

Review of: "Duality, Liberty, and Realism in Entangled Political Economy"

Dimitrios Tsarapatsanis¹

¹ University of York

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The article is interesting, but has some serious flaws. First, the main concepts used (realism, idealism, EPE, liberalism - classical or otherwise etc) are either not defined or insufficiently defined or defined in ways which show insufficient engagement with a very rich literature (say, on political realism, which has become a very contested topic in the past 10 years). Second, the 'solution' to the 'problem' of minimizing coercion is not convincingly argued for. It is just claimed that somehow 'institutional design' can help solve the problem, again ignoring a rich literature which shows the limits of any such design (including a legal literature on the topic). Third, it is not even clear how EPE offers any additional insights for a very classical problem (minimizing coercion by the state). That the state is characterized by the monopoly of legitimate violence is the mainstream view since at least Weber. There is nothing new or original about this insight and framing it in a 'political economy' framework does not make it more original or interesting. No argument is provided as to how EPE could make the problem more tractable.