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*In the Spirit of Kropotkin*

**The pervasive nature of heterodox economic spaces at a time of neo-liberal crisis:  
towards a "post-neoliberal" anarchist future**

**Dr. Richard J White**

Senior Lecturer in Economic Geography  
Faculty of Development and Society  
Sheffield Hallam University  
City Campus, Howard Street  
Sheffield S1 1WB  
[Richard.White@shu.ac.uk](mailto:Richard.White@shu.ac.uk)

**Colin C Williams**

Professor of Public Policy  
School of Management  
University of Sheffield  
9 Mappin Street  
Sheffield S1 4DT  
[C.C.Williams@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:C.C.Williams@sheffield.ac.uk)

**Abstract**

Re-reading the economic landscape of the western world as a largely non-capitalist landscape composed of economic plurality, this paper demonstrates how economic relations in contemporary western society are often embedded in non-commodified practices such as mutual aid, reciprocity, co-operation and inclusion. By highlighting how the long-overlooked lived practices in the contemporary world of production, consumption and exchange are heavily grounded in the very types and essences of non-capitalist economics relations that have long been proposed by anarchistic visions of employment and organisation, this paper displays that such visions are far from utopian: they are embedded firmly in the present. By mapping the pervasive nature of these heterodox economic spaces, some ideas about how to develop an anarchist future of work and organisation will be proposed. The outcome is to begin to engage in the demonstrative construction of a future based on mutualism and autonomous modes of organisation and representation.

**Key Words:** anarchist geographies, heterodox economics , postneoliberalism

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"(I)t becomes evident that the economic institutions which control production and exchange are far from giving to society the prosperity which they are supposed to guarantee; they produce precisely the opposite result. Instead of order they bring forth chaos; instead of prosperity, poverty and insecurity; instead of reconciled interests, war; a perpetual war of the exploiter against the worker, of exploiters and of workers among themselves. Weary of these wars, weary of the miseries which they cause, society rushes to seek a new organization..."

(Peter Kropotkin, 1880/2002: 36)

"An anarchist society, a society which organizes itself without authority, is always in existence, like a seed beneath the snow..."

(Colin Ward, 1982: 14)

**Introduction**

As we once more bear witness to the latest crisis of neo-liberalism (Castree 2010; Hart 2010; Wade 2010) in which "(t)he free-market project is on the ropes" (Peck et al 2010: 94) it is particularly relevant and timely to re-state the scale and importance of broader non-commodified economic spaces in contemporary society, and explore the potential that these spaces provide to envision and enact a "post-neoliberal" future. The crisis also presents a wonderful opportunity to re-invigorate human and economic geography by re-introducing anarchism as a legitimate radical philosophy, not least in light of its growing importance as a socio-political mobilizer both within the academy and beyond.

The main contribution of the paper is to demonstrate that these oft overlooked, non-commodified economic practices in the contemporary world of production, consumption and exchange are heavily grounded in the very types of non-capitalist economic relations that have long been proposed by classical anarchistic visions of employment and organisation. Thus the key argument is made that "post-neoliberal" visions grounded in anarchist thought

and praxis are far from utopian: they are deeply rooted within the present. From an anarchist perspective this finding is particularly significant. That the paper is written *in the spirit of* the anarchist and geographer Peter Kropotkin is in recognition of the fact that the paper keeps faith with the approach, orientation and means of engaging with society that he sought and epitomised. As Cleaver (1994: 120) highlighted:

"As to the method followed by the anarchist thinker," he (Kropotkin) wrote in 1887, "it is entirely different from that followed by the utopists... *He studies human society as it is now and was in the past ... tries to discover its tendencies, past and present, its growing needs, intellectual and economic, and in his ideal he merely points out in which direction evolution goes.*" (emphasis added)

Having addressed the reasons why these non-commodified economic spaces are so pervasive, some proposals about how to develop an anarchist future of work and organisation will then be made. The hope is that this will invite further discussion and exploration about how best to engage in the demonstrative construction of a future based on mutualism, pluralism, autonomous modes of organisation and representation.

Before advancing further it is reasonable to pose the question: "What is anarchism?" (Un)fortunately a simple response is conspicuous only by its absence. As Marshall (1993: 3) argues:

"It would be misleading to offer a neat definition of anarchism, since by its very nature it is anti-dogmatic. It does not offer a fixed body of doctrine based on one particular world-view. It is a complex and subtle philosophy, embracing many different currents of thought and strategy. Indeed anarchism is like a river with many currents and eddies, constantly changing and being refreshed by new surges but always moving toward the wide ocean of freedom."

Woodcock (1986: 11) attempts to gain some firmer grounds by stating that:

"What we are concerned with, in terms of definition, is a cluster of works which in turn represents a cluster of doctrines and attitudes whose principal uniting feature is the belief that government is both harmful and unnecessary. A double Greek root is involved: the word *archon*, meaning a ruler, and the prefix *an*, indicating without; hence anarchy *means* the state of being without a ruler. By derivation, anarchism is the doctrine which contents that government is the source of most of our social troubles and that there are viable alternative forms of voluntary organization. And by further definition the *anarchist* is the man (sic) who sets out to create a society without government."

Regarding the structure of the paper, the opening section will focus on a critical body of economic literature that has been concerned with mapping the limits to capitalism, and promoting a heterodox reading of "the economic". This will then be followed with a discussion focused on how the key outcomes emerging from this critical reading of economics has much in common with anarchist-inspired visions of human engagement, work and organisation in society. This contextual opening will advance onto more empirical grounds by focusing on the plurality of economic practices evident within western society, both at the national level (focused on time-budget studies) and at the local level (principally drawing on the findings harnessed through the Household Work Practice Survey undertaken in several UK communities). Here the need to explore the geographies of (non-)capitalist spaces at the community and household level is particularly important from an anarchist perspective as it embraces a direct commitment to explore diversity and difference at the human-scale (Ward 1982; Sale, 1980). This intervention is vital if bottom-up, autonomous and empowered modes of organisation and representation are to harness the livelihood practices of individuals and communities that are already in place. The final contribution of this paper will then look to *suggest* ways in which these spaces (*of hope? of possibilities?*) may be pursued. A non-prescriptive, non-coercive means of engaging is fundamental. As Colin Ward (1982: 143) observed, "Anarchism in all its guises is an assertion of human dignity and responsibility. It is not a programme for political change but an act of social self-determination."

### **The Emergence of Heterodox Economic Spaces within Geography**

Over the last twenty years, that "body of work in economic geography and cognate fields—which through an attention to space, place and difference, rejects the tendencies towards formalism and homogeneity in inherent within orthodox economics—has begun to theorise the proliferative nature of economic life" (Leyshon, 2005: 860) has gained significant influence within geography and amongst other critical approaches toward "the economic". Particularly influential contributions that have helped conceptualise, capture and understand the rich, complex, multiple and "diverse" economic landscapes in society have broadly emerged from research focused on the "alternative" or "informal" economies (Burns et al 2004; Leyshon et al 2003; Samers 2005; Williams 2005, 2007, 2011).

One of the most impressive and sustained interventions that have de-centered the central texts of capitalism, through unpacking practices and strategies of capitalism, and developing viable, transformative projects of noncapitalist development, has come through the work of Gibson-

Graham (1996, 2006). More widely a great of research within this heterodox approach to economics has engaged with modes of production, exchange and consumption evident at the household and community level. These include feminist campaigns to recognise the value of unpaid work (for example, Benston, 1969, England, 1996; Katz and Monk, 1993; McDowell, 1983; Oakley, 1974); research focused on unpacking the nature of monetary exchange to rework the social nature of the economic (for example, Crang, 1996; Crewe and Gregson, 1998; Lee, 1996, 1997; White 2009); highlighting non-traditional, neglected, sites of consumption such as garage sales (Soiffer and Hermann, 1987); car boot sales (Gregson and Crewe, 2002, 2003), charity shops (Crewe et al. 2001; Williams and Paddock, 2003) and local currencies (eg Cahn, 2000; Lee 1996; North, 1999). This radical commitment to re-reading the orthodox neoliberal approaches to "the economic" has led to the more diverse, multiple and heterogenic modes of economic conceptualisation, representation, meaning and materialisation being identified and represented. This in turn has resulted - as will be shown later - in far richer economic landscapes coming to the fore, within which capitalism is just one among several key modes of economic organisation.

### **Anarchist Economics and the transcendence of capitalism**

Even if neat definitions of anarchism are elusive, we can be certain that many of the findings emerging from a diverse economies approach, and certainly those advocating a move away from capitulo-centric economic discourse (Gibson-Graham, 2006); from "thin" to "thicker" readings of economic exchange (Zelizer, 1997; 2000); emphasising on voluntary co-operation and mutualism (Burns et al 2004; Williams and Windebank, 2011); on collectivity rather individuality (White 2009); and the importance of engaging with the intimate places of "the local" have much in common with many anarchist-orientated critiques of economy and society. Moreover the ambition to explore non-capitalist alternative economic practices situated within contemporary society - and thus avoid the need for utopian projections - is in keeping with the spirit of anarchism. This can be illustrated perfectly with reference to Kropotkin, and the body of work that he left behind. As Cleaver, (1994: 122) observes:

"(Kropotkin's) work fascinates not because it gives us formulae for the future but because it shows us how to discover tendencies in the present which provide alternative paths out of the current crisis and out of the capitalist system. As that system has developed in the years since he wrote, some of the alternatives he saw were absorbed and ceased to provide ways forward. Others have survived. Others, inevitably, have appeared. Our problem is to recognize them, to evaluate them and, where we find it appropriate, to support their development."

Elsewhere, Ward (1982:5) noted that:

"Many years of attempting to be an anarchist propagandist have convinced me that we win over our fellow citizen to anarchist ideas, precisely through drawing upon the common experience of the informal, transients, self-organising networks of relationships that in fact make human community possible, rather than through the rejection of existing society as a whole in favour of some future society where some different kind of humanity will live in perfect harmony"

It is toward unearthing the informal and self-organising networks of relationships in contemporary society to which the paper now turns.

### **The pervasiveness of heterodox economic spaces in contemporary society**

Attempts to illustrate the relationship(s) between different types of economic spaces face the problem of representation: any final structures are inevitably crude in their execution<sup>1</sup>. That said, in recent years representations have become increasingly complex in the hope of better capturing a more nuanced economic reality. One of the most promising of these is the use of a total social organisation of labour approach (TSOL), designed to capture the multiplicity of labour practices that exist on a horizontal spectrum, moving from formal to informal work practices, which are cross-cut by a vertical spectrum that moves from wholly monetised to wholly non-monetised practice (see Williams, 2011). Operating at a more superficial level, one of the more established attempts to simply capture and contextualise the main spheres of work is highlighted in Figure 1.

**Figure 1 Spheres of Work**

<b>Exchange</b>	<b>Monetised</b> Non-profit motivated	<b>Non- monetised</b>
	Profit motivated	
<b>Non-exchanged work</b>	Self-provisioning	

In this representation the 'capitalist' mode of exchange (monetised, market-like and profit-motivated) is juxtaposed against non-profit motivated monetised exchange; self-provisioning; and non-monetised exchange. In the orthodox (neo-liberal) reading of economic development, the assumption is that the world is becoming increasingly commodified (Polanyi 1944; Scott 2001; Watts, 1999). The thesis is that profit-motivated, monetised exchanged work is expanding at the expense of all other spheres. However, when evidence is sought to corroborate this grand narrative of commodification, the "most worrying and disturbing finding... is that hardly any evidence is every brought to the fore by its adherents either to show that a process of commodification is taking place or even to display the extent, pace or unevenness of its penetration." (Williams, 2005: 23).

In an attempt to address this gap at the national level, the results generated by time-budget studies have been particularly influential (Gershuny 2000). As Table 1 indicates, across twenty countries, an average of 43.6 per cent of working time is spent in engaged in unpaid domestic work (i.e. non-exchanged work), which in displaying the persistence of non-commodified work in contemporary societies seriously calls into question the extent of commodification assumed to have taken place in the so called "advanced" economies.

**Table 1 Allocation of Working Time in Western Economies**

Country	Paid work (minutes per day)	Non-exchanged work (minutes per day)	Time spent on non-exchanged work as % of all work
Canada	293	204	41.0
Denmark	283	155	35.3
France	297	246	45.3
Netherlands	265	209	44.1
Norway	265	232	46.7
UK	282	206	42.2
USA	304	231	43.2
Finland	268	216	44.6
20 Countries	297	230	43.6

*Source:* derived from Gershuny (2000, Table 7.1)



Moreover, when research is gathered to test the assumption that there has been a definite transition over time away from unpaid work and towards paid formal work, again this is not substantiated (see Table 2). Indeed paid work, when taken as a percentage of total working time across the 20 countries is actually *decreasing* over time.

**Table 2 Subsistence and Paid Work as a % of Total Work Time Across 20 Countries, 1960 – Present**

Country	1960-73		1974-84		1985-present	
	Mins per day	% of all work	Mins per day	% of all work	Mins per day	% of all work
Paid work	309	56.6	285	57.3	293	55.4
Subsistence work	237	43.4	212	42.7	235	44.6
	546	100.0	497	100.0	528	100.0

*Source:* Derived from Gershuny (2000, Table 7.1)

At the local level, research intent on explored the geographies of community self-help, "those informal activities that are not formally provided by the market and the state" (Burns et al 2004: 29) are particularly relevant to understand from an anarchist perspective, as will be argued shortly. Table 1 outlines further typologies of community self-help, including self-help (which refers to unpaid work undertaken within a household by a household member), and mutual aid, both unpaid (work undertaken on an unpaid basis by the extended family, social or neighbourhood networks) and paid. Paid, autonomous forms of mutual aid are:

"where legal goods and services are exchanged for money and gifts, which are unregistered by, or hidden from, the state for tax, social security or labour law purposes." (Burns et al, 2004: 30)

**Figure 2: Types of Community Self-Help**

Self-help	Routine self-provisioning	
	Do-it-yourself activity	
Mutual aid	Unpaid	One-to-one kinship reciprocity
		One-to-one reciprocity between friends and

	neighbours
	organised mutual aid
	Community volunteering
Paid	Autonomous

Adapted from Burns et al (2004: 30) Table 2.1 Types of community self help

Addressing the extent of community self-help evidence is drawn from 861 face-to-face interviews that were undertaken across a range of deprived and affluent urban and rural English localities (see Williams, 2011). Drawing on data generated by the UK government's Index of Multiple Deprivation (ODPM, 2000), a maximum variation sampling was used to select localities amongst the highest and lowest ranked in terms of multiple deprivation (see Table 3).

**Table 3 UK Localities Studied**

Locality-Type	Area	Number of Interviews
Affluent rural	Fulbourn, Cambridgeshire	70
Affluent rural	Chalford, Gloucestershire	70
Deprived rural	Grimethorpe, South Yorkshire	70
Deprived rural	Wigston, Cumbria	70
Deprived rural	St Blazey, Cornwall	70
Affluent suburb	Fulwood, Sheffield	50
Affluent suburb	Basset/Chilworth, Southampton	61
Deprived urban	Manor, Sheffield	100
Deprived urban	Pitsmoor, Sheffield	100
Deprived urban	St Mary's, Southampton	100
Deprived urban	Hightown, Southampton	100

The interviews undertaken in these localities were semi-structured. Having gathered necessary contextual information (age, gender, household income, employment status, work history) the interview then focused on the type of labour that a household had called upon to undertake up to 44 domestic tasks<sup>ii</sup>. For each task, the respondent was asked whether the task had been undertaken; if so who had carried out the work (and why), and whether or not it was done on a paid or unpaid basis (and why). Then the same tasks were addressed but this time

asking the respondent if they (or other members of their household) had done work for other households and, if so, under what basis.

When focusing on the evidence for commodification through this exploration of work practices at the local level, the finding was that participation rates in monetised labour are far from extensive (see Table 4). In reality, less than a fifth of respondents in deprived localities had participated in paid formal labour over the previous twelve months. In affluent localities, this figure was higher but still accounted for less than fifty percent of the respondents. Moreover, when these findings are taken in conjunction with non-exchanged labour and non-monetised informal community exchanges then what emerges is an economic reality in which private sector formal labour is marginal, and is of significance only to a small minority of the population.

**Table 4 Participation Rates in Different Labour Practices**

% respondents in last 12 months participating in:	Deprived urban	Affluent urban	Deprived rural	Affluent rural
<i>Monetised labour</i>				
Formal labour in private sector	16	48	19	49
Formal labour in public and third sector	20	27	18	25
Paid informal labour	5	7	6	8
Paid favours	60	21	63	30
Paid family labour	3	6	2	4
<i>Non-monetised labour</i>				
Formal unpaid labour in private sector	1	2	1	2
Formal unpaid labour in public & third sector	19	28	21	30
Informal unpaid labour in organisations	2	0	2	1
Unpaid one-to-one labour	52	70	54	73
Non-exchanged labour	99	100	100	100

Source: Colin Williams's own English Localities Survey

When focusing on the labour practices employed by households to complete the tasks investigated, Table 5 again suggests only a shallow and uneven penetration of formal market labour. Hence, only a limited commodification has taken place in these English localities. Indeed, just 16 per cent of tasks when last undertaken had used formal market labour.

**Table 5** Type of labour practices used to conduct 44 domestic tasks: by locality-type

% tasks last conducted using:	Deprived urban	Affluent urban	Deprived rural	Affluent rural	All areas
<i>Monetised labour</i>					
Formal labour in private sector	12	15	18	22	16
Formal labour in public and third sector	2	2	2	2	2
Paid informal labour	2	8	<1	4	2
Paid favours	3	1	4	1	3
Paid family labour	1	<1	1	1	1
<i>Non-monetised labour</i>					
Formal unpaid labour in private sector	<1	0	<1	<1	<1
Formal unpaid labour in public & third sector	<1	0	<1	0	<1
Informal unpaid labour in organisations	<1	0	<1	0	0
Unpaid one-to-one labour	4	2	8	7	6
Non-exchanged labour	76	72	67	63	70
Total	100	100	100	100	100
$\chi^2$	102.89	29.87	89.76	28.88	-

Note:  $\chi^2 > 12.838$  in all cases, leading us to reject  $H_0$  within a 99.5 per cent confidence interval that there are no spatial variations in the sources of labour used to complete the 44 household services.

Source: Colin Williams's own English Localities Survey

The results also indicate the uneven permeation of formal market labour and the existence of contrasting work cultures across populations. For example, lower-income populations are less monetised than higher-income ones. The household work practices of higher-income populations are also less reliant upon community exchange between close social relations (monetised and non-monetised). Self-help (self-provisioning) is still very dominant, with little work being sourced within the market realm.

When the multifarious labour practices are taken into account alongside the evidence generated through time budget surveys then the empirical case to support the commodification thesis is weak. This understanding - that the commodification thesis is a popular *myth* - is one which should give much inspiration to those anticipating and advocating for a "post-neoliberal" economic future. The economic landscape of the western world should be more properly understood as a largely non-capitalist landscape composed of economic plurality, wherein relations are often embedded in non-commodified practices such as mutual aid, reciprocity, co-operation and inclusion.

### **Understanding The Pervasiveness of Non-Commodified Spaces**

This presents another important question: "Why are non-commodified spaces so pervasive?" And it is here that (classical) anarchist readings concerning the nature of humans, and their relationship others are particularly well represented. The slim volume of research that has begun to explore this question explicitly has cited several key reasons to explain its persistence. For example, Williams and Windebank, (2001) undertook research focused on the Household Work Practices Survey across 511 households in two English cities (Sheffield and Southampton). Their research found that of the 44 tasks conducted, "76 per cent were carried out using unpaid labour of household members in lower-income neighbourhoods and 72 per cent in higher-income neighbourhoods (Burns et al 2004: 55). When focusing on self-help activity, the motivations they found for engaging in this activity focused on *economic necessity, ease, choice and pleasure*.

Economic necessity was the primary reason why lower-income urban neighbourhoods engaged in this form of activity, cited by 44 per cent of the respondents (see Burns et al 2004: 57). For higher-income households this accounted for just 10 per cent of tasks with other non-economic rationales such as ease, choice and pleasure coming to the fore instead. Thirty-seven per cent of higher-income neighbourhoods, and 18 per cent of lower income neighbourhoods used self help, because this was *easier* than contacting and employing others to do the job

Elsewhere, households preferred to use self-help because the tasks would be completed to a higher-standard and/ or would be more individualised than if another source of labour was used. This preference was closely linked to engaging in self-help activities because this was seen to be a *pleasurable* experience (mentioned by 32 per cent of affluent neighbourhoods and 14 per cent of deprived neighbourhoods). To engage in do-it-yourself projects (like

decorating or other home improvement tasks) for example was something particularly worthwhile and rewarding. Of course this simple pleasure in undertaking the not-routine tasks, in direct contrast to formal work has been highlighted in many anarchist writings. As Ward (1982: 95) noted:

"(A man or women) enjoys going home and digging in his garden because he is free from foremen, managers and bosses. He is free from the monotony and slavery of doing the same thing day in day out, and is in control of the whole job from start to finish. He is free to decide for himself how and when to set about it. He is responsible to himself and not to somebody else. He is working because he wants to and not because he has to. He is doing his own thing. He is his own man.

And elsewhere Berkman (1929/ 1986: 336) observed that:

"The need of activity is one of the most fundamental urges of man. Watch the child and see how strong is his instinct for action, for movement, for doing something. Strong and continuous. It is the same with the healthy man. His energy and vitality demand expression. Permit him to do the work of his choice, the thing he loves, and his application will know neither weariness nor shirking. You can observe this in the factory when he is lucky enough to own a garden or patch of ground to raise some flowers or vegetables on.

When focusing on community self-help research which adapted the Household Work Practice Survey (focusing on a smaller range of tasks, 24) was conducted across 100 households (White, 2009; White and Williams 2010). The research compared the coping strategies of affluent and deprived households in two wards in Leicester (UK) (see Table 6)

**Table 6: Coping strategies employed to complete tasks in Leicester UK.**

Leicester wards	Jobs completed overall (%)	Jobs completed using the formal economy (%)	Jobs completed using paid informal work (%)	Jobs completed using self-provisioning (%)	Jobs completed using unpaid informal mutual aid (%)	Jobs completed using paid mutual aid (%)
West Knighton (affluent)	79	9	4	62	18	7
Saffron (deprived)	71	7	1	60	26	6
ALL TASKS	75	8	3	61	22	7

Source: White and Williams (2010: 327) Table 4: Household Coping Abilities and Practices in West Knighton and Saffron, UK

When asked to explain the why households preferred using community self help (which accounted for almost 92% of the tasks focused on in the research), two over-riding rationales came to the fore. The first was that individuals felt that they had a *moral duty or responsibility* to help others, particularly family members, and broader social relations. Neighbours reported helping other neighbours or friends out who were in difficulty because it was the right thing to do. Again these contemporary findings have been repeated again and again in the anarchist-based literature focused on mutuality, reciprocity and moral obligations. As Kropotkin (2002: 97) concluded, "wherever society exists at all, this principal may be found: Treat others as you would like them to treat you under similar circumstances."

The second key rationale for undertaking community self-help in Saffron and West Knighton attention the social-embedded nature of community self help, and how this fostered a *great sense of belonging*, and of being wanted (by others). There was an expectation that wider family members would be (expected to be) asked to help out individuals, and take exception if they weren't. Indeed when "focusing on kinship reciprocity, mutual aid was overtly harnessed by respondents as a principal means of retaining and developing meaningful contact with other family members" (White, 2009: 467)

Given this body of evidence then surrounding the geographies of community self-help, what can be meaningfully - and constructively taken forward to help inform discussions and debate that are concerned with harnessing (a) post-neoliberal anarchist future(s)?

## **Towards a post-neoliberal anarchist future**

"Suppose our future in fact lies, not with a handful of technocrats pushing buttons to support the rest of us, but with a multitude of small activities, whether by individual or groups, doing their own thing? Suppose the only plausible economic recovery consists in people picking themselves up off the industrial scrapheap, or rejecting their slot in the micro-technology system, and making their own niche in the world of ordinary needs and their satisfaction. Wouldn't that be something to do with anarchism? (Ward, 1982: 13)

The principal aim of this paper thus far has been to re-assert the centrality of non-commodified spaces in an age of neo-liberal economic crisis. Many alternative forms of social co-operation and ways of being not only persist in the contemporary world, but still occupy a central place in many household and community livelihood practices. Moreover many of these livelihood practices are empowering and desirable for many in that they are harnessed more through choice, and not economic necessity. It is hoped that this will encourage anarchist-based visions of "post-neoliberal" futures to assert themselves from within these current economic landscapes, and help a secure bridge to be established between the contemporary world "as is", with any projections about how a "post-neoliberal" world may look. This bridging between what is, and what could be, is fundamentally importance for many reasons, but particularly given that:

"The problem of transcending capitalism is the search for the future in the present, the identification of already existing activities which embody new, alternative forms of social co-operation and ways of being." (Cleaver 1994: 129)

This brings us to another important consideration: "What, in a phrase, will it be like to live in a world dominated more and more by household and hidden economies and less by the formal economy?" (Ward, 1982: 13). Certainly, when attempting to address possible anarchist futures of work and organization, it is crucial to avoid the temptation of advocating (imposing) from above an overly narrow, singular, 'best' interpretation of what that future should be. Indeed plurality, diversity, and heterodox approaches to address the future should be positively encouraged and embraced. As Baldelli (1972: 82) argues:

"In an anarchist society there will be positive freedom, freedom as power, but only in association with others, not over or against them. There is only one way to avoid making the individual powerless against society, and that is a plurality



of societies within society, and a plurality of powers within or in accompaniment to each society. This double plurality should provide ample room for each individual to choose from a fair variety of possible destinies."

Similarly for Springer (2011: 526), "imagining new forms of voluntary association and mutual aid, where pluralism may blossom, democratic engagement might be enhanced, and a liberatory zeitgeist may emerge" as the basis of emancipation .and thus central to successfully contesting "the alienating effects of contemporary neoliberalisation".

There must certainly be a holistic focus in place, one which critically recognises the intersections that operate collectively to liberate or suppress. Without doubt the anarchist gaze should seek to unpack and the (untapped) liberatory potential roles of education, housing, employment and the family (eg Illich 1971; Ward 1982). With respect to the family this may take new and unpredictable forms. As Ward (1973: 129) argued

"Family life, based on the original community, has disappeared. A new family, based on community of aspirations, will take its place. In this family people will be obliged to know one another, to aid one another and to lean on one another moral support on every occasion."

It is vital that research focused on exploring the barriers to participation in community self-help is also given full consideration in post-neoliberal visions. Again, drawing on the research undertaken through the household work practice survey in the UK (Burns et al 2004; Williams and Windebank, 2001; White, 2009) the nature of these barriers are uneven, and not only reflect (a combination) of a household's lack of money, time, skills, and social networks, but in relation to mutual aid in particular are frustrated by several social taboos including 'being a burden to others'; 'false expectations', 'being taken advantage of' and 'being unable to say no to others'. A nuanced, bottom-up approach to understanding these barriers from the household and community level is essential if these are to be successfully addressed.

That many seemingly entrenched obstacles can be overcome by direct action, through taking responsibility for changing one's own situation, can be witnessed on many levels, and in many places. Indeed there has been a great deal of evidence of good (anarchist-based) practice arising through the work that (radical) geographers have undertaken, particularly those focused on engaging with autonomous communities (Pickerill and Chatterton 2006). There is no doubt that many new and exciting strategies of resistance have yet to be explored, or properly understood, not least from within the western world. This was a reflective point considered by Chatterton (2011: 898) while working with the Zapatista autonomous municipality of Morelia:

I began to think about the inspiring struggles and people I had met back home in the UK over the last few years. People ripping up genetically modified crops, breaking into warehouses to hold raves or military bases to dismantle jet fighters, blocking road developments or holding parties in the middle of motorways. The silent army of people organising free language classes for migrants or solidarity events against the poll tax, developing open source software, hacklabs and alternative news media. Under the bright inspiring lights of the Zapatista struggle, I had begun to forget just how many people continue to resist neoliberalism, the deadlock of consumer-led market fundamentalism and the patronising deadhand of representative democracy in a wealth of untold ways; often putting their own liberty on the line to struggle for a better, more equal society where everyone has a say in how it is built.

Critical academics and activists alike should take great heart and comfort that we can perceive clear (anarchist) spaces and methods of social and economic organisation that are being continually practiced in the contemporary world. It is also clear that strategies which look to harness and pursue "post neoliberal" economic worlds should try wherever possible to put community self-help at the heart of these "new" worlds. As Burns et al (2004: 28) said: "Community self help should not be seen as an off-the-wall radical philosophy. It is for the most part what we do already."

Anarchist visions aside, it is important to consider what the means to these ends will be though. What *strategies* and *tactics* can be used to successfully promote anarchist-inspired praxis pose the greatest challenge? As Goldman (1979: 48) noted: "as the most revolutionary and uncompromising innovator, Anarchism must meet needs with the combined ignorance and venom of the world it aims to reconstruct". One significant step forward would be the wider integration of the critique(s) and (new) intersections that a re-vitalised anarchism can bring to the contemporary radical theory and praxis of human and economic geography. It is disappointing to reflect that direct engagement with anarchist ideas and practice within geography have been neglected, or overlooked in favour of other radical geographies (Marxist and feminist critiques for example) for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As Blunt and Willis (2000:2) conclude: "Anarchist ideas have inspired enormous change within the discipline, but as yet, they have spawned only the outlines of a tradition of geographical scholarship and there is plenty of scope for further elaboration." Thus, if this paper has contributed in some small way toward a (re)turn to anarchist geography, opened up some new opportunities and possibilities to unleash our economic imaginations, helped suggest ways to move beyond authoritarian methods of social organisation, and move purposefully toward a "post-neoliberal" future then it will have achieved its purpose.

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<sup>i</sup> On a related point, an important gap in heterodox economics literature generally concerns the lack of a post-structuralist anarchism intervention. This would be another potential exciting and worthwhile endeavour, and one that has begun to be of influence elsewhere (eg May 1994, 2011; Koch 2011; Newman 2011; Mueller 2011; Jeppesen 2011).

<sup>ii</sup> The tasks included aspects of *house maintenance* (outdoor painting; indoor painting; wallpapering; plastering; mending a broken window and maintenance of appliances), *home improvement* (putting in double glazing; plumbing; electrical work; house insulation; putting in a bathroom suite; building a garage; building an extension; putting in central heating and carpentry), *housework* (routine housework; cleaning windows outdoors; spring cleaning; cleaning windows indoors; doing the shopping; washing clothes and sheets; ironing; cooking meals; washing dishes; hairdressing; household administration), *making and repairing goods* (making clothes; repairing clothes; knitting; making or repairing furniture; making or repairing garden equipment; making curtains), *car maintenance* (washing car; repairing car and car maintenance), gardening (care of indoor plants; outdoor borders; outdoor vegetables; lawn mowing) and *caring activities* (daytime baby-sitting; night-time baby sitting; educational activities; pet care).