

'WE ARE EVERYWHERE': AN ECOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ORGANIZATIONS IN THE ANARCHIST YELLOW PAGES

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ABSTRACT

The Anarchist Yellow Pages (AYP), an international directory of anarchist groupings throughout the world, listed over two thousand organizations in 2005. This paper explores the types of these anarchist organizations and their geographic clustering throughout the world, with special emphasis on the 21 countries with at least 20 such organizations. The concentrations of anarchist organizations found in the AYP suggest that the movement tends to be strongly European-centered. North Americans are greatly involved in various media organizations; Spain, France, and Sweden have strong syndicalist tendencies; Italy and Germany tend to have a high percentage of physical spaces like social centers and info shops. The theory of political opportunity is used to interpret the global anarchist movement, leading to the general conclusion that rights and democracy are related to the concentration of anarchist organizations.

Keywords: anarchism, social movements, political opportunity, internationalism, organizations

PERSONAL REFLEXIVE STATEMENTS

Dana M. Williams

I am committed to an anarchist-informed sociological critique of present-day society. Accordingly, I find it important to dispel the related assumptions that (1) organization necessarily leads to oligarchy and despotism and (2) that anarchists oppose all organization. My participation in anarchist organizations and groupings—not to mention participation in decidedly non-anarchist ones in education, economics, politics, and social life—has led me to seek out alternative models of organizing daily life (and I have found many fruitful examples). I see anarchism embodying and overlapping with the best in many other traditions, such as humanism, feminism, class struggle, and national liberation movements. Yet, these are high standards for individuals and collectivities and they require

incredible effort and practice. My personal efforts to this end are tentative, rudimentary, and in a constant state of re-assessment.

Matthew T. Lee

*I have spent more than a decade studying crime and (negative) deviance. Much of my work, including *Crime on the Border: Immigration and Homicide in Urban Communities*, has disputed the long-standing criminological notion that immigration leads to increased crime, while other publications have grappled with the causes and consequences of organizational deviance. But I have become increasingly dissatisfied with the study of the “dark side” of social life and now focus on positive forms of “deviance,” such as altruism and anarchism. This academic shift has dovetailed with an increased aspiration to promote positive social change, which has manifested in my recent work as a Conflict Management Fellow at The University of Akron and as a member of the Board of Directors for the Center for Restorative Justice of North Central Ohio. My interest in anarchist organizations reflects his broader concern with, to borrow the words of Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day, transforming structural conditions to make it easier for people to be good to each other.*

The past decade has seen a pronounced resurgence in anarchist movement activity throughout the world (Gordon 2007). This increased activity can be witnessed by large-scale protests featuring sizable (and organized) anarchist contingents, focused media attention on anarchists active in social movements, and the expressed concerns and accusations made by politicians of a new anarchist menace. Although this resurgence is clearly factual, it is unclear why anarchism has reappeared now, to what extent it exists, and where it is most active.

There has also been a resurgence of interest in anarchism—both academically and in popular media—but very little of this treatment has offered a comparative examination of the international anarchist movement as it has been differentially shaped across geo-political contexts. Specifically, research has not comprehensively assessed the factors that influence where anarchism thrives and its particular domains of activity. For example, are anarchist media organizations more prevalent in countries with strong press rights, or do such organizations flourish in the absence of these rights? Most recent studies have been theoretical (Day 2004, Shantz 2002a, 2003), anecdotal (Katz 1981, Graeber 2002), or qualitative and focus on only one organization (Blickstein and Hanson 2001, Boehrer 2000, 2003, Ingalsbee 1996, Luke 1994, Maiba 2005, O'Brien 1999, O'Connor 1999, Roy 2003, Shantz 2002b, Shantz and Adam 1999).¹ Yet, there is very little organizational consistency in anarchist organizations, particularly

when surveying their distribution across the world. These organizations may focus on local, national, and/or global struggles; address political, cultural, and economic concerns; and target government, corporate, religious, or cultural authorities. Some members of such organizations may perceive their involvement as contributing to a larger anarchist social movement with the explicit goal of fundamental societal transformation; others may have become involved for more prosaic reasons and share the anarchist ideology to a lesser degree, if at all. Regardless, anarchist organizations are “everywhere,” as a movement slogan argues. But, few attempts have been made to disaggregate their content across national boundaries. Even less research has sought to account for the appearance of particular types of anarchist organizations in specific social and political contexts.

A central problem associated with attempts to understand anarchist organizations is that they are, by their very nature, decentralized so no master source of information on anarchist organizations exists. The best existing resource available to researchers is the Anarchist Yellow Pages (AYP). This paper analyzes the AYP to build upon the empirical knowledge of anarchist social movement organizations. This paper offers an initial descriptive and analytical account of the geographic clustering of types of anarchist organizations, with special emphasis on the role of political opportunities in shaping this distribution. As such, our approach contributes to the study of anarchism by exploring the macro-level forces that shape the characteristics of populations of organizations (c.f., Hannan and Freeman 1989; Friedland and Alford 1991), as well as the political opportunity variant of social movement theory (McAdam 1996). We begin by offering a brief description of anarchism and anarchist organizations.

Anarchism is surely one of the most misunderstood political and social philosophies of the modern era. Any discussion of anarchism requires a preface that distinguishes fact from fiction and between what anarchists say about themselves and what others say about them. First, anarchism is *not* about chaos, violence, terrorism, or disorganization. Anarchism does not advocate a dog-eat-dog world or a nihilist future of an uncaring society (Zinn 1997). Concerted media propaganda campaigns have been waged against anarchists, both in the past (Cobb-Reiley 1988, Hong 1992) and the recent present (McLeod and Detenber 1999), campaigns that have strongly influenced this popular misperception. Thus, it is unsurprising that most people today expect an image of anarchists that reflects a Walt Whitman-esque male draped in black cape, clutching a lit bomb, ready to hurl it wherever his glee suits, or the image of a young person—surely White and over-privileged—wearing a black hooded-sweatshirt, face covered with a bandanna, and intentionally antagonizing police officers. However, these two stereotypes—mad bomber or violent street

fighter—do not represent the wide range of tactical repertoires, nor the aspirations or goals of modern-day anarchists.

Second, anarchism can be defined by what it is for and what it is against. Anarchism opposes hierarchy, authority structures, and domination, which are embodied in various institutions: capitalism, the state, patriarchy, heterosexism, White supremacy, militarism, fundamentalist religion, and bureaucracy (Berkman 2003, Ehrlich 1996). Anarchism supports freedom, cooperation, decentralization, and horizontal relationships (Goldman 1969, Rocker 1990, Ward 1996). The whole of society's dominant institutions and power structures need to be, according to anarchists, radically restructured. Through a complete transformation of society and its power relationships, a more just, peaceful, egalitarian, and humanist world will emerge.

Third, anarchism has almost always been part of the broader socialist movement (with the exception of some individualist or post-leftist tendencies that have occasionally emerged). It constitutes a libertarian, non-state, and non-vanguardist alternative to Marxism (Chomsky 1973). As such, anarchists have always found common cause with the general ends of socialists, but have disagreed with the means suggested to achieve those ends, primarily the need of a centralized leadership or state apparatus (Berkman 2003). Fourth, anarchism is both a theoretical and applied ideology—there is a tight link between putting values into action. It is within this point that anarchists find their sharpest critique of Marxists, who anarchists argue, “talk the talk” but are incapable of moving to a more liberated future because they wish to *control* the process toward socialism.

Fifth, social relationships in anarchist organizations exist on a smaller scale than dominant society: organizations tend to be deliberately small (cooperatives, collectives, and affinity groups being the typical organizations of choice); if there are many members in an organization, it tends to be a federation of smaller groups participating in an equal fashion (Martin 1990). Simpler and smaller structures are desirable because anarchism values direct action as opposed to representative action (Polletta 2002). Whereas many conventional definitions of “organization” include components such as a chain of command and a relatively permanent formal structure, Ehrlich (1977:6) argues that this excludes “virtually all organizational forms that an anarchist would take to be central to community life.” Some anarchist organizations have no membership roster or formal procedures because anarchist thought suggests that decision-making is more democratic, empowering, and easier with fewer involved constituents, less structure, and minimal standard operating procedures. This aspect does not mean to imply that industrial society is incapable of becoming more liberating, but that social relationships must be made as horizontal as possible.

Finally, some organizations and people are either openly anarchist or have anarchistic tendencies. Sympathizers with anarchism occasionally shy away from labeling themselves as “anarchists” due to the stigma attached to the label. Although there has been no “purely” anarchist revolution, anarchist influences may be seen throughout various movements, events, and cultures in recent history: syndicalism (Rocker 1990), the Spanish Civil War (Bookchin 1998), the New Left (Brienes 1982), the American anti-nuclear movement (Epstein 1991, Katz 1981), punk rock (O'Connor 1999, O'Hara 1999), European squatters and anti-fascists (Katsiaficas 2006), the Zapatistas of Mexico (Albertani 2002), and the global justice movement (Epstein 2001).

This paper has two goals, which should be viewed as small steps toward a more quantitative and theory-grounded critique of the modern anarchist movement. First, using the AYP directory, we offer the first systematic description of the types of organizations that comprise the contemporary anarchist movement, as well as the geographic patterns that the movement assumes internationally. To our knowledge, no previous study has explored the contours of the distribution of anarchist organizations across countries. This gap in the literature becomes especially problematic when trying to account for the ecological features of countries that might be shaping the births, longevity, and deaths of anarchist organizations in specific environments. Our second goal is to begin to understand this “population ecology” of anarchist organizations at the national level (c.f. Hannan and Freeman 1989), through the initial step of looking at anarchism through the lens of political opportunity theory. To do this, we use additional international data sources that address issues raised by the political opportunities variant of social movement theory (McAdam 1996). We argue that political opportunities theory is particularly relevant for understanding how features of country-specific ecological environments might facilitate or inhibit the development of certain kinds of anarchist organizations.

Because we are breaking new ground with our focus on anarchist organizations, and because our data are cross-sectional, we do not push the “natural selection” metaphor too far. But we believe that the patterns that we have uncovered are highly suggestive with regard to the environmental pressures that shape the preponderance of types of organizations in specific countries. We have no doubt that political opportunity theory does not capture all of the myriad forces impinging on the development of anarchist organizations. However, the historical record on the repression of anarchists by various political regimes suggests to us that the political rights available at the beginning of the 21st century may be providing new opportunities in some nations for the development and growth of some, but not all, types of anarchist organizations.

Generating specific research expectations is difficult given the lack of prior studies on the topic. But given the history of anarchism we anticipate that the

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majority of the world's anarchist organizations will be located in European countries (Hypothesis 1). And we expect that greater political freedom and democratic governance will be associated with higher levels of anarchist organizing (Hypothesis 2). For example, at the country level, freedom of the press will encourage the development of anarchist media organizations, trade union rights will facilitate class-based organizations, and rights related to political participation will foster anarchist community spaces and social centers. These kinds of logical speculations were used simply to help guide the selection of appropriate variables; we would not be surprised if contradictory or otherwise unexpected findings emerged from the analysis.

FINDING DATA ON A DECENTRALIZED MOVEMENT

As one might expect, anarchists have never made efforts to file for government-sanctioned “non-profit status”, thus facilitating a “proper” census of their movement.² Instead, they have usually taken up the task of recording their own organizational networks and contact information. Perhaps the best example is the Anarchist Yellow Pages (AYP), a major international directory of anarchist organizations and projects that has existed since the 1990s. The directory's name is a playful adaptation of a well-known Western phone book style—where one can find not only corporations and shopping malls, but anarchist collectives—and is available in both website and print-versions. The AYP is the work of a small number of anarchists who have aspired to compile a thorough, yet stable collection of contact information for anarchist groups and projects throughout the world. The directory's purpose is thoroughly political: to connect anarchists and/or fellow travelers with each other in order to facilitate the goals of individual groups and the movement as a whole.

The AYP lists the organization's name, address, city, state or province (in US and Canada), country, continent, phone, fax, email, webpage, category, and other information about the organization's purpose. The most recent version of the AYP was completed in 2005 and includes entries for 2,171 organizations worldwide. Anarchist organizations exist on every continent except Antarctica. It is undeniable—and admitted by one maintainer of the AYP (Felix Frost in an email dated October 26, 2005)—that the directory could include many more anarchistic organizations than are listed. Organizations such as Anti-Racist Action, Critical Mass, Earth First!, Food Not Bombs, Homes Not Jails, Independent Media Centers, and others could also be listed as anarchistic organizations, and are often readily referred to as such. Ironically, the AYP includes at least one of each of these anarchistic organizations, but does not include the hundreds of others found in various other cities or regions throughout the world.³ More generally, the classification of some organizations as

“anarchist” and not others may introduce certain biases. In fact, there is an entire category called “Libertarian Marxist/Ultra-Left” to accommodate for the ambiguity and overlap that some organizations may have with anarchism. One could make the distinction between an organization being overtly anarchist and being anarchistic, anarchist-inspired, or a non-anarchist organization consisting mainly of anarchist members. The criteria used to differentiate between these formats and constitutions are unknown.

Still, we believe that there is a great deal of value to using the AYP. First, it is a worldwide directory that contains many of the most prominent anarchist organizations that currently exist, all classified into a useful typology. Second, it is the most comprehensive source of information available. Third, and perhaps most important, we must acknowledge that even though some anarchist organizations are not included in the AYP, undercounting is a problem that plagues virtually all social research. For example, it is widely acknowledged by criminologists who rely on data collected by police agencies that more than half of all crimes are not reported to police and remain unknown to them. It is highly probable that these are not randomly missing cases, but are absent in patterned ways that bias the data on which criminologists rely. Such biases are unavoidable, but we suggest that the information that the AYP provides on anarchist organizations allows us to at establish a baseline for discussion about the larger social forces that shape the distribution of organizational forms in the anarchist movement throughout the world. Our initial research represents a point of departure and is not the final word on this topic. So although we cannot provide definitive proof that our findings accurately represent the reality of anarchist organizing, we hope that future research will build on our work, further explore the possible biases in the AYP, and draw on other sources of data to develop a more complete picture of the contemporary anarchist movement.

“OH MY! THERE ARE ANARCHISTS HERE?”

This study asks *what* anarchist organizations exist and *where* they are found. To answer these questions in a comprehensible fashion we must first group organizations into meaningful types. Organizations in the AYP are originally classified in twenty different categories. Of these categories, the most prevalent are “anarchist groups” (330), “info shops/bookstores” (283), and “community spaces/social centers” (241). On the low end, the least common are “disobedients” (12), “social ecologists” (9), and “situationists” (8). The authors have collapsed most of these twenty categories into larger groupings based on a category’s general purpose. Table 1 lists these groupings. Anarchist groups have not been placed into any subcategory, since they are general anarchist organizations without an apparent specific purpose or emphasis. The “physical

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spaces” constitute the largest super-category of anarchist organizations, an interesting fact considering the probability of such organizations being less campaign- or action-oriented in and of themselves, and instead serve as “infrastructure” for the action and goals of the anarchist movement.

Table 1: Categories of Organizations in the Anarchist Yellow Pages (N size)

<i>Class-oriented</i>	<i>Physical spaces</i>	<i>Media</i>
Industrial Workers of the World (57) International Workers Association (208) Syndicalist Union/Group (174) Total: 439	Community Space/Social Center (241) Infoshop/Bookstore (283) Archive/Library (56) Total: 580	Alternative Media (109) Libertarian Publication (142) Publisher/Distributor/Mail Order (100) Total: 351
<i>Franchise</i>	<i>Other</i>	
Anarchist Black Cross (75) Anti-Fascist Group (69) Food Not Bombs (35) Total: 179	Disobedients (12) International Anarchist Federation (87) Libertarian Marxist/Ultra-Left (25) Other (130) Radical Environmentalists (21) Situationist (8) Social Ecologists (9) Total: 292	

Note: anarchist groups N=330, authors’ analysis.

Class-oriented organizations include those that focus on conflicts regarding class stratification, particularly workplace struggles or labor solidarity. Physical spaces are organizations that have a building in which politics can happen or from which anarchist materials are available. Media organizations attempt to share alternative views on political and social matters, distributed in a wide variety of mediums. “Franchise” organizations refer to organizations that do very similar things and have the same name, yet are not in direct communication with each other. These organizations are akin to “franchise” businesses and include Anarchist Black Cross, Food Not Bombs, and Anti-Racist Action (or Antifa, short for “anti-fascist”). “Other” organizations include those that are not listed in the previous categories and are not general “anarchist organizations”. This category ranges from various leftists and ecologists to protest formations (like “disobedients”) and the broad International Anarchist Federation.

Second is the question of where organizations are located. Organizations can be found on seven different continents: Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East, North

America, Oceania, and South America. Some of the AYP's classifications, such as the Middle East and Oceania, surely have debatable geographies—would Asia or Australia be more appropriate? Similarly, organizations in the Caribbean and Central America are placed in either North or South America. Europe has over two-thirds of all anarchist organizations. This finding supports our first hypothesis that Europe would have the greatest number of anarchist organizations. The second most populous continent is North America, with less than one-third as many. Africa has the fewest organizations. Table 2 shows these results.

Table 2: Number of Anarchist Organizations per Continent

<i><u>Continent</u></i>	<i><u>Organizations</u></i>	<i><u>Percent of Total</u></i>
Africa	6	0.3
Asia	44	2.0
Europe	1527	70.3
Middle East	31	1.4
North America	460	21.2
Oceania	41	1.9
South America	62	2.9

The large proportion of European organizations in the AYP suggests two main possibilities. First, European anarchist organizations dominate the international anarchist movement. This could be due to various factors. For example, the large percentage of anarchist organizations found in Europe could reflect anarchism's “birthplace” in the European Enlightenment tradition, that political opportunities are afforded to Europeans and are not available elsewhere, or that there is a crucial need for anti-authoritarian movements in Europe. It seems likely that countries with highly Western cultures and institutions would be more amenable to Western philosophies like anarchism.⁴ Second, the high number of European organizations may not accurately represent reality, but may reflect certain methodological biases associated with the AYP. Some reasons for this possibility may include: Europeans and other Westerners have a higher number of computers and Internet access compared to less affluent countries (Kellerman 2004, World Bank 2006), thus restricting the ability of non-Western organizations to be listed in the AYP. The political climate in non-Western countries may not be conducive to “above-ground” anarchist organizing—including highly public listings in the AYP—in the face of repressive governments. Or perhaps the AYP reflects the interest, scope, or contacts of its compilers, who are Westerners.

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A look at the countries and cities in the AYP with the greatest number of anarchist organizations also reveals noteworthy findings. Not surprisingly, the greatest number of anarchist organizations is in European and North American countries and in the largest Western cities. The top ten countries and cities with the largest number of organizations are listed in Table 3. Buenos Aires, Argentina—a city not in Europe or North America—barely missed making the top-ten list (14 organizations).

Table 3: Countries and Cities with the Greatest Number of Anarchist Organizations

<i><u>Ranking</u></i>	<i><u>Country</u></i>	<i><u>City</u></i>
1	USA (360)	Roma (48)
2	Spain (263)	London (40)
3	Germany (237)	Berlin (37)
4	Italy (231)	Milano (30)
5	France (209)	Madrid (28)
6	Great Britain (119)	New York (27)
7	Sweden (83)	Montreal (24)
8	Canada (72)	Paris (22)
9	Poland (64)	Stockholm (18)
10	Netherlands (38)	København (15)

If we know what types of organizations are in the AYP and where aggregations of organizations are located, the next question is: which types of organizations are found where? Even though “physical spaces” and “class-oriented” organizations represent huge numbers of organizations, there is no guarantee that they are proportionately distributed throughout the world. Thus, Table 4 shows the types of organizations found in the ten countries listed above. A few striking numbers are instantly apparent. An incredibly large proportion of anarchist organizations in Spain, France, and Sweden are class-based.⁵ The same is true for physical spaces in Germany, Italy, and to a lesser extent the Netherlands. The US and Canada have more media organizations than any other grouping. The largest quantity of British organizations is not grouped, while in Poland the most popular are simply anarchist organizations. For more detail, Figure 1 (see page 56) provides a map showing the major categories in Europe, the continent with the most organizations overall.

Table 4: Number of Anarchist Organization Categories in the Top 10 Most Popular Countries

<u>Country</u>	<u>Anarchist</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Physical</u>	<u>Media</u>	<u>Franchise</u>	<u>Not Grouped</u>
United States	64	38	76	80	52	50
Spain	12	156	41	30	7	17
Germany	5	30	138	37	12	15
Italy	22	17	146	19	1	26
France	33	92	20	9	4	51
Great Britain	25	14	20	21	5	34
Sweden	8	27	7	11	12	18
Canada	9	9	10	18	13	13
Poland	23	12	9	9	10	1
Netherlands	7	0	14	9	4	4

Note: "Anarchist" Organizations are general organizations not classified in any specific category.

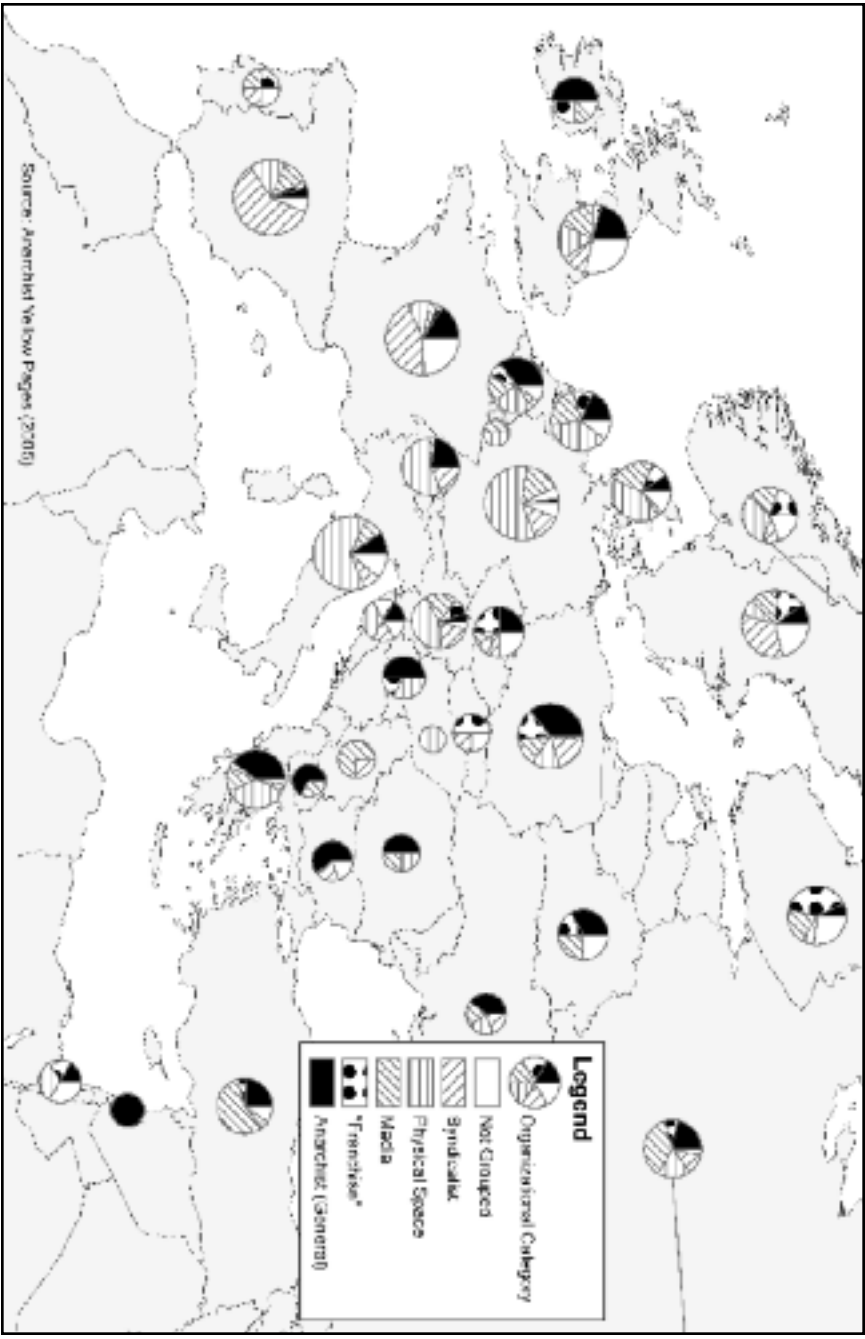
Table 5. Number of Anarchist Organizations in the Anarchist Yellow Pages in 1997 and 2005

<u>Organization Type</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
IWA	62	208	+235%
ABC	30	75	+150%
Anti-Fascist	125*	69	-45%
IWW	38	57	+50%
Syndicalist	50	174	+248%
Spaces	261	241	-8%
Anarchist groups	243	330	+36%
Total	809	1154	+43%

* Note: Anti-fascist organizations in 1997 included only RASH and ARA (the above figure of 125 is their combined total); the 2005 figure includes additional anti-fascist groups.

Have the organizations listed in the AYP changed from 1997 to 2005? The organizations listed in the 1997 AYP are compared to those in the 2005 AYP in Table 5.⁶ The clearest trend is that nearly every category of anarchist organization increased during this time period. The major exception is anti-fascist organizations, which dropped almost half their number in a span of eight years. Many of the losses came from Germany (25 to 3 groups), Great Britain (23

Figure 1



to 1), and the US (51 to 21). Such groups sprung-up in Europe in response to the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment following the Iron Curtain's fall in the East and may have been replaced by other types of organizations as the nature of pressing social issues changed over time (Katsiaficas 2006). A smaller loss came from the "spaces" category. The time-span from 1997 to 2005 also represents an intensification of popular attention on anarchism, including high-profile mass protests (e.g., Seattle during 1999 and Genoa during 2001) that anarchists played a prominent role in organizing (Crass 2001). As a consequence, anarchist organizations likely benefited from a heightened focus on protest politics. The increases in other categories could be attributed to better recordkeeping and contacts as easily as it could be attributed to an increase in anarchist organizing. During these eight years, there was a 43 percent increase (from 809 to 1154) for these types of anarchist organizations.

THE ECOLOGY OF ANARCHIST ORGANIZATIONS: A CONSIDERATION OF POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

Now that anarchist organizations in the AYP have been placed in a geographic context, we explore the salience of theory in explaining such patterns. Any number of social movement theories could be applied here: relative deprivation, resource mobilization, frame alignment, new social movements, and so forth. Yet, there are limitations in the extent to which the AYP by itself can be understood via these theoretical viewpoints. However, by combining outside data sources, particularly country-level data, it is possible to explore the implications of the political opportunities (POs).

Political processes theory extends resource mobilization theory and considers the political environment into which social movements are born and prosper—in short, the “political opportunities” available to movements. In this respect, it exhibits similarities with the population ecology perspective in the organizational literature. In addition to having an insurgent consciousness and organizational resources, social movement organizations (SMOs) are aided in goal-achievement by conducive political conditions in which such SMOs are embedded. Regardless of whether all participants in anarchist organizations identify with the broader anarchist social movement, they collectively define this movement simply by virtue of the fact that the vast majority of visible anarchist activities occur in organizational contexts. For example, in some countries anarchist ideology has been disseminated largely through labor unions; in others, publishers or direct action organizations are more influential. Either way, organizations are involved.

The concept of political opportunities has been described by a number of social movement researchers, but this concept has obvious relevance for the

organizational level of analysis as well. McAdam (1982) presents a classical example: structural changes occurred in US political opportunities that facilitated an insurgent Civil Rights movement, including a decline of the Southern cotton industry, the movement of African-Americans to Northern cities, a decrease in the number of lynchings, and lower risks for African-American organizing (much of which was conducted via church and community organizations). There are four dimensions to this view of political opportunities: (1) the relative openness of the political system; (2) the stability of elite alignments; (3) the presence of elite allies; and (4) the state's capacity and tendency for repression (McAdam 1996). When such conditions become consistent aspects of a political environment, they come to represent a political opportunity structure (Tarrow 1998). These structures may be similar across nations because of processes of globalization that have led to both structural affinities of states and diffusion of protest repertoires. The result is that social movements may be somewhat homogenous in states that share structural affinities and political opportunities may partially account for these affinities (Giugni 1998). It follows that organizational homogeneity will likely exist as well.

Political opportunities that reside largely within the state would seem inapplicable or contradictory for an avowedly anti-state movement. Anarchists surely do not wish to see one elite political party in power that will be more affected by an anarchist lobby for the passage of an "Abolish the State" bill. Yet, some facets of the PO argument may still be applicable. For example, the ability of anarchist organizations to thrive may be addressed by noting how many organizations exist in "democracies" where dissent is more likely to be tolerated (even if occasionally suppressed), compared to dictatorships. According to this argument, there is an "inverted U-curve" for protest (noted in Eisinger 1973): in totalitarian societies, protest is squelched with violence, whereas in a completely democratic society, protest would be theoretically unnecessary since the government represents the people perfectly. Yet, neither of these two situations ever exists in reality; there is always a continuum between totalitarianism and democracy, an area in which protest arises.

This idea raises a number of questions regarding the political opportunities for anarchists. Which countries have formal and actual freedoms of speech and protest? Is there a legal right to organize trade unions (since many AYP organizations are syndicalists) or engage in strikes? Does a country have broad media freedoms?⁷ Which countries were previously or are currently in a state of "light repression" or "heavy repression" against political dissenters?

We can attempt to measure some of these elements. Using a number of measures for the broader political environment of countries with anarchist organization—such as civil liberties, political rights, trade union rights, and media rights (data from Freedom House⁸ and International Labour Organization

reports)—we find that specific factors are significantly correlated with the presence of particular types of organizations.

Before diving into this analysis, a word of caution is warranted. Not all anarchists would appreciate the application of political opportunities to anarchism. For example, Purkis (2004) argues that POs provide access to the existing political structure, and thus do not equally serve those who are uninterested in pursuing goals via the political system. The theory may also be too instrumental and ignore the cultural dimensions of movements. Even though anarchists may not have access to the State (or want such access, in fact), they do rely on shared cultural resources which are tolerated or suppressed by the State to varying degrees, including revolutionary discourses, social spaces, radical publications, musicians, and the like. So despite the potential narrowness of the PO concept, it remains at least partially applicable.

The first three measures described here come from the international human rights research organization, Freedom House, whose data is commonly used in comparative research on countries.⁹ *Political rights* afforded citizens may be summarized as the right to participate freely in the political process, vote freely in legitimate elections, and have representatives that are accountable to them. *Civil liberties* include the right to exercise freedoms of expression and belief, to be able to freely assemble and associate, to have access to an established and equitable system of rule of law, and to have social and economic freedoms, including equal access to economic opportunities and the right to hold private property (Piano and Puddington 2004).¹⁰ *Press rights* include three sub-measures. The legal environment considers laws and regulations that could influence media content and the government's desire to use such laws to restrict media. The political environment encompasses the degree of political control over news media content. The economic environment consists of the structure, transparency, and concentration of media ownership, as well as other costs associated with the establishment and functioning of media (Karlekar 2005). The International Labor Organization has developed a measure for *trade union rights*, which overlaps somewhat with the civil liberties scale and is separately determined by a content analysis of labor rights reports. The most commonly observed violations measured in this index are arrests or other punishments for union activities, interference with union rights, dismissal or suspension for union activities, the inability to elect representatives freely, intervention of authorities in collective bargaining, and exclusion of economic sectors from the right to strike (Kucera 2005).

A slightly different approach is to measure how democratic or autocratic the polity itself is. The Polity IV Project (Marshall and Jaggers 2005) measures a *democratic* polity as one where political participation is fully competitive, the recruitment of executive is via elections, and the constraints placed on the chief

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executive are substantial. Some of the component variables in the measure of democracy are the *regulation of participation* and *competitiveness of participation*. The regulation of participation is the extent to which there are binding rules for when, whether, and how political preferences are expressed. Competitiveness of participation is the extent to which an alternative policies and leadership can be sought in the political arena (Marshall and Jagers 2005). This view of “democracy” is the standard view in the highly advanced capitalist countries of Europe and North America (where the majority of anarchist organizations reside in the AYP) and, more accurately, is synonymous with “representative democracy”.¹¹ These measures will be tested for association with the rate of anarchist organizations per capita.

Countries with fewer than 20 anarchist organizations were excluded, leaving 21 countries in the analysis.¹² Although this threshold for the number of organizations per country is somewhat arbitrary, countries with 20 or more organizations represent 90 percent of the AYP. In addition, we believe that a focus on countries with 20 or more anarchist organizations is helpful because these are the most important countries historically for anarchism and because we are trying to minimize the problem of potential undercounting associated with biases in the AYP (i.e., countries with few political rights may not be represented in the AYP because the risks may be too high for anarchist organizations to disclose their location or even existence).¹³ Our examination of the reduced sample is actually a more conservative test of relationships than an analysis that includes all of the countries and the results are arguably less subject to biased reporting in the AYP. Because of the small number of countries considered, our analysis relies on bivariate correlation rather than multiple regression, and thus should be considered exploratory. The number of organizations in each category was divided by the country’s population (in millions), to represent the rate of each type per capita. Table 6 presents bivariate correlations between these group categories per population and the different types of rights and democracy measures.

A strong pattern emerges here: anarchist organizations tend to be associated with those countries that have a variety of freedoms and democracy characteristics. Thus, instead of a relative deprivation argument that suggests that radical resistance would be strongest in the poorest, most repressed countries, the data presented here demonstrate the opposite, at least for anarchist organizations. Every measure for rights or regime “openness” is significantly related to the per capita level of anarchist organization, at least when all such organizations are combined. This finding supports Hypothesis 2 that predicted a positive relationship between these opportunity structures and anarchist organization density. Correlations of anarchist organization categories to the Human Development Index (not shown) were all non-significant. This suggests that a

country’s level of human development does not indicate the density of its anarchist movement and that the anarchist movement is not *merely* the result of advanced economic development or rights serving as a proxy for human development.

Table 6. Correlations Between Rights and Categories of Anarchist Organizations per Capita

<i>Category/ population</i>	<i>Political rights</i>	<i>Civil liberties</i>	<i>Trade union rights</i>	<i>Press rights</i>	<i>Democracy</i>	<i>Participation regulation</i>	<i>Participation competitiveness</i>
Group rate/ million	0.5225*	0.4934*	0.5658**	0.5454*	0.5277*	0.5261*	0.5161*
Not grouped orgs/million	0.3447	0.4092+	0.3450	0.4516*	0.3245	0.3914+	0.3694+
Class orgs/ million	0.2427	0.1594	0.2109	0.1958	0.1941	0.2410	0.2396
Spaces/ million	0.4419*	0.3306	0.5317*	0.3146	0.4957*	0.4692*	0.4554*
Media orgs/ million	0.4029+	0.5056*	0.4058+	0.5396*	0.4782*	0.4352*	0.4016+
Franchise orgs/million	0.2542	0.4171+	0.3345	0.4384*	0.2857	0.2393	0.2425
Anarchist org/million	0.4054+	0.2174	0.4561*	0.3707+	0.3489	0.2748	0.3146

Note: two-tailed Pearson's correlation coefficients; ** p < .01 * p < .05 + p < .10

Among the grouped types of organizations, our results are somewhat mixed in terms of what we would expect from political opportunity theory. For example, our press rights variable is significantly correlated with the rate of media organizations, while trade union rights are not significantly related to class-based organizations. Competitiveness of participation—the right to express and pursue alternatives—is significantly and logically correlated with physical spaces and media organizations, both of which are based on the ability to formulate and create alternative ways of thinking and doing. For some types of organizations, such as for franchise and anarchist organizations, there are no apparent meaningful patterns. Yet, there are a great many significant relationships between organization types and rights. This finding lends some support to the idea that political opportunities at least partly shape the development of some types of anarchist organizations.

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For example, we found that anarchist media organizations appear to benefit from a variety of state-based characteristics, such as political rights, civil liberties, trade union rights, and press rights (all of which were culled by Freedom House), as well as democracy, participation regulation, and participation competitiveness (variables which were constructed by the Polity IV). The consistency in outcomes across these two very different data sets suggests that biases within a particular data set do not overshadow the fundamental finding that some types of anarchist organizations do in fact benefit from political opportunities within particular kinds of states (i.e., those that afford greater rights to citizens). This finding, although not uniform across types of anarchist organizations, is somewhat ironic given the assumptions that anarchists tend to have about the undesirable nature of the state itself. Clearly, some types of anarchist organizations are thriving within a state-based political context.

The basic rights and democracy measures used in the correlation analysis are still limited in scope; overlooked are wider conceptions of rights (such as the right to education, housing, medical care, etc).¹⁴ But, it should be remembered that political opportunities as described by McAdam (1996) include increased access to political decision-making, not broader economic and social rights. The Freedom House measures are still robustly correlated to the presence of anarchist organizations. Thus, regardless of how narrowly Freedom House's conception of rights may be defined, this pattern still holds. Even the antithetical inclusion of "property rights" could facilitate some, albeit limited, access to space to conduct political organizing. Having a physical building in which to hold meetings, plan protests, run community projects, and other activities is a necessity for social movements generally, and anarchism should not be different in this regard.

However, the positive correlation is not to suggest that prevailing political arrangements are ideal for anarchist organizing, a fact highlighted by the relatively low number of anarchist organizations in most countries. Anarchist organizations seem to exist in far fewer numbers than most types of organizations, such as sports clubs, religious groups, or labor unions. In addition, our analytical method does not allow us to establish causality. Rather, the relationship between certain kinds of rights and the presence of specific types of anarchist organizations may be bolstered or even caused by unmeasured variables.

The very presence of such organizations may indicate a level of tolerance by governments that allow them to exist and appear in the Anarchist Yellow Pages. One can imagine the existence of many anarchist organizations in a country as large as China, but such organizations are unlikely to openly disclose their existence let alone their location in the political context of a repressive state. Appearing in the AYP would mean a virtual death sentence for the organization

in states that do not recognize certain basic rights and democratic mechanisms. As we suggested in our discussion of the strengths and limitations of the AYP, some anarchist organizations have an interest in not being listed and this concern is not randomly distributed across geo-political space. This is precisely why we argue that more attention to political opportunities would increase our understanding of the ecology of anarchism as a social movement.

Additionally, anarchists in poorer countries might prefer or choose to operate within other, non-anarchist movements. For example, the labor and environmental movements in peripheral, former-colonies have tended to be embedded within movements for national liberation and other struggles that are unifying in nature—and thus less explicitly ideological (Sturmthal 1972, Rootes 1999). A more complete picture of anarchism throughout the world—especially in places without greater rights and democracy, or international communication networks—will likely require labor-intensive studies (perhaps participant observation) on the ground in those countries.

Do our findings mean that anarchists who want to drastically re-order the existing social order are actually benefiting from state-based characteristics? Perhaps. Yet it would be misleading to claim that, for example, civil liberties are only offered by the laws of the state, and not by the social norms that everyday people expect and reinforce in their daily lives. It would be equally naïve to presume that greater freedoms and rights are not in fact weakening the centralized authority of the state. A state with a diminished capacity to enforce the will of its executives and elites may not be an anarchist society, but one could argue it is closer than one in which a dictator reigns. This is to propose that the social order of a society may be a spectrum upon which liberty and despotism are but two extremes. The state strengthens itself as it approaches dictatorship, while it weakens itself as it approaches libertarianism.

Even though past waves of anarchism—such as during the Russian Revolution and Spanish Civil War—may have been different, the present-day anarchist movement clearly resides in those places where formal and informal political rights as well as democracy exist. The opportunities offered in these societies have apparently fostered, if not at least tolerated, the insurgency of a collection of radical organizations with the goal of overthrowing the very institutions that have uncomfortably and temporarily permitted them. The ironic presence of a decidedly anti-capitalist and anti-state movement in some of the most capitalist and stable states in the world raises intriguing and important questions with which future research and anarchist activism will have to grapple.

CONCLUSION

This research has explored an organizational-level data source of international anarchist organizations. There are no other comparable datasets for the anarchist social movement, and perhaps few as unique as this one, with as much variation by type. Thus, although we do not consider the attitudes or actions of individual anarchists, nor macro-scale goals and strategies of the anarchist movement writ large, our analysis offers many original insights. We began by providing an overview of the geographic distribution of anarchist organizations. We then used political opportunities theory to explore the population ecology of anarchist organizations in a restricted number of countries for which a sufficient number of cases were available.

We found that general anarchist organizations constitute the largest single category of organizations. Yet, when categories are grouped together, physical spaces outrank both class and media organizations. Organizations tend to be found in North America and Europe, and, unsurprisingly, in major urban cities in those countries. Germany and Italy are dominated by physical spaces, France and Spain by class organizations, and the US and Canada by media organizations. The number of comparable anarchist organizations has also grown since an earlier version of the AYP in 1997, increasing over 40 percent in size. This growth could be indicative of an evolution in social movement politics that could have long-term consequences, or could be a temporal “protest cycle” (Tarrow 1998) that may presently be peaking and could recede in upcoming years.

Political opportunities are associated with the geographic distribution and density of anarchist organizations across countries and therefore may plausibly represent an important environmental force for the “natural selection” of such organizations. Countries with a greater per capita rate of anarchist organizations are significantly related not only to all manner of rights, but also to the democratic nature of the polity. In each case, there is a greater density of organizations in countries with more rights and a more democratic political system. Instead of anarchist organizing coinciding with a formally closed society, the opposite appears true—at least as measured by the AYP. Ironically, anarchists appear to prosper more in those countries that appear to be supportive of radical dissent and thus where revolutionary change to an autocracy would seem less necessary. Yet, anarchists are not satisfied with merely an “equal opportunity” society, but rather seek equality of outcomes, and are especially concerned with building a society that lacks a hierarchical and centralized authority or bureaucracy. So, even though these findings seem problematic for an anti-state movement like anarchism, such patterns make sense given the literature on

political opportunities and the radical demands of anarchists that require continually expanding freedom and some protection from repression.

One of the central criticisms of the population ecology approach to understanding organizations is that it ignores the power of organizations to shape the environment. For example, one influential critique disputes the notion that the biological theory of natural selection is appropriate for explaining whether certain kinds of organizations are “negatively selected” (killed) or “positively selected” by the environments in which they are located (Perrow 1986:209). The argument is that many corporate organizations are so powerful that they actually control and reshape the environment, rather than the other way around. In this view, the population ecology perspective plays a “mystifying” role by “removing much of the power, conflict, disruption, and social class variables from the analysis of social processes” and substituting “vague natural forces,” almost implying that “God does the negative and positive selecting” (Perrow 1986:213). However, the population ecology model would seem well-suited in the case of anarchist organizations because none of these have anywhere near the power or resources of a giant corporation like General Motors or British Petroleum. Anarchist organizations are often small by design, given the preference for decentralized action, and totally disconnected from the power structures that corporations use to control their environments. The striking variations that we have found across countries with respect to the relationship between political opportunities and the existence of types of anarchist organizations suggests to us that anarchist organizations are shaped by ecological constraints in ways that participants may not expect or consider. If the anarchist movement is to grow internationally, future efforts at organizing will have to pay more explicit attention to such concerns.

This paper offered an initial foundation on which other studies can be built. With the global picture in mind, future researchers may wish to investigate a broader range of ecological conditions in a smaller number of countries as they impact the presence or absence of types of anarchist organizations. Cross-national case studies could reveal the historical development of the movements and provide clues as to particular geographically specific characteristics and emphasis. Our exploratory findings suggest strategic locations for such research, as well as specific political factors that should be examined.

ENDNOTES

¹In disciplines beyond sociology and the field of social movements, “anarchism” usually refers to conceptions that are entirely theoretical, thus uncoupling anarchist movements from their historical and contemporary context, and ignoring the usage of the term “anarchism” by the very activists who call themselves anarchists. Political Science uses the phrase to reference international politics sans a global system of governance, Philosophy usually treats it as an abstraction for chaos or statelessness, Economics usually means “free-market capitalism” when it speaks of anarchism, and History rarely studies anarchists or anarchist movements after WWI.

²Governments and law enforcement agencies around the world are likely keeping track of anarchist organizations (since they represent some of government’s severest critics). Even international policing organizations such as Interpol—ironically founded as a response to an earlier wave of the anarchist movement (Jensen 1981)—could be involved in such data collection. Yet, the prospect of gaining access to these documents is highly improbable.

³A number of reliable, although often-fluctuating directories for these organizations exist and to add them to the AYP would greatly augment the size and breadth of that directory.

⁴Although anarchism’s emergence during the Industrial Revolution is usually connected to Europe, some authors suggest that anarchist ideas and tendencies have existed in non-Western cultures for some time prior (Mbah and Igariwey 1997, Bender 1983).

⁵For research on anarcho-syndicalism as an ideology, see Williams (2008). Anarchists were significantly more likely to be union members if they possessed an economic ideology and were working class.

⁶The year 1997 was chosen because it was the first edition of the AYP available online, in a rudimentary, archived format: <http://www.spunk.org/texts/biblio/sp001653/ayp.html>.

⁷The problem with this theory is that many of the above questions must be subjectively answered by considering what exactly constitutes “repression” or “democracy”.

⁸Some have alleged a pro-Western bias by Freedom House, which may less critically evaluate official US allies and more critically evaluate official US enemies (Barahona 2007). Many well-known neo-conservatives sit on the board of trustees and much of its funding comes from the US State Department. This possible bias should be considered for all interpretations.

⁹Also available at www.freedomhouse.org.

¹⁰The inclusion of “the right to own private property” in the civil liberties measure is clearly a peculiar addition. Most anarchists advocate the redistribution of private property—especially assets and property owned by corporations and the wealthy—but do not see the need to infringe upon the right to some *personal* property (thus, anarchists do not suggest everyone needs to share the same toothbrush). Unlike totalitarian regimes—including various strains of Marxism—anarchism does not disavow an individual’s right to have possessions, at least to the extent that such possessions cannot be used to oppress or dominate others.

¹¹A more anarchist view of “democracy” would refer to either “direct democracy” or “participatory democracy” where decisions are not filtered through elected or appointed official representatives. Anarchists instead prioritize the ability to make decisions through collective participation with others in either a consensus-based or direct-voting process.

Future research on anarchist organizations should seek measures that are able to evaluate these types of conditions. See Held (1987) and Pateman (1970) for these distinctions.

¹²Countries include: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United States.

¹³We have analyses for the full sample (available on request). When all countries are included all of the same variables are significant and additional variables attain significance as well.

¹⁴Thank you to reviewer Daniel Egan for pointing out the restrictiveness of this conception of rights, as well as the right-wing bias of Freedom House as a source of data.

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