

ANARCHISM AND TECHNOLOGICAL IMPEDIMENTS TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

MATEO S. PIMENTEL

Arizona State University

EDWARD J. MARTIN

California State University, Long Beach

ABSTRACT

Illich and other theoretical anarchists argue that one of the primary sources of contemporary social injustice is the established orthodoxy legitimizing the rationale for human progress through advanced technological innovations. Illich and theoretical anarchists argue that this orthodoxy comes at the expense of human labor and basic human needs. Unfettered technological innovation thus undermines, to a large degree, the individuals and societies to which technological innovation is argued to liberate. Capitalist advancement and technological innovation makes labor expendable as victims of capitalist technological success.

Keywords: Anarchism, Capitalism, Technology, Justice, Decentralism, Convivial Tools

“The problem is this: how to conceive of an order without an orderer and of organizational effects where formal organization is lacking.”

Kenneth Neal Waltz

INTRODUCTION

Anarchists argue that the state itself is inherently repressive by nature. The anarchist project thus aims to do away with the “coercive” nature of the state and any “self-evident,” moral requirements for a general mass obedience to state-made laws. That dutiful or morally upright citizens should obey state-made laws is a principle of their conscience (say, out of a conscientious attempt to preserve their civil liberties) does not at all imply that the very legal system they obey is necessarily a just one. In fact the very system that law-abiding citizens obey may wrongfully convict and punish them, at any time (Wolff, 1970; Smith, 1972; Simmons, 1979; Raz, 1979; Green, 1990). This is, perhaps, especially problematic for those who argue for a general mass obedience to the laws of an unjust legal system. When confronted with anarchist criticism, this form of obedience, and arguments in favor of it, seem to translate as collusion with state-sponsored legal injustices (Chartier, 2009; Murphy, 2007).

Conversely, by calling into question the state-made laws of a society, the anarchist project, as it is treated here, does not argue for chaos by attacking the legitimacy of the state, or necessarily aim for a return to what can be likened to Locke’s “state of nature.” Nor does the anarchist project subscribe to the notion that human nature is irrevocably benevolent, or that it can be made so by social forces argued for in a Marxist utopia. Nevertheless, human beings in anarchist thinking are expected to comport themselves in

moral fashion absent state-made law. In fact, what the anarchists have a penchant for knowing is what people can and ought to do without such law, and without the tyranny of a system sustained in part by, for example, wrongful convictions. This is the anarchist query: What to do without the state? What is more, the anarchist project might ask: What to do without a legal system fraught with wrongful convictions? Specifically, this is most notable as it plays out disproportionately on minorities and the poor.

This is to say that law and legislation most certainly are not one and the same. It is not, therefore, unimaginable that an anarchist society should give rise to courts that rely on common-law or legal norms developed from one case to the next. Indeed, there is more than enough political currency and forthrightness within the anarchist project to establish a reasonable system of law that not only satisfies the necessary conditions – which go, probably, largely unmet – of an authoritative legal system, but which avoids altogether the pitfalls of an unjust legal system freighted with wrongful convictions (Chartier, 2009). It would ultimately be the task of anarchist social justice to confront a legal system that disproportionately wreaks havoc on minorities and the poor through wrongful convictions.

MANIFESTATIONS OF ANARCHIST SOCIAL JUSTICE

Oligarchy and other anti-democratic institutions make it impossible for justice, let alone anarchist social justice, to be a reckoning force in society. Yet, there is no shortage of alternatives to these institutions or the theories and theorists that fuel them. Chomsky, for example, acknowledges the Kibbutzim villages of Israel and the Spanish experiment with worker-owned cooperatives of Mondragon, Spain, as evidence of such alternatives (Scott, 2012, 1990). The new social movements (NSM) school informs anarchist

alternatives which activists have adopted and amalgamated with their repertoire of alternative means of social arrangement. An entire class of individuals (e.g., Laclau, Mouffe, Offe, and Wallerstein) has submitted for public consideration its anarchist tendencies with regards to several topics, such as ideology, identity, politics, and culture. It should be noted that all of these alternatives and their proponents have gained notoriety as a result of the women's movements, LGBTQ rights movements, peace movements, as well as ecological and environmental ones, and more.

Anarchist NSM organizations have emerged and come to emblemize what may be considered a "community of meaning" inclusive of "popular justice." Alternate modes of self-governance such as these offer a way of skirting the rigidity posed both by oligarchy, state, and nonprofit organizations that often coincide with oligarchic institutions, even complementing their structures. The "community of meaning," on the other hand, takes root in social relationships that are principally based on what is called a "conscience collective" (i.e., the espousal of diverse gifts and skillsets in a given local setting, such as a neighborhood or school). Thus, individuals can respond adequately to an array of needs while striving to manage strategies for sustainable development and promote "socio-economic" justice. But this will not be possible without due attention to the built environment and the technological artifacts that comprise and fill them.

In *The Whale and the Reactor*, Langdon Winner (1986) offers the insight that changes in technology over time have encompassed "a panoply of human motives, not the least of which is the desire of some to have dominion over others even though it may require an occasional sacrifice of cost savings and some violation of the normal standard of trying to get more from less" (p.24). Winner's

observation coincides with much of what Ivan Illich (1973) decries about the dehumanizing and alienating dimensions of industrial tools, and this may be because Winner himself is occupied with tools common to an age of high technology. Winner nuances the conversation, but he does not steer it in a direction that is anathema to the intellectual trajectory previously mapped out by Illich. “If our moral and political language for evaluating technology includes only categories having to do with tools and uses,” writes Winner, “if it does not include attention to the meaning of the designs and arrangements of our artifacts, then we will be blinded to much that is intellectually and practically crucial,” and imperative to dismantling what it is about the state that needs dismantling for socio-economic justice to be realizable (p.25).

Like Illich’s interest in the “prevailing fundamental structure of our present tools,” which he claims to be a menace to “the survival of mankind,” Winner addresses the fact that people seldom even question whether given technological implements might have been designed to “produce a set of consequences logically and temporally prior to any of its professed uses” (p.25). Both thinkers address crucial aspects of the same issue, which is at once social, political and technological in nature. It is difficult to conclude that they take aim at altogether different targets. Ultimately, however, it may be that for Illich the issue of industrialization is much more insidiously totalizing than it is for Winner, who ends his book by asking, “How long will it be until we are ready for anything better?” (p.178).

Illich (1973) posits that tools are indeed an integral part of social relationships. In fact, the way individuals relate to society depends on the tools they use and master. Moreover, in keeping with this paradigm, Illich postulates that individuals can imbue their world inasmuch as they master their tools. Illich also acknowledges that a reciprocal dynamism exists between individuals and their

tools. He states that not only does an individual get shaped by the tools he uses, but also, "...to the degree that he is mastered by his tools, the shape of the tool determines his own self-image." It is within the strictures of this relationship, and this kind of social use and mastery of tools, that Illich additionally situates the kinds of implements after which he has named his book. "Convivial tools," writes Illich, "are those which give each person who uses them the greatest opportunity to enrich the environment with the fruits of his or her vision" (p.21).

Fittingly, the distinction between convivial tools and other kinds is a point that is paramount to Illich's prescription for adopting a mode of life that is at least partly based on tools for conviviality. He prescribes "public controls over tools and institutions that curtail or negate any person's right to the creative use of his or her energy," and also "procedures to ensure that controls over the tools of society are established and governed by political process rather than by decisions by experts" (Illich, 1973, p.12). In order to paint a clear picture of the category of tools to which convivial ones belong, Illich compares them with industrial tools, which he argues "deny this possibility to those who use them and they allow their designers to determine the meaning and expectations of others." As opposed to industrial tools, say, convivial ones help individuals to engender a convivial society, which "should be designed to allow all its members the most autonomous action by means of tools least controlled by others" (Illich, 1973, p.20-1).

Illich does concretize his prescription for adopting tools for conviviality, and he qualifies what those kinds of tools are:

Tools foster conviviality to the extent to which they can be easily used, by anybody, as often or as seldom as desired, for the accomplishment of a purpose chosen by the user. The use of such tools

by one person does not restrain another from using them equally. They do not require previous certification of the user. Their existence does not impose any obligation to use them. They allow the user to express his meaning in action (p.22).

Yet, it is worth asking if a convivial society is actually viable. As Illich notes, imagining things like development and modernization, and namely with respect to a lower rather than a higher use of energy, is difficult for contemporary people to do. This cognitive difficulty results in part from living in an age of high technology (Illich, 1973, p. 26).

Winner states that “people are often willing to make drastic changes in the way they live to accommodate technological innovation while at the same time resisting similar kinds of changes justified on political grounds...” (p.39). He advises that studying the impacts or effects of technological change should be subordinate to “evaluating the material and social infrastructures specific technologies create for our life’s activity,” and that we should strive “to imagine and seek to build technical regimes compatible with freedom, social justice, and other key political ends.” Illich speaks of the political possibilities that necessarily accompany a convivial society, and Winner adds to that: “Insofar as the possibilities present in a given technology allow it, the thing ought to be designed in both its hardware and social components to accord with a deliberately articulated, widely shared notion of a society worthy of our care and loyalty” (p.55).

Illich argues that one of the main sources all contemporary injustice is the “political approval for the existence of tools that by their very nature restrict to a very few the liberty to use them in an autonomous way” (p.43). This bespeaks a system of values that industrialized society has adopted, and should anyone set out to interrogate such

values, Winner advises that the following question be asked: “How are we living now as compared to how we want to live?” (163). Nor do Illich and Winner ignore the historical efforts that many have made in their attempts to curtail, command and employ technology for social and political means, and what have been perceived as “just” ends. Thus is the established orthodoxy for increased technological innovations at the expense of human labor and basic human needs. Unquestioned technological development and innovations thus undermine, to some degree, the very labor and fundamental rights of individuals and societies. Human advancement and technological innovation, it would seem, has made human labor the victim of its own technological success.

For example, both Illich and Winner speak on decentralism. Winner states, “As a species of modern political ideology ... decentralism stresses the need for a greater number of centers of genuine social and political policy making” (p.89). Historically, decentralization has connoted “a positive social goal,” which includes “the right of the people to exercise decision making and administrative authority directly ... while avoiding the pitfalls of concentrating power in the state” (89). Winner cites anarchist thinkers like Peter Kropotkin and his anarchist vision of social order comprised of loosely federated small local communes along with Murray Bookchin, another anarchist theorist, as well as the English social theorist G. D. H. Cole, and his counterparts in the Guild Socialist movement.

Though these political figures represent differing schools of thought, they all share in common a vehement opposition to what Winner identifies as “the centralization of state power in capitalist society” (p.90). Relevant to technological development, he acknowledges in his book that Marxism “anticipates a history of rapidly evolving material productivity, an inevitable course of events in

which attempts to propose moral and political limits have no place” (90). This assumes, too, the replacement of capitalism with socialism—the moment in history when “the machine will finally move into high gear, presumably releasing humankind from its age-old miseries” (p.17). Illich and Winner, then, might ask the same question of this would-be momentous occurrence in history: What kind of world is actually being made? For Illich, at least, the answer to this question would hopefully be “a convivial one.”

As Winner notes, “Numerous examples in the history of modern industrial society lend support to the belief that overtly dangerous applications of new technology will not long be tolerated” (p.140). But what is to come next? What is to replace modern industrial society? Illich recognizes the answer is that “society must be reconstructed to enlarge the contribution of autonomous individuals and primary groups to the total effectiveness of a new system of production designed to satisfy the human needs which it also determines.” Yet, because the “institutions of industrial society do just the opposite,” the power of individuals gets reduced to the power to consume (p.10-1). Thus, it is not enough simply to indicate that individuals in society prefer, as Winner calls them, “...monuments to gigantism, war, and the overstepping of natural and cultural boundaries” (Winner, 1986, p.177-8). Rather, for Illich, it is fundamental that individuals recognize that they “can no longer live and work effectively without public controls over tools and institutions that curtail or negate any person’s right to the creative use of his or her energy...” This entails engendering a protocol for establishing control over society’s tools, and the governance of those tools by political processes rather decisions taken by experts (p.12).

TECHNOLOGICAL IMPEDIMENTS TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

In her book entitled *Feminism Confronts Technology*, Judy Wajcman (1991) contributes much to the “reworking” of the contemporary relationship between gender and technology. Wajcman’s contribution adds to the “transformation of gender relations,” which she advocates, and which she cites as imperative—that is, should be the kind of sociotechnical change that she envisages take place. Importantly, Wajcman posits that “technologies reveal the societies that invent and use them,” and that the same technologies are, moreover, revelatory about societal incarnations of the things important to feminism, such as “social status and distributive justice” (p.166). In a similar vein Wiebe (1995) argues for “a need to analyze technical change as a social process” (p.269) because politicizing technology “can help establish institutional and structural ways of guaranteeing the democratic nature of technological culture...” (p.289). Certainly, a democratic technological culture would concern itself with social status and distributive justice as much as the technologies and sociotechnical systems that contribute to its general functioning.

In his book *Of Bicycles, Bakelites, and Bulbs* it is apparent that Bijker inhabits an intellectual landscape like that of Wajcman, though his arguments do not make explicit use of any sort of feminism, or the kinds of feminist aims, that Wajcman does. Even if largely independent of feminism, Bijker does maintain a position coincidental to Wajcman’s criticism of science and technology. For example, he argues that explaining a given set “of power relations ... to reveal the micropolitics of power” can become a powerful mainstay for explaining the “development of a new order constituted by a particular combination of technology and society” (p.272). Wajcman

expands on this notion, adding that “despite technology being seen as a driving force, it has not ushered in a new order but rather has been built into the pre-existing relations of sex, class and race that structure the labour force and employment opportunities ... (and) social relations are expressed in and shape technologies” (p.52). The feminist confrontation of technology thus enriches the insights that theorists like Bijker can share in relation to the kinds of analysis they promote.

For Bijker, analyzing technical change as a social process is fruitful because the stabilization of artifacts (i.e., when the associated meanings of artifacts become less ambiguous) is clearly “a social process and hence subject to choices, interests, and value judgments”—or, what he reduces to mean “politics” (p.270-1; 280-1). This logic certainly lends itself to the notion that thinkers are likely “to fall prey to determinist thinking” should they decline the promising aspects of interpretive flexibility when analyzing technology (p. 281). On the other hand, abiding by interpretive flexibility and a constructivist perspective allows for not only the kind of analysis that Bijker promotes, but also, it affords thinkers a kind of intellectual space conducive to critiquing technological determinism in feminist terms. This more than implies the idea that technology is “a neutral force determining the nature of society ... robbing us of any power to affect its direction.” Not only for feminism but for other science and technology scholars also, analyzing technology with an eye to what Wajcman calls the “social shaping approach” creates space for engaging with two components of the feminist critique: “human agency” and “political intervention” (Wajcman, 1991, p.163).

These are critical for dispensing with determinism, which poses an intellectual threat insofar as it “inhibits the development of democratic controls on technology because

it suggests that all interventions are futile” (Bijker, 1995, p.281).

On the topic of technology, the intellectual cooperation between Wajcman and Bijker is innocuous, and even agreeable. In fact, both offer reason to investigate the often invisible dimensions that contribute to the ways in which societies function. This includes researching the contribution of technology and sociotechnical systems, which may seem highly menacing to those who stand to benefit most from the undemocratic and hegemonic systems built into society and reinforced by sociotechnical systems. For this privileged group in particular, the threat that emerges from the kinds of analyses that Wajcman and Bijker encourage hinges on the fact that “[t]he technical is socially constructed, and the social is technically constructed,” and that “classes, occupational groups, firms, professions, machines - all are held in place by intimate social and technical links” (p.273). Wajcman notes that it became more and more apparent in the mid-20th century that no longer could the distinction “between science and ideology” be upheld as “the dominant social relations of society...” Instead, these became increasingly understood as constitutive factors of science itself (p.4). Subsequently, many of the dimensions of a technology-dependent society that commonly reinforce social narratives of domination and subordination, which tend to operate along gendered or racial lines, have been called into question.

Furthermore, Pinch and Bijker (1987) argue that “both science and technology are socially constructed cultures and bring to bear whatever cultural resources are appropriate for the purposes at hand,” and this entails that “the boundary between science and technology is ... a matter for social negotiation...” (p.21). One need only look to segregation, which Wendy Hui Kyong Chun (2012) identifies as “an important U.S. racial technology,” to understand how the foregoing science/technology boundary

and social negotiation contribute to the technological shaping of the society, as well as the social shaping of technology. Those who stand to gain from segregation, for example, rely on that technology's ability to designate a clear "spatial mapping that creates stark racial differences where none necessarily exist" (p.46). Segregation, moreover, is a socially shaped instrumentation whose analysis as such may threaten the dominance of the group it privileges (Klein & Kleinman, 2002).

This kind of racism, which Foucault (2003) calls "modern racism," is a racism which states depend on to, supposedly, enhance "the social welfare of their populations, to exercise sovereign power ... (and) to punish and destroy" (p.258). Still, one might ask what roll experts play in contributing to socially shaped technologies the dominant social relations in a society like that of segregation-era United States. Perhaps it is wise to acknowledge, as Pinch and Bijker (1987) do, that "technology, as well as science, can be understood as a social construct," and that "everything is negotiable: what is certain and what is not; who is a scientist and who is a technologist; what is technological and what is social; and who can participate in the controversy" (p.25-26). From this vantage point, at least, it looks as though all of society truly is free to participate in segregation, just as it is free to participate in perpetuating what Wajcman calls "the built environment," or the technological arrangement that "reflects and reinforces a domestic ideal which emphasizes the importance of the home as a woman's place and man's haven" (p.110). Hence, technology itself is never entirely to blame, and this is in keeping with an analytical approach that does not ultimately revert to deterministic thinking.

Given the social contribution to constructing such technologies and environments, further analysis seems necessary in order to sufficiently determine the role that scientists and technologists play, the social group who "can

be regarded as constructing their respective bodies of knowledge and techniques with each drawing on the resources of the other when and where such resources can be profitably exploited” (Pinch & Bijker, 1987, p.21). At the same time, if one is going to research the impacts of publics and experts on highly sociotechnical worlds, one might also entertain what Bruno Latour (2012) describes as “[t]he bizarre idea that society might be made up of human relations ... a mirror image of the other no less bizarre idea that techniques might be made up of nonhuman relations.” Indeed, simply to “cut through this rich diversity of delegates and artificially create two heaps of refuse, ‘society’ on one side and ‘technology’ on the other” seems oddly insufficient (p.239-40).

Perhaps not unlike segregation and the built environment discriminate against their intended targets, simple mundane artifacts also regularly discriminate “against very little and very old persons.” Hence, one might successfully argue that to call for an analysis of segregation and the built environment along feminist terms, is somewhat lacking if it does not likewise encompass an impetus for analyzing “the missing masses,” or the world of artifacts that shape so much of human life. This includes, as Latour indicates, objects as ordinary as the door, which, if propping them open indefinitely is not an option, “...discriminate against furniture removers and in general everyone with packages, which usually means, in our late capitalist society, working- or lower-middle-class employees” (p.234).

SOCIETY AND TECHNOLOGY¹

Speaking to the farming machine that rendered obsolete thousands of farming and agriculture jobs some decades ago, Winner observes that “the harvester is not merely the symbol of a social order that regards some while punishing others; it is in a true sense an embodiment of that order” (p.27). Certainly, Winner’s observation is reminiscent of the iconic “Where Are the Missing Masses?” essay, in which Latour acknowledges and evidences several ways in which “the built environment” regularly discriminates against the already socially marginalized (p.234). Again, to call for an analysis of the built environment along more radical terms, however, is somewhat lacking if it does not likewise encompass an impetus for analyzing “the missing masses,” or the world of artifacts that shape so much of human life.

Today, social technologies are so important in the lives of millions, much as other technologies have been, that it would be wise to pay increasingly critical attention to the ways in which people willingly excuse the political incursions that such technologies welcome into their lives (if not, into the lives of others). But first, it is likely necessary to acknowledge that millions of people who, perhaps, could not fathom life without specific technologies might, likely, be the very demographic that is most willing to excuse the political transgressions that such technologies invite, especially if the negatives harm stakeholders other than themselves. For example, profiling and surveillance may be illegal to differing extents, though it happens regularly across a spectrum of devices and other digital platforms; and it may be unconstitutional for the state to invade citizens’ personal lives in myriad circumstances,

¹ See Pimentel, M. S. (2017, Summer). Social Technologies & Politics. *Fifth Estate*, 30.

which doubtless involve these technologies (with due consideration for Section 215 of the Patriot Act, of course). Nevertheless, the once fervent public outcry for, say, body cameras on police officers now allows the state to monitor – with unprecedented closeness – the actions of all individuals in the public sphere, especially those whom it has systematically targeted prior to the advent of the “body cam.”

Moreover, this is precisely in line what Winner means when he observes that artifacts have politics: there is a political dimension to our technologies. By allowing body cameras on thousands of police officers nationwide, the public might hope, and even believe, that there will occur a drastic drop in the number of Black lives that perish either in police custody, or during interactions with the police. Yet, this line of thinking tends to “eclipse other sorts of moral and political reasoning,” as Winner says (p.36). That is, in lieu of addressing the fact that police already wield lethal weapons in often illegal, and even extralegal manners, or rather than address that specific laws have disproportionately affected certain ethnic communities for decades (which has facilitated so much strife between communities and the state), some are now willing, and rather uncritically, to give the State a front row seat at virtually every traffic stop, and more, all because it is easier to delegate a misplaced sense of civic duty to a watchful technology than it is to participate in the restoration of justice to its rightful social and political throne. This collective and active inactivity, however paradoxical it may seem at first blush, consequently empowers the state to determine the legal scope of the instance in which it surveys its interaction with, or harassment and murders of, civilians. One question is thus whether rights or civil liberties can ever be neutrally preserved after the fact, never mind questions of whether

the civil liberties of entire, commonly repressed communities have ever truly existed in the first place!

In another example, there is the issue of reviving the coal industry and fracking in the United States, especially thanks to the political capacity of the nation's newest president, Donald Trump. Specifically, it calls to mind a parcel of wisdom from the French anarchist thinker Jacques Ellul's (1964) treatise on the totalizing power of technique: it is productive power that dominates, not ideas and theory. Hailed by dozens of public intellectuals and a growing number of journalists as an imminent threat to modest efforts on climate change, the very demographic of the American public that purposely contributed to the election of Trump – whether by voting for him directly or by the less viable, undemocratically installed candidate of the opposing political party – remains willing, and even happy, to suspend the need to legislate a sustainable future, all in the name of supplementing the fossil fuel industry—a choice that may cost them dearly in negative externalities. This, then, also coincides with what Winner means by artifacts having politics. “Whatever claims one may wish to make on behalf of liberty, justice, or equality,” he writes, “can be immediately neutralized when confronted with arguments to the effect, ‘Fine, but that’s no way to run a railroad’ (or steel mill, or airline, or communication system, and so on)” (p.36). Can we not imagine a sadly similar argument? We can; in fact, it goes like this: “We might have politicians and experts working towards effective climate change policy, but that is no way to run an economy predicated on fossil fuels.” It is plain to see that a dangerous degree of the logic of capitalism has gotten embedded in fracking equipment as much as the Twitter platform that amplifies Trump's rather predictable demagoguery of late. Yet, just how willing are we to acknowledge as much?

Winner writes, “In our times people are often willing to make drastic changes in the way they live to accommodate technological innovation while at the same time resisting similar kinds of changes justified on political grounds.” And thus, we actively contribute to the new and emerging systems of control, which Deleuze (1995) philosophizes as ubiquitous and omnipresent—such as Police surveillance, or even David Graeber’s well-known qualm with debt, which Appel (2014) memorialized in the *Radical History Review*: “Finance is a word for ‘other people’s debts’. What it really means is, you bribe politicians, you set up legislation that will guarantee that people are in debt, and then you use government to regulate and manage that debt” (p.159-73). Indeed, in Deleuze’s “control society,” people are free to borrow money, say, and to pursue their interests with it. Ultimately, however, the subtlety of an ever-present threat of force, which vows to coerce the repayment of the debt, goes about enslaving so many. Hence the need to recognize the influence that systems of control, such as finance, and their technological dimensions have on global human life. Only then, as the socialist-feminist Haraway (2006) suggests, might “the construction of the consciousness, the imaginative apprehension, of oppression, and so of possibility” truly be possible (p.117-58).

Along the way we must acknowledge that, whereas we should all enjoy the right not to die in police custody under any circumstance (a right that is especially relevant for those who statistically perish most often), and whereas we should all be unquestioningly entitled to what is just relative to clean air and water, our social technologies – our artifacts, both social and mechanical – nonetheless remain capable of wreaking havoc on these “moral and political” rights, or liberties. So long as we remain willing to make excuses and allow for artifacts to transgress and facilitate otherwise contemptible political actions, we ought to pay

even closer attention to what kind of political purchase they have in our lives, and regardless of whether we feel we have the privilege to ignore this mainstay of our material existence or not.

A TECHNO-SCIENTIFIC REPUBLIC

In many ways, the framers of the US Constitution endeavored to make their work a reflection of Enlightenment thinking (Longley, 2002). Yet, there existed misgivings at the time of the document's elaboration; the practical application of political principles to the design of the fledgling nation's public institutions gave some, like Thomas Jefferson, a good deal of pause. In addition to Jefferson, thinkers like Madison, Hamilton and Adams were reasonably occupied with a "science of politics" during the drafting of America's Constitution. They hoped, or believed, that a science of politics would facilitate useful knowledge as America transitioned from abstract notions of "power, liberty, and public good" to much more concrete, tacit expressions of the same. This hope extended specifically to the real-life "divisions, functions, powers, relationships, and limits of the Constitution." Notions of rational control abounded, as did a desire to find the sweet spot between potentially rival social powers of an already economically divided nation (Winner, 1986). This manifested itself in different institutions. Take, for example, what today's science and technology community considers the nation's "knowledge systems." These systems include presidential elections, or any institutions that produce scientific facts, such as 'who wins' and 'who loses' elections. The constitutional process is very important to this history of civic epistemologies (Miller, 2015). The scientific and technological preoccupations of its framers would contribute to the global impact the US

Constitution was a radically scientific work that would have a global impact; it influenced Latin American republics within the same hemisphere, influencing even the philosophies on rights and the human person that Latin American republics debated during their respective constitutional processes (Longley, 2002, p.1-55; Winner, 1986, p.40-58).

Perhaps the foregoing argument proves seminal to the beginnings of US-Latin American relations, especially if it reveals something about how political philosophies began to mix and interact with one another at the time. The admixture of American political philosophies is perhaps doubly important to consider during the spread of rebellion and inter-American political interaction, which imbued the region's international affairs with new dimensions of political thinking and republicanism. Lester Langley notes how the US Constitution, "though characterized by a disorderliness that often disgusted European visitors, was for a generation of Latin American intellectuals a model to be emulated." Langley goes on to observe that "Latin Americans may have expressed admiration for the model republic and its Constitution, but their governance they chose to preserve social order rather than fashion citizen republics" (cited in Longley, 2002, p.53). This is not to say, however, that the US and Latin American republics did not, after 1825, face their fair share challenge, crisis, and disorderliness, which continued to change their relations (Longley, 2002, p.42).

The "citizen republic" element is historically alluring; many Americans abetted revolutionary activities in Latin America, and these were the selfsame Americans over whom the framers of the US Constitution so keenly fretted while drafting their scientific work. These were precisely the Americans whom the framers wanted to, in a real sense, convince to pursue their own interests in rational ways (Winner, 1986, p.40-58). It was furthermore this

group of Americans that engendered a telling kind of self-enlightened, or rational, activism (e.g., the smugglers who equipped Haitian rebels the early 1800s). In fact less than two decades into the same century American groups freely aided rebellions as revolution rolled across Latin America. The makeup of this group of pro-revolution Americans consisted of merchants and businessmen. Yet, even President James Madison originally espoused an attitude of “good will” toward Latin Americans, encouraging “friendly relations” and “the most liberal intercourse” between the US and her hemispheric neighbors—seemingly in echo of public sentiments at the time. And Madison’s message resonated with Latin Americans who eagerly anticipated such sentiments from Washington. In 1815 the *Baltimore Register* averred: “The freedom of Mexico alone, is indeed, fifty times more important to the United States than the rescue of Spain from the hands of Napoleon was” (Longley, 2002, p.1-55).

If the framers of the US indeed believed that Americans would ultimately act as self-interested political agents, “employing whatever instruments they needed to generate wealth,” then it is not unreasonable to parse the relationship between the US and Latin America through the lens of, if not the most telling, one of the most interesting dynamics at work between the two groups during the early-to-mid 19th century: their socio-technological interactions. However complex one fascinating example happens to be the post-War of 1812 docking of revolutionary ships in US ports. America’s 1815 Treasury Department did not bar Latin American revolutionary ships from entering US ports, but more interesting, perhaps, is how the American public reacted to external threats. When prominent European forces (e.g., the British navy) tried to disrupt US-Latin American commerce American veterans reacted, volunteering themselves to service in Latin America. Philadelphian and Bostonian merchants procured tens of

thousands of arms and sold them to Latin American rebels. Even ship owners in American ports sold their privateers to these Latin American forces. All the while US officials did little to bring such private activities to a halt (Longley, 2002, p.1-55). What history makes visible at this point in US-Latin American relations "...is an ongoing social process in which scientific knowledge, technological invention, and corporate profit reinforce each other in deeply entrenched patterns, patterns that bear the unmistakable stamp of political and economic power" (Winner, 1986, p.27).

DISCUSSION

What seems to emerge from this discussion is that technology is firmly controlled by elites within a hierarchical society. The masses, while possessing some personal computer technology, in no way have real or substantive control of local or global technology. What anarchism really offers as an alternative philosophical tradition, albeit a variegated ideology is opposition to hierarchy and elite control of technology and other forms of scientific and technological advancements that are dominated by global elites. The primacy of the individual cannot be overstated, as the individual has inherent moral value, and the individual serves as the fundamental building block for anarchism and the teleological hunt for individual freedom that it propounds - a thing which Mikhail Bakunin ([1871] 2008) so clearly expresses as a prominent Russian anarchist and self-described "fanatical lover of liberty" who claimed anarchism to be the "unique condition under which intelligence, dignity and human happiness can develop and grow."

Anarchism thus ideologically differs from the central bourgeois conception of liberty, which is liberal in nature: "...formal liberty which is dispensed, measured out

and regulated by the State ... a perennial lie that represents nothing, but the privilege of the few, based upon the servitude of the remainder” (p.76). Anarchism takes issue with this “unrestrained” notion of liberty, which coincides with liberal capitalism, because Anarchism decries all incarnations of coercion that imperil individual liberty. Chomsky (1970) has underscored the key concepts of anarchism to have grown out of the Enlightenment era, and that they share in Rousseau’s ([1755] 1984) *Discourse on Inequality*, von Humboldt’s ([1854] 1969) *The Limits of State Action*, and Kant’s “categorical imperative,” which states that people ought to act in such a way that human beings are never treated as means but as ends (see Hutchings, 1996). Anarchism shares in the same insistence that these articles purport, that is, any arbitrary authority found withholding freedom under the guise of legitimacy should be disassembled if lacking some rational justification.

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Acronyms

LGBTQ	Lesbian Gay
Bisexual Transgender Queer	
NSM	New Social
Movements	
US	United States

Author's Biography

Mateo S. Pimentel holds an M.S. in Global Technology and Development. He currently studies in the Ph.D. program for the Human and Social Dimensions of Science and Technology in the School for the Future of Innovation in Society at Arizona State University.

Edward J. Martin, Ph.D. is Professor of Public Policy and Administration, at the Graduate Center for Public Policy and Administration, California State University, Long Beach. His areas of research are in political economy, sustainable development, welfare policy, and inequality. He is Editor-in-Chief for the *International Journal of Economic Development*. His publications have appeared in *Public Administration & Management*, *Public Administration Quarterly*, *New Political Science*, *Contemporary Justice Review*, *International Journal of Public Administration*, and *Social Policy*. He is co-author of *Savage State: Welfare Capitalism and Inequality*. Professor Martin received his Ph.D. in public administration and policy at Arizona State University in 2000. He has been teaching in the Master of Public Administration program, Graduate Center for Public Policy and Administration, California State University since 2000.