Anarchist Economics FAQ

Whose Economy? Our Economy.

This text contains frequently asked questions (FAQ) about anarchist economics and their answers. It focuses on the anarcho-communist flavor of anarchism. The answers are the author's opinion and don't represent the ideas of any organization. The goal is not to define "the right" school of economics but to inspire discussion. The answers are intentionally kept short and concise.

Katja Einsfeld, Berlin, 26.01.2025

Update 2026: From today's point of view, this text is too centered on human needs. The needs of non-human animals or ecosystems are addressed only in passing. I intend to focus on this in a new text in 2026.

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Of course, other anarchists disagree on this. And that's okay. Multiple methods of transformation can co-exist as long as they don't interfere with each other.

Will the transformation into anarchist economies ever be finished?

No, anarchist societies always need to adapt to changing environments and futures.

11. Praxis

What would a day in an anarchist economy look like?

You might eat your breakfast at a communal center (without paying) or enjoy food at home that you got from the distribution center the day before (without paying). Afterward, you might work for four hours in a hospital. For lunch, you might get something from a sandwich bar in the city center (without paying) and later join some friends for sports and go out for some food and drinks (without paying). Before going to bed, you might log in to the communication system to check for news and upcoming decisions you might want to get involved in.

Do you really think anarchist economies work?

There are historical examples of large-scale anarchist economics like the Makhnovshchina 1917-1922 (market socialism) and the Spanish revolution 1936-1939 (various versions of anarchist economies, some without money). Both were forcefully ended by fascist and communist military. Also, the movement of the Zapatistas and the one in Rojava have features of anarchist economies. Versions of anarchist economies work in smaller communities today, in house projects, work collectives, and also in your friend group (you are not expecting something in return when you help a friend).

Also, research and simulations show that the concepts of cooperation and anarchist economies are sound and viable (Cybernetics and the Viable System Model (VSM)). All of this is not proof that anarchist economics work, but supporting evidence.

I can't imagine how anarchist economies would work. What can I do?

You can read some short stories or novels about future societies with anarchist economies like this one on transform-social, Ursula le Guin's The Dispossessed, James P. Hogan's "A Voyage from Yesteryear", and many others. You can discuss the ideas with your friends, and maybe even try the ideas in some roleplay scenarios.

While spreading the information and building anarchist infrastructure, social security systems like an UBI are helpful, as they allow for some freedom. However, anarchists usually won't spend a lot of time begging the state for help. In the end, the state probably won't help us to get rid of itself.

How do we overthrow the government?

I don't think a sudden overthrow of the government would work. There is way more surveillance, media, and military technology protecting the state compared to the times of the Paris Commune. That's why we need a very broad consensus on the ideas of a post-capitalist and post-statist society. With a peaceful mass movement, a government can be forced to surrender.

That's also why I prefer the term transformation over that of revolution. Many anarchists agree that the methods used to get closer to anarchist societies should be compatible with anarchist ideas. A military overthrow of a state led by a small group often creates a new elitist, maybe even authoritarian state. We need to remember that the idea is to get rid of the state. Ideas of transitional phases with a state (as suggested by some communists or marxists) should also be treated with skepticism. Many anarchists were killed by the "transitional state" of the Soviet Union.

How can expropriation happen?

Once there is mass movement for societies based and freedom and solidarity and once the government and the law enforcement have decided to join the winning movement, the remaining doubters who still claim a right to property might give in as well. However, if they don't claim any scarce resources it might be possible to let them coexist. Otherwise, group pressure and scandalization can be used to hand over their property as a common good for all to use and share.

Is it naive to plan for a non-violent transformation?

I don't think so. There are some examples of non-violent transformations in history. A mass movement for a transformation in free and solidary societies is a good basis for a non-violent change. Also, with today's international communication networks, any violent attack on the movement could be communicated and scandalized in real-time. Governments attacking a non-violent movement don't look good internationally. States use various forms of violence against us. Preferring non-violent means of opposing violence and wanting to avoid military aggressions because wars are horrible is not the same as passive or naive submission.

0. The Scope of Economics

What is the definition of economics?

Economics is about the production and distribution of resources, goods, and services. It deals with what we take from nature, what we create, and who gets what. As these topics are central to our existence, making decisions about economics should be part of our daily life.

What is an economy?

An economy is one way to implement economics, one set of ideas and practices according to which production and distribution are organized.

Isn't economics boring?

As a kid, I hated economics because I thought it was only about becoming rich while ignoring injustices. That's not true. Economics is actually exciting. It's about deciding how production and distribution can be organized in ecological, free, and solidary ways.

Isn't economics the same as capitalism?

Capitalism is just one way of organizing an economy. There are better ones.

Is economics complicated?

The capitalist version of an economy is quite unpredictable, fragile, and very complex. Many small things could lead to a huge crisis and politicians thus fear making major changes. Fragile and crashing economies are prone to cause famines and even deaths. Yes, modern production and distribution have quite some complexity due to dependencies. However, the complexity and fragility can be reduced by methods of decentralization and encapsulation, allowing everyone to understand the relevant parts of economics. This will be further explained below.

Is economics only for experts?

We are all experts for that part of the economy that affects us: We know best what we need. And, at our workplace, we know best how to further improve the working conditions and the processes related to production or providing a service. We know these things better than e.g. bosses who don't participate in the production. Economies also require people who keep an overview over e.g. global usage of scarce goods, environmental issues, dependencies between industries, supply chains, and so on. However, having an overview

responsibility does not imply having the right to decide over others. Overview responsibilities should rotate.

Are there really other options besides capitalism?

Yes. Economics existed before capitalism and there will be post-capitalist economies. We are led to believe that there is no alternative to capitalism but there is actually a multitude of options of how to organize economies.

Why do we need to think about economics now?

The capitalist way of doing economics has led to a severe climate crisis and huge social injustices. This damage needs to be stopped. Also, thinking about and discussing post-capitalist economies, is a way to convince others of their feasibility.

Why do we need an economy?

If you don't want to live in a self-sufficient commune that produces everything they need themselves, i. e. if you want things like the internet, chocolate, or hospitals, then there is a need to coordinate with others about how to share the responsibilities and the access to the goods and services. If you do want to live in a self-sufficient commune, that's fine too, just don't force it on everyone.

1. Characteristics of Anarchist Economics

How can an economy be anarchist?

Anarchism is about removing or at least minimizing all forms of dominance. Also, anarchist societies have to be based on the values of freedom and solidarity. An anarchist economy should provide to everyone according to need, i.e. no matter if or how someone works, their needs should be met. Anarchism is also about diversity, about acknowledging that there is not one solution that fits everyone. Anarchist economics should thus account for the respectful coexistence of multiple economic systems. Any structures related to the economy should be as decentral, transparent, and dynamic as possible so that they don't mutate into static power structures.

Do you really think an anarchist economy is possible?

Yes. The questions and answers below will further explain how.

Why is this FAQ written from an anarcho-communist viewpoint?

Anarcho-communism is the flavor of anarchist economics that I like best because it maximizes both freedom and solidarity. It uses no market and no

Some socialists and some climate activists claim that the immediate danger of the climate crisis requires a timely system change or revolution with a strong leader. Why do anarchists disagree?

Climate change is real and to prevent the worst, urgent action is required. On the other hand, the pressure to act quickly can be used by authoritarians as a justification to install a strong state. Either to enforce climate change countermeasures with authoritarian or even military means or to fight those who want to do that. Either way, authoritarian states were never a good idea: Many people have been killed and tortured by both communist- and national-socialist authoritarian states in the past. I'd rather have a slower transformation while handling the environmental damage in solidarity, than an authoritarian dictatorship.

What is class and is it important?

Let's not fight over how to define class and its importance. Let's unite everyone willing to stand behind the ideas of freedom and solidarity to abolish capitalism and end all other forms of oppression.

What are anarchist approaches to labor struggle?

Building unions is one form of anarchist self-organization and mutual aid. As capitalism is based on the exploitation of workers, this is a good starting point for a conversation about alternatives to capitalism.

How can we transform into anarchist economies?

We can share information about the feasibility of anarchist economies and thus change the narrative of there being only one economic possibility. We can start building organizations and structures of anarchist economies within the old system (as good as possible without getting frustrated). This is called prefigurative politics. It allows us to experiment with and practice anarchist capabilities while building infrastructure useful for the present and the anarchist future. We can also start making more plans for future anarchist economies, either as role play or more seriously: Which production facilities could be reused, and which are useless? What are the most important elements of the infrastructure to fulfill the needs? What would you work on during and after the transformation? All these diverse approaches need to grow into a broad movement of many, many people sharing a broad consensus on what they fight for. Let's build many anarchist economics oases, bridges, and networks within the capitalist desert until the wildflowers start growing all over.

Could a needs-based economy exist next to a capitalist economy?

As capitalism is inherently expansive, wanting to grow all the time, there is a danger that neighboring capitalist areas could try to exploit, bring important resources forcefully under their control, or even overthrow anarchist economies. (See above about how to avoid military aggressions.) Peaceful coexistence with capitalism could be possible if everyone would respect the agreements and conditions for the coexistence, which is unlikely for capitalism (see below).

Under which conditions could diverse forms of economies coexist?

1. The ecosystem of the planet should be maintained for future generations.
2. Every human should have the choice to live in the economic and political system they prefer (this is also called panarchy).
3. The basic needs of every human should be met. Economic systems that fail to feed their humans should be scandalized.
4. For important but scarce resources (no matter in which area they are located), every economic system should get access to them and their share of them should depend on the number of humans within them.
5. There should be transparency, free exchange of information, no weapons, and no warlike activities.

Capitalism can't coexist under these conditions. It needs e.g. cheap labor and exploited workers would probably rather switch to another economic system. Capitalism would thus either break these agreements or collapse. The coexistence of anarcho-communist economies with non-exploitive market economies like market socialism or collective anarchism could be possible.

Competition between the co-existing economies should be limited. This could e.g. be done by evaluating happiness and injustices every 10-20 years, and maybe resetting, redistributing, and recalibrating the agreements between the economies if needed as part of a trans-economical post-capitalist festivity.

Would the economy crash if we tried anarchist economics?

An economic crash or collapse is defined by high bankruptcy- and unemployment rates and high inflation. None of this can exist in a needs-based economy without money. What could happen are shortages of necessary goods. This could be prevented by

1. planning the transformation (see below)
2. focusing on the most essential goods in times of crisis, and
3. good information systems and transparency for sharing what is available in solidarity.

wage labor (see below for issues with market and wage labor) and distributes based on need. If you prefer other types of economics, that's fine, you can write another FAQ. Under certain conditions, there is a good chance that diverse forms of economics can coexist. While I focus on anarcho-communism as my favorite flavor of anarchist theory and praxis, I support the diversity of anarchist currents as an important characteristic of anarchism and organize in a synthesist anarchist federation.

What are the characteristics of anarchist economies?

To get more concrete, economies based on freedom and solidarity should have the following characteristics:

- solidarity with future generations should be considered, while not using this argument to dominate the currently living life forms
- freedom also means having the security that our needs will be fulfilled tomorrow and in the future
- reduction/removal of social injustices
- inclusion of all humans, by removing states and borders
- organizational structures should be as decentral as possible, dynamic and transparent, and not an end in itself
- awareness of structures of dominance and their removal

Who should make decisions about the economy?

Those affected by the decisions should be able to be part of the decisions. They don't have to decide everything as they could also trust others to make the right decisions but they could if they wanted. To make this possible, upcoming decisions and the related background information should be transparently accessible to everyone who is affected.

What is an anarchist criticism of the current economy?

Anarchists criticize capitalism for multiple reasons:

1. Capitalism is exploiting the workers and the environment, thus causing the climate crisis.
2. Capitalism cultivates structures of dominance - not only between workers and bosses - it also reinforces patriarchy, racism, antisemitism, and ableism.
3. Production under capitalism focuses on profit, not on the needs of the people. Capitalism is causing huge social injustices and wars. This and the structures of dominance have a huge negative impact on both the physical and psychological health of many humans.

How is the anarchist criticism of capitalism different from the marxist criticism?

Marxism mostly focuses on the exploitation of workers. Not all marxists are critical of power exercised by an elite or a state. Anarchists identify all forms of dominance and want to abolish them all.

What is the difference between an anarcho-communist economy to a libertarian socialist one?

The economic concepts of anarcho-communism, libertarian socialism, or free access socialism are mostly the same. Also gift economy or library economy are sometimes used as terms for similar economic concepts. In doubt, it's best to ask what is meant. The important questions to ask are "who owns the means of production", "who decides what to produce and how to distribute", and "what about care work"?

Will there be only one type of anarchist economy? Is there a blueprint?

No, there can only be many types of anarchist economies and many blueprints. Anarchism is about diversity, about adapting to the needs of the people and people have diverse preferences. Also, experiencing and experimenting are important in order to adapt to changing environments and futures. Of course, these experiments should not endanger the well-being of humans and other animals, they need to stay within the limits of freedom and solidarity. There might even be additional agreements to which all versions of economies should adhere. The possible ways of interaction between diverse economies are discussed further below.

2. Needs-Based Economics

What are needs?

Needs are what you require for a good life. They are more urgent than desires or wishes. However, there is no fixed distinction between need and desire. Also, what a need is is different for each person and can also vary from region to region.

What is a needs-based economy?

The goal of a needs-based economy is to fulfill the needs of the people. The economy has to function in a way that this goal does not have to be put behind allegedly stringent necessities of abstract things like "the market" or dominating institutions. The people themselves define what their needs are and that can be good to have an overview of possible usages of the resource, to have a fixed budget of the resource for investments, and then decide among various investment proposals. This can happen both locally and in federated regional councils.

10. Transformation

Can an anarchist economy only exist if the whole planet switches to it?

It would be great and easier if the whole planet would switch to anarchist economies because resources could be freely moved between all regions. However, this does not have to be the case. While larger areas are better to create resilient economies, also small regions can create self-sufficient economies.

How could the transfer of goods or resources happen with not-yet-anarchist economies/areas?

As anarchist economies don't use money, they can't buy or sell goods from not-yet anarchist areas. If the other areas are hostile towards the anarchist economy, they might not want to interact with it at all or try to coerce the anarchist area into an unfair exchange of goods. Ideally, anarchist economies would not depend on that. A fair exchange might be a long-term contract defining exactly which quantities of which goods in which intervals are transferred so that this agreement can enable some planning and security of supply.

What to do in case of military aggressions against anarchist economies?

Capitalist states might feel threatened by anarchist economies and plan military attacks. They might also try to find conservative people within the anarchist area to support them. Like Chile was overthrown on 9/11/1973. The best thing is probably to be aware of this danger from the beginning and to protect against it. Not with means of weapons but with means of information. Watching out for people conspiring against the anarchist organizations, confronting them via means of conflict resolution, scandalizing every effort to sabotage the anarchist economies, and making the information public, across the whole planet. Those who are not happy with anarchist economies should be given the possibility to peacefully coexist in the same area, using their own economic system (see below).

Does a needs-based economy require huge warehouses to fulfill all needs?

You might think that a needs-based economy either only produces once a need is voiced or requires huge warehouses to fulfill all needs. But that's not the case. First, needs are not wishes. Not every wish has to be fulfilled immediately by the economy. Second, depending on the type of product or service future needs can be estimated in advance by evaluating past usage and production can thus be planned. For other types of products or services production on demand is best to fulfill very individual needs. As supply chains no longer need to be optimized for profit, they can be optimized for both efficiency and sustainability balanced by the urgency of the need. Depending on this optimization, warehouses might even become smaller and more decentralized.

Will barter and trade always exist?

Anarchist economics will not prohibit bartering or trading as there is no central authority to enforce rules. However, the goal of needs-based economies should be to make bartering and trading unnecessary and thus irrelevant: everyone should be able to get what they need without having to engage in barter or trade.

9. Innovation

How is innovation possible in anarchist economies?

Because people will do less hours of monotonous and alienated work per day, there will be more leisure time for inspiration. Also, information about innovative ideas could be freely shared in the information system, as they can't be used for profit any more, sparking new ideas and cooperation.

Will researchers get resources for their work?

Innovative ideas might need many resources and time to develop and there is always a risk that they won't be useful in the end. If local communities are not able or willing to agree to extensive resource usage or are not convinced of the benefits, it's still possible to find like-minded people in other regions via the information system and get a consensus on the usage of some resources.

How will investments in anarchist economics be possible?

As there is no money in anarchist economies, this is only about the investment of time and other resources in a project, which might not have a predictable outcome. If the required resources are not scarce, and no one is affected, it does not even have to be discussed. In case of scarce resources, it might be different depending on the region and its environment and different depending on the individual. This includes people in all regions of the earth. This also includes thinking about the needs of future generations. And it includes thinking about the needs of non-human animals. If the fulfillment of one need conflicts with the fulfillment of another need, all affected people will find a solution to maximize the fulfillment of needs as best as possible. While every human can voice their needs, being able or willing to voice their needs should not be a requirement for their fulfillment.

Does "according to need" mean that everyone will get whatever they wish for?

As anarchist economies are not only about freedom but also about solidarity, one person can get what they wish for as long as it does not negatively affect others. And even in that case, they might still be able to get what they wish for, if the affected people talk about the (resource-) conflict and find a solution that is acceptable to all of them. If there is enough of one good or resource, everyone can just take as they need. Only for scarce goods, the affected community will have to find a mode of distribution that best meets all needs. Also, hoarding won't be a problem anymore.

Would people start hoarding in anarchist economies?

When you can get what you need and you can trust your community to also provide for your needs in the future, there is no benefit of keeping huge quantities of things at your home. Neighbors might look at you funny if you still do that. Additionally, once getting things is decoupled both from family heritage and labor accomplishments, owning something is nothing to be proud of and does not serve as a status symbol. Thus, most people will stop hoarding.

3. Local Level

How could anarchist economies work on the local level?

(Here, a local level is thought of as a structure of up to around 150 people (Dunbar's number), so that it's still possible to know most of the people by sight, but this is just an illustrative number). One possible organization model for the local organization of production and distribution is the creation of three types of structures: Consumer councils, production collectives, and coordination committees.

1. Consumer councils organize around local neighborhoods or chosen families. They collect information on what is needed.

2. Production collectives are organized around various production processes and services. They provide information on what could be produced or which services provided.
3. Coordination committees consist of a few rotating delegates who facilitate and mediate between needs and production capabilities, coming up with multiple variations of possible plans.

The whole community then decides on a plan.

4. Planning

Is an anarchist economy a planned economy?

Yes, but not in the sense of a centrally planned economy as in the Soviet Union, but rather in a decentralized way, decided on by the people affected by the decision. An anarchist economy as envisioned in this FAQ would consist of many, many distributed plans, partly overlapping and coordinated as needed.

What are the advantages of economic plans?

Having some sort of plan allows for the freedom to know that our needs will also be provided for tomorrow and in the future. It also allows making longer-term plans for the regeneration of ecological systems or the development of infrastructure.

Does everything have to be planned in detail?

No. For most things, future consumption can be estimated based on last year's consumption in combination with changed conditions (e.g. new agreements on the limited usage of scarce resources). Rough estimates are good enough.

For how many years do we have to plan?

That depends on the purpose of the plan and can vary. E.g. bakeries might want to plan both their need for resources for the next year as well as the required products for the next week. The improvement of railroad infrastructure should instead be planned multiple years ahead and involve more people than those of a local community. Also, it's ok to adapt plans to changing environments.

5. Supralocal Level

What are supralocal structures?

Supralocal structures are forms of organizing that bring together people other than those living in a local community.

relevant key figures are useful (e.g. the usage of scarce resources). However, the type of key figures needed depends on the context. Key figures are more useful and informative than a universal unit of account. This is sometimes called calculation in kind.

Why is money (or tokens, or any universal unit of account) problematic?

Universal units of account reduce the information of a product or service to one number. They also suggest the idea of having to exchange one thing with another with the same number, the quid-pro-quo-logic, and the idea of wanting to increase the collection of amounts of the universal unit of account. This distracts from the main purpose of an economy: the fulfillment of needs.

Should anarchist economics account for the needs of future generations?

Yes. We should extend our solidarity also to future generations when deciding about which resources to use and how to handle the environment. On the other hand, this argument should not turn into longtermism, putting the needs of future generations over those living today (see e.g. Timnit Gebru's work on TESCREAL).

On what kind of data are decisions based?

While transparency is important, the collection of data should not be usable as a tool of surveillance and control. Thus, the collection of data should be as decentralized as possible, with only aggregated information being passed to supralocal structures if needed. Not every good, every resource, or every hour of work has to be tracked as data. Every community can decide how much they want to track. A general rule of thumb might be that as soon as some kind of distribution feels unjust, it might be good to collect some data to get transparency and improve the just distribution.

With the data collection requirements, is there a danger of a surveillance state?

The tools to collect the data should be decentralized and federated so that it is not possible for a central authority to gain control of them (e.g. similar to the fediverse). So even if there is currently no authoritarian entity interested in gaining control over the data, it should also not be possible to do so in the future.

1. It's good to create transparency about the scarcity. This might motivate some people and communities to use less or find replacements.
2. If a scarce good is needed for the production of various other goods, these goods should be marked as scarce as well.
3. Importance rankings can help to decide between multiple possibilities.
4. Optimization algorithms can suggest the best usage of a scarce good under some given conditions.
5. For scarce consumer goods, individuals and communities with a higher need (e.g. medical conditions, regions which suffered more under capitalism) should be preferred in the distribution. If there are no huge differences in need, waiting lists or distribution to winners of games, could be an option.

Aren't there too many decisions in anarchist economies? Would we have to spend most of the time in meetings?

No. Many things stay roughly the same or change slowly (like the average need for houses or food) and don't need new decisions all the time. Other things with a low impact or within a previously decided scope can just be done without a formal decision and only be changed later if someone objects. Also, not everyone has to be involved in every decision. Knowing that you could get informed and involved when needed, it is often enough to trust others with the decision.

Aren't humans too egoistic for anarchist economies?

No. There is a lot of research, proving the theory of the homo oeconomicus, the idea that humans are always striving for their personal benefit, is wrong. Kropotkin's "Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution" is about the importance of cooperation and reciprocity in animal and human societies. Axelrod's mathematical proof via simulations of the repeated prisoner's dilemma finds cooperative strategies most successful. Martin A. Nowak and Michael Tomasello also confirm the importance of cooperation in the evolution of humans. It's rather the other way around: the behavior of the homo oeconomicus is both beneficial to capitalism and created by capitalism (see e.g. Jonathan Aldred: "Licence to be Bad: How Economics Corrupted Us").

8. How to Plan

Do we need a universal unit of account?

Capitalism uses the market price as a universal unit of account. Other socialist economies suggest tokens based on work hours. Anarchist economies as envisioned by this FAQ don't need a universal unit of account. In some cases,

Why are supralocal structures needed?

The cooperation across multiple local communities and regions allows e.g. the planning of complex infrastructures and the production of modern technology which relies on the many different resources and supply chains. Additionally, the supralocal perspective gives some overview and improves distribution justice as well as resilience in case of catastrophes. Some anarchists say that everything they need can be produced on the local level in self-sufficient communities and that any additional structure could lead to bureaucracy and dominance. People who want to live like this can do this. It won't interfere with anarchist economies networking on supralocal levels while monitoring for and avoiding bureaucracy and dominance.

How will distribution in anarchist economies work?

Multiple possibilities could coexist (under some conditions). The most promising method of distribution is based on federated councils of delegates from affected communities and regions and decentralized plans. The distribution is based on the needs of the people. This doesn't have to be overly complicated. For many goods like food or clothes, local distribution centers (like supermarkets but without paying) work well. Only for scarce goods, planning the distribution is important to improve social justice. The problems with distribution via worker control or markets are covered in the following questions.

What are federated councils?

Councils are created for a specific purpose (temporary or permanent). For permanent councils, rotation of responsibilities is important. If the purpose, the question to discuss, concerns more than a local group of people (and only then!), delegates of multiple of those councils from various regions should federate, forming federated councils. This means that they will exchange information, support each other, and, if required, find agreements across the whole federation. Delegates from the local councils can not impose an agreement on the local councils, i.e. the federation is no power structure. It is a structure of facilitation and coordination, while the ones to decide are still those affected by the decision (similar to the coordination committee on the local level). The internet is a powerful tool for federation. A federation does not have to consist of clearly defined geographical regions. It could consist of geographically or thematically overlapping networks.

What are the problems with workers deciding about the distribution of what they produce?

Some socialist concepts advocate for worker-owned and worker-controlled means of production. This includes the workers deciding about who gets what they produce. While this may sound like self-organization worth striving for, it has some problems related to the anarchist concepts of solidarity and freedom: If the workers are responsible for the production of an important infrastructure good like transportation, water, or information, the distribution affects many people and thus not only the workers but all affected people should be allowed to be part of the decision. If only the workers could make this decision, they would be in a position to proclaim power over others, exclude others from access, and give them in-group an advantage. This creates structures of favoritism and discrimination. Others will have to fight for the fulfillment of their needs.

What are the problems with markets?

Markets are an information tool that allows the exchange of goods and thus distribution. Markets are used by capitalist economies but they are also suggested for some socialist versions of economies. Even in those versions, markets are problematic. The market communicates the needs of the people only in a quite delayed, indirect, and distorted way:

- The information about products gets mostly reduced to a single number, the price.
- Prices are adapting to purchases, not to consumption or need. I.e. speculation or hoarding can skew prices.
- Also, monopolies skew prices.
- The market incentivizes hiding important information like the environmental impact or the production conditions.
- Markets tend to result in externalized (not cared for) environmental damage (negative externalities).
- Products must perform well on the market and break soon afterward instead of fulfilling needs (production focuses on exchange value rather than use value).
- If company A plans to change their production, requiring more of product X, the price of X will increase until company B increases the production of X. With markets, company A won't tell company B about the plans in order to still profit from the lower prices. Without markets, the shortage of X could be avoided by direct and early communication between companies A and B.
- The exchange on the market has no societal goal baked in: It does not guarantee that all needs are met.

reasons for this, others will understand. If not, they might ask critical questions. Community and solidary often lead to more happiness than resource-intensive possessions anyway.

Would anarchist economies be only local or could we have e.g. coffee?

Yes, there can be products from other regions. To reduce transportation resources, it's preferable to use as many local products as possible, however producing for and receiving products from other regions is also a good practice of cross-regional solidarity and communication. For limited popular goods, it's useful to create some transparency for fair distribution across all regions interested in it.

Is there enough for everyone?

It's important to reject right-wing ideologies which claim there would not be enough for everyone and thus people should be excluded and only a selected elite should get the available resources. In times of climate crisis it can be come more difficult to produce enough for everyone living on earth today. But we can do it. It is in our hands to produce and distribute in a way that there is enough for everyone. Everyone can have a good life.

The ideas in this FAQ don't depend on abundance or "fully automated luxury communism". They also work in times of crisis and scarcity.

What do you mean by good life?

Not having to worry about needs like food and housing, friends, and happiness are important factors for a good life. The right to own way more than others or consume way more than needed might be considered an unethical concept of a good life.

What can be done if demand exceeds supply?

This also can be decided case by case. It might be possible to increase the supply by finding more volunteers for the work, by making the work more pleasurable, or by automating it. It might also be possible to find ways to lower the demand or to improve the distribution.

If something is scarce, how does it get distributed?

If a good, resource, or service is scarce, the affected communities can decide how to handle the distribution and they might pick a different solution for a different situation. Here are some ideas:

What about Care-Work?

In a needs-based economy, care is one of many needs that will be fulfilled. Care work (reproductive work) will thus be accepted and taken seriously in the same way as other work. What's special about care work is that it requires a lot of responsibility and commitment and people working in care can't be randomly interchanged. E.g. a baby needs some but not too many permanent caregivers.

That and the time required for care need to be considered in economic planning. Not as the number of hours to be minimized in a capitalistic fashion, but as a generously estimated period, in which no other work can be done in parallel. How to think about and plan care work exactly can be decided on the local level. The improvement of healthcare, the educational system, and other societal changes might also slightly reduce the amount of needed care work.

7. Conflict Resolution and Limited Resources

What if someone does not contribute anything and uses a lot of resources?

It's okay. The system won't break if a few people don't contribute anything. They probably have reasons why they can't contribute and others will understand this. If there are no reasons and the community sees the extensive usage of resources as a problem, they will try to resolve this as a conflict. If the conflict can not be resolved, the community can decide to stop providing resources to this person.

How are decisions enforced?

There is no organization like police, prisons, or military to enforce decisions. Agreements taken at local or supralocal levels have a good chance of being acted upon as they were taken by those affected and not a remote authoritarian government. If some people don't respect the agreements, it might not be a big deal. However, if others are disturbed by their behavior, there will be a conflict resolution process. If this does not help or people refuse to take part in the conflict resolution, their behavior can be scandalized. Communities might also decide to separate from individuals who repeatedly cause harm and refuse to take part in processes to transform their behavior (community accountability).

Would we have more than basic survival necessities?

Yes, that's what we should be planning and producing for. Depending on what a local community or single person needs, they can organize what they need to have a good life. In times of climate crisis, however, they might want to check if their needs and wants cause too much environmental damage. If there are good

- Markets require active participation by doing wage labor, getting informed about products, and maybe bargaining. This is thus excluding those who can't fit into this requirement.

The problems of wage labor are covered in the next section.

Why were markets considered the only option?

The argument for markets was that they are decentralized and can adapt to the needs of the people and that there is no other decentralized tool for distribution. Both can now be considered wrong: the needs are not fulfilled and we do have decentralized communication tools like the internet now. Markets are one tool for organizing economies and there are better ones.

6. Production and Work

Is paid work a good idea?

No, any wage or remuneration for work (no matter if it's money or tokens representing work hours or something similar) is not a step in the right direction when the goal is distribution based on need. It even has negative effects:

1. Regardless of whether the wage is calculated depending on education, experience, hours, or effort - there can never be a concept that is fair to everyone.
2. Wage is an external motivator, or even coercion if people depend on the wage for basic needs. External motivation is neither good for the quality of the work nor the mental health of the worker.
3. The idea of wages requires the distinction between work for which you get wages and other work for which you don't get wages. In Europe, non-waged work is at least 40% of all work (mostly care work. This distinction is degrading and unfair.
4. The idea of waged labor assumes the "normal" human to be someone who does enough wage labor to fulfill their needs. All others need to rely on social benefits, which is degrading and ableist.

Anarchist economics as envisioned by this FAQ would thus use neither money, nor tokens, nor wage, as the distribution is based on need anyway.

How much do we have to work in anarchist economies?

We will probably have to work less than today because many jobs like those in the financial sector, insurance, or advertising won't be needed anymore. Others could be simplified because information about production processes could be open so research does not have to be duplicated. As now unpaid care work will

be thought of, this section of work will be added as necessary work. The amount of necessary work depends both on the needs and decisions of the community you live in and on the extent of environmental damage that will need effort for restoration.

Who owns the means of production?

No one. They get used and maintained by those responsible for the production. These people don't own the means of production and don't decide about the distribution. Maintaining means of production includes making sure they remain usable long-term and preventing their overuse. Ownership in general is not compatible with anarcho-communism as there is no state to enforce property rights. What matters is who makes the decisions and that should be those affected by the decision.

Who owns land, houses, and other things?

No one. People use them when needed. If multiple people would like to use the same land or house, the community will find a solution. Maybe the most popular houses should only be used for hospitals or guests. However, no one will randomly take a used house away without a prior resource-conflict resolution. Using and occupying something is different from ownership. The collection of things can rather be thought of as a library from which you lend things when you want to use them and give them back afterward.

Who decides what to produce?

Consumers decide what is needed, producers decide what can be produced, and together, everyone affected by the decision can decide what to produce.

Who decides how to produce?

The producers decide how to produce as long as this decision does not affect others. E.g. if the chosen method of production hurts the environment or uses scarce resources, others affected by this decision should be involved.

Who produces for whom?

If possible and fair considering distribution justice, production should focus on local consumers. This reduces transport resource usage and the number of affected people. However, when needed, supralocal cooperation and production for people across regions and continents is possible.

How will necessary work be distributed?

In the case that the work distribution does not just work by everyone picking up something they love to work on in addition to some information medium announcing where help would be needed, local coordination committees can collect relevant information and come up with suggestions. E.g. if there is important but unpopular work left to do, a suggestion could be to find enough people who are willing to do this work on rotation. Or, if it's some kind of cleanup, that needs to be done from time to time, to introduce a community day, in which everyone joins together, getting the work done while making it a fun experience. Or, if a local production facility which also sends products to other regions, requires a lot of work, the coordination committee could ask neighboring communities for support.

Do all jobs have to be rotated?

No. It's okay to commit to one type of work for a whole life if that's what you enjoy. However, if you do a very well-liked job, the community might ask you to also work some hours on less popular work. It's also okay, to switch jobs often or to work on multiple things at the same time. Some work types require intensive training. Volunteers for this kind of work will be asked to commit to the work for a longer period.

Is there a compulsion to work?

No. Maybe slight group pressure, depending on the community. Also, the way of working will be organized by those who do the work, by the production collectives, and can thus be adapted to be as enjoyable as possible depending on the preferences of its members.

Why will people work if there is neither compulsion to work nor wage?

After some time of relaxation, most people feel the need to get involved, to contribute, to create something, or to help others. It provides them with fulfillment and a meaning of life. It's also a means of socializing with others and meeting friends and lovers.

What is defined as work and what is not?

This can depend on local communities and their way of living. As there is no remuneration for work, a definition of work is not a requirement. Some might want to dissolve the concepts of work and non-work by making work more pleasurable. Others might try to define what kind of activities are needed to meet all needs and define those as work.