

## Why does exchange harm us?

Last week's Strategy Note 269 said our solidarity economy would function better without the exchange economy. Why?

Under exchange, we need to own as much property (such as money) as possible so we have something to exchange for what we need. That pressure to accumulate causes much harm.

Exchange pressures us to accumulate. The need to accumulate creates pressure to profit. Needing to profit creates a need to cut costs. The pressure to reduce costs can create some social benefit if, for example, it prompts energy-saving innovation. But businesses often find it easier to cut costs by making others pay them. Polluting avoids the cost of cleaning up. Skimping on staffing and safety cuts costs while risking workplace injuries and deaths.

These harms come from exchange's pressure to accumulate, profit, and reduce costs. These pressures will exist in any economy that relies on property and exchange, especially in capitalist forms of exchange.

In a democracy, the many working people could outvote the wealthy few. So an exchange economy pressures owners to prevent democracy.

In the long run, if we want a healthy planet, safe work, and democracy, we must eliminate property and exchange.

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