43; Üstündağ, 2016, p.203.

[111] This is clear from the fact that despite significant efforts towards democratic self-organisation and demands for recognition by Indigenous groups in various countries the change desired by those groups is often resisted by the state and so is usually unfulfilled. Moves towards democratic recognition in this context, such as they are, are often limited to a 'consultative' relationship with the state that is still ultimately underpinned by the ongoing antagonistic authority of the state over the group. See, e.g.: Stephen Ellicott Cornell, 2006, *Indigenous Peoples, Poverty and Self-Determination in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States*, Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management, and Policy, pp.6-11; Hannum, 2011, pp.95, 98-103; Megan Davis, 2018, 'The Long Road to Uluru: Walking Together: Truth before Justice'*, Griffith Review*, (60).

And though tackling them has long been, and will continue to be, primarily the work of activists outside of the state, patriarchy, heteronormativity, trans exclusion and discrimination against disability are systemic and embedded in political and legal systems. Therefore, the state must in the end again play the role of respondent to the popular pressure created by activists and movements and ratify their prefigurative changes and/or accede to their demands by repealing or passing legislation. All these separate but overlapping and interweaving aspects of the realist anarchist conception of the broad project of radicalising democracy of course coexist and are integrated, in both strategy and broad future models, with the more traditional examples of workplace and community self-management discussed earlier. These more traditional sites of struggle also of course entail a self-destructive role for the state in the process, especially when for instance the struggle occurs within a workplace which is also a social welfare institution controlled by the state, or which is a target for nationalisation (or re-nationalisation) as an element of the long struggle towards anarchist democratisation and radicalisation.

The final conceptual step (though not necessarily the chronologically last step) in the radical democratic and realist anarchist approach to the dissolution of the state is the abolition or the radical transformation of the actual elements of the state directly dedicated to coercion and the application of force - the police and other state security forces, prison industry, and armed forces. If the general guide for the overall process is the transformation of the relations between the elements that constitute the state, and between the state and a radically democratic self-managing society, from coercive to non-coercive relations, then the transformation of the arms of coercion themselves is required for the process to be considered to have created something-other-than a state. Though perhaps among the most practically difficult aspects of a radicalisation process, abolition of police and prisons is theoretically comparatively straightforward. Although anarchism has a long history of abolitionism, it has historically been primarily conceptualised as part of a violent revolution where such institutions are simply swept away. However, there is too a non-anarchist abolitionist literature (and activist movement) which has given extensive consideration to the task of abolition without revolution and within contemporary liberal democratic states, and which is compatible and complementary to the realist anarchist and radical democratic approaches to radicalising democracy. Indeed, leading abolitionist theorist Ruth Wilson Gilmore, like Chomsky, also employs the Gorzian distinction between reformist and non-reformist reforms to describe this process,[112] and argues for a broad ranging project of social change external to the state in order to create conditions where police and prisons are not required. So, like realist

[112] Gilmore, 2007, p.242.

anarchists, Gilmore imagines that the majority of abolitionist work must occur by a committed activist and social movement, but that, as it does not rely on violent revolution to achieve, the state must in the end play a role in ratifying and legalising those efforts by the abolitionist movement and pass the legislation to abolish the carceral institutions.[113] In doing so it plays the role of a state that dissolves core elements of itself towards the creation of a new form of political organisation.

A common objection levelled at the abolitionist position in anarchism as well as within contemporary abolitionism is the problem of 'extreme cases'. This is also an objection levelled at the anarchist general distaste for coercive authority,[114] and the replacement of coercive with non-coercive relations as the guide for the process of radicalising democracy — if we abolish prisons and police then what about sexual predators, serial killers and mass murderers; if all groups and individuals can self-organise and demand non-coercive relations what about fascists and paedophiles? These objections however misunderstand the abolitionist perspective, which accepts that there will continue to be the need for the ability to respond to extremely violent and anti-social behaviour with coercion and isolation if necessary, though it should take a very different form to that which currently exists.[115] Though they recognise that the vast majority of 'crime' is property (or 'drugs' i.e. illicit property) and class related,[116] and therefore open to elimination through social reorganisation, realist anarchists do not have a view of human nature as essentially benevolent where all crime is due to the corruption of society and so do not argue that all forms of anti-social behaviour or violent psychiatric conditions would disappear in an anarchist society and accept that some relatively coercive institutions would likely be required in any social structure to respond to the threat and effects of violent crime,[117] as well as to counter-revolutionary reaction.[118]

Similarly, the perspective is not principally non-violent – it does accept the need for violence in self-defence – and does not extend democratic, non-coercive relations to those who are opposed to them in principle.[119] And so they accept that the preservation of a general condition consisting of non-coercive democratic relations sometimes requires the coercion of anti-social, violent,

[113] Ruth Wilson Gilmore and Craig Gilmore, 2013, 'Restating the Obvious', *Indefensible Space*, Routledge, p.145.
[114] Malatesta 1965, p.105.
[115] Malatesta 1965, p.173; Malatesta, [1926] 2014, p.477.
[116] Malatesta, 1965, pp.106-107.
[117] Malatesta, 1965, p.109.
[118] Errico Malatesta, [1909] 2014, 'Anarchists and the Situation', In: Turcato (ed.), *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, p.346.
[119] Chomsky 2002, pp.193-194; Gordon, 2008, pp.99-102.

antagonistic elements. For instance, they do not extend democratic respect to fascists whose professed goal is the destruction of democracy and implementation of dictatorship.[120] Likewise, they recognise that individuals and groups that threaten general ongoing democratic relations with violent, anti-social behaviour, such as for instance physical assault, murder, and rape, are the legitimate targets of organised coercion, though it is of course imagined to take a much different form than that which currently exists.[121] Malatesta again is characteristically forthright on this issue and scathingly critical of those leave aside "all practical questions", imagining that such matters "will resolve themselves or be resolved by future generations".[122] He believed that "you cannot clear the decks and leave them bare if people are living on them", and that "it would be very difficult to find any present institution, including the worst of them … that does not respond, directly or indirectly, to a social need".[123] And so he argues:

> *Of course, let us abolish the gendarme…By all means let us destroy the gaols … But in the case of, say, some satyr who rapes and tortures the little bodies of children, there has to be some means of preventing him from doing harm if he is not to make other victims before falling to lynch violence. Shall we leave such a problem to our descendants? Surely not. We must concern ourselves with it now, because these things are happening now.*[124]

Aside from these issues of violent anti-social behaviour however, it may be asked what the limit is to this process of self-determination. If one group can reject the legitimacy of the state and demand non-hierarchical, non-coercive, democratic relations at what point does the right for other groups to similarly assert a right to self-determination and non-coercive relations with the state and other elements of society end? The realist anarchist answer would be that in theory it doesn't. The radical democratic state has no general right to coercive, antagonistic relations with its subjects; or rather the radical democratic (post/non-)state has no right to subjects. If the extent to which the state is indeed a state and not some other form of political organisation depends on its authority to employ violent coercion in its relations with individuals and groups within its territory then realist anarchists propose the replacement of the relations that thus comprise the state until that which remains is a different form of political organisation - one whose primary purpose is the agonistic mediation of difference and conflict between different elements of a democratically self-managed society. Realist anarchists would generally prefer that this process be advanced by action that does not rely on particular parties achieving political power, but through decision-making mechanisms

[120] Mark Bray, 2017, *Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook*, Melville House, p.100.
[121] Malatesta, [1926] 2014, p.477; Malatesta 1965, pp.105-106.
[122] Malatesta, [1926] 2014, p.478.
[123] Ibid., p.476.
[124] Ibid., p.477.

open to popular and grassroots radical influence, such as through mechanisms secured by previous radical democratic reforms.[125]

However, popular decision-making mechanisms such as citizen-initiated referenda and deliberative assemblies constructed by sortition,[126] or radical mechanisms such as workplace or community direct democracy, usually require party control over the triggering of constitutional mechanisms to be ratified and legalised, or even instituted in the first place. Where there are no citizen initiated legislative and executive mechanisms, their creation requires the willingness of a party to legislate them into existence or otherwise pursue the appropriate constitutional procedures to secure their legitimacy. Often, processes such as referenda must be initiated in order to establish or legitimise a new popular decision-making mechanism before it can be used as an instrument to pursue further radicalisation and democratisation, and for such mechanisms to be utilised to transform the state into a radically democratic alternative form of political organisation. So, the radicalising democracy strategy entails a long process of radicalisation through construction of prefigurative institutions, democratisation and radicalisation of workplaces, communities and society in general including insertion into and democratisation of the peripheral elements of the modern state. Simultaneously it presumes that there had also been a long process of propagation and education (especially education-by-experience) whereby the value and potential of radical democratisation had become hegemonic 'common-sense'. Following these long-term aspects of the project realist anarchists envision the use of the state as a self-destructive tool through the use of its legislative and constitutional mechanisms to reconstitute itself in a non-state form either within the shell of its former state identity or in federation with similar regional or international entities.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the realist anarchist approach to the various potential positive radical roles for the state: encouraging, incentivising, protecting, supporting, and ratifying action at other levels of the broad project of radicalisation; implementing radicalisations that while technically not requiring a state (i.e. they could be achieved in a post-state radical democracy) are currently unfeasible through grassroots action alone; transforming (in concert with action at other levels) social institutions; and transforming the central institutions of the democratic state.

[125] Bookchin, [2002] 2015b, pp.29-30.
[126] I.e., selection by lot, rather than election. See: David Van Reybrouck, 2018, *Against Elections*, Seven Stories Press.

These realist anarchist approaches to the state as a target for resistance and transformation, and as a tool for the radicalisation and transformation of society and the state itself, logically imply a specific realist anarchist conception of the radical state. The state is still seen as illegitimate and the coercive logic of the state as an illegitimate mode of political organisation and social relation. It is still seen as a repressive and anti-revolutionary institution that is to be generally opposed, but under certain circumstances the realist anarchist radical democratic state is a *radicalising* state which is conceived as an instrument to be employed in the process of democratisation and radicalisation of society, democracy, and the state itself. The conditions for such a radicalising state to be recognised are demanding. It is considered possible only after a long and widespread campaign of movement building, education, and organisation which had engaged in prefiguration, democratisation and radicalisation efforts at multiple sites of struggle and levels of society. The use of the state as a radicalising tool then relies on the existence of a broad movement of movements to drive the allied or sympathetic party that controls the state towards the radical reform of all aspects of society. Likewise, it is only after the state has been effectively employed as a tool for ratification of efforts taken at other sites of action and for the democratisation and radicalisation of the peripheral elements of the state, and when such processes had become widely accepted and supported, that the process is imagined to be turned towards the dissolution of the core elements of the state itself. As the perspective is realist it of course responds to particular circumstances and recognises the constancy of social and political change, and so it is recognised that progress could be interrupted suddenly by a dramatic change of conditions, which could significantly alter the process, either by creating setbacks and obstacles, or by providing opportunities for acceleration of some of its aspects. However, the radicalising democracy strategy is specifically developed for the context of modern liberal democracy and, given the continuation of the current conditions in such societies, is assumed to be a very long-term and ambitious process.

This approach defies the most substantive and enduring elements of the standard academic image of anarchism. Realist anarchists are not bound by a simplistic and purist rejection of the state and all interaction with it. Nor are they committed to sudden violent revolution, insurrectionary upheaval, the spontaneous emergence of anarchist social order, or withdrawal to apolitical lifestylism. Instead, their perspective embodies the application of political realism to the task of anarchist social transformation. In its conception of the liberal democratic state as a potential radicalising tool it engages with the dominant contemporary political institutions in an effort to chart a realistic path towards uncompromised radical goals in seemingly impossible conditions. Its approach is pluralist and pragmatic rather than dogmatic and idealist, incorporating the

accommodation of other perspectives into relations with other radicals, alternative social visions, and strategies for radical change. It recognises that conflict and disagreement are inescapable in any human society and so radical social change as an unending process. It is not a moralistic perspective, or one that proceeds from a view of politics as 'applied-ethics', and the application of ideal theories but is focused on concrete action in contingent historical context. It centres considerations of power in radical change, and it does not withdraw from engagement with dominant institutions and political contestation.

Conclusion

This thesis has illustrated a realist tendency in anarchism, outlined its strategic orientation, detailed one of its strategies in the context of modern liberal democracies, and explicated the approach to the role of the state in radical change implied by this strategy. I have argued that this anarchist tendency defies the standard representations of anarchism in political theory that in a broad sense, and also in more specific claims, present anarchism as naïve, idealistic, and paradigmatically non-realist. This concluding chapter will provide a brief summation of the argument of the thesis and provide a final defence of its significance and implications. I emphasise how this perspective defies the standard image of anarchism and how it conforms to the definitional requirements of the realist disposition. I will also restate the essential elements of the realist anarchist tendency discussed in the thesis, especially in relation to its strategic approaches. Realist anarchism is a perspective which recognises the contingent nature of politics and so employs different strategies and tactics according to different contexts and particular conditions. It is also a pluralist position which accepts the co-existence of other radical orientations before, during, and after events of radical political transformation. Following the summary I will discuss and defend the implications of the thesis in regard to the existence of the realist anarchist perspective and its importance to understandings of the scope of radical theory and political theory generally. The final section will outline some potentially fruitful directions for future research in realist anarchist theory.

Summary

Chapter One

In chapter one of this thesis I introduced the context of anarchism's history and theoretical treatment in academic political theory, and argued that the standard representation of anarchism in political theory is erroneous and that there exists a tendency in that field of thought and action that is politically realist. I did not assert that 'realist anarchism' is itself a coherent, standalone theory with unified theoretical positions. It is not then a 'school' of anarchism but rather a disposition or tendency that is expressed is various ways by some theorists and organisations in different theoretical traditions, movements, locations, and moments in history.

Chapter Two

Drawing on a variety of anarchists from across this broad tendency, in the second chapter I first outlined the ways that realist anarchists accord with those positions, or 'tenets', by which political theorists commonly identify realists. This demonstrated that there are anarchists who exhibit the realist disposition and agree with its commonly cited tenets though their interpretations of these positions and the context of their application are often quite different to those of conservative or liberal realists. Anarchists who are realists accept that 'politics is essentially about power'; that 'conflict and disagreement are ineradicable'; and that politics is embedded in particular, and contingent, material and historical conditions; that political theory should be recognised as a 'partisan' activity; it should be 'concrete and oriented towards action'; and it should not be 'moralist' or seen as 'applied ethics'.

However, when they advance these positions they are usually implicitly critiquing other radicals - anarchists and others - who reject them, rather than the liberal targets of much realist theory. So, a focus on power opposes the influence of anarchists who aim to abolish power (and believe such a project possible), rather than liberal idealism. Similarly, acceptance of the permanence of conflict stands against those who aim for revolutionary closure; that political theory should be 'concrete and oriented towards action' is directed at those who believe that to articulate a model for a superior alternative society is sufficient for its realisation, or even that such a task should form a central element of radical theory; and that it should be historically located and cognisant of contingency challenges those who offer timeless solutions, cling to outdated strategies, or rely on an inexorably unfolding teleological process to deliver change. The realist rejection of an 'ethics-first' approach, from an anarchist perspective, is not, of course, a reaction to the Rawlsian project, towards which the recent realist literature directs so much of its ire. Like the realists of the contemporary discourse in political theory, realist anarchists reject the creation of ideal blueprints for alternative societies which begin from idealistic assumptions about human nature and proceed through the extrapolation of ethical principles based on such assumptions into universal models for social and political organisation. And, as shown in chapter three, many realist anarchists also oppose methods like Rawls's 'ideal theory' and its assumptions regarding compliance and acceptance of ethical principles, even when they are employed only for reasons of theoretical clarity. However, these are again not directed at Rawls or liberalism generally but at anarchists and other radicals who adopt similar approaches. So rather than liberal individualism they oppose the idealist anarchist view of humans as naturally cooperative and benevolent; rather than a 'well-ordered', 'nearly just' political liberalism they reject the construction of detailed utopian 'blueprints' as such, but especially those which assume a harmonious post-revolutionary closure of social

conflict and political disagreement. Instead of 'full compliance' with ideal principles of justice anarchists who are realists focus their critiques on idealistic assumptions of strategic and ideological homogeneity in radical theories of action before, during, and after revolutionary change. Likewise, within contemporary realist theory there is a broader critique of 'moralism' in political theory, that is broadly shared by realist anarchists - that although it is likely impossible to completely eradicate moralism and morals from political thought, political normativity should not be advanced by appeal to moral principles. Again, the targets for anarchists of a realist disposition are other anarchists who aim to advance the anarchist project, to recruit and educate, by appeal to morality or the assertion of the moral superiority of alternative political arrangements. Realist anarchism stands against those who expect revolutionary change to occur via spontaneous, widespread moral 'awakening'. This is not to suggest that realist anarchists argue that anarchism is or should be amoral, or that morality plays no role in anarchist thought, but merely that moralistic approaches are not effective methods of political argumentation or action.

When accompanied by an anarchist pre-disposition then, the realist disposition results in a perspective which advocates a practical, action-focused approach located in particular historical conditions that is pluralistic regarding the composition of the radical milieu but partisan and openly radical. It is a stance which seeks to engage rather than withdraw from political contest and institutions in the struggle for radical change, which recognises the centrality and ineradicability of power and conflict in society broadly and politics specifically, and aims to move as realistically as possible towards uncompromised goals in seemingly impossible conditions.

Following the establishment of realist anarchism as a form of realism the thesis turned to the more substantial task of dispelling the various elements of the standard representations of anarchism in political theory. Some of the more simplistic and unserious elements, such as that anarchists oppose theory, or organisation, were left aside as disproved by the very fact that there are theoretical sources for this study to engage with, and that the most cursory examination of any introductory text on anarchism shows that different schools of anarchism (and indeed their influence on broader radical movements) are generally defined precisely by their forms of organisation. Other simple elements of the standard image were shown to be primarily semantic issues, such as the claim that anarchists oppose all law, democracy or power. Though there certainly are anarchists who articulate their positions in such ways, they are almost never opposed to the things as such but rather to particular (sometimes counterintuitive) definitions.

Some elements in the standard image of anarchism are, however, more substantive and in need of more detailed treatment. These elements – such as a naïve conception of human nature, an uncompromising approach to radical change based either on total revolution or complete withdrawal, and the primacy of simplistic anti-statism – are affirmed by in some anarchist theory and so are reasonably understandable elements of representations based on some limited engagement with actual anarchists. As elements of representations of anarchism as a whole however they are misleading and incorrect, as the bulk of the remainder of the thesis demonstrated by explicating relevant elements of the approach to such issues by the realist tendency in anarchism.

This began by addressing the representations of anarchist conceptions of human nature, as this perception is often a foundation upon which the other elements of the standard image of anarchism rest. The claims of anarchist opposition to power, law and organisation, their supposedly naïve and simplistic approaches to radical social change, and impossibly utopian alternative social visions, are all based on a view of humans as naturally cooperative, community-minded, and generally benevolent. However, while some early anarchists did articulate their political visions in a manner which suggested a belief in a benevolent and cooperative essential human nature (e.g., Kropotkin), it was demonstrated that many, and arguably most anarchists of even the classical era do not subscribe to such a conception. In contrast to a view often ascribed to a modernist or 'enlightenment' philosophical perspective, of a singular essential human nature, anarchists have usually worked from a view of humans as malleable and multiple-natured. We have an 'anarchist impulse' for freedom and against coercion but also an urge to dominate; we are rational and irrational; cooperative, kind, self-interested and cruel. None of these qualities enjoy a primary or definitive role – none are our 'true' essences to be revealed by the correct form of social organisation, or which could serve as guide in the design of such. In a way that some argue constitutes a form of proto-postmodernism,[1] anarchists most often characterise humans as shaped by their environments and largely socially constructed. Rather than a simplistic and essentialist conception of human nature which is also naïve in its optimistic assumptions of cooperative benevolence, the anarchist perspective is a complex, and often pessimistic view. For example, it includes those observations on the prevalence of particular human qualities which have commonly informed the realist position, such as the ineradicability of conflict in human societies, and the importance of things such as emotions and power in politics.

[1] Jun, 2012.

Chapter Three

From here I turned, in the third chapter, to addressing the subsequent realist anarchist positions, which are founded on the established approach to human nature, through consideration of the approaches to radical social change that some anarchists have advocated which in various ways show the falsity of all of the main aspects of the standard image. This first meant detailing the pragmatic and pluralist approach to strategy in realist anarchism. The realist disposition demands an adaptation to particularity, contingency and context, which means that as the perspective has existed in different times and places, as well as in various different anarchist strains, and schools, it of course encompasses different strategies. The expression of the realist perspective from this variety of theoretical and ideological foundations within anarchism and different eras in its history reflects not only the flexibility and adaptability of the realist anarchist perspective but indeed the realist disposition more generally. Realist anarchism is a strategically pragmatic perspective which varies its approach according to context. Among its strategies it includes a gradualist approach to radical change in liberal democracies which is sometimes referred to as radicalising democracy. The anarchist application of this strategy is recognised in anarchist literature but is ignored in academic political theory and it demonstrates as false some of the most constant and substantive elements of the standard non-realist characterisation of anarchism in political theory: its attitude to the state generally, but particularly its supposed commitments to either sudden, violent revolution or complete withdrawal from political contest and engagement with existing institutions. As the anarchist movements of the late 19th and early 20th century failed to achieve their revolutionary ends, and that revolutionary era appeared to be drawing to a close, some anarchists, particularly (as I have noted throughout) Errico Malatesta, began to develop their plans towards the furtherance of anarchist goals 'before the revolution', and 'within the state'. That is, they turned to long-term orientation and actions that were not based on the expectation of revolutionary upheaval in the foreseeable future. Following the Spanish Civil War and then the Second World War, after which that previous revolutionary era in European industrial societies had definitively ended, the gradualist anarchist approach continued to be developed by some anarchists into the radicalising democracy strategy.

The term 'Radical Democracy' is not itself alien to academic political theory and is most commonly associated with the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. The realist anarchist application of the radicalising democracy strategy has significant resonances with that of Laclau and Mouffe, especially so with the approach more comprehensively detailed across the subsequent work of Mouffe alone (though the anarchist strategy developed separately and prior to her work). In keeping with the pluralist stance of realist anarchism in relation to other radical perspectives, this

thesis employed some of the language of Mouffe's radical democratic theory, particularly in describing the realist anarchist approach to radical transformation within liberal democracies. The term 'radicalising democracy' is useful because realist anarchists have various strategies, and this term well-describes one specific approach. And although some realist anarchists have used the term to describe their strategies, the fact that it is usually associated with a different but compatible theoretical literature is also beneficial as it draws attention to the pluralist assumptions within the realist anarchist approach. Resonances between different approaches are worth emphasising, especially when each assumes the existence and cooperation of various radical perspectives as part of their strategy. And this is particularly appropriate for realist anarchism, as most anarchists of the realist disposition (with the notable exception of Bookchin) do not advance their visions or strategies in a monistic form or idealistic narrative where only their perspective is considered. Instead, they explicitly include the expectation of difference and conflict within a diverse milieu of other actors, often assuming the likelihood of their continued minority status in that milieu and so plan for a revolution that is not quite their own, and of their own goals they assume a degree of failure with each step of progress.[2]

Chapter Four

The strategy of radicalising democracy is a complicated and ambitious project that encompasses democratisation and radicalisation of workplaces and communities, civil society, the economy, the state, and all social relations. It includes action by and within traditional vehicles for radical struggle such as unions, revolutionary parties, and social movements, as well as 'New' (and 'Newest')[3] Social Movements, activist groups, community organisations, prefigurative radical projects, and political parties. It adopts a ruthlessly pragmatic stance towards the furtherance of radical goals, supporting reforms, especially 'non-reformist reforms' of a structural nature, but also those aimed at material disadvantage, social exclusion, or oppression, and any which might help to position for future radical gains. But with such an all-encompassing range of goals the realist anarchist also expects disappointment in any future events of radical transformation and prepares to adopt a stance of dissatisfaction and opposition towards even the most revolutionary future government. Realist anarchists then reject the idea of revolutionary closure and see all radical action, even revolution, as itself a type of reform - a waypoint in an unending process of struggle against existing and future forms of domination and oppression.

[2] This is also arguably reflects a realist stance, see: Little, et al., 2015.
[3] Day 2011.

This long-term vision of radical change assumes a process of radicalisation and democratisation that spans (at least) decades rather than years and entails a multitude of campaigns of organisation and education - especially education and development through involvement in direct democratic self-management. Through these long and recursive processes, the project is intended to target practically all social, political and economic relations and institutions and to become so powerful and pervasive that the logic of radical democratic organisation on the basis of anarchist non-coercive relations becomes hegemonic in contemporary society at every level.

This approach is based on a view of the state that contradicts the standard image of a monolithic and simplistic state which anarchists are claimed to oppose. The realist anarchist relational state reflects the centrality of relationality in anarchism generally, especially anarchists of a realist disposition. Anarchism has always been centrally concerned with the appropriate relations between political entities, from the individual to the global level. Reflecting this view, Landauer's definition of the state has been widely endorsed by realist anarchists as well as by those who might not so easily be included in the realist tendency. It has, however, particular resonance with aspects of the realist disposition, especially the recognition of historical contingency and human agency. The realist anarchist perspective is anti-teleological and action-focused, without faith in inexorable processes or inevitable crises to deliver revolution, seeing society and its institutions as the chaotic sum of humans and their inter-relations, and not the realisation of either God's plan, rational scientific progress, or the unfolding of History - "the ultimate, hidden truth of the world is that it is something that we make, and could just as easily make differently".[4] The guide for transformation through radicalising democracy is to replace relations based on violent coercion, or its threat, with non-coercive, democratic relations where neither party has recourse to force to impose solution to disagreement. And this is again reflected in the centrality of non-authoritarian relations in the prefigurative institutions, organisations, and social experimentation in anarchist movements.

This relational view is also a central aspect, and reason for, the prefigurative approach of modern and contemporary anarchism and the project of radicalising democracy. The motivation behind prefigurative organising – the creation of the new 'in the shell of the old' - is based on the anarchist connection of ends and means. This position states that a society of non-authoritarian, non-coercive organisation cannot be ushered in through authoritarian means – you cannot force people

[4] David Graeber, 2015, *The Utopia of Rules: On Technology, Stupidity, and the Secret Joys of Bureaucracy*, Melville House, p.89.

to be free. And so radical organisation 'before the revolution' cannot be organised in a hierarchical chain of command, but through organisations which 'prefigure' the form of relations of a future society within the very organs that seek to bring it into being. Non-coercive, horizontal relations form the basis of anarchist organisations which aim towards the transformation of various targets for radical change under the realist anarchist strategy. And the prevalence of this relational attitude is reflected in realist anarchist agnosticism towards differing strategies and tactics of other anarchists, and of other non-anarchist radicals.

Chapter Five & 6 ('The Radicalising State' parts one and two)

One of the striking features of the realist anarchist advocacy of a strategy of radicalising democracy is the, usually implicit, roles for the state it envisages in the long process of radical transformation of all social and political relations and institutions including the state. This 'radicalising state' requires a number of demanding (and not currently extant) preconditions in order to come into existence. These include the existence of a large, organised, and powerful 'movement of movements' for radical democratic change acting at innumerable sites of struggle, all levels of organisation and against all forms of coercive social and political relations. Rather than attempt to impose their views, or hope to convert all others, anarchists of a realist disposition generally hold that such a diversity of ideological perspectives and strategic orientations within the radical democratic milieu is to be expected, and positively valued, before, during and after any significant radical transformation. Therefore, though they do not themselves seek to wield state power, realist anarchists who advocate a democratic radicalisation process within liberal democracies also accept, though often only implicitly, a variety of roles for the state in that process. Under control of a party that is allied to the broader movements, and itself under significant influence or control by those external elements, the state is seen as a potential tool for radicalisation and democratisation of society, the economy, and political institutions including the state itself. Compared with the actions of the rest of the radical movement the state is envisioned as having relatively minor roles in the ambitious, long-term, sweeping process of radicalisation, firstly through ratification and legalisation of those actions and demands of the non-state elements. It is only seen as having a more active role when the broader radical movement has already achieved significant momentum and influence, and where particular radical reforms would be difficult or impossible to achieve without either generating state response or securing its support. In the final phase of radicalisation of political institutions, the state plays a role in its own destruction by serving as the vehicle through which the non-state form of political organisation which is to replace the state is constitutionally and legalistically created within a world of preexisting states. That this should be a peaceful process is generally agreed upon, and it is accepted that the level of organisation, pervasiveness,

momentum, power and social and political hegemony are important factors determining whether a peaceful transformation is possible. However, ultimately whether or not the process is accompanied by violence can only be decided by the forces of reaction. Even the most resolutely non-violent and democratic attempt to radically alter society, the economy, and political institutions is liable and likely to draw violent counter-revolutionary opposition. For this reason, most realist anarchists accept the likely need for armed defense of radical communities and institutions at some point in the process of change, and many contemporary anarchists advocate arming and training for armed self-defense in the current context of a resurgent and violent far right, particularly in high firearm-ownership countries such as the United States.[5]

The radicalising democracy process is of course for the most part speculative. There is no historical example of such a self-destructive state which anarchists who advocate this method cite as proof for the viability of this approach. It is merely an attempt to adapt the uncompromised goal of state dissolution to a context where such a goal is a seeming impossibility due to the non-revolutionary context of liberal democratic welfare states and both their overwhelming power and relative popularity. Again, it was not claimed that this is the best overall radical strategy, nor the most realistic anarchist approach. However, it decisively defies the standard image of anarchism in its approach to the state and radical change, and it also demonstrates the application of a radical realist perspective which is realistic while 'demanding the impossible'. As Malatesta famously states: "it is not whether we accomplish anarchy today, tomorrow, or within ten centuries, but that we walk towards anarchy today, tomorrow and always".[6] A realist perspective within anarchism calls for a constant reappraisal of the path towards anarchy, and a non-dogmatic and unsentimental adaptation of strategy to the realities of particular historical and political contexts.

Significance and implications

The Radicalising State

The ostensible lack of originality or uniqueness of the conception of the radicalising state is one of its greatest strengths as a contribution to pluralistic radical strategy. The realist anarchist application of a radicalising democracy strategy within liberal democracies is conceived with the expectation of the ongoing existence of a diverse milieu of different radical perspectives and a realisation that successful radical action will likely require cooperation between different elements.

[5] Kim Kelly, 2019, 'I'm a Left-Wing Anarchist. Guns Aren't Just for Right-Wingers', *Vox*, [Online] Available from: https://www.vox.com/first-person/2019/7/1/18744204/guns-gun-control-anarchism.
[6] Malatesta, [1899] 2014b, p.300.

In this context the existence of compatible and complementary strategies, and conceptualisations of elements within those strategies, is a valuable and arguably necessary requirement for effective radical action. The concept of the radicalising state is not only implicit in the strategic orientation of realist anarchists in liberal democracies, but in many other contemporary radical perspectives also. Though different theoretical perspectives of course vary on details, it is the basic implicit model underlying many 'progressive' or 'leftist' radical orientations, such as a variety of radical democratic perspectives, abolitionist movements, democratic socialists, and others who aim towards broadly anti-state goals in the contemporary context of powerful and persistent states. In much the same way that a general conception of the state is shared by, and 'resonates' between, various elements of the right-wing political milieu despite their sometimes substantial differences and conflicting ultimate goals,[7] a broadly shared concept of the state within democratic radicalism could facilitate practical cooperation between disparate groups by providing common ground upon which to advance on shared goals and constituent parts of the larger radicalisation project, even if those separate elements disagree on the ultimate long-term aim of the project.

The scope of political theory

Leaving aside practical contributions to radical politics however, on purely theoretical grounds this thesis has significant implications for understanding of the scope of anarchism, realism and democratic theory. It adds to accepted views regarding the variety of existing anarchist tendencies and forms of radical democratic radicalism, as well as of potential radical expressions of the realist disposition. In the broadest sense however this thesis and the perspective outlined within has significance for political theory as a discipline, especially for understanding the scope and spectra of the field, as well as the theoretical and political context of some of the most influential works of modern and contemporary political thought. The standard image of anarchism is often constructed without reference to any actual anarchist theory which of course generates various problems, such as unknowingly offering as novel radical perspectives which already exist, and the concomitant lost opportunities of articulating resonances and compatibility between different orientations which might meaningfully cooperate. But this habit also reinforces the apparently common assumption that anarchist theory is not serious or otherwise worthy of genuine engagement and citation, which has further ramifications. It allows anarchism to be employed as an unacknowledged inspiration or foil against which to contrast an ostensibly novel position.

It has of course been commonplace in radical theory for theorists to cast their positions in contrast to anarchism, which has often been the default and intuitive radical perspective in radical

[7] William E Connolly, 2005, 'The Evangelical-Capitalist Resonance Machine', *Political Theory*, vol:33, (6).

movements. For example, Lenin's famous and influential works '*What is to be Done?'* and *'The State and Revolution'* are both largely characterised by a contrast to anarchist approaches (which were widespread and influential within the Russian revolutionary milieu).[8] Anarchism also played a crucial role in the development of Antonio Gramsci's radical theories. Gramsci had a long history of critical engagement with anarchism which served as a foil, or "adversarial goad" to the development of many of his most important contributions to radical thought, especially the concept of 'hegemony'.[9] And this general orientation of Marxist philosophy towards the dominance of anarchism in revolutionary movements extends back to Marx himself, who famously had long-running disputes with the leading anarchist theorists of his day, Proudhon and Bakunin.[10] But beyond radical theory the challenge represented by anarchism to the most basic assumptions in political philosophy and theory has had deep and lasting impact. Robert Nozick admits in *'Anarchy, State, and Utopia'*[11]that the "fundamental question of political philosophy is … Why not have anarchy?" and that "anarchist theory, if tenable undercuts the whole subject of *political* philosophy". Despite this explicit recognition, which goes as far as accepting that "it is appropriate to begin political philosophy with an examination" of anarchist theory, Nozick engages meaningfully only with the capitalistic form of American libertarianism that most anarchists do not rate as meaningfully connected to the bulk of anarchist history and theory.[12] Substantive engagement with the mainstream of anarchism occurs in a single footnote, which merely serves to dismiss the entirety of the anti-capitalist canon of anarchist thought purely on the undefended basis that, as it is primarily socialist in orientation, it does not require further consideration.[13] From this starting point Nozick proceeds to orient this highly influential work towards debunking an extremely narrow, if not entirely fabricated, caricature of anarchism and its opposition to the state.

In this way much political theory and philosophy treats anarchism as what might be seen as an absent interlocutor – an opponent that does not and cannot speak for themselves, and more as one who will not either have others rise to their defence – whose views can be represented in the manner which best suits those who seek to bracket off and dismiss them. This is a long-standing tradition. Carl Schmitt constructed *Political Theology* as a response to Bakunin (who first employed

[8] Paul Avrich, 1967, 'The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution'*, The Russian Review*, vol:26, (4).
[9] Carl Levy, 2012, 'Gramsci's Cultural and Political Sources: Anarchism in the Prison Writings'*, Journal of Romance Studies*, vol:12, (3).
[10] Marx, 2008 [1847]; Marx, 2000; see also: Robert Graham, 2015, *We Do Not Fear Anarchy? We Invoke It: The First International and the Origins of the Anarchist Movement*, AK Press.
[11] Robert Nozick, 1974, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Basic Books, p.22. italics in original.
[12] Ibid., p.53.
[13] Ibid., p.250n6.

the term 'political theology' in its now common sense) without engagement with Bakunin beyond the assertion that he was a Satanist.[14] And Max Weber, whose 'Politics as a Vocation' is rightly considered a classic of political thought and a common source with which to introduce the concept of the state, lived for some years with a group of anarchists, had anarchist friends, and delivered his famous lecture during the Bavarian Councils Republic (a revolutionary order in 1919 which included many influential anarchists, including Gustav Landauer) to a group of students he had "cultivated for at least two years" and who were sympathetic to the revolution.[15] However, the revolutionary context of Weber's work is rarely highlighted, let alone his long-standing engagement with anarchism. This tendency continues to be relevant to more recent canonical contributions to the field. Judith Shklar accepts that her 'liberalism of fear' would be "very close to anarchism" were it not for anarchism being defined by a single attribute (which is supposedly demonstrated in the chaotic anarchy of civil war and breakdown of existing government), in a single sentence with a single reference to a single thinker whose perspective generated significant disagreement and which has long been superseded.[16] Likewise, Bernard Williams, who endorses Shklar's liberalism of fear, employs anarchism as a placeholder for the extreme end of a scale of political orientations he wishes to outline, by first depicting anarchism as the negation of his preferred stance without any substantiation.[17] Similarly, Foucault can cast his sceptical stance towards all forms of power as "clearly different" from anarchism while advancing as novel one of the most common existing anarchist principles and asking us first to "define anarchism" as something else.[18] Mouffe can write implicitly against anarchism for over thirty years before mentioning it by name and depict her long-standing position on the state and radical reform as unique and unappreciated – opposed by almost all contemporary radicals including all anarchists – when in truth she has stepped into a long-running debate within anarchism, agreed with the realist side, and declared herself alone.[19]

---

[14] Carl Schmitt, 1985, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, University of Chicago Press, p.64.

[15] Levy, 1999b, pp.102-103.

[16] Shklar, 1989, pp.36-37, as discussed on page 41 of this document.

[17] Williams, 2005, pp.82, 85, as discussed on pages 1 and 41 of this document.

[18] Foucault 2014, p.78, as discussed on page 40 of this document.

[19] Mouffe has long advanced her radicalising democracy strategy on the basis that hers is practically the only instance of the stance which takes engagement with the state seriously, and that the anarchistic elements prevalent in the contemporary radical milieu do not. See, e.g.: Chantal Mouffe, 2009, 'The Importance of Engaging the State', In: J., *What Is Radical Politics Today?*, Palgrave Macmillan, p.230. However, Mouffe's approach is remarkably similar to the realist anarchist strategy of widespread radical action on various fronts, *including* engagement with the state. This similarity is not recognised by Mouffe as she does not engage with anarchist theory except for a single passing dismissal in her recent work *For a Left Populism* (2018, p.46). For discussion of the resonance between realist anarchism and Mouffe's radical agonism see chapter three of this document.

The realist anarchist perspective decisively challenges the standard image of anarchism on which such misrepresentations are based. Recognition of the mere existence of this perspective disrupts the assertions of novelty and uniqueness of many major works in political theory. If it is true, as Nozick claims, that anarchism represents 'the fundamental question' and is therefore centrally important to political theory, which of course I agree that it is, then it should not be considered unreasonable to expect that we engage more seriously with anarchist theory and what actual anarchists themselves propose as the answer to that fundamental question.

Directions for Future Research

This thesis has been limited by considerations of length and concision, and therefore constrained in its focus in various ways, some of which indicate potential directions for future research. As has been emphasised throughout, the radicalising democracy strategy is but one of the approaches to radical change that anarchists advocate from a realist perspective, and the focus on it here has been primarily in service of drawing out the implications for the standard image of anarchism of the very existence of this perspective in any anarchist theory. There are then several other strategies that could be investigated and explicated. Many anarchists, including some realists, reject as unrealistic some of the assumptions upon which radicalising democracy is based, especially the reliance on electoral action even by other, non-anarchist, radical actors. Among these there are those who remain committed to wholly revolutionary approaches as well as others who have completely foregone all hope of widespread radical change of the status quo and resign themselves to a stance of permanent insurrectionary hostility. Both of these perspectives are potentially compatible with a realist stance, though the explication of which would require consideration at length beyond the scope of this thesis.

Another potential area for further consideration is the relationship between anarchist and other expressions of the realist disposition, especially with other radical realist approaches. As highlighted previously, there are many different varieties and applications of realism, and the similarities and contrasts between forms can offer insights of various types, such as demonstrated herein with regard to the scope of political thought in general. The traditional tension between Marxism and anarchism suggests that the differences between radical forms of realism may include some which are irreconcilable. However, as shown, the realist anarchist perspective can accommodate coexistence with various forms of radical thought including post-Marxist radical democratic theory, and there may be grounds for productive compatibility and complementarity

with other non-anarchist forms of radical political realism. It might also be fruitful to consider the application of a realist anarchist perspective to current debates in realist political theory, such as for instance the question of what forms of normativity are reasonable for a realist stance to advance, or the question of the limits of a realist approach, given that it spans quite a considerable spectrum from conservative to radical, and as far as anarchist, approaches.

Perhaps the most consequential area for future research would be the consideration of the application of a realist anarchist perspective to the pressing concerns of contemporary contexts. While some contemporary realist anarchists hold to the strategies of gradualism and radicalising democracy, those approaches emerged and developed in the early 20th century and developed in earnest in the era following the Second World War in liberal democratic welfare states. However, while they are still arguably the most pragmatic and realistic strategies for radical change in liberal societies, the contexts within which they seek to operate have changed dramatically since their inception. These strategies have been advocated by some anarchists since their development, but it would be inaccurate to suggest that they have ever been dominant within the broader anarchist milieu or that they have, in that time, been widespread enough to be acted upon to a significant degree, or to progress in their application beyond the first steps in a long-term, many-stages process. And in the time since the development of these approaches it cannot either be suggested that the grounds for their application have meaningfully improved, but rather that there are many factors upon which they rely which have deteriorated in their conduciveness to these strategies. For example, the welfare states have become weaker, the forces of reaction stronger, and other obstacles not anticipated in previous eras have developed.

As noted in chapter six, the neoliberal revolution has included the rise of anti-state capitalist forces which complicate the strategy that seeks to carve off institutions of the state and bring them under radical democratic control. Privatised institutions are arguably more difficult within which to pursue democratisation than government-controlled services that are at least potentially open to popular influence. But beyond this, in the context of a long campaign of capitalist privatisation of state services, attempts to democratise remaining public institutions must contend with the depredations of those forces and avoid actions which might contribute to the goals of anti-democratic anti-statism. Another recent development is of course the resurgence of radical right and outright fascist politics throughout the world. Given the centrality of anti-fascism to modern anarchism since the early twentieth century, realist anarchist responses to such reactionary forces,

and the role of these responses in considerations of contemporary progressive radical strategy, represents another area which may be productive for future research.

Another of the recently developed obstacles to radical transformation, and one of the overriding issues with which contemporary radicals are faced, is the looming threat of catastrophic climate change. Arguably the most meaningful tasks for radically realist political theory in this context is the development of realistic approaches to pursuing radical political and social change towards a sustainable human society. Current scientific consensus on the threat has recently moved quite explicitly to the recognition that drastic changes are required to human systems to avoid dire consequences, including the very real threat to civilisational continuity and even the potential for the human species to ourselves fall victim to the mass extinction event which we have initiated.[20] The sweeping changes required to avoid these outcomes must obviously be global and must of course be present in those wealthy societies with which lie the primary responsibility for the crisis as well as the structural power and influence to curtail its impact. This means then that despite its seeming impossibility, the most sober and realistic appraisals of the global scientific community suggest that something approaching revolutionary change must occur worldwide, but especially in the post-industrial societies of the 'West', for human civilisation to survive. In a situation where the 'salient facts' of reality include that revolution is both politically impossible and unavoidably necessary, perspectives such as realist anarchism, which seek to balance uncompromisingly radical objectives with sensitivity to the reality of significant obstacles to such change, are invaluable. Therefore, the most pressing concern for future research on realist forms of anarchism, for radical realism, and indeed for political realism in general, is to turn attention from the recently dominant issues of methodological debate and fine theoretical distinctions towards the question of the 'real politics' of radical transformation of human societies upon which all other endeavors arguably rely.

[20] IPCC, 2021, *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group 1 to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/; IPCC, 2022, https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/; IPCC, 2023, https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-cycle/.

Bibliography

(Federação Anarquista do Rio de Janeiro), FARJ, 2008, 'Social Anarchism and Organisation', [Online] Available from: https://libcom.org/library/social-anarchism-organisation.

Action, Center for Preventative, 2023, 'Conflict between Turkey and Armed Kurdish Groups', *Council on Foreign Relations - Global Conflict Tracker*, [Online] Available from: https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-between-turkey-and-armed-kurdish-groups [Accessed: 3/5/2023].

Adamiak, Richard, 1970, 'The "Withering Away" of the State: A Reconsideration', *The Journal of Politics,* vol:32 (1), pp.3-18.

Adams, Ian, 1993, *Political Ideology Today*, Manchester University Press.

Addis, Oscar. 2017, *The Utopian Realism of Errico Malatesta*, Paper presented at Association for Social and Political Philosophy (ASPP) Conference Available from: https://www.academia.edu/33711849/The_Utopian_Realism_of_Errico_Malatesta [Accessed: 10/2/2019].

Akkaya, Ahmet Hamdi & Jongerden, Joost, 2012, 'Reassembling the Political: The Pkk and the Project of Radical Democracy', *European Journal of Turkish Studies. Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey,* (14).

Amsler, Sarah S., 2015, *The Education of Radical Democracy*, Taylor and Francis, Hoboken.

Amster, Randall, 2009, 'Anarchy, Utopia, and the State of Things to Come', In: Amster, R., Deleon, A., Fernandez, L.A., Nocella, A.J. & Shannon, D., *Contemporary Anarchist Studies*, Routledge, London and New York.

Amster, Randall, 2012, *Anarchism Today*, Praeger, California.

Amster, Randall, DeLeon, Abraham, Fernandez, Luis A., Nocella, Anthony J. & Shannon, Deric, 2009, *Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy*, Routledge, London and New York.

Anonymous, 2015, *Collective Process: Overcoming Power*, The Common Wheel Collective, New York, [Online] Available from: https://ourgardensshallnotbedivided.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/collective_process_overcoming_power.pdf.

Antliff, Allan, 2011, 'Anarchy, Power, and Post-Structuralism', In: Rousselle, D. & Evren, S., *Post-Anarchism: A Reader*, Pluto Press, London and New York.

Apoifis, Nicholas, 2016, *Anarchy in Athens: An Ethnography of Militancy, Emotions and Violence*, Oxford University Press.

Apter, David Ernest, 1971, 'The Old Anarchism and the New - Some Comments', In: Apter, D.E. & Joll, J., *Anarchism Today*, Macmillan, London.

Apter, David Ernest & Joll, James, 1971, *Anarchism Today*, Macmillan, London.

Arendt, Hannah, 1965, *On Revolution*, Viking Press.

Aronowitz, Stanley, 1993, 'The Situation of the Left in the United States', *Socialist Review,* vol:23 (3), pp.5-79.

Arshinov, Peter, [1923] 1974, *History of the Makhnovist Movement (1918-1921)*, Solidarity, Chicago, [Online] Available from: http://www.ditext.com/arshinov/makhno.html.

Aulich, Chris & Pietsch, Rebecca, 2002, 'Left on the Shelf: Local Government and the Australian Constitution', *Australian Journal of Public Administration,* vol:61 (4), pp.14-23.

Avrich, Paul, 1967, 'The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution', *The Russian Review,* vol:26 (4), pp.341-350.

Avrich, Paul, 1973, *The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution*, Cornell University Press.

Baderin, Alice, 2014, 'Two Forms of Realism in Political Theory', *European Journal of Political Theory,* vol:13 (2), pp.132-153.

Baer, Hans A, 2017, *Democratic Eco-Socialism as a Real Utopia: Transitioning to an Alternative World System*, Berghahn Books.

Baker, Zoe, 2022, 'Anarchism and Democracy', *Anarchopac*, [Online] Available from: https://anarchopac.com/2022/04/15/anarchism-and-democracy/ [Accessed: 2/3/2023].

Bakunin, M.A., 1910, *God and the State*, Freedom Press.

Bakunin, Mikhail, [1867] 1971, "Federalism, Socialism and Anti-Theologism", In: Dolgoff, S., *Bakunin on Anarchy: Selected Works by the Activist-Founder of World Anarchism*, Vintage Books, New York.

Baldelli, Giovanni, 1971, *Social Anarchism*, Transaction Publishers, New Jersey.

Barber, Benjamin, 2003, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*, University of California Press, California.

Barsky, Robert F., 2007, *The Chomsky Effect: A Radical Works Beyond the Ivory Tower*, MIT Press, Massachusetts.

Bavister-Gould, Alex, 2013, 'Bernard Williams: Political Realism and the Limits of Legitimacy', *European journal of philosophy,* vol:21 (4), pp.593-610.

Bell, Duncan, 2017, 'Political Realism and International Relations', *Philosophy Compass,* vol:12 (2).

Bellagarrigue, Anselme, 1850, 'Anarchy Is Order', *Anarchy, A Journal of Order*, 1(1), [Online] Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/anselme-bellegarrigue-the-world-s-first-anarchist-manifesto [Accessed: 28/02/2023].

Bentley, Amy, 1998, *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity*, University of Illinois Press.

Berkman, Alexander, 1937, *Now and After: The Abc of Communist Anarchism*, Vanguard Press, New York.

Biehl, Janet, 2015, *Ecology or Catastrophe: The Life of Murray Bookchin*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Biehl, Janet & Staudenmaier, Peter, 1995, *Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience*, AK Press Edinburgh.

Bigger, Jon. 2020. *Class War, Anarchism, and Elections*. YouTube: Anarchism Research Group Loughborough. [Online] Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=neiK3rbUo6g.

Black, Bob, 1997a, *Anarchy after Leftism*, Columbia Alternative Library Press, Albany, New York.

Black, Bob, 1997b, 'On Organisation', *Anarchy after Leftism*, Columbia Alternative Library Press, Albany, New York.

Black, Bob, 2010, 'Nightmares of Reason', *CAL Press*, [Online] Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/bob-black-nightmares-of-reason.pdf [Accessed: 18/11/2018].

Black, Bob, 2012a, 'Chomsky on the Nod', *Defacing the Currency: Selected Writings 1992-2012*, LBC Books, Berkeley CA.

Black, Bob, 2012b, 'Debunking Democracy', *Defacing the Currency: Selected Writings 1992-2012* LBC Books, Berkeley, CA.

Bogel-Burroughs, Nicholas & Garcia, Sandra E, 2020, 'What Is Antifa, the Movement Trump Wants to Declare a Terror Group', *New York Times,* vol:28.

Boggs, Carl, 1995, *The Socialist Tradition: From Crisis to Decline*, Routledge, New York.

Bolloten, Burnett, 1991, *The Spanish Civil War: Revolution and Counterrevolution*, Univ of North Carolina Press.

Bookchin, Murray, 1971, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, Ramparts Press, Berkeley Calif.

Bookchin, Murray, 1979, 'Anarchism: Past and Present', In: Ehrlich, H.J., *Reinventing Anarchy, Again*, AK Press, San Francisco.

Bookchin, Murray, 1980, *Toward an Ecological Society*, Black Rose Books, Montréal.

Bookchin, Murray, 1982, *The Ecology of Freedom : The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy*, Cheshire Books, Palo Alto, California.

Bookchin, Murray, 1985, 'Radicalizing Democracy', *Kick It Over,* Kick It Over, [Online] Available from: http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bookchin/raddemocracy.html [Accessed: 17/1/2020].

Bookchin, Murray, 1990, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology: Essays on Dialectical Naturalism*, Black Rose Books, Montreal.

Bookchin, Murray, 1992, *Urbanization without Cities: The Rise and Decline of Citizenship*, Black Rose Books, Montréal.

Bookchin, Murray, 1995, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm*, AK Press, California.

Bookchin, Murray, 1997, *Deep Ecology and Anarchism: A Polemic*, Freedom Press, London.

Bookchin, Murray, 1998, *The Politics of Social Ecology: Libertarian Municipalism*, Black Rose Books, Montreal.

Bookchin, Murray, 2004, 'Listen, Marxist!', *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, 3 ed, AK Press, Edinburgh and Oakland, CA.

Bookchin, Murray, 2015, *The Next Revolution: Popular Assemblies and the Promise of Direct Democracy*, Verso Books, New York.

Bookchin, Murray, [1989] 2015, 'The Meaning of Confederalism', *The Next Revolution: Popular Assemblies and the Promise of Direct Democracy*, Verso Books, New York.

Bookchin, Murray, [1991] 2015, 'Libertarian Municipalism: A Politics of Direct Democracy', *The Next Revolution: Popular Assemblies and the Promise of Direct Democracy*, Verso Books, New York.

Bookchin, Murray, [1998] 2015, 'A Politics for the 21st Century', *The Next Revolution: Popular Assemblies and the Promise of Direct Democracy*, Verso Books, New York.

Bookchin, Murray, [2002] 2015a, 'Anarchism and Power in the Spanish Revolution', *The Next Revolution: Popular Assemblies and the Promise of Direct Democracy*, Verso Books, New York.

Bookchin, Murray, [2002] 2015b, 'The Communalist Project', *The Next Revolution: Popular Assemblies and the Promise of Direct Democracy*, Verso Books, New York.

Bookchin, Murray, [2002] 2015c, 'The Future of the Left', *The Next Revolution: Popular Assemblies and the Promise of Direct Democracy*, Verso Books, New York.

Bookchin, Murray & Foreman, Dave, 1991, *Defending the Earth: Debate between Murray Bookchin and Dave Foreman*, Black Rose Books.

Boswell, Victor Rickman, 1943, *Victory Gardens*, US Department of Agriculture.

Bradley, Matt, Albayrak, Ayla & Ballout, Dana, 2016, 'Kurds Declare 'Federal Region' in Syria, Says Official', *The New York Times*, [Online] Available from: https://www.wsj.com/articles/kurds-declare-federal-region-in-syria-says-official-1458216404 [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Bray, Mark, 2013, *Translating Anarchy: The Anarchism of Occupy Wall Street*, John Hunt Publishing, London.

Bray, Mark, 2017, *Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook*, Melville House, London.

Bray, Mark, 2018, 'Horizontalism', *Anarchism*, Routledge.

Brennan, J., 2017, *Against Democracy*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey.

Broomfield, Matt, 2016, 'The Anarchist Squatters Housing Manchester's Most Vulnerable Homeless People', *Vice*, [Online] Available from:

https://www.vice.com/en_au/article/wndkdy/the-anarchist-squatters-housing-manchesters-most-vulnerable-homeless-people [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Brown, Ian, 2020, *Gamil Means No: An Interview with Gamilaraay Next Generation's Ian Brown*, Sydney Criminal Lawyers, [Online] Available from: https://www.sydneycriminallawyers.com.au/blog/gamil-means-no-an-interview-with-gamilaraay-next-generations-ian-brown/.

Brownlee, Jason, Masoud, Tarek E & Reynolds, Andrew, 2015, *The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform*, Oxford University Press, USA.

Burelli, Carlo, 2022, 'Political Normativity and the Functional Autonomy of Politics', *European Journal of Political Theory,* vol:21 (4), pp.627-649.

Butler, Judith, 2013, 'Palestine, State Politics and the Anarchist Impasse', In: Critchley, S., Blumenfeld, J. & Bottici, C., *The Anarchist Turn*, Pluto Press, London.

Butler, Judith, 2015, *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Call, Lewis, 2002, *Postmodern Anarchism*, Lexington Books, Lanham, Maryland USA.

Carbone, Suzanne, 2010, 'He Never Votes but Wants You to Vote for Him', *The Age*, July 27.

Carter, April, 1971, *The Political Theory of Anarchism*, Routledge, London.

Chomsky, Noam, 1970, 'Notes on Anarchism', In: Guerin, D., *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice*, Vol: 175, Monthly Review Press, New York.

Chomsky, Noam, 1988, Otero, C.P. (ed.), *Language and Politics*, Black Rose Books, Montréal.

Chomsky, Noam, 1996a, *Powers and Prospects: Reflections on Human Nature and the Social Order*, South End Press, Boston.

Chomsky, Noam, 1996b, *Radical Democracy: Noam Chomsky Interviewed by John Nichols*, Capital Times, Madison, WI [Online] Available from: https://chomsky.info/19970303/.

Chomsky, Noam, 1997, *Expanding the Floor of the Cage*, Z Magazine, [Online] Available from: https://chomsky.info/199704__/ [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Chomsky, Noam, 1998, *On Human Nature*, Red Pepper [Online] Available from: https://chomsky.info/199808__-2/ [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Chomsky, Noam, 2002, Mitchell, P.R. & Schoeffel, J. (ed.), *Understanding Power: The Indispensable Chomsky*, New Press, New York.

Chomsky, Noam, 2005a, Pateman, B. (ed.), *Chomsky on Anarchism*, AK Press, New York.

Chomsky, Noam, 2005b, *Government in the Future*, Seven Stories Press, New York.

Chomsky, Noam, 2012, *Occupy*, Penguin, London.

Chomsky, Noam, 2013, *On Anarchism*, New Press, New York.

Chomsky, Noam, 2015a, 'History Doesn't Go in a Straight Line: Noam Chomsky on Bernie Sanders, Jeremy Corbyn, and the Potential for Ordinary People to Make Radical Change', *Jacobin Magazine* [Online] Available from: https://jacobin.com/2015/09/noam-chomsky-bernie-sanders-greece-tsipras-grexit-austerity-neoliberalism-protest/.

Chomsky, Noam, 2015b, *What Kind of Creatures Are We?*, Columbia University Press, New York.

Chomsky, Noam, 2017, *Myths of Globalization: Noam Chomsky and Ha-Joon Chang in Conversation*, Truthout, [Online] Available from: https://truthout.org/articles/myths-of-globalization-noam-chomsky-and-ha-joon-chang-in-conversation/ [Accessed: 24/12/2018].

Chomsky, Noam & Halle, John, 2016, 'An Eight-Point Brief for Lev (Lesser-Evil Voting)', [Online] Available from: https://chomsky.info/an-eight-point-brief-for-lev-lesser-evil-voting/ [Accessed: 18/11/2018].

Clark, John P, 1978, 'What Is Anarchism?', In: J. Roland Pennock, J.W.C., *Anarchism: Nomos Xix*, Vol: 19, New York University Press, New York.

Clouse, Carey, 2014, *Farming Cuba: Urban Agriculture from the Ground Up*, Chronicle Books.

Cockrall-King, Jennifer, 2012, *Food and the City: Urban Agriculture and the New Food Revolution*, Prometheus Books.

Cohn, Jesse, 2002, 'What Is Postanarchism 'Post'?', *Postmodern culture,* vol:13 (1).

Cohn, Jesse & Wilbur, Shawn, 2003, 'What's Wrong with Postanarchism?", *The Anarchist Library*, [Online] Available from: http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/jesse-cohn-and-shawn-wilbur-what-s-wrong-with-postanarchism [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Colson, Daniel, 1996, 'Anarchist Subjectivities and Modern Subjectivity', *The Anarchist Library*, [Online] Available from: http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/daniel-colson-anarchist-subjectivities-and-modern-subjectivity [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Connolly, William E, 2005, 'The Evangelical-Capitalist Resonance Machine', *Political Theory,* vol:33 (6), pp.869-886.

Conrad, Ryan, 2016, 'I'm an Anarchist and I Vote', *Truthout* [Accessed: 18/11/2018].

Cornell, Andrew, 2011, 'A New Anarchism Emerges, 1940-1954', *Journal for the Study of Radicalism,* vol:5 (1), pp.105-131.

Cornell, Stephen Ellicott, 2006, *Indigenous Peoples, Poverty and Self-Determination in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States*, Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management, and Policy, Tucson, AZ.

Critchley, Simon, 2013, 'Introduction', In: Blumenfeld, J., Bottici, C. & Critchley, S., *The Anarchist Turn*, Pluto Press, London.

Crowder, George, 1991, *Classical Anarchism: The Political Thought of Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin*, Clarendon Press.

Dauvé, Gilles & Leoni, Tristan, 2015, 'Rojava: Rhetoric and Reality', [Online] Available from: http://www.troploin.fr/node/83 [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Davis, Megan, 2018, 'The Long Road to Uluru: Walking Together: Truth before Justice', *Griffith Review,* (60), pp.13.

Day, Richard, 2011, 'Hegemony, Affinity and the Newest Social Movements', In: Rousselle, D. & Evren, S., *Post-Anarchism: A Reader*, Pluto Press, London.

Day, Richard J. F., 2005, *Gramsci Is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements*, Pluto Press, London.

DeFronzo, James, 2007, *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements,* 3rd ed., Westview Press, New York.

Dickens, Phil, 2015, 'Electoralism or Class Struggle? ', *Libcom*, [Online] Available from: https://libcom.org/article/electoralism-or-class-struggle-phil-dickens.

Dirik, Dilar, 2021, 'Stateless Citizenship:'Radical Democracy as Consciousness-Raising'in the Rojava Revolution', *Identities,* vol:29 (1), pp.27-44.

DiSalvo, Jackie, 2015, 'Occupy Wall Street: Creating a Strategy for a Spontaneous Movement', *Science & Society,* vol:79 (2), pp.264-287.

Dixon, Chris, 2014, *Another Politics: Talking across Today's Transformative Movements*, Univ of California Press.

Dixon, William & Wilson, David, 2013, *A History of Homo Economicus: The Nature of the Moral in Economic Theory*, Routledge.

Draper, Hal, 1989, *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution Vol Iv*, New York University Press, New York.

Dupuis-Déri, Francis, 2019, 'From the Zapatistas to Seattle: The 'New Anarchists'', *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, Springer, New York.

Edgley, Alison, 2000, *The Social and Political Thought of Noam Chomsky*, Routledge, New York.

Edgley, Alison, 2015, *Noam Chomsky*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Ehrlich, Howard J., 1996, *Reinventing Anarchy, Again,* Rev. ed., AK Press, Edinburgh and San Francisco.

Eigland, Erik, 2015, 'Statement from the Academic Delegation to Rojava', *New Compass*, [Online] Available from: http://new-compass.net/articles/statement-academic-delegation-rojava [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Endres, A Bryan & Endres, Jody M, 2009, 'Homeland Security Planning: What Victory Gardens and Fidel Castro Can Teach Us in Preparing for Food Crises in the United States', *Food & Drug Law Journal,* (64), pp.405.

Engels, Frederick, 2001, 'On Authority ', In: Soudakoff, N., *Marxism Versus Anarchism*, Resistance Books, Australia.

Epstein, Barbara, 2001, 'Anarchism and the Anti-Globalization Movement', *Monthly Review,* vol:53 (4), pp.1-14.

Estes, Nick, 2017, 'Fighting for Our Lives:# Nodapl in Historical Context', *Wicazo Sa Review,* vol:32 (2), pp.115-122.

Esteva, Gustavo, 1999, 'The Zapatistas and People's Power', *Capital & Class,* vol:23 (2), pp.153-182.

Esteva, Gustavo, 2007, 'Oaxaca: The Path of Radical Democracy', *Socialism and Democracy,* vol:21 (2), pp.74-96.

Evren, Süreyyya, 2008, 'Notes on Post-Anarchism', *Talk on Anarchism*, Group for Logistical Support, Belgrade.

Evren, Süreyyya, 2011, 'Introduction: How New Anarchism Changed the World (of Opposition) after Seattle and Gave Birth to Post-Anarchism', In: Rousselle, D. & Evren, S., *Post-Anarchism: A Reader*, Pluto Press, London.

Evren, Süreyyya, 2012, 'There Ain't No Black in the Anarchist Flag! Race, Ethnicity and Anarchism', In: Kinna, R., *The Continuum Companion to Anarchism*, Continuum, New York.

Fabbri, Luigi, 1907, *The Anarchist Organization*, Biblioteca Libertaria, Rome, [Online] Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/luigi-fabbri-the-anarchist-organization.

Fadaee, Simin & Brancolini, Camilla, 2019, 'From National Liberation to Radical Democracy: Exploring the Shift in the Kurdish Liberation Movement in Turkey', *Ethnicities,* vol:19 (5), pp.858-875.

Federici, Vittoria, 2015, 'The Rise of Rojava: Kurdish Autonomy in the Syrian Conflict', *SAIS Review of International Affairs,* vol:35 (2), pp.81-90.

Finlayson, Lorna, 2017, 'With Radicals Like These, Who Needs Conservatives? Doom, Gloom, and Realism in Political Theory', *European Journal of Political Theory,* vol:16 (3), pp.264-282.

Foucault, Michel, 2014, *On the Government of the Living: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1979-1980*, Springer.

Franks, Benjamin, 2007, 'Postanarchism: A Critical Assessment', *Journal of Political Ideologies,* vol:12 (2), pp.127-145.

Franks, Benjamin, 2012, 'Anarchism and Analytic Philosophy', In: Kinna, R., *The Continuum Companion to Anarchism*, Continuum, New York.

Franks, Benjamin, 2018, 'Prefiguration', In: Franks, B., Jun, N. & Williams, L., *Anarchism: A Conceptual Approach*, Routledge, New York.

Franks, Benjamin, 2020, 'Four Models of Anarchist Engagements with Constitutionalism', *Theory in Action,* vol:13 (1), pp.32-69.

Freeden, Michael, 1998, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*, Clarendon Press.

Freeden, Michael, 2003, *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press.

Frémion, Yves, 2002, *The Orgasms of History : 3000 Years of Spontaneous Insurrection* AK Press, Oakland.

Galián, Laura, 2019, 'Squares, Occupy Movements and the Arab Revolutions', In: Levy, C. & Adams, M.S., *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, Springer, New York.

Galston, William A, 2010, 'Realism in Political Theory', *European journal of political theory,* vol:9 (4), pp.385-411.

Gamble, Andrew, 1981, *An Introduction to Modern Social and Political Thought*, Macmillan, UK.

Gelderloos, Peter, 2017a, 'Chapter 4: Environment', *Anarchy Works: Examples of Anarchist Ideas in Practice*, Active Distribution.

Gelderloos, Peter, 2017b, *Worshiping Power: An Anarchist View of Early State Formation*, AK Press, Edinburgh.

Gelderloos, Peter, 2018, 'Diagnostic of the Future: Between the Crisis of Democracy and the Crisis of Capitalism, a Forecast', *Crimethinc*, [Online] Available from: https://crimethinc.com/2018/11/05/diagnostic-of-the-future-between-the-crisis-of-democracy-and-the-crisis-of-capitalism-a-forecast.

Geuss, Raymond, 2008, *Philosophy and Real Politics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.

Geuss, Raymond, 2016, *Reality and Its Dreams*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Gillis, William, 2020, 'Anarchy and Transhumanism', *The Routledge Handbook of Anarchy and Anarchist Thought*, Routledge.

Gilmore, Ruth Wilson, 2007, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*, Univ of California Press.

Gilmore, Ruth Wilson & Gilmore, Craig, 2013, 'Restating the Obvious', *Indefensible Space*, Routledge.

Giovanni, Thomas, 2017a, 'Building Power and Advancing: For Reforms Not Reformism', *Black Rose Blog*, [Online] Available from: https://blackrosefed.org/for-reforms-not-reformism/ [Accessed: 21/2/2021].

Giovanni, Thomas, 2017b, 'Who Are the Anarchists and What Is Anarchism?', *Black Rose Blog*, [Online] Available from: https://blackrosefed.org/who-are-the-anarchists-and-what-is-anarchism/ [Accessed: 21/2/2021].

Gitlin, Todd, 2011, 'The Left Declares Its Independence', *The New York Times*, 2011-10-09, p.4.

Goldman, Emma, 1911, *Anarchism: What It Really Stands For*, Mother Earth Publishing Association.

Goldman, Emma, 1969, *Anarchism: And Other Essays*, Kennikat Press, Port Washington, New York.

Goldman, Emma, 1972, Shulman, A. (ed.), *Red Emma Speaks: Selected Writings and Speeches*, Vintage, New York.

Goldtooth, Dallas, Saldamando, Alberto, Gracey, Kyle, Goldtooth, Tom & Rees, Collin, 2021, *Indigenous Resistance against Carbon,*Indigenous Environmental Network and Oil Change International, Washington, DC, [Online] Available from: https://www.ienearth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Indigenous-Resistance-Against-Carbon-2021.

Goodway, David, 2013, *For Anarchism*, Taylor & Francis Group, London, UK.

Gordon, Uri. 2007. *Anarchism and Political Theory : Contemporary Problems.* PhD Thesis. UK: University of Oxford. [Online] Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/uri-gordon-anarchism-and-political-theory-contemporary-problems.

Gordon, Uri, 2008, *Anarchy Alive! Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory*, Pluto Press, London.

Gorz, André, 1967, *Strategy for Labor: A Radical Proposal*, Beacon Press, Boston.

Graeber, David, 2002, 'The New Anarchists', *New Left Review,* (13), pp.61.

Graeber, David, 2004, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, Prickly Paradigm Press, Chicago.

Graeber, David, 2007, *Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion and Desire*, AK Press, Oakland.

Graeber, David, 2009, *Direct Action: An Ethnography*, AK Press, Oakland.

Graeber, David, 2011, *Revolutions in Reverse: Essays on Politics, Violence, Art and Imagination*, Autonomedia, New York.

Graeber, David, 2012, 'Dead Zones of the Imagination: On Violence, Bureaucracy, and Interpretive Labor: The Malinowski Memorial Lecture, 2006', *HAU: journal of Ethnographic Theory,* vol:2 (2), pp.105-128.

Graeber, David, 2013, *The Democracy Project: A History, a Crisis, a Movement*, Allen Lane, London.

Graeber, David, 2014a, *No. This Is a Genuine Revolution*, ZNet, [Online] Available from: https://zcomm.org/znetarticle/no-this-is-a-genuine-revolution/ [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Graeber, David, 2014b, 'Why Is the World Ignoring the Revolutionary Kurds in Syria?', *The Guardian*, [Online] Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/oct/08/why-world-ignoring-revolutionary-kurds-syria-isis [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Graeber, David, 2015, *The Utopia of Rules: On Technology, Stupidity, and the Secret Joys of Bureaucracy*, Melville House.

Graeber, David, 2016a, 'The Elites Hate Momentum and the Corbynites, and I'll Tell You Why', *The Guardian*, [Online] Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jul/05/political-establishment-momentum-jeremy-corbyn.

Graeber, David, 2016b, 'Foreword', *Revolution in Rojava: Democratic Autonomy and Women's Liberation in Syrian Kurdistan*, Pluto Press, London.

Graeber, David, 2018, *Bullshit Jobs: A Theory*, Simon and Schuster, New York.

Graeber, David & Grubačić, Andrej, 2004, 'Anarchism: Or the Revolutionary Movement of the 21st Century', *Znet|Vision and Strategy*, [Online] Available from: https://zcomm.org/znetarticle/anarchism-or-the-revolutionary-movement-of-the-twenty-first-century-by-david-graeber/.

Graham, Robert, 2005, *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Vol:1*, Black Rose, Montreal.

Graham, Robert, 2009, *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Volume Two: The Emergence of the New Anarchism*, Black Rose Books, Montreal.

Graham, Robert, 2015, *We Do Not Fear Anarchy? We Invoke It: The First International and the Origins of the Anarchist Movement*, AK Press, Oakland.

Guerin, Daniel, 1970, *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice*, NYU Press.

Guillon, Claude, 2002, 'The Chomsky Effect or Anarchism of the State', *Oiseau-tempête* (9), [Online] Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/chomskyeffect#toc2 [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Hamed, Adham, 2014, *Revolution as a Process: The Case of the Egyptian Uprising*, Wiener Verlag für Sozialforschung, Vienna.

Hansen, James, 2010, *Storms of My Grandchildren: The Truth About the Coming Climate Catastrophe and Our Last Chance to Save Humanity*, Bloomsbury Publishing USA.

Harp, Seth, 2017, 'The Anarchists Vs. The Islamic State', *Rolling Stone*, [Online] Available from: https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/the-anarchists-vs-the-islamic-state-109047/ [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Harvey, Neil, 1998, *The Chiapas Rebellion: The Struggle for Land and Democracy*, Duke University Press.

Hatherley, Owen, 2020, *Red Metropolis: Socialism and the Government of London*, Watkins Media Limited.

Heckert, Jamie, 2010, 'Listening, Caring, Becoming: Anarchism as an Ethics of Direct Relationships', In: Franks, B. & Wilson, M., *Anarchism and Moral Philosophy*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Henley, Jon, 2015, 'Greece's Solidarity Movement:"It's a Whole New Model and It's Working"', *The Guardian*, [Online] Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/23/greece-solidarity-movement-cooperatives-syriza [Accessed: 24/12/2018].

Heywood, Andrew, 2012, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction,* 4th ed., Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, UK.

Hillman, M., Fawcett, T. & Rajan, S.C., 2007, *The Suicidal Planet: How to Prevent Global Climate Catastrophe*, St. Martin's Press, New York.

Hindess, Barry, 1977, *Philosophy and Methodology in the Social Sciences*, Harvester Press, Hassocks, UK.

Hindess, Barry, 2008, 'Political Theory and 'Actually Existing Liberalism'', *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy,* vol:11 (3), pp.347-352.

Hinrichs, C Clare, 2003, 'The Practice and Politics of Food System Localization', *Journal of rural studies,* vol:19 (1), pp.33-45.

Hobsbawm, Eric, 1994, *The Age of Extremes: The Short 20th Century, 1914-1991*, Abacus, London.

Hobsbawm, Eric J., 1999, *Revolutionaries*, Abacus, London.

Holloway, John, 2005, *Change the World without Taking Power*, Pluto Press, New York.

Holmgren, David, 2018, *Retrosuburbia: The Downshifter's Guide to a Resilient Future*, Melliodora Publishing, Victoria, Australia.

Horrox, James, 2009, 'Reinventing Resistance: Constructive Anarchism in Gustav Landauer's Social Philosophy', In: Jun, N.J. & Wahl, S., *New Perspectives on Anarchism*, Lexington Books, Lanham MD.

Horton, John, 2010, 'Realism, Liberal Moralism and a Political Theory of Modus Vivendi', *European journal of political theory,* vol:9 (4), pp.431-448.

IPCC, 2014, *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,* Geneva, Switzerland, [Online] Available from: https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/syr/ [Accessed: 10/03/2023].

IPCC, 2021, *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group 1 to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, [Online] Available from: https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/ [Accessed: 10/03/2023].

IPCC, 2022, *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA, [Online] Available from: https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/ [Accessed: 10/03/2023].

IPCC, 2023, *Ar6 Synthesis Report - Climate Change 2023,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, [Online] Available from: https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-cycle/ [Accessed: 10/07/2023].

Ish-Shalom, Piki, 2006, 'The Triptych of Realism, Elitism, and Conservatism', *International Studies Review,* vol:8 (3), pp.441-468.

Johnston, Josée & Baker, Lauren, 2005, 'Eating Outside the Box: Foodshare's Good Food Box and the Challenge of Scale', *Agriculture and Human Values,* vol:22 (3), pp.313-325.

Jones, Jonny, 2012, 'The Shock of the New: Anti-Capitalism and the Crisis', *International Socialism,* (134), pp.27.

Jun, Nathan, 2012, *Anarchism and Political Modernity*, Continuum, New York.

Jun, Nathan J, 2016, 'On Philosophical Anarchism', *Radical Philosophy Review,* vol:19 (3), pp.551-567.

Kajjo, Sirwan, 2017, 'Writings of Obscure American Leftist Drive Kurdish Forces in Syria', *VOA*, [Online] Available from: https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/writings-obscure-american-leftist-drive-kurdish-forces-syria [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Kauanui, J Kēhaulani, 2021, 'The Politics of Indigeneity, Anarchist Praxis, and Decolonization', *Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies,* vol:2021 (1), pp.9-42.

Kedward, Harry Roderick, 1971, *The Anarchists: The Men Who Shocked an Era*, American Heritage Press.

Kelly, Kim, 2019, 'I'm a Left-Wing Anarchist. Guns Aren't Just for Right-Wingers', *Vox*, [Online] Available from: https://www.vox.com/first-person/2019/7/1/18744204/guns-gun-control-anarchism [Accessed: Sept 8 2021].

Kelly, Kim, 2020, 'Meet the Gun Club Patrolling Seattle's Leftist Utopia', *The Daily Beast*, [Online] Available from: https://www.thedailybeast.com/seattles-capitol-hill-autonomous-zone-chaz-has-armed-guards [Accessed: Sept 7 2021].

Kinna, Ruth, 2005, *Anarchism: A Beginner's Guide*, OneWorld, Oxford, UK.

Kinna, Ruth, 2012a, 'Anarchism and the Future of Revolution', *The Continuum Companion to Anarchism*, Continuum, New York.

Kinna, Ruth, 2012b, *Anarchism: A Beginner's Guide*, Oneworld Publications, Oxford, UK.

Kinna, Ruth, 2012c, *The Continuum Companion to Anarchism*, Continuum, New York.

Kioupkiolis, Alexandros & Katsambekis, Giorgos, 2014, *Radical Democracy and Collective Movements Today the Biopolitics of the Multitude Versus the Hegemony of the People*, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, Farnham, UK.

Knapp, Michael, Flach, Anja, Ayboga, Ercan, Abdullah, Aasya & Graeber, David, 2016, Biehl, J. (trans.), *Revolution in Rojava: Democratic Autonomy and Women's Liberation in Syrian Kurdistan*, Pluto Press, London.

Koc, M., MacRae, R., Welsh, J. & Mougeot, L.J.A., 1999, *For Hunger-Proof Cities: Sustainable Urban Food Systems*, International Development Research Centre, Ottowa, Canada.

Kropotkin, Pyotr, 1975, Capouya, E. & Tompkins, K. (ed.), *The Essential Kropotkin*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Kropotkin, Pyotr, 1993, *Fugitive Writings*, Black Rose Books, Montréal, Quebec.

Kropotkin, Pyotr, 2006 [1902], *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, Dover, Mineola, NY.

Kuhn, Gabriel, 2009, 'Anarchism, Postmodernity, and Poststructuralism', In: Amster, R., Deleon, A., Fernandez, L.A., Nocella, A.J. & Shannon, D., *Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy*, Routledge, London and New York.

Laclau, Ernesto, 1994, *The Making of Political Identities*, Verso, London.

Laclau, Ernesto, 2005, *On Populist Reason*, Verso, London.

Laclau, Ernesto & Mouffe, Chantal, 1985, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, Verso, London and New York.

Laclau, Ernesto & Mouffe, Chantal, 1987, 'Post-Marxism without Apologies', *New left review,* (166), pp.79.

Laclau, Ernesto & Mouffe, Chantal, 2001, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics,* 2nd ed., Verso, London and New York.

Lagalisse, Erica, 2018, *Occult Features of Anarchism: With Attention to the Conspiracy of Kings and the Conspiracy of the Peoples*, PM Press, Oakland, CA.

Landauer, Gustav, 2010, *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader*, PM Press, Oakland, CA.

Lecours, André, 2018, 'The Political Consequences of Independence Referenda in Liberal Democracies: Quebec, Scotland, and Catalonia', *Polity,* vol:50 (2), pp.243-274.

Lederman, Shmuel, 2019, *Hannah Arendt and Participatory Democracy: A People's Utopia*, Springer International Publishing, Switzerland.

Leeson, Peter T, 2007, 'An-Arrgh-Chy: The Law and Economics of Pirate Organization', *Journal of political economy,* vol:115 (6), pp.1049-1094.

Leezenberg, Michiel, 2016, 'The Ambiguities of Democratic Autonomy: The Kurdish Movement in Turkey and Rojava', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies,* vol:16 (4), pp.671-690.

Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich, 1999 [1920], *"Left-Wing" Communism : An Infantile Disorder*, Resistance Books, Sydney.

Levins, Richard, 2005, 'How Cuba Is Going Ecological', *Capitalism Nature Socialism,* vol:16 (3), pp.7-25.

Levy, C. & Adams, M.S., 2018, *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, Springer International Publishing.

Levy, Carl, 1999a, *Gramsci and the Anarchists*, Berg, Oxford, UK.

Levy, Carl, 1999b, 'Max Weber, Anarchism and Libertarian Culture: Personality and Power Politics', In: Whimster, S., *Max Weber and the Culture of Anarchy*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, UK.

Levy, Carl, 2012, 'Gramsci's Cultural and Political Sources: Anarchism in the Prison Writings', *Journal of Romance Studies,* vol:12 (3), pp.44-62.

Lewis, Adam Gary, 2020, 'Imagining Autonomy on Stolen Land: Settler Colonialism, Anarchism and the Possibilities of Decolonization?', *Pathways of Settler Decolonization*, Routledge, London.

Little, Adrian, Finlayson, Alan & Tormey, Simon, 2015, 'Reconstituting Realism: Feasibility, Utopia and Epistemological Imperfection', *Contemporary Political Theory,* vol:14 (3), pp.276-313.

Lloyd, Moya & Little, Adrian, 2008, 'Introduction', In: Little, A. & Lloyd, M., *The Politics of Radical Democracy*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.

Lundström, Markus, 2018, *Anarchist Critique of Radical Democracy: The Impossible Argument*, Springer.

Lynd, Staughton & Grubačić, Andrej, 2008, *Wobblies and Zapatistas: Conversations on Anarchism, Marxism, and Radical History*, PM Press, Oakland, CA.

MacLaughlin, Jim, 2016, *Kropotkin and the Anarchist Intellectual Tradition*, Pluto Press, London.

MacSimoin, Alan, 2007, 'Thinking About Anarchism: Nationalism', *Workers Solidarity,* (100):4. [Online] Available from: https://www.wsm.ie/c/anarchism-nationalisation-corrib-resources [Accessed: 24/11/2018].

Maddison, Sarah, 2009, *Black Politics: Inside the Complexity of Aboriginal Political Culture*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

Malatesta, Errico, 1965, Richards, V. (ed.), *Errico Malatesta, His Life & Ideas*, Freedom Press, London.

Malatesta, Errico, 2014, *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland, California.

Malatesta, Errico, 2016, Turcato, D. (ed.), Sharkey, P. (trans.), *The Complete Works of Malatesta Vol. Iii: "A Long and Patient Work": The Anarchist Socialism of L'agitazione, 1897–98*, AK Press, Oakland, CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1884] 2014, 'Program and Organization of the International Working Mens' Association', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1889] 2014, 'Propaganda by Deeds', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1891] 2014, 'Anarchy', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1897] 2014a, 'From a Matter of Tactics to a Matter of Principle', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1897] 2014b, 'Organization', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1899] 2014a, 'An Anarchist Programme', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1899] 2014b, 'Toward Anarchy', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1909] 2014, 'Anarchists and the Situation', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1922] 2014a, 'Further Thoughts on Revolution in Practice', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1922] 2014b, 'Interests and Ideals', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1922] 2014c, 'Revolution in Practice', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1923] 2014, 'Anarchists' Line within the Trade Union Movement', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1924] 2014a, 'Ideal and Reality', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1924] 2014b, 'Idealism and Materialism', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1924] 2014c, 'Individualism and Anarchism', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1924] 2014d, 'On Anarchist Revisionism', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1925] 2014a, 'Gradualism', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1925] 2014b, 'Syndicalism and Anarchism', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1926] 2014, 'Let's Demolish - and Then?', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1931] 2014a, 'Apropos of 'Revisionism'", In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Malatesta, Errico, [1931] 2014b, 'Peter Kropotkin: Recollections and Criticisms by One of His Old Friends', In: Turcato (Ed.), D., *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Marmol, Tarrida del, 1890, 'Anarchism without Adjectives', *La Révolte* 3(51), [Online] Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/fernando-tarrida-del-marmol-anarchism-without-adjectives [Accessed: 1/3/2023].

Marshall, Peter, 1989, 'Human Nature and Anarchism', In: Goodway, D., *For Anarchism: History, Theory, and Practice*, Routledge, London.

Marshall, Peter, 1993, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, PM Press, Oakland, CA.

Marshall, Peter, 2010, *Demanding the Impossible : A History of Anarchism,* 4th ed., PM Press, Oakland, CA.

Martin, Brian, 2008, 'How Nonviolence Is Misrepresented', *Gandhi Marg,* vol:30 (2), pp.235-257.

Martin, Brian, 2012, 'Reform: When Is It Worthwhile', *Anarchist Studies,* vol:20 (2), pp.55-71.

Marx, Karl, 1971 [1887], *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*, Progress Publishers, Moscow.

Marx, Karl, 2000, 'On Bakunin's Statism and Anarchy', In: Mclellan, D., *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, Oxford University Press, USA.

Marx, Karl, 2008 [1847], *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Cosimo, New York.

Marx, Karl & Engels, Friedrich, 1978 [1848], *The Communist Manifesto*, Penguin, Harmondsworth Middlesex.

Maximoff, Georgi, [1930] 1988, *Constructive Anarchism*, Monty Miller Press, [Online] Available from: https://files.libcom.org/files/Constructive-Anarchism.old_.pdf

May, Todd, 1994, *The Political Theory of Poststructualist Anarchism*, Pennsylvania State University Press, Pennsylvania.

May, Todd, 2010, 'Introduction', In: Jun, N.J., *New Perspectives on Anarchism*, Lexington Books, Lanham, Maryland.

McLaughlin, Paul, 2008, *Anarchism and Authority : A Philosophical Introduction to Classical Anarchism*, Taylor & Francis, Abingdon, UK.

McQueen, Alison, 2017, *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times*, Cambridge University Press.

McQueen, Alison, 2020, 'Political Realism and Moral Corruption', *European Journal of Political Theory,* vol:19 (2), pp.141-161.

Mearsheimer, John, 2001, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, W.W. Norton and Co., New York.

Meltzer, Albert, 1993, *Anarchism: Arguments for and Against*, Lancaster Press, Aukland, New Zealand.

Meltzer, Albert, 1996, *Anarchism: Arguments for and Against*, AK Press, Edinburgh.

Miller, David, 1984, *Anarchism*, J.M. Dent, London.

Mills, Charles W, 2005, '"Ideal Theory" as Ideology', *Hypatia,* vol:20 (3), pp.165-183.

Milstein, Cindy, 2010, *Anarchism and Its Aspirations*, AK Press, Oakland, CA.

Mollison, B.C. & Holmgren, D., 1978, *Permaculture One: A Perennial Agricultural System for Human Settlements*, Transworld Publishers, Melbourne, Australia.

Monbiot, George, 2007, *Heat: How We Can Stop the Planet Burning*, Penguin UK, London.

Morgan, Glyn, 2005, 'The Realism of Raymond Geuss', *Government and Opposition,* vol:40 (1), pp.110-120.

Mosby, Speed, 1900, 'The Corporation System-an Argument for Its Abolition', *American Law Review,* vol:34 pp.544.

Mouffe, Chantal, 1993, *The Return of the Political*, Verso, London and New York.

Mouffe, Chantal, 2000, *The Democratic Paradox*, Verso, London and New York.

Mouffe, Chantal, 2005, *On the Political*, Routledge, London and New York.

Mouffe, Chantal, 2009, 'The Importance of Engaging the State', In: J., P., *What Is Radical Politics Today?*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Mouffe, Chantal, 2013, *Agonistics : Thinking the World Politically*, Verso, London.

Mouffe, Chantal, 2018, *For a Left Populism*, Verso Books, London.

Mount, Phil, 2012, 'Growing Local Food: Scale and Local Food Systems Governance', *Agriculture and Human Values,* vol:29 (1), pp.107-121.

Movement, Workers' Solidarity, 2017, *State and Democracy,* Anarchism, Oppression, & Exploitation position paper passed by WSM National Conference July 2017: [Online] Available from: http://www.wsm.ie/c/state-and-democracy [Accessed: 01/03/2021].

Mueller, Tadzio, 2003, 'Empowering Anarchy: Power, Hegemony, and Anarchist Strategy', *Anarchist Studies,* vol:11 (2), pp.122-149.

Muñoz Ramírez, Gloria, 2008, *The Fire and the Word: A History of the Zapatista Movement*, City Lights Books, San Francisco CA.

Neel, Phil A., 2014, *Why Riot?*, Oplopanax Publishing, Melbourne, [Online] Available from: http://www.ultra-com.org/project/why-riot/ [Accessed: 24/11/2018].

Ness (ed.), Immanuel, 2014, *New Forms of Worker Organization: The Syndicalist and Autonomist Restoration of Class Struggle Unionism*, PM Press, Oakland CA.

Newman, Saul, 2001, *From Bakunin to Lacan: Anti-Authoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power*, Lexington Books, Plymouth, UK.

Newman, Saul, 2009, 'Anarchism', In: Pugh, J., *What Is Radical Politics Today?*, Springer.

Newman, Saul, 2011a, *The Politics of Postanarchism*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.

Newman, Saul, 2011b, 'Postanarchism: A Politics of Anti-Politics', *Journal of Political Ideologies,* vol:16 (3), pp.313-327.

Newman, Saul, 2015, *Postanarchism*, Polity Press, UK.

Noonan, Jeff, 2003, *Critical Humanism and the Politics of Difference*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal.

Nozick, Robert, 1974, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Basic Books, New York.

Öcalan, Abdullah, 2011, *Democratic Confederalism*, International Initiative Edition, Cologne.

Öcalan, Abdullah, 2017, *The Political Thought of Abdullah Öcalan: Kurdistan, Woman's Revolution and Democratic Confederalism*, Pluto Press, London.

Osborn, Ronald, 2009, 'Noam Chomsky and the Realist Tradition', *Review of International Studies,* vol:35 (2), pp.351-370.

Osterweil, Vicky, 2020, *In Defense of Looting: A Riotous History of Uncivil Action*, Bold Type Books, New York.

Otero, Carlos P., 1994, 'Introduction', In: Otero, C.P., *Noam Chomsky : Critical Assessments*, Routledge, London and New York.

Otero, Carlos Peregrín, 2003, *Radical Priorities*, AK Press, Edinburgh.

Parenti, Christian, 2011, *Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence*, Nation books, New York.

Pauli, Benjamin, 2015a, 'Noam Chomsly and the Anarchist Tradition', In: Edgley, A., *Noam Chomsky*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Pauli, Benjamin J, 2015b, 'The New Anarchism in Britain and the Us: Towards a Richer Understanding of Post-War Anarchist Thought', *Journal of Political Ideologies,* vol:20 (2), pp.134-155.

Perisic, Alexandra, 2017, 'Overturning Catastrophes', *The Comparatist,* vol:41 pp.118-132.

Philp, Mark, 2012, 'Realism without Illusions', *Political Theory,* vol:40 (5), pp.629-649.

Pittman, John P, 2015, 'Introduction: Red on Black Marxist Encounters with Anarchism', *Science & Society,* vol:79 (2), pp.148-152.

Price, Wayne, 2000, 'Anarchism as Extreme Democracy', *The Utopian*, Vol:1, [Online] Available from: http://www.utopianmag.com/archives/anarchism-as-extreme-democracy [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Price, Wayne, 2006, 'Confronting the Question of Power', *anarkismo.net*, [Online] Available from: http://www.anarkismo.net/article/2496 [Accessed: 25/09/2018].

Price, Wayne, 2007, 'Fragments of a Reformist Anarchism', *anarkismo.net*, [Online] Available from: https://www.anarkismo.net/article/4979 [Accessed: 17/3/2018].

Price, Wayne, 2013, 'Is It a State?', *anarkismo.net*, [Online] Available from: http://anarkismo.net/article/25430?search_text=wayne%20price&print_page=true [Accessed: 17/3/2018].

Price, Wayne, 2016, 'Are Anarchism and Democracy Opposed?', *Anarchist News*, [Online] Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/wayne-price-are-anarchism-and-democracy-opposed.

Price, Wayne, 2017, 'What Is an Anarchist? Am I an Anarchist?', *anarkismo.net*, [Online] Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/wayne-price-what-is-an-anarchist-am-i-an-anarchist [Accessed: 25/09/2022].

Prichard, Alex, 2007, 'Justice, Order and Anarchy: The International Political Theory of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809—1865)', *Millennium,* vol:35 (3), pp.623-645.

Prinz, Janosch. 2015. *Radicalizing Realism in Political Theory*. White Rose eTheses Online: University of Sheffield. [Online] Available from: http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/8367/ [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph, 1994, Kelley, D.R. & Smith, B.G. (ed.), *Proudhon: What Is Property?*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph, 2011, Mckay, I. (ed.), *Property Is Theft!: A Pierre-Joseph Proudhon Anthology*, AK Press.

Quinn, Megan, 2006, 'The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil', *Permaculture Activist,* (59).

Raekstad, Paul, 2016, 'Understanding Anarchism: Some Basics', *Science & Society,* vol:80 (3), pp.407-414.

Raekstad, Paul, 2018, 'Realism, Utopianism, and Radical Values', *European journal of philosophy,* vol:26 (1), pp.145-168.

Raekstad, Paul & Gradin, Sofa Saio, 2019, *Prefigurative Politics: Building Tomorrow Today*, Polity, New York.

Rai, Milan, 2015, 'Chomsky and Revolution', In: Edgley, A., *Noam Chomsky*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Rawls, John, 2001, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, Harvard University Press, New York.

Reclus, Elisée, 1913, 'Why Anarchists Don't Vote', *Mother Earth,* vol:8 (5).

Reclus, Elisée, 2005, 'Evolution and Revolution [1891]', In: Graham, R., *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas*, Vol: 1, Black Rose, Montreal.

Rehmann, Jan, 2013, 'Occupy Wall Street and the Question of Hegemony: A Gramscian Analysis', *Socialism and Democracy,* vol:27 (1), pp.1-18.

Ritter, Alan, 1980, *Anarchism: A Theoretical Analysis*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Roberts, Alasdair, 2012, 'Why the Occupy Movement Failed', *Public Administration Review,* vol:72 (5), pp.754-762.

Robinson, Andrew & Tormey, Simon, 2008, 'Is 'Another World' Possible?: Laclau, Mouffe and Social Movements', In: Little, A., Lloyd, Moya, *The Politics of Radical Democracy*, Edinburgh University Press.

Rocker, Rudolf, [1949] 1973, *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*, Freedom Press, London.

Ross, Carne, 2015, 'The Kurds' Democratic Experiment', *The New York Times*, [Online] Available from: https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/30/opinion/the-kurds-democratic-experiment.html [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Rossi, Enzo, 2010, 'Reality and Imagination in Political Theory and Practice: On Raymond Geuss's Realism', *European journal of political theory,* vol:9 (4), pp.504-512.

Rossi, Enzo, 2019, 'Being Realistic and Demanding the Impossible', *Constellations,* vol:26 (4), pp.638-652.

Rossi, Enzo & Raekstad, Paul. April 2020, *Political Naturalism: Legitimacy without Sovereignty* Paper presented at Anarchist Research Group Seminar Series, Loughborough University, Available

from: https://docs.google.com/document/d/14EXhXIX8AeSpMcBP9vsKQVUxm0gbNOTR-ZQllWAzij4/edit.

Rossi, Enzo & Sleat, Matt, 2014, 'Realism in Normative Political Theory', *Philosophy Compass,* vol:9 (10), pp.689-701.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 2002, 'The Second Discourse: Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Mankind', *The Social Contract and the First and Second Discourses*, Yale University Press, New Haven.

Runciman, David, 2012, 'What Is Realistic Political Philosophy?', *Metaphilosophy,* vol:43 (1-2), pp.58-70.

Ryan, Alan, 2012, 'The Nature of Human Nature in Hobbes and Rousseau', *The Making of Modern Liberalism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

Sartwell, Crispin, 2008, *Against the State: An Introduction to Anarchist Political Theory*, State University of New York Press.

Sary, Ghadi, 2016, *Kurdish Self-Governance in Syria: Survival and Ambition*, Chatham House for the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

Scheuerman, William E., 2013, 'The Realist Revival in Political Philosophy, Or: Why New Is Not Always Improved', *International Politics,* vol:50 (6), pp.798-814.

Schmidt, Michael & van der Walt, Lucien, 2009, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism*, AK Press, Oakland, CA.

Schmitt, Carl, 1985, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, University of Chicago Press.

Schmitt, Carl, 1988, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, MIT Press, USA.

Scott, James C., 2009, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, CT.

Shantz, Jeff, 2010, *Constructive Anarchy: Building Infrastructures of Resistance*, Routledge, London.

Shantz, Jeff, 2011, *Active Anarchy: Political Practice in Contemporary Movements*, Lexington Books, Lanham, Maryland.

Shantz, Jeff & Williams, Dana M., 2013, *Anarchy and Society : Reflections on Anarchist Sociology*, Brill, Boston.

Shantz, Jeffrey, 2005, 'Anarchy Is Order: Creating the New World in the Shell of the Old', *M/C Journal,* vol:7 (6).

Shantz, Jeffrey, 2009, 'Anarchy in the Unions: Contemporary Anarchists at Work', *WorkingUSA,* vol:12 (3), pp.371-385.

Shelley, Cain, 2022, 'Murray Bookchin and the Value of Democratic Municipalism', *European Journal of Political Theory,* vol:0 (0), pp.1-22, https://doi.org/10.1177/14748851221128248.

Sheppard, Si, 2016, 'What the Syrian Kurds Have Wrought', *The Atlantic*, [Online] Available from: https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/10/kurds-rojava-syria-isis-iraq-assad/505037/ [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Shklar, Judith, 1989, 'The Liberalism of Fear', In: Rosenblum, N., *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Shuman, Michael, 2013, *Going Local: Creating Self-Reliant Communities in a Global Age*, Routledge, New York.

Simmons, A John, 1996, 'Philosophical Anarchism', In: Sanders, J.T. & Narveson, J., *For and against the State: New Philosophical Readings*, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, Maryland.

Sitrin, Marina, 2019, 'Anarchism and the Newest Social Movements', In: Levy, C. & Adams, M.S., *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, Springer International Publishing, Cham.

Sleat, Matt, 2011, 'Liberal Realism: A Liberal Response to the Realist Critique', *The Review of Politics,* vol:73 (3), pp.469-496.

Sleat, Matt, 2016, 'Realism, Liberalism and Non-Ideal Theory or, Are There Two Ways to Do Realistic Political Theory?', *Political Studies,* vol:64 (1), pp.27-41.

Smucker, Jonathan Matthew, 2013, 'Occupy: A Name Fixed to a Flashpoint', *The Sociological Quarterly,* vol:54 (2), pp.219-225.

Smucker, Jonathan Matthew, 2014, 'Can Prefigurative Politics Replace Political Strategy', *Berkeley Journal of Sociology,* vol:58 (7).

Smucker, Jonathan Matthew, 2017, *Hegemony How-To: A Roadmap for Radicals*, AK Press, Chico, CA.

Society, Libertarian Workers for a Self-Managed, 1985, 'You Can't Blow up a Social Relationship: The Anarchist Case against Terrorism', [Online] Available from: http://flag.blackened.net/noterror/cantblowup.html.

Solnit, Rebecca, 2020, 'David Graeber Pushed Us to Imagine Greater Human Possibilities', *The Guardian*, [Online] Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/sep/08/david-graeber-pushed-us-to-imagine-greater-human-possibilities?CMP=gu_com.

Solomon, Martha, 1987, *Emma Goldman*, Twayne, Michigan.

Soudakoff, Nick, Wright, John G., Marx, Karl, Engels, Frederick, Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich & Trotsky, Leon, 2001, *Marxism Versus Anarchism*, Resistance Books, Australia.

Soule, Daniel PJ, Leith, Murray S & Steven, Martin, 2012, 'Scottish Devolution and National Identity', *National Identities,* vol:14 (1), pp.1-10.

Speth, J.G., 2008, *The Bridge at the Edge of the World: Capitalism, the Environment, and Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability*, Yale University Press, New Haven.

Springer, Simon, 2016, *The Anarchist Roots of Geography: Toward Spatial Emancipation*, University of Minnesota Press, USA.

Stalin, Joseph, 1950, *Anarchism or Socialism?*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, [Online] Available from: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1906/12/x01.htm.

Stanchev, Petar, 2016, 'The Kurds, Bookchin, and the Need to Reinvent Revolution', *New Politics,* vol:15 (4), pp.77.

Stanovčić, Vojislav, 1992, 'Problems and Options in Institutionalizing Ethnic Relations', *International Political Science Review,* vol:13 (4), pp.359-379.

Starr, Amory & Adams, Jason, 2003, 'Anti-Globalization: The Global Fight for Local Autonomy', *New Political Science,* vol:25 (1), pp.19-42.

Steven, Best, 1998, 'Murray Bookchin's Theory of Social Ecology: An Appraisal of "the Ecology of Freedom"', *Organization & Environment,* (3), pp.334.

Stirner, Max, 1995, *The Ego and Its Own*, Cambridge University Press.

Swann, Thomas, 2010, 'Are Postanarchists Right to Call Classical Anarchists 'Humanist'?', In: Franks, B. & Wilson, M., *Anarchism and Moral Philosophy*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Thompson, John, 2012, 'Incredible Edible – Social and Environmental Entrepreneurship in the Era of the "Big Society"', *Social Enterprise Journal,* vol:8 (3), pp.237-250.

Tilly, Charles, 1978, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Addison-Wesley Publishing, Reading.

Toft, Monica Duffy, 2012, 'Self-Determination, Secession, and Civil War', *Terrorism and political violence,* vol:24 (4), pp.581-600.

Tombs, Steve & Whyte, David, 2015, *The Corporate Criminal: Why Corporations Must Be Abolished*, Routledge, New York.

Tully, James, 2008, *Public Philosophy in a New Key: Volume 1, Democracy and Civic Freedom*, Cambridge University Press.

Turcato, Davide, 2015, *Making Sense of Anarchism: Errico Malatesta's Experiments with Revolution, 1889-1900*, AK Press, Oakland CA.

Turcato, Davide, 2019, 'Anarchist Communism', In: Levy, C. & Adams, M.S., *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, Springer, New York.

Üstündağ, Nazan, 2016, 'Self-Defense as a Revolutionary Practice in Rojava, or How to Unmake the State', *South Atlantic Quarterly,* vol:115 (1), pp.197-210.

Van Der Walt, Lucien, 1996, 'No to Privatisation!', *Workers' Solidarity*, Vol. 2((1)):3. [Online] Available from: https://saasha.net/2012/12/06/workers-solidarity-volume-2-number-1-first-quarter-1996-focus-on-the-unions/ [Accessed: 24/11/2018].

Van Reybrouck, David, 2018, *Against Elections*, Seven Stories Press, New York.

Van Wilgenburg, Wladimir, 2016, 'Kurds Welcome Us Support, but Want More Say on Syria's Future', *Middle Easy Eye*, [Online] Available from:

https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/analysis-kurds-welcome-us-support-want-more-say-syrias-future [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Van Wilgenburg, Wladimir, 2018, 'Syrian Kurds Call on Damascus to Protect Manbij from Turkish Invasion', *Kurdistan 24*, [Online] Available from: https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/1b7c816d-564e-4ec2-905c-ca9c7a040b7a [Accessed: 24/01/2020].

Walker, Rob BJ, 1987, 'Realism, Change, and International Political Theory', *International Studies Quarterly,* vol:31 (1), pp.65-86.

Waltz, Kenneth, 1979, *Theory of International Politics*, Mcgraw-Hill, New York.

Ward, Colin, 1973, *Anarchy in Action*, Freedom Press, London.

Ward, Colin, 1987, 'The Case against Voting', *Freedom,* vol:48 (6).

Ward, Colin, 2004, *Anarchism : A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Warner, Keith, Goodman, Michael, FitzSimmons, Margaret & Allen, Patricia, 2017, 'Shifting Plates in the Agrifood Landscape: The Tectonics of Alternative Agrifood Initiatives in California', In: Munton, R., *The Rural*, Routledge, London.

Weaver, Adam, 2006, 'Especifismo: The Anarchist Praxis of Building Popular Movements and Revolutionary Organization', [Online] Available from: https://blackrosefed.org/especifismo-weaver/.

Weber, Max, 1949, Shils, E. & Finch, H.A. (ed.), *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, The Free Press, New York.

Weick, David, 1979, *Reinventing Anarchy*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.

Weiss, Penny A & Kensinger, Loretta, 2007, *Feminist Interpretations of Emma Goldman*, Penn State Press, Pennsylvania.

Werner, Benedikt. 2012. *Is Earth F**Ked? Dynamical Futility of Global Environmental Management and Possibilities for Sustainability Via Direct Action Activism.* American Geophysical Union, Fall Meeting [Online] Available from: https://ui.adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2012AGUFMEP32B..04W/abstract [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Whyte, Kyle, 2017, 'The Dakota Access Pipeline, Environmental Injustice, and U.S. Colonialism', *Red Ink: An International Journal of Indigenous Literature, Arts, & Humanities,* vol:19 (1).

Wigger, Angela, 2016, 'Anarchism as Emancipatory Theory and Praxis: Implications for Critical Marxist Research', *Capital & Class,* vol:40 (1), pp.129-145.

Wike, Richard, Simmons, Katie, Stokes, Bruce & Fetterorf, Janell, 2017, 'Globally, Broad Support for Representative and Direct Democracy', *Pew Research Center*, [Online] Available from: https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2017/10/16/globally-broad-support-for-representative-and-direct-democracy/ [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Williams, Bernard, 2005, *In the Beginning Was the Deed: Realism and Moralism in Political Argument*, Princeton University Press.

Williams, Dana 2017, *Black Flags and Social Movements: A Sociological Analysis of Movement Anarchism*, Manchester University Press, UK.

Wolff, Robert Paul, 1970, *In Defense of Anarchism*, University of California Press, USA.

Wolff, Robert Paul, 1998, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Woller, Almut, 2018, 'Self-Mediation Practices of Arab Anarchists', *Digital Media and the Politics of Transformation in the Arab World and Asia*, Springer VS, Germany.

Woodcock, George, 1962, *Anarchism : A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK.

Woodcock, George, 1977, *The Anarchist Reader*, Fontana, Great Britain.

Wright, Eric Olin, 2010, *Envisioning Real Utopias*, Verso, London.

Yusif, Hediye, 2017, *A Conversation with Hadiya Yusif*, Washington Kurdish Institute, [Online] Available from: http://dckurd.org/2017/09/27/a-conversation-with-hediye-yusif/ [Accessed: 29/01/2020].

Zerzan, John, 2002, 'Who Is Chomsky?', *Running on Emptiness: The Pathology of Civilization*, Feral House, Los Angeles.

Ziq, 2018, 'Anarchy Vs Archy: No Justified Authority; or, Why Chomsky Is Wrong', *The Anarchist Library*, [Online] Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/ziq-anarchy-vs-archy-no-justified-authority.