



Call for papers for an *ephemera* special issue on:

## **Management, business, anarchism**

**Issue Editors:** Konstantin Stoborod and Thomas Swann

While the inclusion of anarchism and management in the same sentence would normally connote a rejection of one and a corresponding defense of the other, the study of management and radical social and political thought are not as antithetical as one might at first imagine. The field of critical management studies, regularly dated back to the publication of Mats Alvesson and Hugh Willmott's collection (1992), has drawn on left wing theoretical sources as well as heterodox empirical research in reflecting on and ultimately criticizing prevailing practices and discourses of management. As Gibson Burrell noted twenty years ago, there is a 'growing number of alternative organisational forms now appearing, whether inspired by anarchism, syndicalism, the ecological movement, the co-operative movement, libertarian communism, self-help groups or, perhaps most importantly, by feminism' (1992: 82). Despite anarchism appearing first in his list of inspirations for alternative organisation and having a history at least as old as Marxism and feminism, there has been relatively little research on anarchism and its principles within management studies. Notable exceptions include some works under the umbrella of critical management studies (Reedy, 2002; Parker et al., 2007).

Anarchist writers have, however, much to say about organisation and management, especially when it comes to outlining ideas for alternatives to corporate capitalism. From the earliest days of the anarchist movement, writers including Proudhon (2011), Bakunin (1971) and Kropotkin (1970)

spoke of federalism and voluntary association as organisational forms that would eclipse those of capitalist and hierarchical society. In the 20th century, Goldman (1910) and Bookchin (2004), among others, focused anarchist theory on questions of gender and sexuality and ecology respectively, while others such as Ward (1973) sought to develop anarchism as a science of organisation. In recent years, following the struggles of the alter-globalisation movement, anarchist theory has come to stress the importance of democratic organising, direct action (Graeber, 2009) and prefiguration (Franks, 2006).

What we see as a problem with anarchist theory in its contemporary context, however, is that its ideals are detached from an everyday life that has been taken over by managerialism. Protests and social turbulence across the globe, driven by progressive social and political ideas, inevitably end up revolving around global corporate signifiers. Positive stories praise Twitter and Blackberry messaging as tools for revolution, while negative ones condemn buying from Starbucks as a betrayal of political ideals. These are the moments when capitalism intervenes in the politicised social domain, and it looks as if anarchist theory appears unprepared for such an intervention. It is at this point, we believe, that a cross-fertilisation of anarchist theory and management studies should be of interest. A branch of the latter, namely critical management studies, not only has some of its roots in anarchist theory, but also provides a response which uses the vernacular of the established social, political and economic conditions of our day. As such, it is well-placed to challenge the fundamental nature of modern capitalism in so far as it impinges on organization.

The aim of this special issue is to open up a dialogue between the study of management and organization, on the one hand, and anarchism, on the other, and to reinforce both as a result. This has to be attained by bringing anarchist ideas about management, organization and the nature of capitalism to bear on critical management studies as well as determining where anarchist thought can learn from the insights of research on management. This should not be limited to theoretical discussions or interventions, but can also focus on the practical sides of anarchist and other forms of organization. In this respect this call for papers invites reflections not only on alternative forms of organizing but also on ethics, organizational behaviour, consumption and branding, and theories of leadership. This will help in finding out where the productive overlap between two paradigms already exists as well as identifying the lacunas which progressive management thinking is equipped to fill. We particularly welcome examples of how and where intervention from (critical) management studies is needed to rethink the salient issues of the day when it comes to alternatives to global capitalism,

as well as a discussion of what anarchist theory has to offer alongside various forms of organizing. Examples of broad topics we would welcome include:

- Organizational norms and practices in 21st century radical social movements
- Economic, political, social and environmental protests
- Can anarchism be found (or lost) in the business school?
- New technologies, new attitudes and their effects on horizontality in organizing
- Business ethics and anarchist ethics
- Leadership: managerial and anarchist perspectives
- Promotion and “marketing” of anarchist theory and practice
- Embodiment and performativity in protest movements
- Emotions and affectivity of the alternative
- Global anti-authoritarian and/or anti-capitalist trends reflected in local practices
- Anarchism as the outsider of CMS
- Is there a science of anarchist organization?
- The promise of radical opportunity always being elsewhere

### **Submission Deadline and Further Information**

The deadline for first submissions is the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2013; please send submissions directly to the guest editors. The issue will be published towards the end of 2014. Associated events have been organised at the Anarchist Studies Network Conference 2012, and will be organised at the Critical Management Studies Conference 2013. Full papers, conceptual/literature review articles, book reviews, notes, translations, interviews and a variety of other formats of contribution are all encouraged, for as long as they address the remit of the special issue as outlined above, and/or as discussed with the editors.

Generic preliminary submission guidelines can be found here: <http://www.ephemerajournal.org/how-submit>. Potential contributors are encouraged to contact the guest editors Konstantin Stoborod ([ks302@le.ac.uk](mailto:ks302@le.ac.uk)) and Thomas Swann ([thomasrobertswann@googlemail.com](mailto:thomasrobertswann@googlemail.com)) as early as possible for an initial discussion of particular proposals, and for further information.

## References

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