Anarchist Theory and Archaeology

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Introduction

The theory of anarchism primarily concerns the organization of society in a way that fosters egalitarian or equitable forms of association and cooperation and resists all forms of domination. An anarchist perspective involves an awareness of, and critique of, how power is implemented through social relations, whether positively as in collaborative acts of mutual aid to common goals or negatively as in assertions of authoritarian power contrary to the interests of the community as a whole. As a theory concerning power and social relations, archaeologists apply anarchism for analyses of past societies, to interpret and evaluate forms of egalitarian or hierarchical relations, modes of domination or resistance, and expressions of control or autonomy. Moreover, it is not just for considering the past, but the theory can be applied to contemporary social arrangements concerning archaeology in multiple ways: how archaeologists organize themselves for research teams and field crews, involve local or descendant communities, or relate to the various publics concerning heritage. Anarchism has had an increasing influence upon archaeology in recent years, just as the theory has influenced other disciplines throughout the social sciences and humanities.

Anarchism originated in the mid-nineteenth century, advocated by such individuals as William Godwin and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. Anarchism concerns principles for the organization of societies without recourse to formal governments or centralized institutions. For this reason, the name of the theory translates as "no rulers": *an-* (without) + *arche* (ruler). However, a better translation of it is perhaps "without domination" or framed in active form as "against domination." Anarchism is a theory explicitly about human relationships without coercive forms of authority, hierarchy, or exploitation of other humans; many anarchists extend these prohibitions against domination even

further to include human relations with nonhuman beings or entities, meaning other species and the environment.

This formulation, notably, is in contrast to popular notions about anarchy used in the sense of chaos. Rather, for its advocates, anarchism provides principles for social order among any group of people, even in contexts without centralized leadership. This notion provides a significant contrast to Hobbes' notion in 1651 concerning the need for a "Leviathan" to govern people that otherwise chaos would reign without a monarch or other dominant ruler and their enforcers. Instead, as the long history of human social and political organization indicates, peoples have generally organized their lives without the need for a king, monarch, or other leviathan to maintain order. Anarchists presume a degree of willingness to cooperate among consenting parties. Rather than chaos, anarchism is a theory about community-organized forms of social order.

To implement such social relations, anarchist theorists did not provide a blueprint for how societies should be organized, as they recognized that all peoples need to adapt their societies to meet their local historical situations and environmental circumstances. Anarchist theory instead consists of several values or principles for organizing people in egalitarian, equitable, and noncoercive ways, whether as small groups, local communities, extended networks, or societies as a whole. Common principles include individual and local group freedom or autonomy, voluntary forms of association and federation, mutual aid, decentralized and networked forms of organization, communal decision-making (direct democracy), temporary or situated forms of authority, direct actions, and resistance to all forms of domination or exploitation.

Shared among these principles is the emphasis on liberty and autonomy, freedom of thought and expression, both for individuals and groups. While there is a libertarian strain to this emphasis, they do not advocate for social atomism, where each person is left to care for oneself. Instead, there is a strong push for commu-

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nity relationships, although those should be engaged and pursued through voluntary forms of association and community agreement. Self-organization refers to the ability of individuals to organize co-operatively into groups at various scales for productive tasks or shared goals. According to anarchist notions, no central authority is necessary to accomplish any endeavor, no matter the scale. Mutual aid and cooperative endeavors are seen by anarchists as the core dynamic for the self-organization of groups and for the linking of those local corporate groups into larger community and regional networks of interaction. It's the practical needs of individuals within local groups that are the medium for organization. These repeated acts and engagements of mutual aid form networks that link individuals and groups in multifaceted manners that are nonhierarchical or decentralized in structure. Furthermore, these networks have a temporary quality, generally lasting for the duration of utility for those involved; there is a general opposition to arrangements becoming fixed or entrenched, which are limitations upon the freedom of individuals and groups.

While building connections – mutual aid and alliances – are something anarchists support, concentrated authority is something they oppose. Historically, much of anarchist discourse has been directed foremost at the state, as a political formation that is hierarchical and uses state power to enforce and maintain hierarchical relations. However, archaeologists are concerned with the application of power within all types of societies, whether states or non-states. To apply to all societies and settings, the emphasis therefore is upon assertions of domination in any social setting. Various forms of absolutism can occur at multiple scales of human social interaction.

Central to anarchist thinking is that it is a theory about power. For this reason, anarchists have shaped thinking about social power in the social sciences and philosophy, influencing Nietzsche and Foucault. This is founded on the basic point made by Bertrand Russell (2004 [1938]) that the natural sciences are about the

physical dynamics of energy, while the social sciences are about the dynamics of human social power. As archaeology increasingly uses the language and reasoning of the natural sciences (as it should), archaeologists need to also deploy theoretical frameworks about social power, and early anarchist theorists have been at the source of that.

Anarchist approaches have much relevance for archaeologies, especially for social or political perspectives that must understand the dynamics of power relations. Since the vast majority of societies in the longue durée of human history have been anarchies, or societies without formal governments or centralized institutions, the theory of anarchism has relevance for understanding the self-organization of communities.

The theory has more than application toward interpreting the archaeological record, however. Due to its basis as an analysis and critique of power, the theory also applies as well to the contemporary context of archaeology and its practices. Power pervades all forms of social relations that lead to coordinated forms of action. For this reason, anarchism can be applied to the contexts of archaeological work as field crews, as researchers collaborating with communities, as workers in Cultural Resource Management firms or cooperatives, as educators in the classroom, as stakeholders regarding heritage, and so on across the many arenas in which archaeologists relate to others.

Historical Background

Anarchism has a long history in Western discourse, extending back to the mid-1800s. Yet, anarchist principles for social organization associated with the theory have found expression in numerous societies and groups that extend back millennia. Some historians connect such principles with the Taoists, Gnostic groups, and even early Christianity. In this way, anarchistic societies, if not anarchist

of decolonizing archaeologies that aim to critique and remove colonial structures of domination over indigenous peoples and their heritage. To address such structures and pursue alternate forms of social relations with indigenous or descendant groups is a primary method to address such goals. This is supported by anarchist emphases on equitable relationships and direct actions to prefigure the associations that will enable a better community. In this way, anarchist archaeologies also buttress the aims of subaltern archaeologies to redress structures of dominance, including both feminist and indigenous archaeologies. A final example of concurrent aims is with Marxist archaeologies. While there has been a long history of debate between advocates of both approaches, the shared aims of a more equitable society and a critique of power structures in society is present in both. The end goals are similar as well. In many ways, anarchist and Marxist archaeologies are sisters that have been too long separated. Indeed, the many parallel and contradictory perspectives provided by these two perspectives only enhance both archaeologies in their efforts.

In summation, anarchist theory, based in over a century of debate and refinement, both among anarchists and in dialogues with Marxists and others of the left and right, has developed a critique of hierarchical power relations as well as proposals for enacting more equitable relations. In this way, anarchists offer varieties of social and political archaeology that center on the dynamics of power relationships, and these can be applied to the societies of the past and to relationships in the present.

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Indeed, this may provide solid footing for engaging other publics and communities regarding archaeology.

Anarchist theory supports that we can engage these publics, both descendant and non-descendant communities, as natural authorities regarding our craft and specialization and yet recognize the multitude of other authorities regarding the heritage and narratives of the past. This contributes to a more inclusive and collaborative archaeology, resulting in changes in field methods, publication practices, and interpretive stances. An anarchist archaeology offers support to such archaeologies with its emphasis in the decentralization of authorities, the formation of alliances of mutual interest, and an equality of representation among numerous publics.

Anarchist critiques of power and authority bring many ethical implications for implementing anti-authoritarian practices. These stances, concerning authority and assessments of power relations, extend to anarchist approaches in education concerning archaeology. Pedagogy, accordingly, is not a place for hierarchical forms of knowledge dispersal but a setting for engaging others in a shared process of learning, whether in the classroom, at a site with a field school, or in public talks.

An anarchist assessment can also be brought to bear on other forms of social arrangements in archaeological practices, such as research teams, field crews, or archaeological firms. These allow for considering the justification of certain hierarchies or their appropriateness for the tasks at hand. They may ask whether certain interpretations are dominant regarding publication of results or reports or whether recommendations for heritage management adequately reflect the consensus of interests involved.

The interests of anarchist archaeologies share much with other strains of archaeology. These affinities include those emphases on activist archaeology that aims to transform existing practices for the betterment of communities. In the critique of dominant structures, there are shared emphases with archaeologies of resistance (e.g., Ruibal-Gonzalez 2014). This certainly extends to parallel aims

(meaning derived from the discourse of anarchist thinkers), have been expressed throughout human history. In several respects, anarchist elements form a part of any society, non-states or states, since all societies contend with issues of centralization and decentralization, hierarchy and egalitarianism, and control and autonomy.

One of the earliest formalizations of anarchist thought derives from William Godwin, who in 1793 published *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness*, offering how an anarchist society might be organized. Shortly thereafter, in 1798, Immanuel Kant defined anarchy as a form of government entailing law and freedom without force in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. The term became most prominent decades later with Pierre Joseph Proudhon's 1840 publication of *What Is Property? An Enquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government*. Significant subsequent thinkers included Peter Kropotkin and Mikael Bakunin in Europe and Emma Goldman in the USA. Unlike Marxism, which can be distilled, as its name implies, to Marx, anarchists rely upon a plurality of thinkers, each of whom provides a unique vantage point to think through human sociopolitical dynamics. Not one of those thinkers could be pointed to as central, as Marx is to Marxism.

These two traditions share a history. Both are traditions of the political left. Both aim for an egalitarian society and profess interest in an ultimate society of communism without a domineering state. Both joined in efforts of uniting laborers beyond countries in the workers' internationals. Advocates and thinkers of both Marxism and anarchism engaged in vigorous discussions and debates, with Marx enthusiastically meeting Proudhon and Bakunin at various times, even if he later turned against them theoretically. Despite the closeness of being both political allies to the left of Liberalism, the two also differed on how best to transform society. For Marxism, revolution proceeds in stages, and the workers need to take over state authority in order to enable the eventual transfor-

mation into communism. Anarchism, on the other hand, requires that liberation proceeds in a manner that reflects the end goal. Anarchists rejected centralization of the state-level authority from the outset. This grew from the anarchist idea that societies are prefigured, which is to say they emerge from the practices that create them. Instead of the ends justifying the means, anarchists believe that the means create the ends or that the means are the ends – the two are simultaneous. Therefore, while they were close politically, the issue of centralization of power in their methods caused a fissure between the groups. Marx's ideas gained stronger adherents, in the decades following the fissure, both in state and academic positions. This is also reflected in the predominance of Marxism in academic discourse since. However, in recent years, anarchism has seen a resurgence of application.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, interest in anarchism would increase with theorists such as Elisée Reclus, Gustav Landauer, Errico Malatesta, and Voltairine de Cleyre, among others. In many quarters, other major thinkers are regarded within the scope of anarchism, such as Max Stirner or Leo Tolstoy. Into the later twentieth century, the theory of anarchism further developed through Rudolph Rocker, Colin Ward, Noam Chomsky, and Murray Bookchin, among others. Recently, theorists have also adapted anarchism in light of its affinity or relevance to post-modern and poststructuralist thinkers such as Foucault, Derrida, and Lacan (e.g., Newman 2001).

In anthropology, there have been several scholars that have used anarchism to assess cultures throughout the world. Most notably, Pierre Clastres (1987), in *Society Against the State*, has argued that anarchistic societies have not developed a political centralized state but rather that they explicitly do not aim to concentrate power in their societies, preferring the autonomy of groups. Harold Barclay (1982) has provided a survey of anarchic societies with *People without Governments*. Brian Morris (2014) has emphasized the affinity of anarchism and the discipline of anthropology overall, as both

of justification also applies to any social arrangement as well, such as an alliance, exchange relation, or network. Once the need for an alliance accomplishes its goal or outlives its need, a union might soon dissipate to return greater autonomy to local groups. These distinctions provide archaeologists a way to consider expressions of authority, alliances, or other social arrangements in the past as either imposed or consensus-based. Historical processes in any society's culture history may reveal tensions regarding the centralization and contestation of power, either diachronically or synchronically. The changing nature of these community relationships can reveal themselves in settlement patterns, community arrangements, or households, exhibiting decentralized or centralized characteristics. For instance, in many anarchic societies, authority is not centralized. Rather, it consists of numerous authorities that provide balance to each other and a multivocal, diverse environment of thought and practice. This type of heterarchical structure is very resilient (Crumley 1995).

These distinctions between natural authority and artificial authority also apply to contemporary practices since archaeologists represent ourselves as authorities to others concerning the narratives of the past or the management of heritage. Archaeologists should aim to be natural authorities concerning the past, as people knowledgeable of our conceptions of past cultures and events, or as individuals trained in archaeological methods as a craft. Yet, archaeologists should not become artificial authorities, those imposing their authority over stories of the past, as there can be multiple narratives, particularly those of indigenous oral traditions. As well, this applies to stances regarding heritage of sites and artifacts, where the need of scientific study of heritage is claimed over the interests of other publics, especially descendant groups with non-research interests at stake. The anarchist division of types of authority enables and promotes a multivocality regarding heritage while simultaneously allowing for our expertise regarding our craft.

resents "power over" another person, which anarchists refer to as "vertical power." This is top-down form of power, as a boss to an employee, a general to a soldier, and a king to its subjects. The second form of power anarchists recognize is "horizontal power." This is the power to organize in alliances. It is a bottom-up form of power, as with marches, unions, and many grassroots social movements.

Anarchists argue that an emphasis in our language usage upon vertical forms of power can be disenfranchising and marginalizing. Horizontal forms of power must be considered as a power that can oppose vertical forms of power. Therefore, archaeologists aim to assess not only "traditional" forms of power that are hegemonically used to dominate others but also the multiple forms that engender voluntary alliances between people.

The following key issues for anarchist archaeologies involve an assessment of power in past or contemporary social relations or within modern disciplinary practices. Whether vertical or horizontal, power often is distributed through authorities. Bakunin (1953 [1871]: 239) referred to this distinction as between natural and artificial authority. The former is justified as an expression of natural human relationships, whereas artificial authorities are imposed through institutional structures. Saul Newman (2001: 38–41) considered this distinction significantly important in political philosophy. No longer could one critique the anarchists for an oversimplified focus upon the state, since an anarchist conception of power is not tied solely to the state or the "social contract," but instead concerns the power dynamics of any human social relationship (Newman 2001: 40).

While anarchists oppose authoritarian power, they do not reject authority in itself. Bakunin (1953 [1871]: 253–254) stated "I bow before the authority of special men because it is imposed upon me by my own reason. Therefore there is no fixed and constant authority, but a continual exchange of mutual, temporary, and, above all, voluntary authority and subordination." Therefore, any authority must be situationally justified. This notion

emphasize local cultural and historical contexts and relay the diverse possibilities for arranging human societies. While there have been important precursors, it is with the work of James C. Scott and David Graeber that anthropologists have increasingly begun to apply anarchist theory. James Scott (2009) has provided a historical ethnography of societies that oppose the state in Southeast Asia, and his overall works have often been about "arts of resistance" to domination across numerous cultures. The work of David Graeber (2004) has influenced anthropologists and other social scientists toward the breadth and scope of anarchist perspectives, whether upon exchange, debt, democracy, and much more.

Anarchist archaeologists have become more prominent in recent years, including Severin Fowles' (2010) study of a "People's History of the American Southwest," Angelbeck and Grier's (2012) analysis of the archaeological history of the "inverted pear"-shaped social structure of the Coast Salish of the Pacific Northwest Coast, and James Flexner's (2014) treatment of the archaeology of states and non-states in Hawai'i and Vanuatu. Three doctoral dissertations concern anarchist analyses, including our own work (see further readings). Colleen Morgan (2015) has published an overview of anarchist analyses in archaeology. Others have dealt with anarchist analyses implicitly or tangentially, such as Wengrow and Graeber's (2015) discussion of the shifting modes of sociopolitical orders from hierarchy to heterarchy prior to the development of states or Gonzalez-Ruibal's (2014) archaeology of resistance in the borderlands of Ethiopia and Sudan. The basic premises of an anarchist archaeology have been outlined in "Foundations of an Anarchist Archaeology: A Community Manifesto" (Black Trowel Collective 2016).

Anarchist archaeologists often recognize that other scholars tread similar ground, emphasizing order without governments or centralization, recognizing shifting or temporary forms of authority, or acts of resistance in response to forms of domination. These could be called anarchistic studies in that they parallel anarchist

interests without explicitly naming or drawing upon anarchist theory. For instance, McGuire and Saitta (1996), while generally using a Marxist dialectical perspective, emphasized how groups in the Pueblo Southwest can arrange and exhibit both egalitarian and hierarchical sociopolitical formations (i.e., it is not a simple either/or dichotomy). This parallels anarchist views on the complexity of egalitarian forms of social organization and aspects of resisting domination. Barbara Mills (2004), in "The Establishment and Defeat of Hierarchy", argued that forms of hierarchy were contested through the destruction of the material signatures of ritual expressions of inequalities. Finally, Robert L. Bettinger's (2015) *Orderly Anarchy* presented a study of indigenous California cultures that concerned their general social order in the absence of government that also parallels anarchist themes without drawing upon anarchist discourse. A close association also exists with works in heterarchy, whereby Carole Crumley (1995) and others have emphasized the presence of complex nonhierarchical societies. The theory of heterarchy reveals the possibilities for numerous authorities in a society or nodes in a network, allowing for more complex and dynamic interactions and information flows. Many societies, formerly viewed as simply egalitarian, are more accurately heterarchical with their authorities, revealing the diverse ways that cultures can arrange their social relations.

Key Issues/Current Debates

> The epic poems, the inscriptions on monuments, the treaties of peace – nearly all historical documents bear the same character; they deal with the breaches of peace, not with peace itself. So that the best-intentioned historian unconsciously draws a distorted picture of the times he endeavors to depict; and, to restore the real proportion between conflict

> and union, we are now bound to enter into a minute analysis of the thousands of small facts and faint indications accidentally preserved in the relics of the past; to interpret them with the aid of comparative ethnology; and, after having heard so much about what used to divide men, to reconstruct stone by stone the institutions which used to unite them. (Kropotkin 1955 [1902]: 117)

Over a century ago, Peter Kropotkin (1955 [1902]) outlined an important role for archaeology in providing a counter-ballast to the historian's emphasis on conflicts and changes in the chronology of the past and instead highlighted that the great bulk of time consists of the alliance of people in constructive relationships and that archaeologists can help "reconstruct stone by stone the institutions which used to unite them." Archaeological chronologies, too, are flush with terms that emphasize not only periods of change but also periods in which domination was at its peak: "classical," "formative," or "climax" periods are typically identified as cultural "fluorescences." Through such language, other periods are seen as lesser in cultural achievement, with periods of "cultural decline," "dissolution," "de-evolution," or "collapse." Anarchist theory, with its focus on power and a critique of political structures, can offer alternate insights into these periods. Instead, these may represent popular assertions of local sovereignty or actions to achieve less hierarchical social arrangements, for instance. Traditional archaeological chronologies are turned on their heads when reframed using anarchist theory and its consideration of power relations.

Anarchists view all human social relations as mediated by or influenced by power relations. Anarchist approaches also entail an understanding of the dual role of power, as a force for domination as well as a force for voluntary alliances. Power relations, instead of necessarily dominating or hierarchical, can also be built on mutual cooperation, equity, and egalitarianism. The former power rep-