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Freedom and the good of capital: An exegetical application

by

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Introduction

Of all the objects occupying the theoretical focus of the Frankfurt School critical theorists, perhaps none was more central to their analysis than the political project of human emancipation. The negation of systemic oppression and domination, especially as entrenched in the social relations constitutive of the capitalist mode of production, was for these thinkers exalted as a value of ultimate normative import. Max Horkheimer, one of the tradition’s founders and leading theoreticians, gave voice to this view when he remarked that the demarcation of critical theory from that of traditional theory is to be found in the fact that the former serves as a “liberating…influence,” an “emancipation from slavery,” and seeks to “create a world which satisfies the needs and powers” of real persons (1972: 246). Emerging out of the horrors of World War II and its immediate aftermath, this collection of philosophers, social scientists and theorists sought to starkly contrast its Marxist identity, interpretation and political aims from those of the Soviet Union’s Stalinist regime, and the organic intellectuals keen to legitimate and reproduce its bureaucratic structure and vanguard party interests. In this sense the Frankfurt School is often described by scholars as a continuation of Western Marxism, a Marxian-influenced school of thought with beginnings in the writings of Hungarian philosopher Gyorgy Lukacs and Italian statesman Antonio Gramsci, and counterposed to the brand of Marxism-Leninism that held sway among Soviet statesmen and scholars. Alongside other key insights provided from Freudian psychoanalysis and Neitzschean modes of critique, the analyses of these theorists, including their concept of liberation, were thus firmly embedded within a Marxian analytical framework.

1 Adapted from the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry, “Critical Theory” (Bohman, 2005).
Yet any talk of emancipation and liberation rings hollow absent some adequately constructed concept of freedom. Since the Age of Enlightenment and birth of modernity the category *freedom* has enjoyed a privileged status as a social and political value, bestowing as it does an element of moral priority to the individual agent. Indeed, distinguished thinkers as varied¹ as Hobbes, Locke, Kant, and J.S. Mill all adopted this view to varying degrees. In addition to their unity on this point, each took some version of a capitalist market society as the best all things considered institutionalization of this principle; that is, of freedom as a uniquely important feature of normative individualism, a view which takes the individual (over against the community, state, decree of a monarchy or nobility, and other purportedly normative dimensions of the natural or divine order) to be the fundamental unit of moral analysis. And hence the classical liberal tradition, with its emphasis on individuals freely pursuing their self-interest in capitalist markets, was born.

Even such a cursory glance at the history of this thought paradigm should suggest the immense social force behind these ideas. Contemporary politics in the United States and western Europe aptly reflect this constellation of ideas about freedom, as evidenced by the rhetoric and policy proposals so regularly invoked in its defense.² Mainstream microeconomic theory takes as axiomatic the rational, free-acting individual agent, complete with a set of rank-ordered preferences, to serve as an elementary analytical concept for constructing more generalized theoretical models.³ Members of the lay public are hardly immune from engaging in folk psychology or armchair philosophy, extolling the Protestant virtues of thrift, diligence and personal responsibility as a means of exercising our God-given freedoms. Indeed, such notions are deeply embedded in our collective conscience and ethos.
Given its historical and contemporary prominence alike, the aim of this paper is to critically examine and normatively evaluate the concept freedom based on a Marxian understanding of the “laws of motion” of capital. Using the three volumes of *Capital* as a reference point I will contend that, despite the protestations of apologists, no instantiation of capitalism, however *laissez faire* or heavily regulated its basic institutions, is compatible with the fullest form of freedom available in modes of production that are direct and unrestricted in their productive orientation.\textsuperscript{iv} I will begin by reviewing the manifold iterations of the concept freedom and develop a working definition which will be applied throughout. Next, I will extract various elements from Marx’s critique of classical political economy pertinent to my analysis, pressing them into service of demonstrating the limits placed on human freedom under the reign of capital. Specifically, these limits will include: the value form and capital/wage labor relation; globalization and uneven development; and the increasing threat of ecological crisis. Finally, I will close with a brief discussion of the general compatibility and incompatibility of this critique with some contemporary modes of liberal egalitarian thought, in addition to an all-too-hurried glance at the basic institutional structures of an alternative model of economic organization which would address the freedom-limiting aspects of capitalism. By the paper’s close I hope to have established a compelling, if provisional, *prima facie* case against the prevailing notion that human freedom is best preserved under the economic organization and structures of the capitalist mode of production.

At this point it is worth pausing to insist that, in spite of this paper’s overt emphasis on economic processes and structures, freedom can doubtless be restricted in a hundred ways. From large, bureaucratic structures to government policies or lack thereof, to the manifold, identity-based gradations of individual and group oppression, there exists no uniformity of freedom-
denying mechanisms across concrete cases. In abstracting from such instances of freedom-hampering conditions it is not my intent to trivialize their normative import, but to highlight and gain analytical clarity regarding the forms of un-freedom specific to the capitalist mode of production. Any critical theory worth taking seriously must offer a comprehensive account of the intersections at which freedom is unduly compromised.

**Preliminary Objections**

Before setting out to review the concept of freedom and its implications for guiding a normative assessment of capitalism’s essential features and social relations, addressing two important objections to this project will be both pertinent and imperative. The first originates from within the writings of Marx himself, for they are commonly interpreted as containing more than a germ of hostility toward normative evaluation in general, as well as the invocation of “bourgeois” categories like *liberty, equality, and justice* more particularly. It is therefore crucial to deal with the content of this objection since a failure to do so would have the most undesirable consequence of relegating my entire endeavor to the status of “nonstarter.” Second is the troubling historical association of Marxism with totalitarian political regimes which, for whatever else it might represent, rightly strikes most observers as the antithesis of freedom, and as the fated undoing of socialism as a viable mode of economic organization. Hence illustrating the sharp divergence between Marx’s writings pertinent to the issue and the historically specific forms such regimes took when actualized should prove instructive. (Communitarian objection against freedom as foundational political value or good….)

**Marx’s Negative Appraisal of Normative Arguments, Categories, Concepts**

Many of Marx’s writings indeed suggest an unfavorable stance toward the use of moral language and reasoning as a means for critiquing the capitalist mode of production, or for
arguing in favor of socialism. One of the more salient examples of Marx’s aversion to such measures can be found in his description, where he refers to notions of “equal right” and “fair distribution” as “obsolete verbal rubbish” (Marx & Engels [1875] 1968: 321). Marx was, in addition, also quite scathing toward other authors of the time he deemed guilty of arguments on these grounds. For example, he writes of Proudhon “xzy…” (citation). From these examples Marx seems unequivocal in his rejection of negative moral evaluations of capitalism, a conclusion compatible with interpretations of his work that take his analysis to be a strictly scientific one. For if capitalism were to collapse it would be the result not of any systemic moral failings but rather of antagonisms intrinsically linked to its internal logic.

While it may well be the case that Marx rejected absolutely the procedure of moral reasoning as a useful form of critique, it is just as well to consider the place of his rejection in light of the historical debates with which he was engaged. Classical political economy and the classical liberal tradition from which it emerged each employed *rights, equality, freedom*, and the like as analytical concepts central to their theoretical framework. One reason for Marx’s palpable antipathy toward moral condemnations of capitalism, then, can be understood in virtue of his reluctance—indeed, refusal—to legitimate the conceptual framework of classical political economy. (Additional sentence.) Yet it is important to note that such a position, rather than constituting any sort of inferential deduction from his systematic reconstruction of the essential determinations of the capitalist mode of production, reflects but an attitudinal preference, necessary for his method of critique and engagement with the rivalrous theorists of his time perhaps, but not ultimately incompatible with an evaluative framework that employs normative categories. In other words, despite his tactical objections to the use of moral reasoning in

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criticizing capitalism, the use of such methods nonetheless fails to generate a logical contradiction between their implementation and Marx’s reconstruction using logical categories. The use of each simultaneously is therefore not precluded, considering especially the divergent aims and methods of each. And while not aimed directly at freedom construed as a normative concept, a host of social theorists in and out of the Marxist tradition now acknowledge the centrality of “moral equality…to Marx’s thought” (Kymlicka 2002: 170). I therefore follow these theorists, including those of the Frankfurt School, in embracing the use of normative categories together with logical ones favored by Marx in my analysis.

The Historical Association of Marxism with Totalitarian Regimes

A second objection to the nature and aim of my project lies in a commonly perceived intrinsic relation between Marxian thought and the totalitarian political orders that marked the twentieth century. Specifically, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR, henceforth Soviet Union) is often cited as a social order that justified a set of economic organizations and institutions on the basis of Marx’s writings. His name, after all, is included in the Marxist-Leninist political ideology that in part motivated the October (Bolshevik) Revolution, overthrowing the czarist autocracy and quasi-feudal economic structure that characterized Russia in favor of a Bolshevik political party and bureaucratic command economy, the latter of which instituted planned economic output and distribution. For whatever else may be said of the Soviet political-economic structure, the social conditions under which most persons lived during its tenure could hardly be said to be constitutive of freedom in any substantial sense. Industrial workers, for instance, with the Soviet state now the representative agent of their interests qua the socialized means of production, nonetheless were still abjectly subject to the will of Party leaders

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3 As referenced in Kymlicka (2002: 170):
and economic planners. One of the principal reasons underlying the historical observation of such subjugation was the political praxis of Vladimir Lenin, the party leader whose reading of Marx led him to espouse democratic centralism, a political arrangement that permitted only party members to deliberate freely about policy prescriptions while precluding all other members of society. Because there had been no capitalist development in Russia prior to the 1917 revolution, and because, in turn, any viable socialist revolution presupposes both (i) a class of wage laborers with the capacity to attain consciousness of its intrinsic subordination and the collective interests of its members, and (ii) the technical development of the factors of production spurred on by competition in capitalist producer markets, Lenin was sharply aware of the barriers facing the development of a socialist economic order in post-feudal Russia. So he envisaged a politically elitist party, under the direction of which the developmental course and national unification of the Soviet Republic, including that of the workers, could be effectively carried out. But the temporary if indefinite subordination of the latter to the will of the Party remained an essential feature of Lenin’s vision. When placed into political practice, therefore, Marxian theory necessarily leads to some form or other of totalitarian regime.

Several lines of response are available to critiques that seek to conflate Marxian theory with the political-economic structure of the Soviet Union. It is perhaps instructive to begin by noting, as I did in my introductory remarks, the Marxist writers and groups emphatically seeking to contrast their views with those of the Soviet political project. Among the most prominent and earliest of these openly anti-Soviet Marxist writings were those penned at the turn of the twentieth century by radical Polish theoretician and social activist Rosa Luxemburg, some 13 years prior to the Russian revolutions. It was in *Organizational Questions of the Russian Social Democracy* ([1904] 1961) that she laid out her criticism of Lenin’s calls for centralism, fervently
contesting his end-justifies-the-means assertion that authority should be concentrated within the Party’s highest ruling apparatus and delegated only at its discretion. For Luxemburg, the often localized and “spontaneous” nature of working class movements could not be realized in a bureaucratic hierarchy (Luxemburg [1904] 1961: 168). And so from its earliest aspirations the Soviet political regime was marked by a power structure that a host of non-Soviet Marxists found irredeemably objectionable.

Another attractive option for responding to claims that would inexorably link Marxian thought with totalitarian political regimes is to consult relevant passages from Marx’s own writings. While it is generally acknowledged among theorists steeped in his tradition that Marx wrote comparatively little on the concrete structures that might constitute his vision of a post-capitalist society, since, after all, he died before completing books on the state and world market, he nevertheless did affirm particular political-economic structures in his political essays. Notably, in “The Civil War in France,” an 1871 pamphlet that detailed the nature and development of the struggle between Parisian workers and nonlocal powers, Marx emphasized what he deemed as due limits on administrative powers. First, all executive and judicial positions were to be democratically elected and subject to performance-based revocation. Second, the remuneration of officials occupying these positions of public service was to be set equal to a “workman’s wage” (Marx 1871). That none of these limiting conditions prevailed under the Soviet regime should give one pause before concluding that a Marxian society is an essentially totalitarian one. As we will see, freedom of the sort to which Marx alluded in the first volume of Capital extends well beyond that observed in the political arrangement of the Soviet Union.

Prior to considering one final objection it will be useful to spend a moment’s reflection on the term socialism. Like so many technical terms its meaning is undoubtedly vague without
additional conceptual footwork, and its usage therefore will prove imprecise across manifold speech act cases. Due to hostile relations between the US and Soviet Union during the Cold War, socialism’s denotation has come to constitute something of a thick concept, evaluatively loaded regardless of the user’s political leanings, yet surely more prominent in its evocation of negative sentiments among US discourse. Some view it as synonymous with socializing the cost of any public good vis-à-vis a system of taxation while others, taking a broader view, suggest that any form of state intervention into markets without the express intent of safeguarding property rights is compatible with the term. Others still couch the concept in concert with totalitarian political regimes of the sort discussed in this section. This latter means for employing the concept had an ossifying effect, setting “the standard conception for the twentieth century’s confrontation between the ‘two great systems’ for most people on both sides” (Resnick & Wolff 2002: x).

But it turns out that socialism is a genus term with multiple species variations, resistant to any static conceptualization. So while it may be perfectly sensible in certain contexts to speak of socialism in terms of government intervention or totalitarian political regimes, such versions do not exhaust the conceptual landscape. Nor do they restrict commitment to any one species. For this author, socialism minimally entails a mode of social production characterized by its direct and unrestricted sociality, in addition to a generalized, substantive access to the means of production for workers. In other words, associated producers unfettered by traditional social roles or customs fashion items of utility in democratically-controlled workplaces. Instances in which workplace control is mediated by some governing body or representative agent must be accompanied by a set democratic principles that meaningfully express the will of the workers they are instituted to represent.

Opposition to Freedom as Foundational Category
One final issue to address before examining instances of freedom under capitalism is the foundational priority of freedom as a normative category. There is considerable debate in contemporary social and moral philosophy surrounding monistic conceptions of the right or the good; that is, contention about what sort of basic goods to which all others should be subordinate or can be reduced. Some versions of utilitarianism, on the one hand, take wellbeing or preference satisfaction or sufficiently informed pleasures as the basic constituents of value. Rights and duty-based theories, on the other hand, have historically emphasized the self-determination of autonomous agents, human rights, and generalizable just principles used to evaluate human action, decision making procedures and social institutions. This latter set of commitments constitutes what is sometimes called normative individualism, a classical liberal view which takes the individual as the ultimate point of moral concern. Communitarian theorists reject these consequentialist and rights based accounts on the basis of their abstraction from tradition and community norms, which are taken to be valuable as such. Ideas of individual freedom as a foundational value are, communitarians insist, no doubt the product of socialized values embedded within language, a social truth that renders implausible the sort of individualism to which liberals appeal. With so many seemingly incompatible theories of value, on what grounds might we demonstrate that freedom is the norm toward which we should direct our ultimate normative commitments?

For all their stark differences in method and content, the theoretical paradigms just sketched take as intrinsically valuable one (or one set of) foundational good (or goods). Such monistic frameworks are thus essentially incompatibilist regarding the ontological and normative status of competing basic values. If one value is truly basic, then all others must in some sense be derivative of the former. Somewhat more concretely, then, if it is supposed that wellbeing is the
most basic value or good, then a derivative value like freedom can be considered only insofar as it increases wellbeing. And within the context of value monism, value relations between basic and non-basic values of this sort will obtain across cases, provided that no defeaters condition the cases otherwise.

Yet, as the work of twentieth century Scottish philosopher W.D. Ross has shown, incompatibilist ethical monism with respect to value turns out to be a false dilemma. In deriving a duty based moral theory, Ross posits a multitude of *prima facie* obligations\textsuperscript{vii}, none of which are reducible to the others in any given circumstance (Ross, [1930] 1988). Rather than constructing his normative framework on the basis of a single moral principle, Ross instead adopts a pluralistic structure containing a relative handful of duties. While no one duty is assigned foundational priority, each is nonetheless overriding based on prevailing social conditions and other relevant non-moral facts. The general compatibility between values (or, in Ross’s case, duties) observed in this system mirrors the tack taken in my own project. *Freedom* need not essentially supersede any other competing values like wellbeing or community norms, for existing as one among a number of other intrinsically valuable tenets is compatible with my project of examining the ways it manifests or withers under the capitalist mode of production.

Having considered and responded to these preliminary objections, let us turn now to the conceptual variations of freedom, including its descriptive and normative dimensions.

**Freedom: Conceptual Issues and Distinctions**

The concept *freedom* is in philosophical discourse most often appropriated for use in metaphysical debates between variants\textsuperscript{viii} of causal determinism and metaphysical libertarians, who maintain at minimum that some agents, in some cases, are able to meet the requirements necessary for subjective will formation independent of any external factors that would otherwise
nullify this capacity. And while there is at once much overlap between metaphysical and political conceptions of freedom, for present purposes I will mostly abstract from contentions regarding the former. Another striking feature of freedom is its distinctly modern emergence. That the legitimation of political authority should be grounded in the self-governing individual agent is a foundational principle of classical liberalism (Christman, 2015). The extension of such a principle into political practice lies at the heart of the social contract tradition, views that coalesced in the writings of Hobbes, Locke, Kant, and Rousseau. A closer examination of freedom’s conceptual distinctions is therefore in order.

**A Working Definition of Freedom: Conceptual Variants and Conditions**

*Freedom, or negative and positive liberty*, and *autonomy* constitute a family of closely related concepts. Indeed, as Christman (2015) notes, the delineation of such concepts can be cumbersome—arbitrary, even—and will in many cases yield effectively equivalent results. Still, deriving a working definition of *freedom* is imperative given the aims of my project. Taken most generally, *autonomy* is construed as a capacity to “live one’s life according to reasons and motives that are…one’s own,” “independent of one’s place in a metaphysical order or of one’s role in social structures” (Christman, 2015: 1-2). More specifically, *personal autonomy*, an individual trait more global in scope than the mere capacity to impose the moral law on oneself, a capacity associated with *moral autonomy*, is also cast into contrast with *basic* and *ideal autonomy*. The workings of autonomous self-governance suggest that one must have the capacity to form and act on desires that are in some meaningful sense one’s own. For many philosophers working on the issue, this includes meeting necessary conditions of competency and authenticity. While the competency condition involves “rational thought, self-control, and freedom from debilitating pathologies, systematic self-deception, and so on,” the authenticity condition
requires an ability to affirm one’s own commitments (Christman, 2015: 6). Put most simply, then, *personal autonomy* involves both the independent authenticity and competence in a desire-forming procedure.

In contrast with *autonomy*’s emphasis on the independent and authentic nature of will or desire formation, *freedom* (or *liberty*) is more explicitly concerned with the presence of barriers and the possibility of acting. Extending back at least as far as Kant, notions of negative and positive liberty were most comprehensively developed in the work of Isiah Berlin during the mid-twentieth century. The designation “negative” connotes the absence of some freedom-denying factor such as obstacles, constraints or interference from others, whereas the designation “positive,” accordingly, connotes the presence of some freedom-conferring factor like control, self-determination or self-realization (Carter, 2012). A useful distinction for further conceptualizing these terms may be had by a consideration of factors both internal and external to the agent, with the former applying to self-direction and control and the latter applying to exogenous barriers. What is perhaps most important for the derivation of a working definition is how such notions are placed into the language of contemporary social philosophy, namely, the capacity of an individual or group to carry out their life plans in a way compatible with the reasons given for valuing such plans. Further, the ideal of freedom is attributed to persons as a means for deconstructing oppressive social conditions, liberation from which is taken as a foundational aim of justice (Christman, 2015). A corollary of such principles is that the economic structure should open a sphere in which individuals and groups are able to actualize their life plans according to values they reasonably accept. Hence this ability of individuals and groups to independently formulate and carry out their life plans in a capitalist market society will be at the center of my evaluation, including the essential features and social relations inherent to
the system, the concomitant structural tendencies that follow, and the ways in which human freedom is furthered and compromised as a result.

**Freedom and the Capitalist Mode of Production**

**Freedom: Hegel’s Defense**

Arguments marshalled in defense of the capitalist mode of production, including its freedom-conferring capacities, have prevailed since its turbulent beginnings (Perelman, 2000). One of the most comprehensive if mystifying expositions detailing the normative significance and legitimating features of capitalist market societies is found in the work of the remarkably gifted nineteenth century Prussian philosopher Georg W. F. Hegel. A principal aim of Hegel’s project in *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* ([1821] 2008) was to reconstruct in thought the institutions essential for conferring freedom to human subjects by ultimately reconciling interests of particularity (i.e. group interests) and individuality with more universal ones. This task of reconstruction was carried out via a systematic dialectical process, wherein the empirically givens of “actual existence” are appropriated for a systematic reconstruction based on an examination of the logical structure of sequential categories, which proceed from simple and abstract to increasingly complex and concrete determinations (Smith, 1990). By implementing categories as a principle of unification, whereby manifold moments of simple unity and difference are conjoined, Hegel’s dialectical system was invariably affirmative of the structures derived from the initial moment of appropriation (ibid). Beginning (or, rather, resuming at the stage in the dialectic where he left off), as he does in the *Philosophy of Right*, at the level of abstract right and the subjective will desirous of property possession, Hegel culminates his dialectic progression at the level of the modern state. For Hegel, then, the concept of freedom is synonymous with the concept of right.
As Hegel progresses to more concrete and complex stages, ethical life and its constituent civil society, he constructs a number of arguments defending the freedom-enhancing structures in capitalist market societies. Markets, according to Hegel, provide an objective structure in which freedom can become actualized. The historical emergence of markets as a means of exchange formally institutionalizes a space in which individuals can exercise self-determination, a core dimension of freedom, in carrying out their life plans. In consumer markets, for example, more readily acquired are the products deemed compatible with one’s vision of the good life. No longer were social roles and consumptive practices constrained by the custom of feudal relations, with individuals now free to choose for themselves an occupation of the sort that best matches their values and interests in newly existing labor markets. A normatively significant consequence of consumer and labor markets, therefore, is that humans are free to define and expand their capacities in dynamic ways previously unavailable. Along with the formal institution of recognition, where subjects engaging contractual exchange for mutual benefit honor the other’s freedom to rationally enter the exchange relation and equality under the law, markets permit an additional, higher order structure within which individuals pursuing their private self-interest cannot but further the common social good. Matching the sanguine optimism of classical political economists at the time, the spirit of the invisible hand argument was naturally entrepreneurial: individuals pursuing their self-interest in a market society will systematically generate new goods that help others in meeting their needs, since doing so will ensure their own successful pursuit of the good. Put differently, if one is successful in commercializing a good or service that is met with high demand, one is bound for economic success, which serves as a means to more readily pursuing one’s own interests. Thus for Hegel, the market-based “system
of needs” is yet another moment of reconciliation, where interests of particularity are simultaneously affirmed in concert with those of universality (2008: 186-197).

**Marx’s Concept of Capital: A Digression**

Karl Marx is, considering among other things the enormity of his impact on world affairs, a towering figure in intellectual history, well known for his critique of the capitalist mode of production. In his masterwork, *Capital*, his grandiose aim was to lay bare the laws of this specific form of social production. Doing so, however, would require a distinctive dialectical methodology, in which sequentially ordered logical categories are used to capture individual, empirical moments deemed essential to the system’s being as such. As a system of social production, that is, a system in which commodity outputs that meet human needs are produced organically, by living labor, capitalism is characterized among modes of production by the uniquely asocial nature of its production of social wealth. In previous modes of production, slave and feudal types, for instance, the total social product was directly social, produced for the immediate needs of the ruling and oppressed classes alike. But in capitalism, the goods produced under conditions of privately undertaken labor do not prove their social usefulness until they are successfully exchanged in a market transaction. In this sense, then, a system of generalized commodity production, where most persons in most times and places are engaging in privately undertaken labor, both underlies and requires a system of generalized commodity exchange, where most persons in most times and places meet their needs by exchanging commodities in a marketplace.

One of Marx’s most controversial categories, his so-called labor theory of value, presupposes such a system of generalized commodity production and exchange. For Marx, a commodity produced under conditions of privately undertaken labor assumes the “super-
sensuous” property value only if it is validated in market exchange; otherwise, if no use for a commodity is socially recognized in a market transaction, the privately undertaken labor time invested in the production of that commodity is socially wasted. Commodities produced under such conditions, which constitute the “elementary form” in Marx’s dialectical progression, thus possess a dual character: a use value, which provide for their owners some modicum of utility, and an exchange value. The latter constituent of the commodity is brought to bear when it is cast into relation with other commodities via the process of exchange. Some amount $a$ of commodity $C$ will exchange for some amount $a_2$ of commodity $C_2$, for example. More concretely, perhaps twenty pairs of shoes exchange for ten parkas. On Marx’s account, what allows for commodities to be exchanged in this way must be some third property, distinct from use value and exchange value, and possessed in shoes, parkas, and all other commodities alike. This property underlying exchange value is value.

The concrete processes involved in producing shoes and their associated use value is no doubt qualitatively distinct from that which is involved in producing parkas. Hence for Marx, concrete labor is that which occurs during a specific production process. When commodities are exchanged between parties, their concrete use values are socially validated. But since exchange occurs as a process abstracted from that of production, it is abstract labor that for Marx constitutes the substance of value. According to Marx, the value of a commodity is determined by abstract labor that has proven its social necessity only if and because that labor was privately undertaken in a system of generalized commodity production. In other words, it is not simply the amount of abstract labor congealed in a commodity that determines its value, as is commonly objected.
In order that persons effectively meet their material needs over time in a system of
generalized commodity exchange, they must proceed to the market with commodities to buy and
sell. When the exchange value of one commodity C is brought into relation with that of another,
C’s value expressed in the material form of the other, is what Marx termed value’s *accidental*
form. Yet this relation of commodities fails to exhaust the logical possibilities, since this same
commodity C can just as well express its value in the material form of all existing commodities,
the *expanded* form of value. Here, too, there remains a yet more complete relation of
commodities, where the value of all other existing commodities express their value in the
material form of commodity C, value’s *general* form, where value assumes its form in a
commodity that is simultaneously a universal and particular—money, the objective form in
which value necessarily appears in conditions of generalized commodity production (Smith,
1990).

Markets as such are not inherently conducive to exchange since each party must possess a
commodity desired in the will of the other. The introduction of money largely solves this “double
coincidence of wants” problem, standing in as a medium or means of exchange and thus
permitting sellers to be matched with buyers who possess no commodity they desire. Marx
simplified this process with the use of a simple schematic: C-M, a commodity exchanged for
money, a sale. The corollary of this, of course, is M-C, money exchanged for a commodity, a
purchase. Propertyless workers, divorced from the means of subsistence and production, must
sell their labor power as a means to access their material needs through participation in market
exchange. Applying the schematic would expand its scope to a C-M-C circuit, where the
commodity (C-) labor power is sold in exchange for money (-M-), which is used to purchase
commodities (-C) that will temporarily service an individual’s subsistence needs. Money, hence,
serves as a means (of commodity circulation) that satisfies human ends. It is instructive to note here that the freedom to formulate and carry out one’s life plans and to competently form authentic desires takes place within this process of commodity exchange.

If we were to extend the purchases and sales of commodity exchange indefinitely, our schema would appear thusly: […]C-M-C-M-C…]. So in addition to C-M-C circuits, we also observe the logical possibility of M-C-M circuits where, rather than as a means of circulation, money serves as an end of exchange. Contrary to C-M-C circuits in which money is used as a means of exchange for qualitatively heterogeneous commodities, M-C-M circuits are characterized by money as a quantitatively homogenous end of exchange. But it is in some sense absurd to place money into circulation only to get in return an equivalent quantity. Instead, money may be circulated with the intended end of an accretion of value, the form in which it objectively appears. Our M-C-M circuit has thus been replaced by M-C-M’, where M’ (M prime) designates an increased, or “valorized” amount of value. It is in this circuit that owners of capital purchase (M-) the commodity (-C-) labor power with the intent of accruing some greater sum of money (-M’). Insofar as value, privately undertaken labor that has been socially validated through exchange, takes the form of commodities and money, it now takes on a new, higher-order form, capital: a process of value in motion that takes on different forms as it reproduces itself over time. This is evinced perhaps most clearly in the process of production capital (M-C-P-C’-M’), in which money (M-) is advanced by owners of capital to purchase the commodities (-C-) labor power and means of production. Owners follow up by exercising their right to use the commodities, setting labor power to work on the means of production in the production (-P-) process, which yields a collection of commodity outputs (-C’-) that, if all goes accordingly, are sold at a value greater than that which was input into the production circuit. The distinctive
moments of this process, that is, of value assuming multiple forms, are characterized by their transformation (or “metamorphosis”).

**Capital as dominant subject.** So we have arrived, finally, after but a rough sketch of the essential determinations of the capitalist mode of production, at Marx’s category of *capital*. What is perhaps most striking about this concept is not manifold forms traversed to capture its basic intelligibility, but rather the peculiarity of the language used by Marx in his description of its process. In the chapter “The General Formula for Capital,” Marx writes his concept *capital* as an “automatic subject,” as value as “the subject of a process in which, while constantly assuming the form in turn of money and commodities, it changes its own magnitude”; it is “self-valorizing value” (Marx, 1990: 255). It is one thing for philosophers to speak of human subjects, pursuing their ends, their goods, as they see fit. It is perhaps not wholly inconceivable to speak of nonhuman animals as subjects, for they too have desires (or at the very least inclinations oriented by biological drives) they seek to fulfil. But to construe capital, a process of value in motion, as a subject? The bold claims of social ontology persist: Not only is capital a subject in its own right, it is the “dominant subject” of the whole social world, under which all other subjects, wills, processes, goods, ends, freedoms are subsumed (ibid). This is illustrated by reference to our exchange circuits. The C-M-C circuit of circulation of circulation under which the class of wage laborers pursue their interests is both ontologically and logically subordinate to the M-C-M’ circuits in which capitalists purchase wage labor as a commodity, since individuals can only obtain the objective material conditions of human existence in C-M-C circuits by selling their labor power in M-C-M’ circuits, where the ruling paradigm is everywhere and always: Money *must* beget money!
None of this is to say that all hope for freedom under the capital imperative, where value must accrete, where money must become more money, is irretrievably lost. For Marx readily acknowledged the sorts of freedom and social development conducive of flourishing institutionalized in generalized commodity exchange. One may indeed experience varying degrees of freedom in such a system. All that is required is aligning one’s own ends with those of capital: the ceaseless accumulation of capital. Insofar as this project is undertaken, one’s interests will be systematically privileged in the socio-economic sphere, including, most importantly for our purposes, the ability to act in such a way as to be compatible with one’s life plans. But as we have seen and will continue to see, the scope such freedom nonetheless remains limited.

One such limitation worth considering is the formation of preferences or desires under a system of generalized commodity production and exchange. If the ultimate logic of the system is to valorize value, to exalt the profit motive, which is best accomplished by the production and sale of as many commodities as possible as quickly as possible, then the system will require a critical mass of persons to adopt a theory of the good life compatible with these ends. In short, this entails convincing a critical mass of persons that consuming as many commodities as possible is the foundational value of the good life. Herbert Marcuse, in a revision to his grand Freudian-Marxian synthesis, *Eros and Civilization*, acknowledged his failure to take heed of this robust, desire-altering phenomena when attempting to explain the continued existence of “surplus repression,” in modern society (Marcuse, [1955] 1966). If subjective preference formation can be reliably altered for the purposes of capital, and if the authentic and competent formation of such desires are two essential conditions for freedom, the limits to freedom as subsumed under the dominant subject capital are quite pronounced indeed.

**Capital and Freedom: A Marxian Evaluation**
What is perhaps less well known about Marx’s thought is the extent to which he affirmed categories of freedom like those defended by Hegel above. In his reconstructive project Marx takes, along with the classical political economists, a system of generalized commodity production and exchange to be an institutionalization of freedom (and equality) unavailable in previous modes of production. For the wage laborer was by virtue of the novel economic structure granted a form of freedom nonexistent in the master-slave or lord-serf relation. For his part, Hegel insisted that there was no economic institutional arrangement beyond a market-based system of needs that could further promote freedom (Smith, 1990). Contrary to the affirmative transitions between categories in the Hegelian dialectical system, Marx’s transitions were simultaneously affirmative and critical. Part and parcel of the co-existence between affirmative and critical conclusions about the institution of certain social structures had to do with the temporal directionality of evaluation: If the normative evaluation is cast backward, comparing institutions and social relations that comprised feudalism to those of capitalism, the rationality of the categorical structure could be affirmed based on the freedom-conferring tendencies it generalizes. Yet it remains perfectly legitimate to analyze the limitations of such freedom-granting structures.

In his chapter on “The Sale and Purchase of Labour Power,” Marx evinces the notion that the wage laborer of capitalism is “free in the double sense” (Marx, 1990: 272). That is, (s)he is, on the one hand, free to sell his or her labor power as a commodity in the sphere of exchange; (s)he is, on the other hand, also free of the objects needed for the realization of his labour-power” (Marx 1990: 272-273). In writing of “freedom” of the latter sort, Marx is alluding to the dispossession faced by the wage laborer with respect to the objective conditions of human existence: the means of production and means of subsistence. And though he devotes a relatively
short chapter ("The Secret of Primitive Accumulation") to the historical development “written in…letters of blood and fire” behind the creation of the wage laborer, his derivation of the category wage labor emerges out of considerations surrounding the capital form, specifically capital in production, its category of simple unity, which takes as given wage labor as a commodity bought and sold by capitalists and workers, respectively (ibid: 875). On Marx’s view, then, rather than being the agent free to sell their labor power, the wage laborer is anything but, for “the period of time for which he is free to sell his labor power is the period of time for which he is forced to sell it” (ibid: 415). Marx thus views the capital-wage labor relation as, contra Hegel, one constituting inherently antagonistic interests, rather than any sort of reconciliation among interests.

The capital/wage labor relation. The capital/wage labor relation has three tendentious features relevant to the concept freedom: structural coercion, exploitation, and workplace domination⁴. In what immediately follows each will be considered in turn.

Structural coercion. It is difficult indeed to get too far in conceptualizing freedom as a concept in itself without reference to the possibility of coercion. Most talk of coercion consists in the presence of two (or more) agents, wherein at least one agent seeks through various measures to force or restrict the action or self-determination of others (Anderson, 2011). But agents can have their options restricted in a dozen ways, including by external factors that limit their substantive choices. If, given our conditions of freedom from above, individual subjects (or groups) can have their ability to act or their capacity to formulate life plans consistent with their reasons for valuing such plans constrained, then their freedom has been compromised insofar as these conditions have been constrained.

⁴ This tripartite model of the capital/wage labor relation is taken from Smith 2015 (draft).
According to Marx, as we have seen, persons free from access to the objective conditions of human existence must, consequently, sell their labor power to procure their means of subsistence, as nearly all such means take the form of property privately owned by another party. No owner of society’s productive resources coerces the involuntary action of any individual systematically and legally separate from the means of subsistence, requiring that they enter a wage contract against their will. But if entering any wage contract whatsoever restricts action an agent would have otherwise taken or is fundamentally incompatible with their view of the good life, and if entering such a contract is required for mere survival, then coercion exists in the economic structure irrespective of whether it is conditioned by other subjects or external factors. And if coercion that undercuts the competency and authenticity dimensions of freedom outlined above obtains, as it does here, the possibility of freedom-conferring conditions becomes especially precarious. For example, a recent Gallup Poll notes that approximately half of all workers employed full-time in the U.S. work over forty hours per week. Nearly one-in-five works over sixty hours, while another third works between forty-one and fifty-nine hours per week (Saad, 2014). Perhaps some subset of this group, satisfied with their work/life balance or available leisure time, subjectively experiences little of the freedom-limiting conditions of the structural coercion constitutive of labor markets. But given the materially-based compulsion of the working class to sell their labor to some capitalist or other, the concept of freedom cannot have its basis validated by the preference satisfaction of any one individual.

An objection to this line of reasoning comes from the eminent right libertarian philosopher Robert Nozick, whose writings on voluntary exchange call into question whether wage laborers are indeed compelled to sell their labor power. Nozick implores his readers to imagine an “Alphabet Economy” with twenty-six persons, A to Z. Individuals A and B, C and D,
and so on, all freely agree to make binary contracts and in the process do not violate any individual’s rights, including those of Person Z. In Nozick’s view, although the contracts of Persons A through Y may severely limit Z’s options, they do not in the same way reduce her freedom, since Person Z is not made to involuntarily (i.e. against her will) pursue any specific undesirable option. Because Persons A through Y are acting voluntarily and within their rights as free and equal exchangers of goods, it is impossible to conclude that Person Z has been coerced and thus had their freedom diminished. On Nozick’s account, therefore, one is forced to sell one’s labor power only if human actions necessitated the restriction of one’s options in this way and these actions turned out to be illegitimate (Cohen, 1995).

The intuitive plausibility—or lack thereof—of any argument is, of course, no guarantee of its soundness; in the best of instances, it may be granted a certain prima facie case. Indeed, if ever there were a conception of freedom so impoverished as to be rendered meaningless, surely it is to be found in this point-missing musing of Nozick. The essential dependence Nozick posits between some person P’s action A being involuntary, and the presence of human action acting as a freedom-inhibiting condition, is spurious, and no such argument is forthcoming as to why this assertion should be accepted. In addition, Nozick helps himself to the question-begging assumption that the means of production are privately held, thus underlying his system of exchange. And attempting to legitimate a system of justice in transfer (i.e. market exchange) when no compelling arguments have been proffered for justice in acquisition (other than appeals to purportedly self-evident truths) strikes me as especially grievous.

Exploitation. Marx’s category of exploitation, along with his theory of value, turns out to be among the most contentious in all his voluminous writings. The derivation of this category within his systematic, dialectical reconstruction of the capitalist mode of production is based on
the initial determination of the category capital, labor power as a commodity (Smith, 1990). Because one group of society owns nearly all its productive resources, and with them a considerable hoard of wealth that guarantees their subsistence, while a second group effectively owns none, a structural tendency of asymmetric bargaining power is thereby institutionalized. Finding themselves repeatedly in a position of relatively lower bargaining power, wage laborers must negotiate wage contracts with owners of capital (ibid). Because of their systematically subordinate position, wage laborers will tend to produce commodities whose value exceeds that of their labor power, which is determined by the socially necessary labor time needed to produce the commodities needed for its reproduction (Marx, 1990). In producing commodities whose value exceeds that of their labor power, these workers are, through laboring beyond that required for the successful material reproduction of their labor power (i.e. their performing surplus labor), producing what Marx coined surplus value. This concept entails two subgenres: absolute- and relative-surplus value. The former’s variability is determined by the length of the working day. Once the value of labor power has been reproduced via necessary labor, the remainder of the workday is spent performing surplus labor, and hence creating surplus value. Alternatively, relative surplus value is produced by advances in technologies and means of production specific to the commodity basket essential to the reproduction of wage labor. When technologies that produce food improve, to take a trivial example, this forces the value of labor power down. And as the value of labor power decreases, so too do the capital outlays dedicated to its purchase, which increases the relative surplus value to be appropriated by the owners of capital at the close of a production circuit.

In the case of exploitation, too, as constituted in the capital/wage labor relation, human freedom is reliably belied. The surplus value created in the labor process and appropriated by
owners of capital is systematically separated from its producer, the wage laborer. Instead of having the freedom to take for themselves their productive output, with property rights to distribute or exchange such output in ways compatible with their authentic desires, the wage labor class must relinquish its *surplus product* into possession of the capitalist class, who are free to distribute the output in accordance with their desires. Freedom from society’s productive resources limits the freedom of occupation institutionalized in labor markets, since no amount of freedom to sell one’s labor power is necessarily consistent with access to value produced.

Many theorists will at this point no doubt object that labor is but one input into the productive process, and is compensated accordingly based on its contribution to the production process via the wage contract. After all, the argument goes, nature and capital each provide inputs to and play a role in the production process, for which they too should be compensated in concert with their contribution. Marx dealt explicitly with arguments not unlike this in his chapter on “The Trinity Formula” in the third volume of *Capital*. In the standard version delivered by classical political economy, capital was rewarded with profits, land with ground rent, and labor with wages. But since his theory of capital is meant to capture a historically specific set of social relations in a historically specific form of social production, these initial pairings are faced with a problem of incommensurability, since land is a trans-historical factor of production and so cannot be pressed into the service of explaining its collection of rent. Even after reformulating the categorical pairings to account for the incommensurable categories, there is still a mistake of using the properties of one category to explain those of another. To explain the profit of the capitalists, classical political economists invoked the physical productivity of machines during the production process. But this move conflates a physical process, the productivity of a machine, with a social one, the determination of the distribution of value.
produced. And since Marx’s analysis is a theory of social relations underlying the productive process, no use of physical properties to explain social processes will be explanatorily sufficient.

**Workplace Domination.** In capitalist market societies, control of the workplace is in many instances delegated to agents hired to represent the interests of the capitalist class. Accordingly, this relation between capital and its agents institutes a structural hierarchy in the workplace, with workers placed more or less toward the bottom of the hierarchy and managers, to varying degrees, closer to the top. The nature of this arrangement designates a loss of workplace control and determination in the production process for labor. In being separated from both the product of their labor and control of the production process, laborers experience the adverse social-psychological effects of “alienation,” feelings of isolation from a valued productivity (Harvey, 2014: 267). Due to the relentless effort to increase the rate of surplus value production, these agents of capital seek to intensify the labor process, the physical and psychological health effects of which have been well documented. Marx, in his chapter on “Machinery and Large-scale Industry,” noted the real subsumption of labor to the temporal rhythm of the production process, where the status of workers as subjects in the labor process is inverted to that of mere object, as the worker becomes an “appendage” of the machine, subject to its movements (Marx, 1990: 614). If freedom consists in the substantive ability to carry out one’s life plans and the capacity to realize one’s authentically and competently formed desires, it is perhaps in the structural hierarchy of the workplace that the prospect of freedom is most explicitly thwarted.

*(Codetermination objection and response…)*

**Inequality and Uneven Development.**
Inequality. One of the research programs central to a Marxist analysis of freedom is individual inequality within nation-states, and uneven regional and geographical development. The science of tracking trends in inequality and social stratification belongs to the subject content of sociology. Among other variables, inequality’s amount, rigidity, ascriptive processes, and crystallization are all conceptualized, operationalized, and used to convert empirical data into more general theoretical models that explain general tendencies of the analytical object(s) and serve as a platform for prediction generation (Grusky & Weisshaar, 2014). Recently, seminal work in the amount of inequality has been spearheaded by French economist Thomas Piketty and his colleague Emmanuel Saez. In reviewing US income tax data from the early twentieth century through present, Piketty and Saez conclude that income returns have since the 1970s been increasingly concentrating in the upper quintiles, and especially to wage earners in the top tenth of a percent (Piketty & Saez, 2003). Further data have suggested that, since the onset of the Great Recession of 2007 through 2009, the top one percent of income earners have appropriated some 95 percent of new wealth generated (cite). And in his own work, one of Piketty’s most striking conclusions was that the rate of return to capital (r) will always exceed (g), the growth of income, as captured in his equation r > g (Piketty, 2014).

Based on a Marxian concept of capital and the exploitation of wage labor, such a conclusion, despite the severity of its material consequences, is hardly surprising—or even illuminating. The appropriation and distribution of surplus product under capitalism is a contingent and highly contested concrete political process. At certain historical junctures, namely, when the organization and representation of labor has been strong, labor is able to procure for itself a relatively larger share in national income. Yet the systematic asymmetry in bargaining power featured in the capital/wage labor relation remains as long as the social
relations that characterize the capitalist mode of production are in place. As value is produced by wage labor during the labor process and appropriated by capital as a result of the wage contract, living labor is systematically alienated from the value it produces, thus rendering Piketty’s $r > g$ formula all the more plausible. And if using money as a means to further human ends within C-M-C circuits is a precondition for exercising a fuller form of freedom, and the income return to labor is always subordinate to the income returns to capital, however much political reforms might cushion the blow, then the inequality of income and wealth distribution under capitalism cannot ultimately prove compatible with the conditions required for freedom, considering especially the structural tendency for capital to appropriate greater returns on income relative to labor and the political power to effectively reproduce such relations.

*Uneven Development.* Another component of inequality-based research programs is inequality between nation-states, or combined and uneven regional and geographical development. While stark inequality of the sort observed in the US (and other economically developed nation-states) case may alert our moral intuitions, such cases hardly warrant the normative concern of less developed regions and nation-states. The World Bank estimates that “over 2.1 billion people in the developing world live on less than US $3.10 per day in 2012” (World Bank, 2016). In conceptualizing the economic disparities existing between nations, social theorist Immanuel Wallerstein developed his world systems theory of capitalist development, using now-established concepts of core, periphery, and semi-periphery to designate relative levels of “surplus appropriation by the bourgeoisie” (Wallerstein, 1979: 293). Core regions are those marked by the highest rate of capital accumulation, and independently capable domestic economies. At the opposite pole are those regions or nation-states so-called peripheral, typified by relatively low rates of surplus product accumulation and domestic economies that are
generally dependent for their prosperity on capital inflows and foreign trade markets. Somewhere in the middle, that is, in the semi-periphery, are those regions that are either on the ascent, closing in on the core status label, or on the descent, coming ever-closer to the dreaded status of periphery.

Marx predicted the mobility and concentration of capital leading to “subject the country to the rule of the towns” (Marx & Engels, xxxx: pg#). This adage, vague though it may be, turns out to be generalizable in a way useful for our analysis. Historically, nation-states with relatively higher concentrations of surplus value (i.e. capital) accumulation have seen their privileged positions and dominance of world markets reproduced over time, but only insofar as the conditions essential to capital accumulation—see especially the rate of profit—persist for their nationally-based units of capital. But the moment at which such conditions begin to wane, capital, and especially the hyper-mobile money capital, begins its flight, shifting investment to nation-states and other regions more conducive to higher profit rates. These instances of capital flight, it should be noted, are equally observed at more localized levels, as a tour through the US’s Rust Belt region of the upper Midwest will aptly demonstrate. It is in this sense that we again see the prospect of human freedom subject to the imperatives of the social world’s dominant subject, capital, as workers are made to follow the flows of capital investment wherever they may lead, for there can be no generalizable, long-term stability in capital’s insatiable need to self-valorize.

Global regions and nation-states historically subject to capital’s often imperial rule, or who have “failed” to create economic conditions congruent with the end of capital accumulation, now find themselves amidst a global race to the bottom, jostling with similarly-positioned nations to offer the lowest wages such that capital might better flourish. Such nations, we were
repeatedly assured by economists keen to legitimate their neoliberal theory, were not forever resigned to this position in the economic global order. If only they were to adopt domestic economic policies of the right sort, displacing corrupt local elites along the way, so the story went, they could eventually experience the economic success enjoyed by more developed regions and nation-states. Exalted as paradigmatic success stories of the neoliberal ethos were East Asian nations like South Korea and Taiwan, who, through embracing free-market economic policies such as opening their borders to foreign investment, were able to grow their domestic economies out of their previously meager state. But ascribing a direct, uni-linear causal inference from the economic success of these nations to free market principles supposedly implemented is hardly so straightforward. Due in large part to antagonistic Cold War relations between the US and Soviet Union, US-based powers sought to wage and win an ideological war within the greater Asian and Eastern European region. Toward this end, the US government and capitals flooded the nations of South Korea and Taiwan with liquidity and patented technologies, granting them the capacity to grow their domestic economies at a rapid rate, thereby disillusioning the nearby Soviet communist political-economic project (cite). So much for the magic of free markets. Outside of such extravagant measures, the sustained development of economies in the global periphery via means of neoliberal policy remains much more accidental and precarious.

If the prospect of domestic economic development under capitalism remains bleak for relatively underdeveloped nations bereft of any lucrative natural resources (read: oil), it may well be expected that such economies will continue to stagnate in the process of a vicious circle. Absent any developed infrastructure, given their historic economic subordination, most foreign investment inflows are directed toward low wage sectors, leaving government revenue bases
effectively nonexistent to invest in infrastructure or social programs. And this lack of infrastructural and social development systematically discourages any further investment in sectors that might otherwise prove to jumpstart a lifeless economy. Many of the ways in which freedom is undercut by material deprivation and the separation of workers from value created have already been discussed. It is sobering to reflect on the fact that such a vast portion of the world’s inhabitants are subordinated in this way, all for the good of capital, for the process of increasing value for the sake of increasing value.

**Ecological Crisis.**

As we have seen, capital is characterized by the imperative of accumulation, where producing and selling as many commodities as possible as quickly as possible is its necessary condition. This productive process of ever-increasing intensity necessarily depletes resources and generates wastes. The question of whether such a pattern of hyper-production and consumption is ecologically sustainable in the long-term thus comes immediately to the fore. For if the physical environment produces climatic conditions that are generally incompatible with the reproduction of organized society, the ability of persons to formulate and carry out life plans in accord with their rationally and authentically held desires will be thwarted in all but the most extreme cases of good fortune. Richard Smith “capitalism as ‘ecosuicidal’… Results of the Paris Climate Summit…”
References


Notes

i On the concept of freedom and its normative significance, the convergence of these thinkers’ views will surely surpass their divergence, even in spite of differences found in their methodological derivation of the term.

ii For an advanced introductory critique of the methodological assumptions of mainstream economics, including methodological individualism, see Keen, 2011. For a more advanced criticism, see

iii It is pertinent to note the disparate political and economic structural forms (and reforms) that the Soviet Union took on between its inception in 1917 and its dissolution in 1991. See Resnick and Wolff (2002).

iv In spite of the resistance of Luxemburg and other Marxists to the centralized power structure that characterized the Soviet Union, it still may be reasonably asserted that such structures are inherently indicative of a political Marxism; that is, that such power structures are a necessary rather than merely contingent (or accidental) feature of Marxist societies. A terse discussion of

v Ross’s *prima facie* duties include: benevolence, fidelity to promises, truth-telling, avoiding harm, gratitude, justice and reparation.

vi Some such versions of causal determinism include biological, physical, psychological, and theological.

vii “Although some attempts have been made to distinguish between liberty and freedom (Pitkin 1988; Williams 2001; Dworkin 2011), generally speaking these have not caught on” (Carter, 2012).

viii As with its connection to metaphysical disputes concerning freedom of the will, this concept is intimately tied to notions of social philosophy involving the formation of desires and preferences under social conditions of justice.

ix Debates have ensued among modern liberal social theorists about the means necessary for carrying out one’s life plans. Some suggest that access to material resources is sufficient for this end, while others emphasize the ability to exercise certain distinctively human capabilities.

x These findings have been replicated in Stiglitz 2012.