



# Could Walden Two Be an Anarchist Society?

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## Abstract

In his autobiography, Skinner states that Walden Two was an anarchist society because no person was in control and the community was planned in such a way that institutions were not needed. Based on that statement, this article aims to evaluate an anarchist interpretation of Walden Two. The text is divided into 3 parts. The first part presents a definition of anarchism, covering its criticism of domination and a defense of self-managed society (anarchy). In the second part, some convergence points of Walden Two and anarchism are indicated in 3 social spheres (economic, political, and cultural). The last part analyzes the divergences between the community described in Walden Two and an anarchist society, with an emphasis on the issue of Walden Two's political inequality. It is concluded that the divergences between Walden Two and anarchism are decisive and prevent the community described in Skinner's book from being classified as an anarchist one, and, therefore, they counter Skinner's own statement.

**Keywords** Anarchism · Ideology · Politics · Walden Two

Discussing some criticisms addressed to the society described in his novel, *Walden Two* (Skinner, 1948/2005), Skinner (1983/1984b) made an intriguing statement in the third volume of his autobiography:

When ... I called myself a benign anarchist ... someone said that that was not like the dictatorship of *Walden Two*. But Walden Two *was* anarchistic. No *person* was in control. The community was designed in such a way that police, clergy, entrepreneurs, teachers, and therapists were not needed. (p. 426)

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This declaration brings two contributions to an interpretation of the sociopolitical commitments of the Skinnerian proposal. First, it indicates that *Walden Two* would be a pivotal source for this type of investigation. That is endorsed by Skinner's continuous mention of *Walden Two* as a political model (e.g., Skinner, 1982, 1988, 1989), and by the fact that *Walden Two* remains a topic of discussion and sometimes a source of inspiration for behavior analysts, especially when they turn to sociopolitical issues (e.g., Abernathy, 2009; Altus, 2013; Altus & Morris, 2009; Benson, 2017; Mattaini & Aspholm, 2016; Molina, Deochand, & McGee, 2019; Rakos, 2006). Second, in the aforementioned quote, Skinner explicitly affiliates *Walden Two* with anarchism, thus indicating that his proposal would be in tune with this political ideology.

Given these points, this article aims to systematically analyze the possibility of an anarchist interpretation of *Walden Two*. The article is divided into three parts. The first presents a definition of anarchism, covering a negative (criticism of domination) and a positive aspect (defense of a self-managing society). In the second part, some convergences between *Walden Two* and an anarchist society (anarchy) are indicated in three social spheres (economy, politics, and culture). The third part examines the divergences between the community described in Skinner's novel and anarchy. It is concluded that the divergences are decisive, making it impossible to classify *Walden Two* as an anarchist community.

## Defining Anarchism

Perhaps one of the few consensuses among anarchist scholars is that anarchism cannot be easily defined (Kinna, 2005; Marshall, 2008; Woodcock, 1962/2004). That is because of at least two issues.

First, authors with very different philosophical or even ideological points of view have traditionally been associated with anarchism (Correa, 2012). This presents the challenge of trying to articulate theoretical proposals based on blatantly irreconcilable worldviews, which, at times, involve quite distinct political conceptions. Examples of this incompatibility can be easily found in classic anarchism historiography that range from Max Stirner's radical individualism to Pyotr Kropotkin's naturalistic communism, and from Mikhail Bakunin's revolutionary and anticleric proposal to Leo Tolstoy's peculiar Christianity (Graham, 2005; Marshall, 2008; Woodcock, 1962/2004). The difficulties of delimiting the concept of anarchism become even more evident when contemporary representatives of economic neoliberalism such as Murray Rothbard and David Friedman call themselves anarchists (Friedman, 1973/2014; Rothbard, 1978). How can we reconcile one of the most radical defenses of contemporary capitalism with the admittedly communist proposals of the early 20th century?

Second, there is a long-standing confusion between the ordinary and the technical meanings of anarchy. Since its original meaning in Greek, *anarchy* has had a negative and derogatory connotation. The prefix *an-* means the rejection or absence of any government or leader, and thus *anarchy* is often taken as a synonym for chaos, mess, riot, or simply the absence of order (Marshall, 2008). When the term *anarchist* was first used in modernity, during the French Revolution, that pejorative meaning was still employed (Kinna, 2005; Woodcock, 1962/2004). Even today, a depreciative sense of

anarchism (and words related to it) continues to be used by politicians to describe demonstrations by their opponents (see Lee & Ries, 2020; Milman, 2020). This strictly negative connotation contrasts with the anarchism that flourished in the mid-19th century and that developed in different parts of the world (Correa, 2012). Understood as a political ideology, anarchism defends a new type of social organization and not chaos (Bakunin, 1866/1972, 1964; Berkman, 1937/2003; Correa, 2012; Kinna, 2005).

Therefore, a way to overcome those difficulties of defining anarchism is to restrict it to that ideology whose principles have guided revolutionary movements oriented to a specific social transformation (Correa, 2012). This social transformation consists of eliminating the different forms of social domination—that is, hierarchical and authoritarian social relations in which a few people decide what everyone should do.

In fact, many political movements and doctrines, such as feminism, Marxism, and even liberalism, struggle against forms of social domination. But anarchism advocates an end to *all* forms of domination without exception (Correa, 2012). Hence, proposals that preserve or tolerate *any* form of domination should not be considered anarchist, even if they criticize specific forms of domination. For example, although the feminist movement was oriented toward the struggle against masculine domination, it cannot be considered anarchist until it openly includes in its agenda other forms of domination, such as economic ones. Although Marxism explicitly defends the end of capitalist economic domination, it also differs from anarchism because it still preserves political domination, by “dictatorship of the proletariat.” The contemporary political and economic doctrine known as “anarcho-capitalism” cannot be considered anarchist because it not only accepts but also advocates the economic domination promoted by capitalism.

The anarchist criticism of all forms of domination is complemented by a defense of a new social order in which there would be peaceful coexistence among individuals—that is, *anarchy*. As the etymology suggests, anarchy is a society created and maintained without the mediation of norms imposed by authoritarian institutions, such as states, businesses, religions, and so on (Bakunin, 1882/1970; Berkman, 1937/2003). But unlike the traditional sense of the word, for the anarchists, anarchy would be an ordered society (Kinna, 2005). Why do they believe that is possible? Would not that be counterintuitive or even counterfactual? The answer to these questions points to the anarchist discussion of human nature (Cornell, 2016; Ward, 1996).

On the one hand, anarchism opposes the understanding of human nature described in the famous Latin phrase *Homo homini lupus* (“man is wolf to man”), popularized by Hobbes (1651/1949) during the modern period. According to Hobbes’s view, human beings are irrevocably selfish, competitive, violent, and treacherous; that would justify the maintenance of the state as an external force responsible for the control of these antisocial tendencies (Hobbes, 1651/1965). If that were true, anarchism would be impossible, because the abolition of the state would leave humankind in a condition of barbarism and chaos, where individuals’ lives would be constantly threatened by other individuals (Cornell, 2016).

On the other hand, anarchism also does not support Rousseau’s notion of human nature popularized by the “noble savage.” Some of Rousseau’s criticisms of the modern state are echoed in anarchists’ texts (see Piozzi, 1990; Wolff, 1996), but that must not be understood as an unequivocal affiliation of anarchism with an image of a naturally good humankind (Bakunin, 1964; Kropotkin, 1902; Suissa, 2019; Ward, 1996).

Anarchism does not mean that human beings are necessarily cooperative and altruistic; anarchism is actually based on a denial of the Hobbes versus Rousseau dichotomy itself (Bakunin, 1964; Kropotkin, 1902).

Russian anarchist Pyotr Kropotkin (1842–1921) explicitly discussed this issue. Opposing Huxley's Hobbesian view that the evolution of species was exclusively based on a struggle for individual survival, Kropotkin (1902) argued that cooperation (or "mutual aid," as he preferred to call it) had a fundamental role in the evolution of species in general and of humankind in particular. Based on observations of animal behavior he made in parts of Siberia and Manchuria, as well as on other researchers' observations, Kropotkin demonstrated that cooperation was often more effective than interspecific struggle for the survival of the species. However, this does not exclude cases in which the dispute between individuals takes a bloody turn, as may happen, for example, in situations of generalized food shortage. Indeed, Kropotkin criticized any explanation of animal behavior (including human behavior) that focused on a finished nature, be it selfish or cooperative: "Rousseau had committed the error of excluding the beak-and-claw fight from his thoughts; and Huxley committed the opposite error: But neither Rousseau's optimism nor Huxley's pessimism can be accepted as an impartial interpretation of nature" (Kropotkin, 1902, p. 5).

Based on Kropotkin's critique, anarchists have highlighted the importance of context for understanding human behavior: If human nature contains both competitive and cooperative tendencies, the context (particularly social context) will be fundamental in leading individuals in one direction or another (Suissa, 2019; Ward, 1996). As clarified by Bakunin (1964), "The fault [of humans] lies not with them nor with their nature, but with the social environment in which they were born and have been developing" (p. 147). Therefore, the social organization (in the economic, political, and cultural fields) is responsible for creating favorable conditions for competition or for cooperation among individuals, and, consequently, that can help or hamper the development of a self-managing society, namely anarchy.

The anarchist discussion of human nature, thereby, changes the question from *why* anarchy is possible to *how* it is possible to promote it. The anarchists' proposal points to the need for revolutionary changes in social structures to favor anarchy. Such changes consist of a struggle aimed at destroying the social structures that support and spread cultural practices of domination, and structures that hamper the exploited's identification of cultural practices of domination (Bakunin, 1882/1970; Berkman, 1937/2003; Correa, 2012).

Therefore, anarchism is not about a struggle without a positive objective. The destruction of the structures of domination aims to constitute a self-managing society, which sustains and is sustained by self-managing individuals, in the sense of them being able to make decisions by themselves and to effectively and widely participate in the decision-making processes (Correa, 2012).

Both the negative dimension (criticism of a dominating system) and the positive one (project of a self-managing social system) are discussed by anarchists in three social spheres, these being economy, politics, and culture. Hence, anarchy would be achieved through radical changes in these different social spheres, which would make self-management possible without the mediation of authoritarian institutions.

## Is *Walden Two* an Anarchy?

Since his involvement with Project Pigeon in the 1940s, Skinner began to believe in the possibility of an extrapolation of experimental data to a cultural context (Capshe, 1993; Rutherford, 2017). This possibility seems to have been radicalized with *Walden Two*. In this novel, Skinner (1948/2005) described a community of about 1,000 members, planned and administered by scientific principles (including those from behavioral science). Throughout the book, the different dimensions of the community are introduced to some visitors (the main ones being Burris and Castle, two professors) by Frazier (*Walden Two*'s founder). (For a detailed presentation of *Walden Two*, see Fernald, 1989.)

In his autobiography, Skinner (1979/1984a) argued that his motivation to write *Walden Two* initially came from a conversation he had during a dinner with friends, soon after the end of World War II. In this conversation, Skinner deplored the fact that young people returning from conflict zones had the destiny of adjusting themselves to U.S. society, with no possibilities of something better. In the face of this provocation, one of the diners suggested that Skinner show them an alternative. Skinner accepted the challenge, which culminated with him writing the book not long after.

This story of *Walden Two*'s origins shows that the book has a countercultural tendency: It is an attack on the principles of the postwar U.S. society, such as its inconsequential consumerism (Rutherford, 2017). At that point, a dialogue between anarchism and *Walden Two* seems plausible. As a countercultural proposal, *Walden Two* could end up drawing near to anarchy. That hypothesis gains strength with the fact *Walden Two* also discusses the problems of American society by focusing on the social context and not on human nature, and the affinities with anarchism were endorsed by Skinner himself, a long time after the book was published (Skinner, 1983/1984b, p. 426). It remains to be discussed whether the transformations proposed in *Walden Two* are really compatible with those of anarchism. For that, each of *Walden Two*'s social spheres (economy, politics, and culture) will be examined in comparison to the characteristics of anarchism described by anarchist literature.

### Economy

According to anarchism, economic domination consists of the exploitation of workers by the proprietors of the means of production. In a capitalist system, economic exploitation is fundamentally driven by profit (Correa, 2012). The anarchist argument is that the resulting surplus of collective production (carried out by a large number of workers) legitimately belongs to the collective, and that the appropriation of this surplus by proprietors who are not producers is, therefore, literally theft:

Whoever labors becomes a proprietor—this is an inevitable deduction from the acknowledged principles of political economy and jurisprudence. And when I say proprietor, I do not mean simply (as do our hypocritical economists) proprietor of his allowance, his salary, his wages,—I mean proprietor of the value which he creates, and by which the master alone profits. (Proudhon, 1876, p. 112)

The fundamental thesis is that laborers are the proprietors of what they produce, for without them and their collective organization, it would be impossible to get the work done. Hence, individual payment through a wage is not sufficient. There is some kind of confusion between collective and individual labor that supports exploitation and that alienates laborers:

“The capitalist”, they say, “has paid the laborers their daily wages”. To be accurate, it must be said that the capitalist has paid as many times one day’s wage as he has employed laborers each day,—which is not at all the same thing. For he has paid nothing for that immense power which results from the union and harmony of laborers, and the convergence and simultaneousness of their efforts. Two hundred grenadiers stood the obelisk of Luxor upon its base in a few hours; do you suppose that one man could have accomplished the same task in two hundred days? Nevertheless, on the books of the capitalist, the amount of wages paid would have been the same. (Proudhon, 1876, p. 116)

The conclusion is that in a capitalist system, there will always be exploitation, because “when you have paid all the individual forces, the collective force still remains to be paid. Consequently, there remains always a right of collective property which you [the capitalist] have not acquired, and which you enjoy unjustly” (Proudhon, 1876, p. 119). The anarchist analysis of economic exploitation clearly anticipates and harmonizes with the one formulated by Marx. However, the anarchist proposal is quite different from the state socialism proposed by Marx and the Marxists (Berkman, 1937/2003; Correa, 2012). For anarchists, economic domination can be found both in the private property of the means of production (capitalism) and in state property (state socialism). The appropriation of the means of production always prevents laborers from being autonomous, forcing them to submit to the interests of either a private elite (when it comes to capitalism) or the state (when it comes to state socialism). As a result, there is an insurmountable imbalance between the proprietors of the means of production and the laborers. This imbalance, precisely because of its oppressive nature, is always accompanied by protective measures for the proprietors (either private or public), as well as by restrictions of laborer rights, all ensured by the state (even in liberal capitalism). Hence, for anarchism, state socialism is not a solution for the economic domination promoted by capitalism, as it continues to maintain a structure of domination in the political and economic fields (Berkman, 1937/2003; Bottici, 2013; Correa, 2012).

Anarchism proposes the complete socialization of the means of production, giving rise to a self-managing economy organized by laborers themselves and oriented by the needs of the people. This implies a change in the logic of labor that would go from being profit oriented—which justifies and promotes economic exploitation—to being driven by collective decisions, made by the direct participation of those who are affected by those decisions. Correa (2012) properly stated this point:

Under economic self-management, workers, as a group, enjoy the whole fruits of their labor. Furthermore, their involvement in the economic decision-making processe—deciding what to produce, how to produce, which investments to make, and where to destiny surplus—is proportional to how much they are affected by it. (p. 117)

It seems that from an economic point of view, *Walden Two* is quite aligned with anarchy. It is a collectivist economy, in which all economic activity (from the production of goods and services to their distribution) is guided by the common good, without differences that could result in the configuration of economic classes. In addition, there is no profit in *Walden Two*; the production processes do not seek to generate any financial surplus that could enable any kind of capital accumulation: “The profit system is bad even when the worker gets the profits, because the strain of overwork isn’t relieved by even a large reward. All we ask is to make expenses, with a slight margin of safety” (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 45).

*Walden Two* also adopts a system of “labor-credit” that is established by the difficulty and, consequently, by the “attractiveness” of each task that needs to be done in the community. This means that unpleasant and difficult tasks “have more value” than those that are pleasant and easy: “We adjust the value of the labor-credit accordingly” (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 45). Work hours are reduced, not exceeding the amount of four daily hours for all community members, which is achieved, mostly, by using technology to decrease work time: “What we ask is that a man’s work shall not tax his strength or threaten his happiness” (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 69). All this would guarantee the workers’ motivation, as well as the productivity needed for the community’s well-being:

We have the extra motivation that comes when a man is working for himself instead of for a profit-taking boss. That’s a true “incentive wage” and the effect is prodigious. Waste is avoided, workmanship is better, deliberate slowdowns unheard of. Shall we say that four hours for oneself are worth six out of eight for the other fellow? (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 53)

Another characteristic of anarchy that finds echoes in *Walden Two* is the criticism of the social division of labor. Anarchism does not support the division between intellectual and manual labor in which a creative, educated, and intelligent minority “thinks” while the majority of the population works in mechanical and inhuman activities. As Bakunin (1866/1972) points out, “When the man of science performs manual labor and the man of work performs intellectual labor, free intelligent work will become the glory of making, the source of its dignity and its rights” (p. 92). *Walden Two* does not seem to comply with the division between intellectual and manual labor either: “No one of us is all brains or all brawn, and your lives must be adjusted accordingly” (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 51). All individuals in the community need to dedicate at least one part of their four-hour workday to manual labor that requires some kind of physical effort, such as window cleaning, building maintenance, or gardening. There are multiple justifications for this, although the most important argument when it comes to an approximation with anarchism is that it would, at the same time, avoid privileges and make planners and administrators more sensitive in their decision-making processes<sup>1</sup>: “It’s our constitutional guarantee that the problems of the big-muscle user won’t be forgotten” (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 52).

<sup>1</sup> The other justifications given in *Walden Two* are the following: (a) manual labor works as physical activity, helping with health preservation, and (b) manual activities generally involve natural reinforcement, accompanied by a “sense of accomplishment,” contributing to happiness.



*Walden Two* also anticipates elements that were only ostensibly incorporated into the U.S. anarchism of the 1960s, such as the ecologic concerns resulting from the criticism of consumerism and waste typical of the American way of life (Cornell, 2016). In Frazier's words,

We practice the Thoreauvian principle of avoiding unnecessary possessions. ... There's little or no spoilage or waste in distribution or storage, and none due to miscalculated needs. The same is true of other staples. We don't feel the pressure of promotional devices which stimulate unnecessary consumption ... we strike for economic freedom at this very point—by devising a very high standard of living with a low consumption of goods. We consume *less* than the average American. (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 57)

Finally, at a certain point in the book, Frazier admits the possibility of an expansion of the *Walden Two* project with several communities cooperating in a collective system similar to the councils proposed by some anarchists (see Berkman, 1937/2003; Correa, 2012). “Why don't you set up some overall organization?” said Castle. ‘A sort of United Communities.’” Frazier replies, “It might be possible. A planning committee has been suggested to guide us in choosing industries so that we can exchange goods” (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 209).

## Politics

According to anarchism, just as in the economy, when it comes to politics, there is also a fundamental imbalance that supports a dominating system. This imbalance consists of the difference between those who govern and those who are governed, in which governmental decisions are made without the direct participation from the governed and, consequently, without necessarily being guided by their needs and interests. Although the debates and the laws promulgated by the state are presented as being the establishment of the common good, they are freely manipulated in favor of an economic and/or political elite. This locates anarchism in a radically opposed position to all forms of government (Bakunin, 1882/1970; Proudhon, 1969).

In the different forms of government, a political imbalance is maintained through both institutional bureaucracy and the threat and use of violence. In the context of anarchist criticism, bureaucracy is understood as a model of public administration in which different bodies, such as commissions, sectors, and secretariats (the *bureaus*), participate (Correa, 2012). That complex administrative structure makes the political decision-making process slow and quite difficult to follow by the people directly affected by decisions. Furthermore, the eventual insistence of the governed in following and questioning this process is prevented by measures that go from fines, imprisonment, and deportation to the death penalty. These sanctions are an exclusive right of the state, insofar as the state can use them, but the population can never do the same. In the case of capitalism, the imbalance is generally maintained by the “democratic” way, with the establishment of a representative democracy. Here, political decision-making processes continue to be permeated by bureaucracy, although it does not need to be as complex as it is in state socialism, for the government's domination is supposedly legitimated by popular vote. As Bakunin (1882/1970) makes clear, anarchism also opposes this conception:



In a word, we reject all legislation, all authority, and all privileged, licensed, official, and legal influence, even though arising from universal suffrage, convinced that it can turn only to the advantage of a dominant minority of exploiters against the interests of the immense majority in subjection to them. This is the sense in which we are really Anarchists. (p. 35)

Moreover, in representative democracies, violence is the main way to combat the insurgency of the governed, with the difference that, in “democratic” regimes, state violence is endorsed by legal institutions (judiciary) that legitimate and execute it in the name of the state. For anarchism, representative democracy does not solve the problem of political domination, as it continues to function in an irretrievably unbalanced way, submitting the majority (the governed) to the oppressive and compulsory authority of a few (the governors).

Anarchism considers, therefore, that the end of political domination cannot be achieved without the abolition of the state. It is a matter of rejecting the authority of the state with the primordial thesis that no one has the right to rule over anybody (Bakunin, 1882/1970). One of the many ways of supporting this rejection of the legitimacy of the state’s authority is to oppose the social contract theory, which sees the state as the product of a voluntary agreement that has the purpose of putting an end to disputes among individuals and to the generalized insecurity of social life. This theory frequently stems from the Hobbesian conception of human nature, which justifies the intervention of a strong state to regulate human relations and achieve a harmonious social life (Bakunin, 1964).

The anarchist argument is virtually the opposite: The state is an arbitrary institution that imposes itself via coercion, creating more violence in the process. This can ultimately threaten the human species (as in the case of massive wars promoted by states in the struggle for political and economic power). Subsequently, the core problem of social life would be the concentration of power and the imbalance of rights between individuals, which results from a hierarchical structure that is the primordial way in which the state functions (Bakunin, 1882/1970). In other words, if there did not exist this kind of power imbalance between individuals, there would not be any differences between the governors and the governed.

The anarchist political proposal is that of a direct democracy in which all individuals can take part in the decision-making processes that affect them without bureaucratic intermediation: “In self-managing relationships, decisions are shared, as well as the responsibilities that derive from them, as there does not exist a political monopoly led by a few agents, groups or social classes” (Correa, 2012, p. 97). This direct participation demands that people know how to respect differences, in the sense of acknowledging the limits imposed by the free transit of different opinions and, mainly, by the collective decision of a community.

The main point of convergence between Walden Two and anarchism in the political field can be found in the opposition to traditional forms of state-based political domination. Similar to anarchism, Skinner’s book considers the state and its bureaucratic structure, as a whole, to be incompatible with the promotion of the happiness of all the community members (the main objective in Walden Two). Skinner’s justification for the state’s ineffectiveness in this matter invokes an argument similar to that of anarchism, about the monopoly of violence as the characteristic of the modern state:

“As we use the term these days, government means power—mainly the power to compel obedience,” Frazier went on. “The techniques of government are what you would expect—they use force or threat of force. But that’s incompatible with permanent happiness—we know enough about human nature to be sure of that.” (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 180)

In line with the anarchist argument, *Walden Two* advocates for the abolition of both the state and politics in an institutional sense. In other words, “professional politicians” could not solve society’s problems and should be replaced by a committee that would no longer be interested in doing that kind of politics but would be, instead, effectively oriented to the common good—as the members of that committee would share the same contingencies as the others members of the community. Frazier states,

Government and politics! It’s not a problem of government and politics at all. That’s the first plank in the *Walden Two* platform. You can’t make progress toward the Good Life by political action! Not under *any* current form of government! You must operate upon another level entirely. What you need is a sort of Nonpolitical Action Committee: Keep out of politics and away from government except for practical and temporary purposes. It’s not the place for men of good will or vision. (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 180)

When it comes to the critique of state-based government, *Walden Two* shares the same anarchist skepticism toward the promises of a representative democracy. That means that *Walden Two* does not affiliate with the liberal democratic model either. The justifications mentioned in Skinner’s novel are also similar to those presented by anarchists: Liberal democracies instituted by vote are not capable of fulfilling their promises because people are not effectively heard and represented by politicians. Differently from that, Frazier argues that in *Walden Two*,

The people have all the voice they have any need for. They can accept or protest—and much more effectively than in a democracy, let me add. And we all share equally in the common wealth, which is the intention but not the achievement of the democratic program. Anyone born into *Walden Two* has a right to any place among us for which he can demonstrate the necessary talent and ability. There are no hereditary preferments of any sort. (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 218)

Or even that

“The government of *Walden Two*,” he [Frazier] continued, “has the virtues of democracy, but none of the defects. It’s much closer to the theory or intent of democracy than the actual practice in America today. The will of the people is carefully ascertained. We have no election campaigns to falsify issues or obscure them with emotional appeals, but a careful study of the satisfaction of the membership is made.” (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 253)

Therefore, in the political dimension, Walden Two shares the same anarchist criticism of the state, even in the case of representative democracies. Thus, Walden Two intends to be a proposal that does not align with any form of government that involves a state. Those critiques are clearly directed toward the U.S. democracy model, but Walden Two does not uncritically adhere to the alternative of Russian state socialism, as Frazier points out:

But most important of all, the Russian experiment was based on power. You may argue that the seizure of power was also a temporary expedient, since the people who held it were intolerant and oppressive. But you can hardly defend the continued use of power in that way. The Russians are still a long way from a culture in which people behave as they *want* to behave, for their mutual good. In order to get its people to act as the communist pattern demands, the Russian government has had to use the techniques of capitalism. On the one hand it resorts to extravagant and uneven rewards. But an unequal distribution of wealth destroys more incentives than it creates. It obviously can't operate for the *common* good. On the other hand, the government also uses punishment or the threat of it. (Skinner, 1948/2005, pp. 259–260)

These criticisms of Russian state socialism are practically the same as the ones formulated by Bakunin in his famous opposition to Marx (Graham, 2019) and reiterated by different anarchists afterward (e.g., Berkman, 1937/2003; Goldman, 1935/1998a). The main argument is that oppression and the accumulation of state power cannot be combated through the maintenance of the same logic of oppression, which would be present in the proposal for a “dictatorship of the proletariat” (Graham, 2019).

## Culture

The anarchist critique of cultural domination focuses on different institutions, such as religion, school, and family. These institutions produce and reproduce hierarchical structures to which individuals are submitted virtually from birth (Bakunin, 1866/1972; Berkman, 1937/2003; Correa, 2012). Thereby, individuals are prepared for a life of domination through indoctrination and diffusion of values adjusted to political and economic domination.

At the same time, cultural domination avoids revolt by spreading discourses that “naturalize” the different forms of domination present in society (Berkman, 1937/2003). Hence, individuals are convinced that nothing can be done, that social problems are not their concern, or even, however paradoxical it may sound, that the solution to these problems consists of accentuating inequality and widening the forms of domination.<sup>2</sup>

The most common institutions of a capitalist society were abolished in Walden Two, making this community culturally in tune with anarchy. For example, although having

<sup>2</sup> The most common examples of these kinds of discourses are the myth of the free market and the meritocracy, both responsible for maintaining competitiveness as a primordial form of relationship between individuals.

a religious belief is not forbidden, there are no temples, rituals, or practices supporting a religious institution in Walden Two:

Walden Two isn't a religious community .... We don't give our children any religious training, though parents are free to do so if they wish. Our conception of man is not taken from theology but from a scientific examination of man himself. And we recognized no revealed truths about good or evil or the laws or codes of a successful society. (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 185)

It seems Walden Two responds to the main anarchist criticism of religion—namely, this institution reproduces values that bolster the structures of domination by preparing individuals to blindly obey a compulsory authority (Berkman, 1937/2003). According to anarchists, this is done mainly with the image of God, who is considered to be a supreme being who must be obeyed, even when we are not capable of understanding his purposes (Bakunin, 1882/1970).

In the case of school, this institution is also strongly permeated by society's economic and political values (Haworth, 2012; Mueller, 2012). Besides the hierarchy between teachers and students, which sometimes demands the students' submission to the teachers' authoritative and arbitrary ways, the system of grades and evaluations also strengthens social domination: Grades generate a hierarchical system and competition between students, suppressing cooperation in favor of individualism and instilling the meritocratic discourse in formal education (Mueller, 2012).

An anarchist education also puts an emphasis on practical and concrete learning processes ("learning by doing"), instead of focusing on theoretical and abstract lessons. It means drawing upon "practical training, visits to museums, factories and laboratories or field trips to study physical geography, geology and botany" (Suissa, 2019, p. 512). All those characteristics are justified by an explicit political orientation, as schools would be spaces for the education of members of a cooperative, free, fair, and happy society.

Walden Two's educational system has remarkable affinities with anarchism. It is not based on a hierarchical and crystallized teacher–student relationship. That hierarchy is avoided by creating conditions for students to learn by themselves instead of being formally taught by teachers, which is also compatible with the promotion of freedom and autonomy defended by anarchism (Suissa, 2019). Furthermore, there is not a formal program with artificially separated subjects. The main goal is to teach students how to think:

Since our children remain happy, energetic, and curious, we don't need to teach "subjects" at all. We teach only the techniques of learning and thinking. As for geography, literature, the sciences—we give our children opportunity and guidance, and they learn them for themselves. In that way we dispense with half the teachers required under the older system, and the education is incomparably better. (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 110)

In Walden Two, students are not divided into school grades either, which makes it possible for each student to follow his or her learning rhythm. Thus, unnecessary punishment is avoided and individual differences are respected.

Motivation and freedom, as they are advocated by anarchism in the cultural sphere, would therefore be guaranteed:

We don't need "grades." Everyone knows that talents and abilities don't develop at the same rate in different children. A fourth-grade reader may be a sixth-grade mathematician. The grade is an administrative device which does violence to the nature of developmental process. Here the child advances as he likes in any field. No time is wasted in forcing him to participate in, or be bored by, activities he has outgrown. And the backward child can be handled more efficiently too. (Skinner, 1948/2005, pp. 109–110)

Another point of contact between education in Walden Two and anarchism is the ideal of an integral education in which intellectual, technical, and physical dimensions go hand in hand, no longer sustaining any social division of labor (Correa, 2012; Suissa, 2019). This seems to be precisely what is done in Walden Two's educational system:

Education in Walden Two is part of the life of the community. We don't need to resort to trumped-up life experiences. Our children begin to work at a very early age. It's not hardship; it's accepted as readily as sport or play. And a good share of our education goes on in workshops, laboratories, and fields. It's part of the Walden Two Code to encourage children in all arts and crafts. (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 110)

Like other institutions, family also educates individuals through the transmission of values that strengthen economic and political domination: Parents must teach their children the importance of having a "good job," a synonym for having a good salary that, in turn, enables them to consume. It is also necessary for parents to teach their children that to be a "good child" is to be obedient and to respect their authority without question, which prepares the individual to respect state laws without rebelling against them, even when those laws are arbitrary and oppressive (Berkman, 1937/2003). Furthermore, family is sometimes responsible for maintaining other forms of oppression that are quite common in a dominating system, such as gender and age inequality, heteronormative standards, and racial prejudice.

Thus, in anarchy, family could not be maintained in standardized molds. Instead, it should be substituted by an "extended family" in which the community as a whole is responsible for children, and not just the parents (Bakunin, 1966/1972). As Frazier explains, that is exactly the notion of family in Walden Two: "Our goal is to have every adult member of Walden Two regard all our children as his own, and to have every child think of every adult as his parent" (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 132). Also in this regard, Walden Two adopts some practices on behalf of gender equality, which could be considered progressive, as the book was published in the 1940s.<sup>3</sup> As mentioned by

<sup>3</sup> While recognizing Walden Two's progressive vision for his time, Wolpert (2005) highlighted the maintenance of some sexist bias and also inequalities in relation to race and sexuality. Homosexuality, for example, is not even mentioned in Skinner's book, suggesting the adoption of a heteronormative bias. In addition, the defense of equal rights between men and women has been found in anarchist literature since the 19th century (e.g., Bakunin, 1866/1972), and it was radically expanded in the early 20th century (e.g., Goldman, 1910/1998b).

Frazier, “You may have noticed the complete equality of men and women among us. There are scarcely any types of work which are not shared equally” (p. 123).

Walden Two frontally opposes the use of propaganda and other strategies whose function is to distract people or to simply conceal forms of domination. According to Frazier, this would be the case in Russian state socialism, which draws upon propaganda as a form of indoctrination:

Their propaganda is much more extensive than any which ever enslaved a working class. That’s a serious defect, for it has made it impossible to evaluate their success. We don’t know how much of the current vigor of Russian communism is due to a strong, satisfying way of life, and how much to indoctrination. (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 259)

The control of behavior through media with the purpose of promoting the “American way of life” is also a concern that guides education in Walden Two. Due to that, children are taught to discriminate the function of advertising in the capitalist world, resembling the anarchist political education (Suissa, 2019). Thus, the seduction of consumerism is avoided, revealing a political side of this kind of education:

We explain why advertisements almost always show pleasant and attractive people, and interesting and beautiful landscapes, beaches, and homes. And we explain that these have never been available to many except at the expense of poverty, disease, and filth for many more. (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 192)

In the cultural sphere, anarchism also stems from the thesis of an open human nature that advocates that social circumstances are responsible for the development of cooperative or competitive tendencies (Ward, 1996). In this context, anarchism considers a self-managing culture to be one reigned by values such as freedom (both individual and collective), equality (either economic, political, or social), solidarity, and happiness (Bakunin, 1866/1972; Correa, 2012).

With respect to the values that are disseminated in Walden Two’s cultural practices, cooperation appears to be primordial. At the same time, situations of competition are explicitly avoided, which includes sports practices. Personal status does not have any support, as there do not exist any rewards, distinctions, compliments, or even thanks in interpersonal relationships:

We are opposed to personal competition. We don’t encourage competitive games, for example, with the exception of tennis or chess, where the exercise of skill is as important as the outcome of the game; and we never have tournaments even so. We never mark any member for especial approbation. There must be some other source of satisfaction in one’s work or play, or we regard an achievement as quite trivial. A triumph over another man is never a laudable act. Our decision to eliminate personal aggrandizement arose quite naturally from the fact that we were thinking about the whole group. We could not see how the group could gain from the individual glory. (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 156)

Pleasure neither obeys the capitalist logic of competition, nor is it a privilege of the few: “We have created leisure without slavery” (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 69). In *Walden Two*, leisure is an important part of a good life, and it is neither mere entertainment nor an alienation mechanism:

... the Good Life means relaxation and rest. We get that in *Walden Two* almost as a matter of course, but not merely because we have reduced our hours of work. In the world at large the leisure class is perhaps the least relaxed. The important thing is to satisfy our needs. Then we can give up the blind struggle to “have a good time” or “get what we want”. We have achieved a true leisure. (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 148)

Finally, just as in anarchism, *Walden Two* does not rely on an individualistic solution to social problems. That way, values such as freedom, happiness, and peace are protected, taking the collective as a base instead of isolated individuals:

The question is: Can men live in freedom and peace? And the answer is: Yes, if we can build a social structure which will satisfy the needs of everyone and in which everyone will want to observe the supporting code. (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 247)

This resembles the anarchist ideal of a society that is based on the voluntary adherence of individuals, instead of on the imposition of rules from the state. It is a society that achieved order without domination: “a society which neither sponges nor makes war” (p. 69).

## Why *Walden Two* Is Not an Anarchy

In spite of *Walden Two*’s affinities with anarchy, there are certain characteristics that do not enable the Skinnerian opinion about *Walden Two* being an anarchist community to be validated (Skinner, 1983/1984b). The main divergence is found in the political dimension of *Walden Two*: It still keeps a ruling class, the planners, that is different from all other community members. Although *Walden Two* presents a critique of representative democracy that is quite consistent with anarchism, Skinner’s proposal diverges from a self-managing society. For anarchism, the political system should be converted into a direct democracy in which individuals have the right to debate, accept, or refuse proposals in the same proportion that they are affected by them (Correa, 2012). For this ideology, decisions must be collective and consensual.

In *Walden Two*, decisions are made by planners, who consult administrators responsible for the different community activities. This reproduces a “social pyramid” kind of system in which a minority decides for the majority, who in turn must comply with what has been decided. Moreover, *Walden Two* seems to still preserve, to some extent, a bureaucratic system that precludes popular participation in the decision-making processes, especially when decisions are unsatisfactory. This bureaucracy is materialized in a code that, among other things, forbids members to discuss the decisions made by the planners with each other. As Frazier explains,



As to disagreement, anyone may examine the evidence upon which a rule was introduced into the Code. He may argue against its inclusion and may present his own evidence. If the Managers refuse to change the rule, he may appeal to the Planners. *But in no case must he argue about the Code with the members at large.* [emphasis added] There's a rule against that. (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 152)

When Castle, Frazier's main antagonist in the book, denounces this point, arguing that "simple democracy requires public discussion of so fundamental a matter as a code" (p. 152), Frazier's answer would astonish an anarchist: "'You won't find very much 'simple democracy' here,' said Frazier casually, and resumed his discussion as if he had referred to the absence of white flour in the Walden Two bread" (p. 152). Walden Two supports, thus, an elite of governors, which is admitted and justified by Frazier:

Certainly our *elite* [emphasis added] do not command a disproportionate share of the wealth of the community; on the contrary, they work rather harder, I should say, for what they get. "A Manager's lot is not a happy one." And in the end the Planner or Manager is demoted to simple citizenship. Temporarily, they have power, in the sense that they run things—but it's limited. They can't compel anyone to obey, for example. A Manager must make a job desirable. He has no slave labor at his command, for our members choose their own work. His power is scarcely worthy of the name. What he has, instead, is a job to be done. Scarcely a privileged class, to my way of thinking. (Skinner, 1948/2005, pp. 218–219)

It is worth pointing out that Walden Two's class system is neither based on economic differences (planners do not gain any economic benefits, such as wealth or goods, as there does not exist any money, and goods are collectivized) nor does it involve acknowledgments or any kind of honors (this also was abolished from the community, and planners do not have any kind of particular status in relation to other members, who sometimes do not even know their names). The following question, thus, remains: What maintains these individuals in that position? Or, more precisely, what controls the planners' behavior, considering they are not "a happy lot"? From a behaviorist point of view, it would be necessary to admit there are reinforcers involved, but what are they?

As the book only describes the behavior of just one of the planners, Frazier, it is not possible to generalize, but considering this case at least, it seems that one of the reinforcers can be found exactly in the possibility of controlling the community or, simply, in power. This is confirmed when Frazier, in an almost megalomaniacal comparison he makes between himself and God, finally admits, "Of course I'm not indifferent to power! ... And I like to play God! Who wouldn't, under the circumstances? After all, man, even Jesus Christ thought he was God!" (Skinner, 1948/2005, pp. 281–282). In this scenario, the importance of the reinforcers that result from planning and decision making becomes evident, especially when it is followed by desirable consequences. It is a matter of some kind of "pride" that derives from the decision that had been made and that puts the planner in the position of being the main responsible person for the community's success.

The problem would shift, then, to ways of avoiding power concentration, keeping those reinforcers at an acceptable level. In other words, instead of removing the hierarchical system to give room to self-management, Walden Two maintains political domination, while creating strategies to avoid the risk of unfavorable consequences

derived from that kind of domination. Such strategies are ways of preventing power concentration among planners, such as the constitution of a council of six planners with its own decision-making system, the limitation of planners' "term of office" (they cannot stay in that position for more than 10 years), and the prohibition of personal accolades (which is applied to all members, including planners).

However, if we are talking about reinforcers, we should predict planners would continue to behave in order to obtain and maintain them more frequently. Likewise, all strategies that limit the power of planners would be, from a behavioral point of view, aversive measures imposed on them. The problem is that in *Walden Two*, such measures would have to be self-imposed by planners, as they are the only ones with decision-making power. This would be the same as saying that the planners should behave to lose reinforcers. Are they, then, an exception to the most elementary behavioral principles? Would it not be more reasonable to predict that they will continue to behave in order to remain in power, even when this is incompatible with the common good?

A positive answer to that question leads to the conclusion that by preserving a political domination system, *Walden Two* would not be exempt from the risks that derive from power accumulation. Why still insist on it? Why cannot people participate directly in the community's decision-making process, in a self-managing model of society? An answer seems to start taking form just when Castle makes an explicit comparison between *Walden Two* and anarchy: "It sounds a little like the old program of anarchy" (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 182). To which Frazier answers,

By no means. I'm not arguing for no government at all, but only for none of the existing forms. We want a government based upon a science of human behavior. Nothing short of that will produce a permanent social structure. (p. 182)

Frazier's thesis is not properly new. The proposal of replacing a class of "professional politicians," already existing in traditional governmental systems, with a class of scientists and technicians is the heart of technocracy<sup>4</sup> (Rutherford, 2017). Hamilton (2012) properly indicated the incompatibility of this form of government with anarchism by invoking Bakunin's argument that, already in the 19th century, reminded us that any scientist in a position of power would behave just as any other person would:

A scientific body to which had been confided the government of society would soon end by devoting itself no longer to science at all, but to quite another affair; and that affair, as in the case of all established powers, would be its own eternal perpetuation by rendering the society confided to its care ever more stupid and consequently more in need of this government and direction. (Bakunin, 1882/1970, pp. 31–32)

<sup>4</sup> Commenting on Nicolaus's (1979) article, which advocates for a scientocracy (just another name for technocracy) in the context of Skinnerian behaviorism, Edleson (1980) criticized this model of government. Although he does not specifically mention anarchism, his arguments and proposals about the strengthening of self-managing models have remarkable affinities with the discussions presented here. However, Edleson (1980) fails when he does not extend his critique to *Walden Two*, as he believed that the measures taken in that community would be enough to avoid the concentration of power in the planners' hands. At the same time, he seems to disregard the notion that *Walden Two* is also, ultimately, a scientocracy—which was correctly pointed out in Nicolaus's reply (Nicolaus, 1980).

Bakunin's quote includes another point that deserves to be highlighted. One of the strategies for maintaining the scientists' power in a technocracy is to alienate the population, making them "even more stupid." From a behaviorist point of view, this is the same as saying that this kind of government could preclude countercontrol by preventing people from discriminating what controls their own behavior. One way of doing that is to preserve the free-choice rhetoric, which may sound absurd at first glance, as Frazier declares himself to be completely deterministic.<sup>5</sup> However, one of the justifications for the absence of popular participation in Walden Two is exactly this one; when Castle concludes that "then the members have no voice whatsoever" (p. 49), Frazier answers, "Nor do they *wish* [emphasis added] to have" (p. 49). Another time, in order to justify the rejection of a direct democracy in Walden Two, Frazier is even more explicit: "Are the people skilled governors? No. And they become less and less skilled, relatively speaking, as the science of government advances" (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 250).

Using the Skinnerian argument itself, it would be possible to ask why people do not take an interest in participation or why they have become less and less capable of developing a self-managing system. From an anarchist perspective, it would even be possible to argue that, given the success of the alienating systems of an authoritative society, people do not feel capable of making their own decisions. After all, that is one of the mechanisms of domination used by the state (to convince people that they could not live without someone making their decisions for them). What justifies this happening in a deliberately planned society such as Walden Two? Would it be a matter of changing human nature? Would Skinner be affiliating himself with a Hobbesian conception in order to justify the maintenance of a decision-making elite? It does not seem to be the case. When trying to justify his rejection of anarchism, Frazier argues that

the trouble with the program of anarchy was that it placed too much faith in human nature ... I have none at all ... if you mean that men are naturally good or naturally prepared to get along with each other. We have no truck with philosophies of innate goodness—or evil, either, for that matter. But we do have faith in our power to change human behavior. We can *make* men adequate for group living—to the satisfaction of everybody. That was our faith, but it's now a fact. (Skinner, 1948/2005, p. 182)

Another time, Frazier identifies the thesis of innate goodness as being a *laissez-faire* philosophy that leads to the logical conclusion that anarchism belongs to this kind of philosophy: "A *laissez-faire* philosophy which trusts to the inherent goodness and wisdom of the common man is incompatible with the observed fact that men are made good or bad and wise or foolish by the environment in which they grow" (p. 257).

<sup>5</sup> In a deterministic system, there is no "free choice"—although it is still possible to speak of *choice behavior*. The "rhetoric of free choice" suggests that individuals do what they *wish*, without a determination of environmental variables. If there is no free choice, then there are two possibilities: Either the behavior of choice was ignored by the planners (although it remains controlled by unknown variables) or it has been deliberately planned so that individuals "wish" what the planners have decided. The argument presented here follows the second possibility.

Mentions of anarchism in *Walden Two* deserve some comments. First, different from what Skinner seems to think, the critique of the “faith in human nature” does not distance *Walden Two* from anarchism, because this ideology does not defend the “thesis of innate goodness” (see Bakunin, 1964; Kropotkin, 1902). Anarchist discussion of human nature is more occupied with criticizing “innate evil” than with defending “the noble savage,” as the Hobbesian notion would completely preclude the project of a self-managing society (Cornell, 2016).

Second, anarchism also adopts a contextualistic conception that gives social context an important role in the construction of individuals who are capable of living in a harmonious and cooperative way (Suissa, 2019). In these terms, it is inaccurate to consider anarchism a *laissez-faire* philosophy; quite the contrary, it is a philosophy that defends the necessity of practical actions, compounded by tactics and strategies deliberately oriented toward the promotion of a transformation of the social system (Correa, 2012).

Finally, developing people’s ability to make their own decisions is completely compatible with *Walden Two*’s “faith in the power to change human behavior.” But this was not taken into account in the planners’ planning, which strengthens the hypothesis that the planners have specific reinforcers due to their differentiated position, and their position-based reinforcers reproduce the system of privileges for the privileged class of the “outside world.” “Democratizing” scientific knowledge in *Walden Two* would mean a loss of important reinforcers for the planning class, and, because of that, it would be highly aversive for planners. A way for the planners to avoid that loss would be to keep people uninterested in decision-making processes while arguing, at the same time, that they simply “do not wish” to do that.

The title of Segal’s article “*Walden Two: The Morality of Anarchy*” suggests that *Walden Two* was a society oriented by anarchist values, such as cooperation, freedom, and happiness (Segal, 1987). Nevertheless, there is still a fundamental limit in the comparison between *Walden Two*’s ethics and those of anarchism (see Bakunin, 1964). In *Walden Two*, there is no political equality among its members, because just some of them, the planners, have the right to make decisions that affect the community as a whole.

That divergence in relation to anarchism in the political field also “contaminated” other social spheres in *Walden Two*. For example, even though the social division between intellectual and manual labor is rejected, and everyone is required to spend some time doing manual labor, the opposite is not true: Just a few are authorized to make political decisions. Therefore, class division is maintained. In the case of education, although *Walden Two* is concerned about teaching children about the risks and problems of the capitalist society, that political education does not seem to be directed to the community itself. Thus, instead of liberating individuals from domination and preventing them from being dominated, education in *Walden Two* actually serves to keep an elite in a power position, spreading the false idea that it is a society free of domination.

## Conclusion

*Walden Two* has many affinities with anarchy (Hamilton, 2012; Segal, 1987). With regard to the economic dimension, *Walden Two* adopts a collectivist system in which

profit and money are abolished and individuals work based on the needs of the community. Moreover, work hours are reduced (to about four hours per day) and calculated according to a system of labor-credit that changes according to the needs of the community, individual interests, and task difficulty. When it comes to politics, Walden Two and anarchism both criticize government systems set up by “professional politicians” that draw upon violence and threats as forms of social control. That includes representative democracy, which many times is brought forth as an alleged solution to society’s political problems (Bakunin, 1882/1970; Proudhon, 1969). Russian state socialism is also not considered a proper alternative, neither for Walden Two, nor for anarchism, because it maintains forms of domination that resemble those of capitalist governments (Berkman, 1937/2003). In the cultural dimension, the institutions responsible for the diffusion of values are abolished or radically changed in Walden Two. There are no churches or any religious training for the community members. School is not based on the hierarchical characteristics of the traditional educational system, drawing near to the ideal of an integral education defended by anarchists (Suissa, 2019). The values spread in Walden Two are cooperation, freedom, and happiness, and cultural practices aim to guarantee equality—that is to say that all community members, in principle, would be subjected to the same contingencies.

However, those affinities with anarchism find their limits in Walden Two’s political organization, which is composed of planners and administrators, on the one hand, and other members, on the other hand. Although there are no economic privileges for the “governors,” and some measures have been taken to avoid the concentration of power, this kind of social structure departs from the anarchist ideal of a self-managing society. Walden Two’s hierarchical structure also departs from anarchy in other social spheres. For example, in economy, although planners and administrators have to submit themselves to manual labor, “common” members do not directly participate in decision-making processes. Furthermore, there is a bureaucratic structure that precludes countercontrol from the common citizen of Walden Two, who can only report dissatisfaction directly to administrators and planners, but never to other “common” members.

It is possible to conclude that Walden Two continues to be a class society that preserves political domination via the distinction between those who govern and those who are governed. The justifications mentioned in the book for the maintenance of such a domination are not convincing and sometimes suggest contradictions, such as the use of the notion of free choice (people do not *wish* to participate in the political decision-making processes) in an openly deterministic and planned system, and the blind faith that planners will not succumb to the “temptations” resulting from power accumulation.

This analysis prevents the community described in Skinner’s 1948 book from being classified as an anarchist one. Thereby, it contradicts Skinner’s statement about Walden Two found in his autobiography. At the same time, a difference in Skinner’s position in relation to anarchism gains prominence: Whereas in 1948, through Frazier, Skinner (1948/2005, p. 182) explicitly denied the possibility of Walden Two’s identification with anarchism, in 1983 he stated that the community described in the book was anarchistic (Skinner, 1983/1984b, p. 426). What explains this change? What is its scope in Skinnerian discussions of politics? These questions should be investigated in future studies.

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