

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

Thanh Le¹

¹ University of Wollongong

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I would like to thank the authors for their effort. This is an interesting article in which the authors examine whether the duality framework can be used to satisfactorily deal with the nexus between liberty and coercion. The authors start with some discussion on the theory of entangled political economy and use it to point out that while the primal problem of duality is not sensible, the dual problem can be retained. This is particularly true for the case of liberty-coercion relationship. They then suggest considering liberty and coercion as a matter of dependency rather than duality where the solution rests on institutions.

Entangled political economy is indeed a very complex issue. However, I am not totally convinced that this theory will generally lead to the failure of the duality framework. Rather, this should be examined on a case-by-case basis. For the specific case of liberty-coercion nexus, the fact that the duality framework may not work well is because of the complexity of liberty and coercion concepts. In particular, the concepts of liberty and coercion are too broad to allow us to draw a line between the two. As such, the two information sets overlap leading to the non-applicability of the additive framework and the duality framework. If we go with a more delicate choice of definitions, the problem may no longer be a problem.

Let us now focus on the relationship between liberty and coercion. The authors suggest that this should be captured by a dependency as depicted by Figure 6. This is fine but we need to make it clear that coercion here means laws and regulations. Hence, the optimal solution here should rest on the level of institutions (i.e., institutional designs) that maximizes liberty. In fact, in some cultures, social norms and cultural values can also affect individual behaviors by exercising some form of coercion (for example, if an individual violates a social norm, he or she may be punished through some form of boycotting or relational intimidation). The authors should discuss this and indicate whether they consider this type of coercion or not in their paper.

In terms of future research, it will be good for the authors to suggest some directions for empirical investigation.

Practically, how to construct a good proxy for liberty and coercion is a way to go. This will help validate the theoretical predictions emanating from the paper.