

Perfectionism, Liberalism, and Coercion: Implications for Global Ethics

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Abstract

The liberal-communitarian debate that has gripped much of political philosophy during the past two decades has shifted to a more refined liberalism-perfectionism discourse. The primary objective of this essay, then, is to advance this discussion. I shall argue that the disagreement is not between liberalism, on the one hand, and perfectionism, on the other. Rather the dispute is whether liberalism should be grounded in perfectionism or neutrality. I maintain that since liberalism cannot be neutral about itself, it should be grounded in perfectionism. I next argue that the perfectionist liberal should coerce another people to respect individual claims to well-being. Because coercion may be necessary my position has profound implications on global ethics, as well as public policy, as I attempt to demonstrate. I shall conclude this normative exploration by discussing the types of illiberalism that I would seek to change and the extent to which my project would take me.

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Introduction¹

The liberal-communitarian debate that has gripped much of political philosophy during the past two decades has shifted to a more refined liberalism-perfectionism discourse. The primary objective of this essay, then, is to advance this discussion. I shall argue that the disagreement is not between liberalism, on the one hand, and perfectionism, on the other. Rather the dispute is whether liberalism should be grounded in perfectionism or neutrality. I maintain that since liberalism cannot be neutral about itself, it should be grounded in perfectionism.

This debate has spilled over into the global arena. In "Two Concepts of Sovereignty: From Westphalia to the Law of Peoples?" David Fagelson (2001) critiques John Rawls' notion, as elaborated in *Political Liberalism* and *The Law of Peoples*, of a new world order based upon political liberalism and reason. Fagelson (2001) argues that we should abandon the search for this and other comprehensive world doctrines and, instead, insists that "[l]iberals must defend basic rights to freedom and equality not because they are reasonable, which some peoples will never accept, but because they enhance human well-being and are, therefore, just" (p. 499). At the end of his essay Fagelson (2001) remarks, "Whether a perfectionist liberal people should coerce another people to respect individual claims to well-being is a question for another essay" (p. 512). This essay takes up his challenge and examines whether or not a perfectionist liberal people should coerce another people to respect individual claims to well-being.

I next argue that the perfectionist liberal should coerce another people to respect individual claims to well-being. In global affairs this stance has direct implications upon a host of issues. The ongoing policy debate whether the United States should attach conditions – and if so, then how stringent – to its bilateral and multilateral agreements of aid and trade is a manifestation of our philosophical inquiry. Should the U.S., for instance, force other states, say China, to enhance and enforce their labor laws more consistently² (and as a end-state consequence increase the price U.S. consumers would pay for Chinese-made products) as a condition of trade? Or should the invisible hand of global market forces be allowed to ameliorate inequities in due course? I shall conclude this normative exploration by discussing the types of illiberalism that I would seek to change and the extent to which my project would take me.

Who is a Perfectionist Liberal?

At first glance, perfectionism and liberalism seem to be at odds. Here I am discussing "liberalism" and "perfectionism" as moral theories. Rawls takes up liberalism in this broader sense in *A Theory of Justice*, while he concentrates specifically on political philosophy in *Political Liberalism* (Rawls, 1993, xiv-xviii). On the one hand, perfection-

ism recognizes certain states or activities as good, in and of themselves. These goods are inextricably linked with human nature. Like Aristotle, Aquinas, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Hurka, I use, contra Rawls, the "narrower" definition of perfectionism: excellence defined by human nature (Hurka, 1993, p. 4, chap. 2). The pursuit, then, of those goods instantiates the human condition. Liberalism, on the other hand, takes a neutral position as to the good life (Galston, 1982; Rawls, 1993, p. 191-194). It argues that in a morally pluralistic world the individual, alone, should determine the good life. Thus liberalism criticizes the perfectionist "heavy hand" in the affairs of the individual.

If we know X is inherently good, then perfectionism "favours state coercion to force people into excellence" (Hurka, 1993, p. 147) by doing X or fostering the development of X. The liberal counters by asking, rather impolitely, "Who the hell do you think you are?" Then, once emotions abate, the liberal proceeds by asking the epistemological question: "How do you know X is good for both Brother A and Sister Z?" Plato and Aristotle would argue that they know through reason. But what if Brother A and Sister Z are members of a community that regards reason as suspect, even immoral?

Of course, Plato and Aristotle are at one extreme of perfectionism, advocating, it will be remembered, an activist state that molds the character of its citizenry. Progenitor of the conservative communitarian tradition, Plato had no qualms with the state interfering in the lives of its citizens. Aristotle, likewise, measured the good life in terms of one criterion, that is, whether it enabled human excellence.

But surely John Stuart Mill's liberal argument for personal autonomy and limited government is attractive, otherwise who (or what) is there to counterpoise a corrupt, unjust state. Mill's harm principle – that there is *no* justification for government intervention unless a person is directly harming or has harmed an individual's right – underpins much of the liberal tradition. This principle treats the autonomy of the individual as sacrosanct, as an inherent good. In this sense it has perfectionist overtures. Concomitantly, it allows the individual to make both the "wrong" and "right" choices (Mill, 2002). Remember, however, that the Millian conceptions of autonomy and liberty are absolute.³ The state must *never* coerce its citizens unless to prevent a direct (and amoral) harm to another.⁴

The perfectionist, if Mill had stopped there, would not have a problem with this formulation: that autonomy is an inherent good, therefore, we should seek to encourage the conditions that foster its development. But Mill extends this line of thought and professes that autonomy is the *only* good. A moral theory resting solely on one good, despite Aristotle's protestations, is inadequate, even if that good is free choice. Consider a world where my freely chosen gluttony is as good as your freely chosen moderation. Or consider the college student whose freely chosen apathy towards class assignments is as noble

as the professor's acumen. There is something wrong with this picture. Why? Because there are goods other than autonomy. And "if there are goods other than autonomy, may sufficient increases in them not outweigh any loss in autonomy" (Hurka, 1993, p. 149)?

A World of Many Goods

Hurka delineates three ways to look at this issue. First, we can rank the goods, with the good of autonomy lexically prior to, for example, the good of knowledge, the good of sex, and the good of physical endurance. Under this ordinally measured scheme, the goods are not necessarily ranked equally apart. Thus "small losses in [autonomy] outweigh large gains in [knowledge, sex or physical endurance]" (Hurka, 1993, p. 149). The second option envisions "some minimum of autonomy, one involving reasonable self-determination, as lexically prior, so that losses that take one below this minimum... outweigh large gains in other perfections" (Hurka, 1993, p. 149). The third perspective recommends that autonomy or free choice is not a good *per se* but is rather an instrument to an end. Here, only those goods that are freely arrived at, without coercion, are able to help achieve true human excellence.

Perfectionism, I argue, need not be of the Aristotelian or Millian extremes. "Moral pluralism," in fact, "can coexist with an idea of human excellence, but perfectionism does assume people ought to strive towards whatever human excellence consists in" (Fagelson, 2001, p. 501). For the perfectionist liberal, human excellence certainly consists of autonomy, tolerance, and other hallmarks of the liberal tradition. Moreover, as Fagelson (2001) insists, "this idea of liberalism not only recognizes negative freedoms related to autonomy and tolerance, but also certain positive freedoms that create the conditions in which autonomy or tolerance are possible options" (p. 502). Hence the perfectionist liberal is obligated vis-à-vis positive freedoms, say of education, to create the conditions in which autonomy or toleration are not only possible but can flourish.

This consequent obligation to create, promote and, in some cases, defend the conditions necessary for an individual's capacity to be realized entails activities and arguments that not everyone espouses, because not all states, groups, or individuals have the same idea of the good life. Conceivably, then, coercion may be necessary to establish and support those substantive freedoms, which Amartya Sen examines in *Development as Freedom*. Later I shall discuss in more detail the extent to which I would coerce people. But, briefly, it may include, borrowing from Theodore Roosevelt, "carrots and sticks." It need not consist of only physical force or the threat of force. It may include inducements to encourage freedom and equality, such as conditionality in providing international assistance to well ordered, albeit illiberal and hierarchal, states.

Discerning questions arise: What if the state depends upon our assistance for

subsistence? What if without outside aid massive amounts of people die? Although not a well ordered state, North Korea's plight is an example of regrettable outcomes: decent human beings may not be able to stomach humanitarian aid used as a weapon. Coercion under this scheme may include sanctions (see, e.g., Beitz, 1979, pp. 46-7) as well as membership qualifications to regional organizations such as the European Union. Law is a coercive measure as well (Vago, 2003, pp. 317-319). In discussing the liberal principle of legitimacy, Rawls (1993) makes this point in *Political Liberalism* when he asks:

when may citizens by their vote properly exercise their coercive political power over one another when fundamental questions are at stake? Or in light of what principles and ideals must we exercise that power if our doing so is to be justifiable to others as free and equal (p. 217)?

Rawls (1993) maintains that the "exercise of political power is proper and hence justifiable only when it is exercised in accordance with a constitution the essentials of which all citizens may reasonably be expected to endorse in the light of principles and ideals acceptable to them as reasonable and rational" (p. 217).

Notice that Rawls places a premium on coercion, as long as it is in accordance with a constitutional framework. Thus Rawlsian political liberalism, in particular political legitimacy, "has been specifically shaped to societies already imagined as falling with a certain broad historical tradition of political sensibility" (Michelman, 2003, p. 397). Frank Michelman continues, "Rawls looks to democratic political culture, broadly viewed, for the makings of a basis for political agreement robust enough to support a democratic constitution even while allowing for the ingrained tendency of constitutional democracy itself to sustain a wide diversity of conflicting moral and religious doctrines" (p. 397).

Is Rawls' "overlapping consensus," as captured here, realistic? This question is even more interesting when we understand that the link between democracy and liberalism is not, historically and contemporarily, axiomatic. Fareed Zakaria (2003) illustrates this point by noting, *inter alia*, popular participation, viz., free and fair (not to mention unfree and unfair) elections, does not ensure liberty. He finds that elections do not automatically translate into more freedom. Consider, as does he, the historical example of Germans electing the Nazis in 1933. This claim illustrates the still larger distinction between political morality and institutional design (Wall, 1998, pp. 21-4).

Since I am arguing that a perfectionist liberal (group or individual) ought to coerce another people to respect individual claims to well-being, I need to be clear as to who the perfectionist liberal is coercing. Is the perfectionist liberal coercing the government? Is she coercing only individuals or groups of individuals? In a constitutional liberal democratic society this distinction between who is coercing and who is being coerced

is critical, because in a constitutional liberal democratic society the individual is thought to share in the moral defects or achievements of the state. Why is that the case?

Moral Accountability in a Democratic Society

For the simple reason that in a "we, the people" society, the people choose their political decision-makers and, in turn, accept those decisions. Therefore it is disingenuous to argue that, on the one hand, it is "my" government, and then, on the other hand, disown the collective decisions. That rationale evinces a moral obtuseness at its worst. Of course, the degree to which individuals share in the moral defects or achievements of the (democratic) state is contested (see, e.g., Walzer, 2000, pp. 296-303).

Take the case of the United Kingdom's decision to partner with the United States and topple the Ba'athist regime in Iraq. Clearly, a "majority plus one" of the British populace did not favor Prime Minister Blair's decision. So, in this sense, are the individuals who did not support the decision to invade in March 2003 morally culpable if things turn out disastrous in Iraq and the Middle East region, as a whole? Or, conversely, can those same individuals take pride (and credit) in the accomplishments of the invasion if Iraq becomes a constitutional liberal democratic society in later years?

The problem of whether democratic moral accountability is determined on a case-by-case basis or over time is formidable. Suppose I am a civil disobedient, conscientious refuser or objector (see, e.g., Thoreau, 1848; Rawls, 1999a, pp. 319-43; King, 1963, pp. 72-89). Does the fact that I demonstrated against the Vietnam War shield me from moral blame for the deaths of innocents on all sides? Perhaps I should take a longer view and assess moral accountability in terms of consequences. Some may note that either the specifics do matter or I am not measuring the cases but the overall effect of the cases. If the latter, then what I am really talking about is a consequentialist metric. If that is appropriate, then, *ex hypothesis*, anything goes as long as the results are good. The perfectionist liberal may agree, in a sense, because the result may prove to be beneficial to an individual's well-being, even though in the short-term it may appear the individual is being coerced or manipulated (Wall, 1998, pp. 133-37). Let us take a rather extreme example: a perfectionist liberal may coerce a person from committing suicide by physically restraining him or her. Or the perfectionist liberal may say, "You know, if you commit suicide, I'll do so too," thus trying to educe a sense of guilt. I hope the liberal who came upon the scene would not assert, "I must remain neutral because these individuals' conception of the good life (i.e., a dead life), though strange, is their decision. And who am I to interfere? Judge not, lest you be judged." (I must immediately raise, however, the pregnant issue of euthanasia and how different doctors understand the Hippocratic Oath "to do no harm" differently.)

Moving forward, let us reiterate: coercion, as used in this essay, encompasses a spectrum of activities, ranging from informal social controls—including ridicule, gossip, praise, reprimands, criticism, and ostracism—to formal social controls, such as laws, decrees, regulations, codes, embargos, and boycotts (Vago, 2003, pp. 191-96). Let us also re-emphasize that Rawls and other liberal contractarians, such as Locke, did not have a problem with coercion *per se*. Locke (2002) maintains that in establishing the social contract the individual is “willing to quit a condition, which, however, free, is full of fears and continual dangers; and ‘tis not without reason that he seeks out and is willing to join in society with others...for the mutual preservation of their lives, liberties, and estates” (p. 57). But then, if Locke is arguing that a rational person would voluntarily give up some freedoms to get the benefits of civil society, is this really a sanction of coercion? It is a fair concern, and it proves (or at least suggests) my point, which I shall discuss later, that social forces influence substantive freedoms. The question still remains as to whether the perfectionist liberal should coerce the government or individuals.

Coercion of the Individual or Group or Both?

I tend to think that the perfectionist liberal, because she is “concerned with human well-being not neutrality” (Fagelson, 2001, p. 512), would coerce both the government and the individual. Coercion, then, is inextricably linked with the human condition. But who should be coerced? For the perfectionist liberal, this question can only be answered with reference to the purpose of the coercion. What is it that the perfectionist liberal hopes to accomplish?

Put simply, the purpose of the coercion is to enhance human well-being. But the perfectionist liberal does not stop there. She sees the good life as maintained by the hallmarks of liberalism: tolerance, autonomy, freedom, and reason. Moreover, the perfectionist liberal is committed to improving an individual’s character. This sounds rather like Plato and Aristotle. There are, however, “two things as necessary conditions of human development, because necessary to render people unlike one another; namely, freedom, and variety of situations” (Mill, 2002, p. 75). Can you guess whose assertion this is? It is Mill, writing in *On Liberty* (Chapter III: Of Individuality, As One of the Elements of Well-Being). Borrowing from Wilhelm von Humboldt’s *The Sphere and Duties of Government*, Mill joins, I believe, perfectionism with his notion of liberalism. Now if Humboldt and Mill are talking about freedom and variety of situations as prerequisites for human development, then surely there is hope for perfectionist liberalism, because this argument is reminiscent of the perfectionist liberal clamoring for liberals to take their own side in the argument and advocate (gentler word for coerce) for autonomy (read: freedom) and tolerance (read: variety of situations). Jonathan Sacks adds that “*difference* is a source of value, indeed of society itself” and that “[d]ifference does not diminish; it enlarges the sphere of human possibilities” (2003, p. 14, 209).

We may define coercion as: "When P coerces Q into doing A, then Q does not do A freely or of his own free will" (Frankfurt, 1988, pp. 44-5). If, then, there is a social contract, then how is it coercion? And isn't there a difference between the choice that a community can make for itself through rational choice to give up one's right to punish and the choice of one society to advocate that others in other communities give up that right when it is not what they would rationally choose? Finally, why would any dictator ever give up such a right to punish or any other power?

First, there is a difference between a community's collective consent to relinquish an individual's right to punish and a society's decision to advocate that others in other communities give up that right when it is not what they would rationally choose. One plausible solution is to foster those conditions that enable the substantive freedoms to take root. Second, in the short term a dictator would, more than likely, not abdicate any powers nor would the dictator feel any obligation to encourage substantive freedoms. But I assert that a certain moral imagination must take hold among people who can make a difference in oppressive, tyrannical societies by creatively "going around" the dictator or his lackeys. Although I will not offer concrete avenues of this sort, I do believe it important to highlight its plausibility.

While the above discussion focused on the individual's character (and the implicit obligation to change or coerce that character by promoting and defending autonomy and tolerance), there is a concomitant obligation, I maintain, for the perfectionist liberal to coerce government. Remember that when I am speaking of the perfectionist liberal I make no distinction between the individual perfectionist liberal and the group (e.g., state) perfectionist liberal. Both have the same obligation to create conditions so that autonomy and tolerance may flourish. The significant difference I shall highlight in passing are the mechanisms that "will instantiate and express human nature precisely because participating in those good, i.e. instantiating (actualizing, realizing) those ultimate aspects of human flourishing" (Finnis, 1992, p. 104).

The mechanisms are different because individuals have fewer resources (moral, political, social, economic, cultural, etc.) than groups (say, governments or multinational corporations), *ceteris paribus*. To discern whether governments should be coerced, I shall use a group perfectionist liberal, in particular a perfectionist liberal government, not because government-to-government is the appropriate norm in international affairs. Rather I tend to think there is a "bigger effect," conceptually speaking, when a perfectionist liberal government coerces another government, as opposed to a perfectionist liberal individual *qua* "lone wolf" coercing a government.

With that caveat, how can I argue that a perfectionist liberal should coerce another state? This question is made far more complex when we stipulate that the coerced state is

hierarchical and illiberal, albeit decent.⁵ In the *Law of the Peoples* Rawls (1999b) tackles our concern by applying his principles of political liberalism, such as the principle of legitimacy (Rawls, 1993, pp.136-37, 217), to the international arena.

Rawls (1999b) clearly believes that "Decent societies should have the opportunity to decide their future for themselves" (p. 85). Thus "an organization [or government] of reasonable and decent peoples, such as the United Nations (ideally), should not offer incentives for its member peoples to become more liberal, for this would lead to serious conflicts among its own members" (Rawls, 1999b, p. 84). Rawls is bound to tolerate hierarchical, illiberal societies, given his premium on self-determination. But if that self-determination comes at the price of human well-being, then the perfectionist liberal will intervene to coerce through conditional assistance by linking, for example, International Monetary Fund loans or nation-state grants with verifiable improvements, as well as the carrot of periodic debt relief (see, e.g., Sacks, 2003, p. 117).

The Perfectionist Liberal Stands Tall

"Liberalism must, by its own lights, acknowledge that there are other comprehensive doctrines. What liberalism cannot pretend to do," contends Fagelson (2001), "is show equal respect for every comprehensive doctrine to the same degree that it respects its own conception of the world. Liberalism cannot be neutral about itself" (p. 511). If liberalism cannot be neutral about itself, then should it not strive to coerce, create, or construct (take your pick!) those conditions that will allow, practically speaking now, autonomy and tolerance to come to the fore? I argue that, indeed, it should, because the "justification for neutrality...must ultimately rest on some ideal conception of human nature and the way people ought to be. The right to equality or neutrality...cannot be prior to this idea of human good because we could not justify giving these rights pride of place unless we thought that doing so advanced human well-being in some way. This idea embeds liberalism in the perfectionist tradition" (Fagelson, 2001, p. 511).

Whether in regard to individual or collective claims, Rawls' neutrality is hard to justify given his conviction that liberal constitutional democracy is superior to other societies (Rawls, 1999b, p. 62). Burton Dreben (2003) notes "that Rawls [was] a good enough thinker not to argue against those who do not believe in liberal constitutional democracy.... The outcome of that struggle he takes for granted, just as I think any sensible person should today. You do not argue in political philosophy over benefits of constitutional liberal democracy; what you try to do is see what that concept leads to, what it entails, what it demands" (p. 322). Yet, strangely, according to Rawls (1999b), "Liberal peoples must try to encourage decent peoples and not frustrate their vitality by coercively insisting that all societies be liberal" (p. 62). In addition, "a liberal people should have confidence in their convictions and *suppose* [my emphasis] that a decent society...may be

more likely, over time, to recognize the advantages of liberal institutions and take steps toward becoming more liberal on its own" (Rawls, 1999b, p. 62). Perfectionist liberalism, on the other hand, supposes nothing. Instead, the perfectionist liberal clamors for the good life, agitating for the well-being of individuals.

This is the time for us to ask: have we, as a developing region, done things right? More important still, have we done the right things? What public policies, incentives, and practices will help us to develop not just our infrastructure, economies and resources, but more centrally the full capabilities of our people, and new opportunities for them and future generations? How can we establish dynamic, open and cohesive environments where human capabilities can flourish; where strong and prosperous societies for all our people can grow; and from which we can withstand the shocks of globalisation and capitalise on its opportunities?

-Rima Khalaf Hunaidi, launching the 2002 Arab Human Development Report

It should be clear from the preceding discussion that a perfectionist liberal would coerce another people to respect individual claims to well-being. This tentative conclusion, though, is only part of our discourse. I must now offer remarks on two pivotal questions: first, what sort of illiberalism am I talking about? Second, to what extent would I coerce an illiberal people? The epigraph that introduces this section therefore frames our remaining discussion.

The key for the perfectionist liberal is to expand the "capabilities" of people in order for them to pursue the type of life they value. In this sense, I am very much following Amartya Sen's capacity approach to human development, as explored in his *Development as Freedom*. Sen (1999) maintains "freedom is not only the primary object of development but also its principal means" (p. 38). Before I explore the above questions, however, I need to adumbrate what I mean by illiberalism.

What Sort of Illiberalism Would I Coerce?

For my purposes, illiberalism is, simply, a lack of freedom. Of course, in a certain sense we all live in an illiberal world, since absolute freedom is impossible.⁶ I am reminded of Rousseau's apt rumination, "Man is born free; and everywhere is in chains." Sen (1999) makes this point too when he recognizes that "the freedom of agency that we individually have is inescapably qualified and constrained by the social, political and economic opportunities that are available to us" (p. xii). Sen expounds further:

It is important to give simultaneous recognition to the centrality of individual freedom *and* to the force of social influences on the extent and reach of individual freedom. To counter the problems that we face [read: illiberalism], we have to see individual freedom as a social commitment" (p. xii).

Indeed, this commitment hits the crux of the perfectionist liberal project, for it elevates conditions that enable personal autonomy and tolerance, for example, to take pride of place.

I would be remiss, however, if I just described illiberalism as the lack of freedom and argue that a perfectionist liberal would coerce that which lacks freedom.⁷ It is far more appropriate to tackle this issue in a two-step process. First, I shall explain, briefly, the two roles of freedom. Then I shall proceed by identifying Sen's five instrumental freedoms and exploring the extent to which I would coerce these freedoms into realization.

What are the Roles of Freedoms?

Freedoms play two interrelated roles in human-development-as-capability discourse. In their constitutive roles, freedoms may serve as ends, in themselves. Whether talking about religious freedom, freedom of conscience, or freedom to participate in the labor market (just to name a few), we should see these and other freedoms as worthwhile, independent of the effect they may have on other conditions able to enhance an individual's well-being. Even, if (to take a counterfactual example) there was a causal relationship between the freedom to participate in the labor market⁸ and higher consumer prices, lower Gross National Product, and shorter life expectancies, the freedom to participate is "admirable" in its own right. The constitutive role serves, as I said, not as a means to an end, but the end itself. Thus, a vital reason why a perfectionist liberal would coerce an illiberal people is that there is intrinsic value to the freedoms.

In addition to being ends, freedoms can take on instrumental importance. That is, they may be understood as means to another end. Take, for instance, French lawmakers' recent passage of a bill to ban pupils at state schools from wearing "ostentatious" religious garb.⁹ The political freedom to criticize French officials may lead some religious communities, for instance Muslims and Christians, to protest the government's action by staging school walk-outs. The protests could encourage greater press scrutiny of minority rights, which, in turn, could stir an international debate as to the very meaning of minority rights. I need to add that Wall (1998) distinguishes between perfectionist liberal political action that is universal and parochial. I espouse the universalism perfectionism type: "...concerned with promoting values and ideals that are necessary components of any fully good human life" (p. 21), rather than one based upon culture or community, for example.

The Five Fundamental Freedoms Consist of What?

To clarify which sort of illiberalism a perfectionist liberal would coerce, let us

now turn to the five instrumental freedoms that Sen (1999) raises: (1) political freedoms, (2) economic facilities, (3) social opportunities, (4) transparency guarantees, and (5) protective security. Another, more concrete, way to think about illiberalism is to view it as the lack of these five instrumental freedoms. To wit, an individual's capabilities are enhanced when these five freedoms are enhanced; therefore, it is a project I support.

As a reminder: the reason why coercion, which militates against the liberal's emphasis on neutrality and self-determination, may be required is because if "personal autonomy is a central component of human flourishing" (Wall, 1998, p. 203), then the perfectionist liberal must facilitate the conditions in which that component is improved. Those conditions are inextricably linked with the instrumental freedoms that we shall explore presently. In essence, the five "instrumental freedoms tend to contribute to the general capability of a person to live more freely, but they also serve to complement one another" (Sen, 1999, p. 38).

Political freedoms "refer to the opportunities that people have to determine who should govern and on what principles" (Sen, 1999, p. 38). They include such things as freedom to express political opinions, freedom of the press and freedom to vote in free and fair elections. The lack of these and other political freedoms give rise to political illiberalism that the perfectionist liberal would seek to counter.

The second category of freedoms consists of economic facilities. They "refer to the opportunities that individuals respectively enjoy to utilize-economic resources for the purpose of consumption, or production, or exchange" (Sen, 1999, p. 39). Components include common sense indicators, such as relative prices, as well as macroeconomic ones, for example, national income. Another aspect related to economic facilities is the availability of credit. The paucity of these facilities, as Sen (1999) concludes, greatly diminishes the capability of individuals to live more freely.

Social opportunities, the third instrumental freedom, "refer to the arrangements that society makes for education, health care and so on, which influence the individual's substantive freedom to live better" (Sen, 1999, p. 39). We can easily imagine two people --one illiterate and the other literate, otherwise similarly situated. Which one would we say is freer? Clearly, the latter is. In fact, one of the things Akbar Ahmed (2003) suggests that the West should do in reaching out to the Muslim world is to focus on education (pp. 156-160).

The fourth instrumental freedom, transparency guarantees, is tied with what Robert Putnam (1993) describes as "norms of reciprocity" (p. 172). These norms, in turn, undergird a sense of social trust (Fukuyama, 1995). Here is how Sen (1999) thinks about transparency guarantees: they "deal with the need for openness that people can expect:

freedom to deal with one another under guarantees of disclosure and lucidity" (p. 39). Some common outcomes of violations of these freedoms include corruption and bribery.

Protective security, the fifth and final instrumental freedom, recognizes that despite societies (and individuals) best efforts "a social safety net for preventing the affected population from being reduced to abject misery, and in some cases even starvation and death" (Sen, 1999, p. 40) is often necessary. This safety net consists of two broad categories: fixed arrangements like unemployment benefits and ad hoc measures like disaster relief. (Most in the United States, I am sure, when someone mentions FEMA, think, "Those are the people who do disaster relief.") The overarching goal of these freedoms is to ensure that individuals' basic needs are met.

Let us conclude this study by exploring coercive mechanisms that would lead my perfectionist liberal project. I would, contra Rawls, place a premium on conditionality. Thus I would advocate and petition my elected officials to support an aid-with-strings approach to international development. I admit that it is an arduous task, made even more challenging given the range of freedoms (or lack thereof) found in the world.

The basic scheme of conditionality is that a people A attach conditions – effectively saying to a people B "you do this, we'll give you this; you don't do this, we won't give you this" – that will positively affect the five instrumental freedoms. Let me suggest this analogy: Imagine an individual, alone, ragged who has not agreed to the "terms" of a community's social contract. This individual, Disheveled, lives outside Andalusia. Occasionally he forays into Andalusia but by and large he subsists outside it. Disheveled is free to do what he pleases but he realizes, over time, that he would prefer to live among the Andalusians, despite the fact that he must give up some natural liberties. He approaches the community gate and indicates his desire to assent to the Andalusian compact. The community members gather round and inform him that he must first take a shower as a condition of membership. Being used to his way of life Disheveled's first reaction is to say, "Thanks, but no thanks." The Andalusians know of Disheveled's plight; they do not have any hard feelings and would prefer that he join them. The problem is Disheveled has not developed, well, any hygiene habits. Disheveled, moreover, does not possess any toiletries. Knowing this, the Andalusians offer him hot water, soap, shampoo, a toothbrush, and, most importantly, a book (*The 7 Habits of Highly Hygienic People: How to Get Clean...and Ahead*), so that he can clean himself today and learn how to clean himself for years to come. Finally, Disheveled relents. Does Andalusia's conditions constitute coercion? Absolutely, but isn't, at the same time, Disheveled's well-being enhanced?

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believe. Another example is the EU's requirement that members not have capital punishment administration for ordinary crimes. The EU is saying, in effect, "clean up, boys and girls...and stay clean." This effort seeks to improve and develop the freedom facilities that we discussed previously. The purpose, then, of these mechanisms is to enhance an individual's well-being. It should be stressed that a perfectionist liberal understands there are other values besides personal autonomy: that other considerations might come to the fore; that a balanced, long-term approach has appeal.

I shall end our discussion by highlighting a moving passage in Sen's *Development as Freedom*:

The adult who lacks the means of having medical treatment for an ailment from which she suffers is not only prey to preventable morbidity and possibly escapable mortality, but may also be denied the freedom to do various things – for herself and others – that she may wish to do as a responsible human being. The bonded labourer born into semi-slavery, the subjugated girl child stifled by a repressive society, the helpless landless labourer without substantial means of earning an income are all deprived not only in terms of well-being, but also in terms of the ability to lead responsible lives, which are contingent on having certain basic freedoms. Responsibility requires freedom (1999, p. 284).

In my introductory remarks I noted that our inquiry could be seen in the context of the "aid and trade" debate. How do we, whether in the form of international governmental organizations, states, multinational corporations, individuals, and so forth, respect individual claims to well-being? Should governments, for instance, remain neutral, as Rawls would have argued, to the harsh conditions of a Rawlings plant in Costa Rica (Weiner, 2004) that produces all the baseballs for Major League Baseball? Or should there be a balance between free market forces, on the one hand, and fair standards and norms, on the other, that would improve an individual's well-being? Surely, there is a middle course in which both sides of the free-or-fair debate can be sensibly satisfied. This essay, hopefully, has contributed to this and similar deliberations.

Endnotes

1. I would like to thank the School of Public Affairs Graduate Council, in particular the Public Purpose editorial staff, for their vision and work in making this publication a reality. I would also like to thank the School's faculty readers who reviewed the submitted essays, as well as David Fagelson's encouragement and support whose original assignment led to this extended piece.

2. According to the National Labor Committee website: In the He Yi factory in China, workers are paid less than the minimum wage, with mandatory overtime, obligatory seven-day work weeks, and 18-20.5 hour shifts, producing "Bobblehead" dolls of major league players produced under licensing agreements with the NFL, NBA, MLB, NCAA, Nascar and the Collegiate Li-

censing Company. Other plastic toys, especially small toy cars, are also produced for Wal-Mart, Disney and Hasbro. Wages are as low as 16.5 cents an hour and just \$16.75 for a seven-day, over-100-hour work week. (Available at <http://www.nlcnet.org/campaigns/he-yi/> Retrieved on March 5, 2004)

3. Contrast with Rawls, 1993, p. 295: "Since the basic liberties may be limited when they clash with one another, none of these liberties is absolute."

4. We could properly ask the liberal what happens when one citizen harms a noncitizen, or vice versa. Does the fact that one is a citizen and the other is not make a difference in our deliberations? Legally, this distinction is quite critical. Does the difference hold morally?

5. Here I use Rawls' definition of decent: "nonliberal societies whose basic institutions meet certain specified conditions of political right and justice...and lead their citizens to honor a reasonably just law for the Society of Peoples (Rawls, 1999, p. 3, note 2, Part II).

6. Absolute equality, too, is impossible and ill advised. We need only to look around and see the disparate capabilities and diversity—in the optimistic sense appreciated by Mill—to understand that the force of equality is not to make us equally worse off, with more people (in addition to the 3 billion plus) living on less than \$2 a day. The goal should be to induce a "high tide," whereby everyone is raised to a higher level.

7. In what follows, the reader will notice I have collapsed Sen's second and third roles of freedom: constructive and instrumental. There is a difference in the two but my point is more easily captured by this simplification.

8. Marx, for instance, did not consider capitalism as entirely ill conceived, for he saw its good in this regard.

9. This continuing story can be found throughout the media, including the Bloomberg News Service. http://quote.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=10000087&sid=ariTSkrOG5nA&refer=top_world_news. Retrieved on March 5, 2004.

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