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Returning Community Psychology to the Insights of Anarchism: Fragments and Prefiguration

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Abstract

Anarchism signifies the actions taken to bring about a fairer, more equal, non-hierarchical, and democratic society, one that exists without State coercion or domination. Although community psychology has engaged with some anarchist practices, such as mutual aid, the discipline has had little explicit or direct engagement with anarchism's broader project of sociopolitical organization, with a notable exception. Almost fifty years ago, Seymour Sarason argued for what he called the anarchist insight, urging community psychologists to be wary of how they interact with oppressive State apparatuses that cause considerable psychological damage within communities. In this article, I draw on Sarason's conception of the anarchist insight as an entry point into what I prefer to think of as the insights of anarchism. The insights of anarchism, I posit, are the knowledges derived from the fragments of anarchism that already exist in communities. The task of community psychologists concerned with the insights of anarchism is to work with people to communicate, strengthen, and make connections between these different fragments. Drawing from my own work, I examine how residents from a low-income community produced and screened a participatory documentary film that connected the everyday anarchism of a community garden to social movement organizing, where the role of the State was intensely debated. I conclude by considering some of the ways by which future community psychology work can consolidate the insights of anarchism.

Keywords

The word anarchism derives from the Greek words *an* and *archos* which, together, translate into English as *without rule* (Mbah & Igariwey, 2014), or *no government* (Chomsky, 2013). Anarchists understand the State as comprising institutions that exert control over people and society through violence and/or coercion (Firth, 2022). Even democratically elected States, anarchists posit, are founded on and sustained by violence and thus cannot play any part in representing the majority or establishing an egalitarian, socialistic society (Bakunin, 1873/1990). As such, anarchism denotes the practices[1] and experiments[2] that strive to organize society in a radically democratic, co-operative, and non-hierarchical manner (Graeber, 2004).

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1) These practices need not necessarily be described as "anarchist" by those undertaking them (Graeber, 2004).

2) Such experiments denote collective attempts to organize how we live along axes of beauty, co-operation, and radical freedom, and are thus in constant flux (Hartman, 2019).

Mainstream psychology has, in large part, had few explicit engagements with anarchism. This is perhaps due to so much of the discipline aligning with capitalism's exploitative mandate, a mandate that anarchists categorically oppose (Heckert, 2013). Indeed, much of psychology serves as an ideologically adaptationist discipline, one that enables people to better comply with the demands of capitalist domination (Malherbe, 2022). Moreover, psychology has a history of pathologizing dissident politics; confining subjectivity within 'knowable' and thus manageable formations; consolidating a capitalistic 'market mentality' (see Mather, 2003); and rendering oppressive socioeconomic forces merely 'matters of the mind' (see Pavón-Cuéllar, 2017).

Nonetheless, some psychologists have engaged with anarchism, whether superfluously (e.g., Maslow, 1961) or more systematically (e.g., Fox, 1993), just as several anarchists have taken psychology seriously (e.g., Goodman, 1977; Honeywell, 2011; Newman, 2011). Within community psychology – where the anarchist sociopolitical project remains, for the most part, neglected – Sarason (1976) offers the most unambiguous consideration of anarchism, or what he prefers to call "the anarchist insight". The anarchist insight, Sarason demonstrates, compels community psychologists to conduct their work outside of and beyond the alienating apparatuses of the State (see also Trickett, 2015). In this way, he argues, community psychologists can ensure that their work is relevant and accountable to the communities with which they work.

Sarason's (1976) engagement with anarchism from the perspective of a community psychologist offers a useful entry point for community psychologists who wish to use their discipline to make connections between and consolidate the fragments of anarchism that already exist in communities (see Graeber, 2004). Fragments of anarchism (e.g., mutual aid efforts, non-hierarchical political organizing, community care initiatives, egalitarian models of entrepreneurship) prefigure a more egalitarian world and can be found in people's day-to-day lives as well as in their political activity (see Van Meter, 2017). Together, these fragments inform what I am calling the insights of anarchism, that is, the knowledges and wisdom that are produced by anarchist activity. Grappling with the insights of anarchism returns us to Sarason's (1976) pioneering work, but it also takes us beyond it and toward embracing existing anarchist practices within community-engaged work. The purpose of this article is to flesh out how community psychologists can work with people to strengthen anarchist activity by communicating and making connections between the different fragments of anarchism being practiced within and across communities. As such, the article demonstrates how anarchism can shape community psychology praxis and, in turn, how community psychology can assist in the realization of anarchist commitments, practices, and ethics (and, importantly, the limits of community psychology in this respect).

In what follows, I describe anarchism with reference to two central anarchist concepts which, I believe, are especially germane to community psychology praxis, namely: prefiguration and fragments. I then examine some of the central ways by which anarchism has been brought into psychology and community psychology, after which I ruminate on Sarason's (1976) anarchist insight, contrasting this with my own conception of the insights of anarchism. Proceeding this, I draw from my work in a South African community to demonstrate how community psychology can be used to support, strengthen, articulate, and consolidate different fragments of anarchism that exist in people's quotidian and political activities. Finally, I conclude by reflecting on the future of community psychology and the insights of anarchism.

Prefigurative Politics and Anarchist Fragments

Anarchists envision and thus also practice social change prefiguratively. What does this mean? Building on Boggs' (1977) definition, Raekstad and Gradin (2020) define prefiguration as "the deliberate experimental implementation of desired future social relations and practices in the here-and-now" (p. 10). Prefiguration emphasizes that people should voluntarily enter into decision-making and political action, rather than be coerced into doing so (Bakunin, 1873/1990). Prefigurative politics, therefore, guide practices that mirror the kind of society that such practice seeks to bring about. Prefigurative politics reject appeals to the State and instead physically intervene against State power in ways that anticipate an alternative society (such intervention is usually referred to as direct action); living as if we are already free in the very unmediated ways by which we confront injustice (Gordon, 2008). The point of prefiguration, Graeber (2002)

insists, is not to suggest that another – more liberated – world is possible. It is to bring about an experience of this world, even if only temporarily.

Different formations embody prefiguration, such as spokescouncils, break-outs, affinity groups, and secessions. A commitment to these kinds of prefigurative formations sees activists connect political means with social ends (Raekstad & Gradin, 2020); organizing and sustaining their movements through non-hierarchical structures that respect diversity and reject coercion and domination (Amster et al., 2009; Gordon, 2008). There are also everyday instances of prefiguration that offer alternatives to capitalism and that seek to build new relations between people (Van Meter, 2017), making revolution in everyday life (Newman, 2011). Examples here include community gardens, ecovillages, and workers' co-operatives.

Prefigurative political practices tend to be disparate and are oftentimes largely unknown to the majority of society – including the ruling classes – which is what makes prefiguration so valuable and life-affirming for so many (Hartman, 2019; Van Meter, 2017). Understanding prefiguration so that we might strengthen it requires that we engage with what Graeber (2004) calls the fragments of anarchism. This is to say that we must "look at those who are creating viable alternatives, try to figure out what might be the larger implications of what they are (already) doing, and then offer those ideas back, not as prescriptions, but as contributions, possibilities – as gifts" (Graeber, 2004, p. 12). Locating fragments reveals how anarchism is already part and parcel of people's lives, and it is by making connections – or fostering solidarity networks – between anarchist fragments that we can consolidate broader sociopolitical anarchist organization (see Trott, 2016). As such, it is not the idea of anarchism that we take seriously when we engage with anarchist fragments, but rather the voluntary co-operative practices – or mutual aid (Kropotkin, 1902/2008) – through which people organize their lives when they are able to do so (see Ward, 1973/1982). The fragments of anarchism, we might say, expose the violence of the State and point toward entirely reasonable, peaceful, and fulfilling ways of organizing life (e.g., direct democracy, horizontal networks, decentralized consensus) that are routinely disallowed by oppressive State apparatuses (Laursen, 2021).

Prefigurative politics and anarchist fragments are certainly not the only components of anarchism, nor should they be treated uncritically (the unequal power differentials that exist between different groups must, for example, be taken seriously when we engage with both prefiguration and fragments; see Firth, 2022). Nonetheless, these two interlinked concepts offer us a window into understanding how anarchism is practiced and what it might mean to consolidate these practices. Central to engaging with anarchism in this way are the psychological components of anarchist practice.

Psychology and Anarchism

Anarchists do not neglect the psychological. Anarchism is, after all, premised on the assumption that people are, by nature, co-operative and respectful toward one another under conditions of freedom (Mbah & Igariwey, 2014). It is only when we are made to labor under capitalistic conditions of coercion and violence that we act in competition with one another. Here, anarchists are in agreement with the Marxists: capitalism feels so psychologically alienating because it runs counter to our fundamentally co-operative humanity (Bakunin, 1873/1990). However, as noted earlier, most psychologists' ideological alignment with capitalism has meant that there has been relatively little dialogue between anarchism and the discipline of psychology.

To begin with, the knowledge-making projects of anarchism and mainstream psychology differ considerably. As Tissaw and Osbeck (2007) note, mainstream psychology is "a conception of psychology-as-science and commitment to experimental methods as the basis of inquiry" (p. 158). Such a psychology places much value on positivism, objective value-free neutrality, hypothesis testing, cause and effect relations, and measurement – focusing on the individual rather than the individual-in-context (Kloos et al., 2012). While experimentation is a hallmark of anarchist philosophy (Gordon, 2008), the anarchist approach to knowledge-making tends to embrace what Feyerabend (1975/2010) called epistemological anarchy, whereby a plurality of methods and approaches are relied upon to know the world. These different methods and approaches are used in conjunction with one another to challenge knowledge conventions and create new ways of knowing. Thus, where mainstream psychology seeks to create order within the social world through 'knowable' subjectivities (Pavón-Cuéllar, 2017), anarchy endeavors toward an "ordered disorder … a rational,

non-hierarchical order immanent in social relations and emerging organically from below" (Newman, 2011, p. 346). If mainstream psychology experiments in order to know, the anarchist 'experiment' can be thought of as continuous experimentation in living beautifully (see Hartman, 2019).

There are, however, some psychologists who have expressed interest in anarchism. Maslow (1961, 1971), for example, condoned many anarchist ideals (e.g., decentralization and autonomy) and even lamented the fact that academics in general "know little or nothing about philosophical anarchism" (Maslow, 1971, p. 207). Nonetheless, anarchism remains, for the most part, absent in Maslow's oeuvre. More recently, and echoing Feyerabend's (1975/2010) epistemological anarchy, Hernandez and Scarparo (2014) have called for a non-dogmatic "methodological anarchism" within psychology, despite offering a relatively minor consideration of anarchist theory and practice. Haaken et al. (2016) have also considered what prefigurative politics might mean for psychological praxis, while various others have explored the role that psychology can play in assisting with mutual aid groups (e.g., Hatzidimitriadou, 2002; Humphreys & Rappaport, 1994; Malherbe, 2022; Nelson et al., 1998). Yet, while it is important to take questions of the psyche seriously when undertaking mutual aid, most psychologically informed work with mutual aid groups tends not to situate mutual aid within a broader anarchist politics of prefiguration.

Fox's work (e.g., Fox, 1985, 1993, 2011) is rather anomalous in that it offers a systematic engagement with anarchist theory and practice from within the discipline of psychology. Although Fox concedes that anarchism and psychology are, in many respects, fundamentally opposed to one another (e.g., psychology's alignment with middle-class values, individualism, and hierarchical State apparatuses), he insists that social psychology can play an important role in assisting anarchists with connecting individual concerns with those of the community (see Fox, 2011; Heckert 2013). He conceives of anarchism as an everyday psychology of desire and behavior that can influence prefiguration and provide a means by which to bridge emancipatory political principles with how we act in our daily lives (Fox, 2011), that is, produce connections between anarchist fragments. Fox (1985) is, in short, preoccupied with how psychology can assist in making anarchist revolution in people's day-to-day lives and in dealing with the psychic consequences of this revolution. Psychology, for Fox, can in this way be used to navigate how anarchist politics generate anarchist thinking (Heckert, 2013). Although work of this kind remains marginal, Fox's attempts to engage with anarchism from within psychology have been taken up by others in psychology (see e.g., Heckert 2010; Shantz, 2004).

In a rather different project to Fox, Chomsky (e.g., Chomsky, 1988, 2003, 2009) uses anarchist principles to formulate a kind of psychology that is "based on the uncompromising respect for the intellectual freedom of the learner" (Malott, 2012, p. 271). Indeed, Chomsky's (1988, 2009) work on generative grammar (i.e., the rules and principles that individuals need to use language) has contributed to the development of what Malott (2012) calls "anarchist psychology". Such a psychology posits that the human brain is capable of generating infinite sentences through finite grammatical rules, and in this sense, it reflects the anarchist insistence that human nature is willed toward freedom and creativity (Chomsky, 2009; Keucheyan, 2013). Anarchism, Chomsky (2003) claims, reflects our innate cognitive structure, and is therefore the social formation that best allows human freedom and creativity to flourish (see Keucheyan, 2013). It is, therefore, only anarchist social organization that can foster a "community of free association without coercion by the state or other authoritarian institutions, in which free [people] can create and inquire, and achieve the highest development of their powers" (Chomsky, 2013, p. 137).

Although anarchism is largely absent in psychology, some anarchists have taken up psychology. Comfort (1950/1988), for instance, draws from psychoanalytic, anthropological, and sociological thought to advocate an anti-war anarchist politics that embrace morality and free sexuality. He uses various psychological concepts to demonstrate that the State disallows the realization of our desires for co-operation and induces trauma within people. It is with prefigurative direct action, Comfort insists, that the individual subject can take responsibility for creating a cohesive and co-operative – and therefore also fulfilling – society that facilitates the mutual recognition of all humanity (Honeywell, 2011). Goodman (1977) similarly draws from psychoanalysis to argue that human nature is compatible with anarchism, and that capitalist culture and institutions (e.g., schools and especially prisons) create depressed subjects. Goodman is especially partial to using social psychology and Gestalt therapy as tools for enabling individual subjects to realize and heal themselves through prefigurative social relations. As such, Goodman addresses questions of liberated human subjectivity and anarchism together.

More Recently, Milstein (2010) has drawn from psychology to instate several anarchist interventions. They have, for instance, sought to understand what it might mean to mourn collectively; to share loss and pain rather than have these utterly human psychological experiences divided so that they debilitate us and our activist energies. Milstein (2010) insists that collective mourning can serve to strengthen fragmented forms of anarchist prefiguration and solidarity that resist systemic violence. Gray (2022) has, in a somewhat similar vein, explored how the State inculcates an oppressive horizon of sociopolitical possibility within subjects, limiting what is thinkable while at the same time constraining visions of and desires for freedom. Also in recent years, the so-called postanarchists (e.g., Call, 2005; Newman, 2011) have used psychoanalytic ideas to explore what utopian fantasies, desires, and other psychic phenomena which underly anarchist organizational practice might mean for creating prefigurative spaces outside of the State.

I have by no means provided an exhaustive overview of the different attempts to instate a dialogue between anarchism and psychology. Regardless, such attempts remain marginal. This is perhaps due to the mutual suspicion between psychologists and anarchists. Where anarchists are largely dismissive of mainstream psychology's individualizing and apolitical proclivities, psychologists tend to misunderstand anarchism as chaos and/or violence (Heckert, 2013). Nonetheless, attempts to hold anarchism with psychology – reconstituting the latter through the former – are useful for how we approach the principal concern of this article: community psychology's engagement with the insights of anarchism.

Community Psychology and Anarchism

Like the broader discipline of psychology, anarchism has not been taken up with much enthusiasm in community psychology. A central reason for this is that much of community psychology is closely affiliated with the State and hierarchical State-affiliated institutions (see Javorka, 2021). Added to this, although community psychology has embraced several epistemic frameworks, many of which have sought to break from mainstream psychology's individualizing positivism (Orford, 2008), these frameworks tend to differ somewhat from Feyerabend's (1975/2010) epistemological anarchy. Indeed, the three most common scientific paradigms in community psychology – postpositivist, constructivist, and critical – are guided by particular research problems and strategies, many of which are determined by hierarchical State funding agencies and/or capital-friendly institutions (Kloos et al., 2012). Although there are resonances between these scientific paradigms and broader anarchist epistemology (e.g., the rigor and shared understandings of postpositivism; the collaborative, experiential, and contextual emphasis of constructivism; and the critical approach's focus on injustice, power, marginalized positionality, and social action), anarchism's ever-reflective, always-questioning, "anything goes" approach to knowledge-making is able to embrace these three paradigms – as well as many others – in accordance with the liberatory demands of the moment (see Feyerabend, 1975/2010), and with the ambition to alter these paradigms. Community psychology, on the other hand, is usually accountable to some kind of State authority (Javorka, 2021), and thus needs to remain within a particular, identifiable paradigm. Indeed, where postpositivist community psychology projects are usually required to present pragmatic results to funders, stakeholders, and policymakers (Kloos et al., 2012), critical and constructivist community psychology interventions tend to rely on participatory action research that rarely interrogates the State, let alone capitalism (Malherbe, 2022; Orford, 2008).

With all of this being said, community psychology typically does embrace a plurality of approaches to knowledge-making. For example, community psychology usually employs a "divergent reasoning" that acknowledges different perspectives and methodologies, learns through dialogue, and tests taken-for-granted knowledge assumptions (Orford, 2008; Rappaport, 1981), thereby striving to blend critical consciousness with scientific methodology (Rappaport, 2005). Stark (2012) argues that community psychology functions in this way as a "linking science" that connects macro and micro problems of psychosocial wellbeing. Therefore, insofar as community psychology understands itself as a science, it is a "community science" that integrates community values and concerns with different scientific approaches (Wandersman, 2003). Nonetheless, community psychology's epistemological plurality differs from anarchist epistemology in that knowledge and practice are oftentimes separated (Orford, 2008), and there is rarely an attempt made to remake different knowledge paradigms (even if they are brought together), as well as an unwillingness to abandon these paradigms. Added to this, community psychology's attempts to formulate itself as a community or a linking science are

prohibited when such attempts are carried out in conjunction with the State or other hierarchical capitalist institutions. As Newman (2011) puts it "formal neutrality and equality – where everyone is included as a 'stakeholder' – can function in an ideological way to legitimize an already assumed economic consensus, while de-legitimizing antagonism and dissent as irrational, violent and undemocratic" (p. 358). Thus, community psychology's approach to knowledge-making differs from anarchism's continuous experimentation with radical possibilities for organizing politics and everyday life.

We might then say that authority within community psychology (e.g., the funders or institutions on which community psychology relies) oftentimes goes unacknowledged precisely because such authority cannot be altered, rejected, or meaningfully challenged. Moreover, community psychology remains in large part tethered to the rigidity of Euro-American-centric epistemic paradigms (Seedat & Suffla, 2017). For anarchists, authority – although always contested – is based on expertise and experience (Mbah & Igariwey, 2014). Those who exercise authority are always answerable to the community, and once a decision has been made by an authority, it is the group, rather than a single individual, that decides whether this decision should be reversed or sustained. As such, authority figures within anarchist settings can be recalled if they cannot produce a legitimate justification for their exercise of power. Authority figures who align with anarchist principles are regularly replaced so that decision-making is made part of everyone's life (Chomsky, 2013). There are, of course, attempts to do this in community psychology (e.g., an emphasis on community participation in the knowledge-making enterprise), but the discipline's institutionalization and State alignment establish a structural barrier here.

There remains, nonetheless, considerable cross-over between anarchism and community psychology (e.g., the relationship between prefiguration and psychological sense of community; the similarities between direct action and radical participatory action research; as well as the shared emphasis on collaboration, grassroots outreach, and respect for diversity; see Gordon, 2008; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010; Permut, 2016; Sarason, 1974; Trott, 2016). State affiliation is not a prerequisite for community psychology, and the discipline has been used to challenge hierarchical formations. Several critical community psychology interventions have embraced prefiguration and anarchist fragments, despite rarely mentioning these terms. For instance, in echoing the anarchist principle of working from the needs of communities (see Laursen, 2021), Lazarus et al. (2015) employed an asset-based strengths approach which "focused on identifying (and mobilizing) spiritual capacity and religious assets to promote generative masculinities for the purposes of facilitating community safety and peace" (p. 93). In another example, Fayter et al. (2021) used community psychology for abolitionist ends, advocating caring communities over incarceration; demonstrating how prisons and the mass psychological damage that they cause form part of State domination. Atallah's (2022) community psychology praxis similarly endeavors to build indigenous communities of resistance that foster non-hierarchical relations, healing, and justice, while rejecting the kinds of colonial logic that structures refugee camps and prisons.

There have also been attempts to trouble the rigid epistemic foundations of mainstream community psychology within and beyond teaching curricula (see Carolissen & Duckett, 2018), many of which form part of a broader effort to decolonize the discipline and to recover what I am referring to here as anarchist fragments. Seedat and Suffla (2017), for example, argue for a decolonizing approach to knowledge creation within community psychology, one that disengages from capitalist knowledge measurements and metrics by retrieving multiple African knowledge archives. They make a particular case for liberatory knowledge archives that push the disciplinary boundaries of community psychology (see also Reyes Cruz & Sonn, 2011 for how community psychology praxis can engage cultural knowledges within communities, rather than imposing epistemological frameworks from above). Sonn et al. (2017) have similarly stressed that community psychology's knowledge project should begin with alliances with community-based social movements, rather than adhering strictly to foreclosed knowledge-making approaches.

Work of this kind that occurs within critical community psychology and that could be read through an anarchist lens, or as reflecting a similarly non-hierarchical ethic to that of anarchism, remains peripheral, with most funding allocated to the sort of pragmatic, positivist community psychology work that aligns with capitalism's profit-making mandate (Malherbe, 2022). Moreover, it should be said that anarchist organizational practices are rarely engaged explicitly by community psychologists. There is, however, an exception here.

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The Anarchist Insight

The most direct engagement with anarchism from within community psychology has been from Seymour Sarason (1976) who, upon receiving a Division 27 award in 1975 for what was then called "Distinguished Contributions to Community Psychology and Community Mental Health", delivered a paper titled *Community psychology and the anarchist insight* (Trickett, 2015). The anarchist insight, Sarason explains, comprises two parts, the first of which is that the State, which he says includes but is not limited to government, "becomes a force alien to the interests of its people, and the stronger the state becomes, the more … there is a dilution in personal autonomy" (Sarason, 1976, p. 251). The second part of the anarchist insight points to the fact that the more powerful a State becomes, the more it damages people's psychological sense of community (see Sarason, 1974), robbing them of communitarian bonds and autonomy.

Sarason's (1976) anarchist insight is faithful to the anarchist insistence that the State is an inherently destructive force that is opposed to the material and psychological interests of the majority of peoples. As such, the anarchist insight compels community psychologists to engage critically with their relationship to the State and, ideally, to exercise some autonomy from the State (Trickett, 2015). Failing to undertake this critical task may, he argues, result in failing the communities with which community psychologists work. He writes: "There is no better instance of this than the un-reflective way community psychology participated in governmental programs, confusing as it did government-provided and defined 'opportunities' with the needs of communities and their peoples" (Sarason, 1976, p. 257). Sarason (1976) is similarly concerned with how community psychologists working in university settings are made to align with repressive State imperatives when securing research grants. His point here is particularly prescient today, where all over the world "universities (especially the public ones) are obviously beholden to their governmental overseers, funding ministries and associated agencies" (Fleming, 2021, p. 13). Sarason's anarchist insight, it would seem, raises several important considerations that remain relevant in our time. These considerations are useful for how community psychologists commit to what I call the insights of anarchism.

The Insights of Anarchism

Sarason's anarchist insight has been neglected as an entry point into bringing anarchist practice more explicitly into community psychology. This is perhaps not especially surprising when we note that Sarason himself emphasized that he "has no intention here of either describing or justifying anarchism as a social or political ideology or movement" (Sarason, 1976, p. 251). The anarchist insight is not, in other words, practical (Trickett, 2015). As Sarason (1976) puts it: "The immediate issue, then, is not about action, but about the nature of one's beliefs, i.e., those culture givens which are part of us, about which we never have had to think, and which define what is right and proper" (p. 258). Nonetheless, as Fox (1985, 1993) contends, Sarason's (1976) conception of the anarchist insight aligns with the anarchist political vision of a decentralized society consisting of self-managed, co-operative communities, and can therefore be drawn on by community psychologists who wish to make their work relevant to anarchist organizational practice. Put differently, community psychologists can draw on the anarchist insight when attempting to consolidate anarchist fragments, even if doing so runs somewhat counter to Sarason's initial intentions.

Like Sarason (1976), I do not believe that it is possible to construct an anarchist community psychology. Despite their similarities, as noted earlier, neither permits a neat synthesis of the other. Instead, I wish to make the argument that the anarchist insight can be made practical when it is opened up to what I call the insights of anarchism. The insights of anarchism are the knowledges that arise out of the fragments of anarchist practices that already exist in communities (see Graeber, 2004). Although different anarchist fragments – which, together, inform the insights of anarchism – can be observed throughout community life, they are principally found in the prefigurative practices carried out in people's quotidian lives and political activity. For community psychologists committed to the insights of anarchism, the task is to work with people to communicate and make connections between these fragments, and in so doing strengthen existing anarchist organization by creating solidarity networks and fostering critical consciousness (see Trott, 2016). In this way, community psychologists and those with whom they work practice what Scott (2012) calls "anarchist calisthenics" (p. 4), where disparate, seemingly minor prefigurative experiences of anarchism can, cumulatively, lay the groundwork

for engaging in more directly confrontational anti-State, anti-capitalist activity. Thus, micropolitical anarchist practices need not seek to supplant macropolitical politics. Rather, each supplements the other (Newman, 2011).

Does a concern with the insights of anarchism require that community psychologists embrace the anarchist moniker? I believe that the answer to this is *no* precisely because anarchists themselves are not especially concerned with whether they are referred to as anarchists or not. Even having organizational membership to an anarchist group is not a prerequisite here (Gordon, 2008). This is because anarchism refers to what one does rather than who one is (Graeber, 2002). The community psychologist and those with whom they work need not refer to themselves as anarchists to engage with the insights of anarchism, they simply need to commit to strengthening community practices that reflect anarchist values. The anarchist focus on action and organization does not, however, mean that anarchism is unconcerned with the assemblage of identity and standpoint struggles directed against capitalism and the State (Gray, 2022). Racism, for example, is part and parcel of State domination, with race functioning as a property relation in processes of gentrification and settler colonialism (Samudzi & Anderson, 2018). Moreover, Statist logic relies on divisive prejudices to position the State as the singularly legitimate change-making agent (see Gray, 2022), one that acts as a surrogate for community (Laursen, 2021). As such, identity-based domination must be taken seriously by community psychologists who, embracing the insights of anarchism, strive to connect local struggles to global domination through insurgent conceptions of identity.

For some community psychologists, the insights of anarchism may not appear entirely novel. We can certainly see Graeber's (2004) fragments of anarchism in several of the critical community psychology interventions mentioned above. Other critical community psychology interventions that embrace anarchist fragments have done so through radical participatory action, a general conception of anti-capitalism, the decolonial attitude, feminism, and critical realism (e.g., Boonzaier & Van Niekerk, 2019; Ellison & Langhout, 2022; Lau, 2017; Malherbe, 2022; Silva et al., 2022). Why then, one might ask, should community psychologists explicitly embrace the insights of anarchism if this is already, to some extent, being done? To this I would answer that when we put anarchist fragments to work for a broader anarchist project (i.e., when we turn to the insights of anarchism by communicating and making connections between these prefigurative fragments, and thus practice anarchist calisthenics), we begin to transform community psychology through anarchist politics, putting the discipline to work for a broader project of anarchist organization. In this, community psychologists can use their discipline to consolidate different prefigurative visions of liberation that exist in the political and the quotidian spheres of communities. Community psychology is, then, evoked in existing anarchist practice, rather than imposing a predetermined or fixed sort of community psychology or knowledge frame onto such practice. Work of this kind is generative in that it is compatible with existing, albeit marginal, critical currents in community psychology (there are, for instance, decolonial feminist anarchist interventions just as there are decolonial feminist community psychology interventions; see e.g., Boonzaier & Van Niekerk, 2019; Gómez-Barris, 2017), and linkages must be made here.

Community psychologists can honor the insights of anarchism in many ways. Work of this kind is subject to an epistemological anarchy that continually questions its own relevance. Thus, to honor the insights of anarchism necessitates that community psychologists adhere to the social principle, which cherishes non-hierarchal, co-operative social organisation (see Firth, 2022). This requires resisting the kinds of State co-optation that can be observed, for instance, in community programmes that promote 'good behavior' over critical consciousness (Trickett, 2015), or that adhere to funding strictures that turn away from the histories and material realities of communities (Coleman, 2021). Indeed, if the insights of anarchism compel community psychology toward resistance, it is a resistance grounded in the social principle – a creative resistance that strives to build anarchism into everyday life (Newman, 2011).

In short, the insights of anarchism are the knowledges produced through different fragments of anarchism that exist in communities. These insights can be observed in the prefigurative activity that occurs in people's quotidian and political lives. I insist that articulating and making links between anarchist fragments can strengthen anarchist practice and commitment to this practice. In an attempt to demonstrate one way (of many) that community psychologists can engage with the insights of anarchism, I offer below an example from my own community-engaged work.

Case Illustration

Thembelihle is a densely populated community and – despite being located in Gauteng, South Africa's wealthiest province – is indexed as a 'high crime' and 'high unemployment' area (Huchzermeyer, 2009). Many of those who live in Thembelihle have experienced what can be described as State-sanctioned structural violence (Malherbe, 2022). Examples here include police brutality, forced relocations, and an absence of basic social services like sanitation, running water, and reliable electricity (Suffla et al., 2020). As such, there is a rich history of activism in Thembelihle that has resisted systematized oppression and domination of this sort. Over the years, mainstream news reports have, by and large, characterized activist efforts in Thembelihle as baselessly violent, and have displayed a strong State-centric bias. For example, protests in the community are almost always described as inherently violent (with little-to-no detail given regarding such apparent violence) and tend to be reported on from the perspective of the police (Malherbe et al., 2021).

In 2017, I – along with several colleagues at the University of South Africa's Institute for Social and Health Sciences, and a film production company – collaborated with activists, culture workers, and businesspeople in Thembelihle to produce a participatory documentary film. The film, which community residents titled *Thembelihle: Place of Hope*, sought to depict Thembelihle in a nuanced way from the perspectives of those who live there, thus speaking back to dominant State-centric media representations (see Malherbe et al., 2021). The documentary did not endeavor to tell the definitive story of Thembelihle. Instead, it offered humanizing, counter-hegemonic depictions of community life (i.e., depictions that resist the Statist universalization of ruling class interests over the interests of the majority; Mather, 2003) that were defined by collective struggle as well as ethico-political commitments. At various public screenings of the documentary which took place in and beyond Thembelihle (e.g., community halls, city centers, and community events), audiences engaged with the community members who produced the documentary. It was in this way that the documentary was used to catalyze solidarity between different social movements, promote various political causes, bring attention to egalitarian business practices, and demonstrate how a humanistic sense of community was being produced in people's day-to-day lives. Many of the conversations at these public screenings went beyond that which was depicted in the documentary.

Although the documentary featured activists from social movements in Thembelihle that – like many social movements in Africa (Mbah & Igariwey, 2014) – are by and large State socialist rather than libertarian socialist (i.e., anarchist), the documentary project nonetheless engaged with the insights of anarchism in several different ways. In what follows, I focus on two anarchist fragments within Thembelihle that were strengthened by those involved in this documentary project, namely: a community garden and debates among activists concerning the State.

Community Gardening

Although we tend not to think of our day-to-day activities in terms of prefigurative politics, whenever we assist individuals or groups without the expectation of compensation, we are in fact prefiguring a world based on mutuality and non-hierarchical co-operation (Heckert, 2013). Helping someone with home maintenance, cooking for others, and assisting with childrearing all represent fragments of an alternative society that is not premised on individualized competition, hierarchical domination, and profit. These seemingly small, everyday actions exist quite apart from the capitalist State and Statist visions of the social good (Raekstad, 2018), and thus reflect an intuitively co-operative way of being-in-the-world with others.

Thembelihle: Place of Hope portrays several quotidian fragments of prefiguration in Thembelihle, such as a brickmaking co-operative that distributes profits and labor equally among its workers, as well as a community organization that, in responding to the inadequacies and violence of the South African Police Service, worked with foreign nationals to establish anti-xenophobic social cohesion in the community. However, at public screenings, what appeared to evoke especially powerful responses from audiences was the documentary's portrayal of a small-scale farmer who runs a subsistence garden. The fresh produce grown in this garden is priced in accordance with what people can pay, which oftentimes sees the farmer giving this produce away free of charge. As he explains it in the documentary, community members "know if they haven't got money, they'll just come to me [and say] '… you know, my kids didn't eat today. Just give me some spinach.' And then I [will] just give [spinach to] him."

The farmer's garden was, for him, tremendously symbolic. As he notes toward the end of the documentary: "This garden reflects the people of Thembelihle" (Malherbe, 2022, p. 103). He expressed pride in the fact that he grows his vegetables on land that some had insisted was not arable. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when food security was under threat, he taught local activists in the community how they, too, could grow vegetables. In these ways, the farmer predicates his own upliftment on that of the broader community, thus echoing Bakunin's (1873/1990) sentiment that one is free only in proportion to the freedom of others, as well as Chomsky's (2013) insistence on a fundamentally co-operative human nature. Although the farmer is in many regards chained to the capitalist mode of production (he cannot, after all, run his garden entirely without the profit motive), he nonetheless strives to practice business in a community-centered and prefigurative manner that resembles what Hardt and Negri (2017) call an entrepreneurship of the multitude (as opposed to an entrepreneurship of capital which relies on individualized competition).

It may be difficult to convince people to live prefiguratively if they have not experienced life in this way. As such, it can be effective to demonstrate existing prefiguration (Raekstad, 2018). Trott (2016) recounts that participatory action research is especially useful for communicating the dynamic, tangible, and often informal nature of prefiguration. This is to say, such research is useful for communicating anarchist fragments and the conscientizing[3] insights contained within these fragments. This was apparent at public screenings of the documentary, where audience members expressed that they were moved by the community-centered work with which the farmer was involved. Many insisted that they were unaware that such prefigurative quotidian activities were taking place in Thembelihle, to which several activists responded by acknowledging the importance of these activities in advancing socially just political programs. As one member of a prominent left-wing group commented:

> "We don't have to just ignore it [poverty in Thembelihle] and say "oh, it's normal." They [community members featured in the documentary] want the best from their place. That's why there's all this action … there's this brother … that's doing a garden [the farmer] … he did encourage me … everything that we do, we have to take away money, always, but … he can spend it on his garden and a social group. As people, we have to care for each [other]. Don't say "no, I'm fine. I'm not poor. I'm not sick. I'm not hungry." You must be conscious!" (Malherbe, 2022, p. 104)

For this audience member, the farmer's garden embodied a prefigurative mode of community care that operates outside of the Statist logic of normalized destitution. To engage one's community in the way that the farmer does is not, then, "to just ignore" poverty; it is to refuse a life of structural misery and domination that capitalism presents as inevitable for the majority of people. When, in her closing remark, the above speaker urges other audience members to be conscious, she seems to imply that the farmer's prefigurative actions demonstrate that although co-operation, fairness, and equality are structurally denied in communities like Thembelihle, there are in fact direct actions within these communities that present fragments of a better life. The insights of anarchism are contained within these fragments and bring abstract ideals of liberation into the here-and-now. It is also within these fragments that the political values of social movements are embodied in tangible, immediate, and appealing ways.

Trott (2016) argues that showcasing prefigurative politics for purposes of conscientization can be problematic as it is typically the loudest voices that get heard, while quieter modes of prefiguration go unnoticed. We also cannot ignore the unequal power differentials that exist among those engaged in prefigurative practice (Firth, 2022). This raises important points of concern for community psychologists engaged with the insights of anarchism. While it is true that the farmer opted not to speak at public screenings of the documentary – although he did attend several of them – and he was, at times, uncomfortable speaking on camera, he remained committed to communicating the insights of anarchism. By using the documentary to do this, he highlighted to activists and others in the community the importance of not only fighting for a better life, but also living out this life – or fragments of it – in the present. Many audience members sought the farmer's counsel on how they too could undertake community-oriented business practices, while others attempted to connect these practices to activist demands. The farmer himself used the documentary in a successful application to register his garden as a non-governmental organization (Malherbe, 2022). Communicating the insights

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3) Conscientization, according to Freire (1972), refers to a process whereby people work with one another to better understand the contradictions of capitalist society so that they might take the best course of collective action against the oppressive social conditions of this society.

of anarchism in these ways, therefore, had far-reaching effects. Community psychologists can assist in providing the resources required for this kind of communication, where the capitalist order is critiqued by demonstrating the alternatives that already exist within it. In this regard, community psychology can be transformed and led by how the insights of anarchism are articulated and received by community members.

Contending the State

Scott's (2012) notion of anarchist calisthenics makes clear that prefiguration, as it exists in daily life, can and should inform anti-State political activism (Newman, 2011; Raekstad, 2018). Social movement politics and the everyday can support and bolster one another in different ways. For community psychologists, the task is to work with people to communicate and connect the anarchist fragments that operate within both of these spheres.

Thembelihle: Place of Hope sought to connect everyday prefiguration with prefigurative social movements by depicting each of these seemingly disparate spheres of life beside one another so that audiences could engage with how each reflects the values of the other. Moreover, many of the community members who produced the documentary insisted that it be used as a tool for social movement activists. Activists were thus invited to documentary screening events where, during the post-screening discussion, they could share their political programs and link these with the everyday struggles that were depicted in the documentary. For example, political demands for water and sanitation were connected to the kind of work that the farmer undertook in the documentary (work which not only requires water and sanitation but also, by embodying an entrepreneurship of the multitude, reflects a similar community-centered dignity).

In another example of how the documentary was used as a political tool, activists from the community hosted their own screenings as a means of communicating their struggles to, and creating solidarity with, social movements located in other communities. As a community outsider, I was not always invited to these political meetings, although I was present at some. At an especially tense meeting, the documentary was used by activists to debate the role of the State in their struggles. It is reasonable to ask whether community psychologists committed to the insights of anarchism would endorse such debate. Is the State not to be rejected outright? Gordon (2008) emphasizes that anarchists are not puritanical on this matter. He notes that throughout history, there has been a willingness on the part of anarchists to work tactically with the State to advance anarchist values (e.g., working within the law to resist State domination). The point is to know where to draw the line. We can think of this kind of agonistic reform as facilitating the conditions that could allow anarchists to alter the social constitution of power more effectively (Hardt & Negri, 2017). As Chomsky (2013) puts it, anarchists can work within the State structures to which they are opposed so that they can create the circumstances which change these structures. Community psychologists working to connect and communicate fragments of anarchism can, then, work with people to facilitate when, how, and if the State can be engaged in politically strategic ways while at the same time rejecting "the notion that the State form is the best or most progressive structure for socio-political organization" (Gray, 2022, pp. 5-6).

Recognizing the oppressive structures and institutions in which one works so that we might change these structures is not uncommon in community psychology (Javorka, 2021). For example, the transformative systems change model favored by some community psychologists seeks to enact community change in collaboration with State funders (Foster-Fishman et al., 2007). When using models like these, the goal is to work at multiple levels to integrate and manage the different interests of communities, State organizations, and policymakers (Maton et al., 2006). For those who embrace the insights of anarchism, however, such integration efforts are not possible because the respective interests of the State and community are not merely different, they are incompatible, with State institutions garnering far more power and influence over decision-making than communities do (see Coleman, 2021). Thus, working with the insights of anarchism, unlike working in State-directed 'collaborative' relations, is not to concern oneself with an idealistic or conflict-free consensus that offers a veneer of democratic inclusiveness (Newman, 2011). Rather, the insights of anarchism embrace conflict in an attempt to compel radically democratic and prefigurative formations through such agonism (see Malherbe, 2022), holding the State in contempt even when there are politically strategic moments at which to make use of the State, or to force some kind of accountability from the State.

At one documentary screening, it was clear that Thembelihle activists were divided with respect to how they viewed the State. Although there was some variation here, for the most part, this was a generational divide. Younger

people were by and large inspired by the kinds of quotidian prefiguration that they had seen in the documentary and, after years of being failed by the South African State (e.g., police brutality, land evictions, and a lack of basic public infrastructure), called for an autonomous kind of libertarian socialism, one that seemed to resemble anarchism. As one young man proclaimed after watching the documentary:

> People [in the documentary], they stood up and they say "government, government, government" … I've lost hope in government … Community leaders, let's stop being selfish. Let's go back to us as a community. We are the ones, the gatekeepers for Thembelihle to be developed … we would qualify to do the proper job … Political leaders must step aside and allow church leaders, traditional leaders, community leaders to make sure that tomorrow we have a bright future … I'm pledging to this house: when we walk out of here, comrades and community leaders, let's have a stakeholders' meeting that involves every leader in the community; education leader, agriculture leader, sports leader. And stop inviting political leaders to these meetings.

These sentiments (which called for leadership and autonomy to be distributed throughout the community, rather than centralized in a State formation) were echoed by several other young comrades in the audience. One audience member, for example, proclaimed that "[w]e can't wait for government. It's about time we stand up on our feet and we do something about it!". Another exclaimed that those in the documentary who were enacting prefigurative politics did "better work than so-called [ward] councillors". *À la* Sarason's (1976) anarchist insight, the State was perceived here as inherently poisonous for any politically progressive community project. For these young people who had little-to-no positive experiences of State intervention, it seemed clear that the State needed to be abandoned, with the documentary providing several fragments that demonstrated how this was already being done.

Some of the elder activists who were in attendance – many of whom came out of the anti-apartheid State socialist movements – were, however, adamant that the State can and should play a role in realizing social justice demands in Thembelihle. The State, they argued, had the resources that activists needed to advance their political goals. As one longtime community activist put it:

> I don't agree [that] the community of Thembelihle must do things for themselves. In communities in other areas, government is sponsoring them. In [a nearby community where the State had relocated some residents of Thembelihle], government is doing something for them … if [government] don't do something for the people in Thembelihle [then] they must come with something that will convince Thembelihle … beyond [a] doubt that [they] cannot assist because of certain things … [but] there is funds for these things.

In this view, which opposes that of the younger activists quoted above, the State should be held accountable to the people of Thembelihle. As such, the State need not be accepted as it is. Rather, grassroots struggle must transform the State by holding the State accountable to a set of emancipatory political demands that are implemented in all communities.

Community psychologists concerned with the insights of anarchism are encouraged to facilitate these sorts of debates on the role of the State in community activism. The point here is not to host these debates for their own sake, nor is it to arrive at a neat resolution or consensus by converting State socialists to an anarchist politics. Rather, these debates and the insights that they reveal can be drawn on to inform direct action. For example, in early 2020, when the social crises brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic were beginning to materialize, activists in Thembelihle embraced and rejected the State at different strategic moments. When the South African State failed to ensure food security, activists from Thembelihle worked with Gift of the Givers, a local non-governmental organization, as well as the University of South Africa's Institute for Social and Health Sciences, to distribute food parcels in the community. The State was, however, held accountable for the payment packages – meager as they were – that were promised to those who were without an income during this time (Malherbe, 2022). Despite their views on the State, then, both younger and older activists worked, at different moments, with and against the State. Community psychologists can, if requested, assist in hosting and facilitating the kinds of emotionally-charged debates that inform this sort of politically

and ideologically nuanced activism, and to work with activists to connect their activism to the fragments of anarchism that are enacted in people's daily lives.

Debates of this kind on the role of the State can introduce a robustness into political engagements. Such robustness can render social movement activism alive to the political demands and possibilities of the moment. After all, it is anarchism that brings into question the often-unchallenged role that the State plays in bringing about 'the good society'. It is also through these debates that connections can be made between the different sorts of prefiguration that exist in people's political and quotidian lives.

Conclusion

Anarchism, regardless of what people think of it, is very much alive today and we can see it being practiced all the time. With respect to social movements, we saw traces of anarchism in the non-hierarchical organizational structures of the Occupy Movement and in today's Movement for Black Lives. We can also see anarchist influences in different political actions, such as pickets, boycotts, slow-downs, and squats. Moreover, anarchism is always being practiced by people in their day-to-day lives. This can be observed in the reproductive labor required to keep society going as well as in the various grassroots mutual aid groups that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic, oftentimes as a result of the State's inadequacy (Firth, 2022). At the societal and community levels, we can see elements of anarchism among the Zapatistas in Mexico as well as those living in Rojava, the autonomous zone of northeastern Syria (Raekstad & Gradin, 2020). In this article, I argue for the potential of community psychology to assist in consolidating such disparate anarchist fragments. In doing so, I flesh out anarchist thought and practice in relation to community psychology, returning to Sarason's (1976) anarchist insight and then going beyond it, toward what I am calling the insights of anarchism, or the knowledges that are informed by already existing fragments of anarchist activity. Drawing from my own community psychology practice, I offer two examples of how the insights of anarchism can be engaged, namely, through a community garden initiative and debates among activists on the role of the State. Considered together, these two examples exemplify how anarchist fragments within daily and political life can inform and bolster one another.

As I have emphasized throughout this article, anarchism is less concerned with labels and strictures than it is with actions that honor the anarchist principle of non-hierarchical co-operation and organization. As such, engaging with the insights of anarchism need not look a particular way or even be carried out by self-identifying anarchists. I have offered two examples but there are many more with which people can engage, and with which many critical community psychologists have engaged. How, for instance, could community psychologists assist with connecting unpaid reproductive labor, COVID-19 mutual aid efforts, and community-centered worker co-operatives to social movement initiatives? How can community psychologists aid those seeking to connect the kinds of prefiguration being enacted in the domestic sphere to the bureaucratic machinery of social movements? It is also worth exploring the value of working with explicitly anti-State community actors across different communities. It is in these ways, as well as many others, that community psychologists can harness the insights of anarchism to realize many of their core disciplinary values (e.g., social justice, respect for diversity, participation, and sense of community) in a community-centered, non-hierarchical, and politically appealing manner.

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