

# Abstract

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Abstract Liberty is a buffer that has the ability to mitigate power imbalances within a system of coercion and inequality, or more simply put tyranny. The ripples and spikes of corruption affect the ideology and function of liberty. How does one define liberty if it is thought of differently in certain theoretical situations? Liberty is multifaceted because it is an ideology, and by nature ideologies are metaphysical, which extend into different realms of thought and application. Liberty is a buffer that has the ability to mitigate power imbalances within a system of coercion and inequality, or more simply put tyranny. The ripples and spikes of corruption affect the ideology and function of liberty. How does one define liberty if it is thought of differently in certain theoretical situations? The notion of liberty for many is the freedom for individuals to choose the path which they are destined for by their own free will. Of course, liberty is the power to make one's own choices. Liberty does not necessarily mean that people will support or respect the decisions that individuals have the ability to make. Liberty is essentially the freedom from constraint. However, the metaphysics of liberty are affected by an information war. Liberty is multifaceted because it is an ideology, and by nature ideologies are metaphysical, which extend into different realms of thought and application. Hayek brilliantly states, "... [the] definition of liberty depends upon the meaning of the concept of coercion" (Hayak, P. 20). Coercion plays a significant role in the ideology of liberty. Coercion morphs the way humans interact within liberty's paradigm. Liberty extends into different levels of conception: political liberty and individual liberty. These distinct aspects play similar roles in relation to the ideological notion of Liberty. It is important to note that liberty is up against the systematic struggle of coercion via an information war. But first, consider human nature

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when thinking about liberty, Zinn has told us, " The most important characteristic of human beings is that we have and exercise moral judgement" ( Zinn, P. 36). Zinn would agree, freedom of choice enables moral judgment whether it be positive, neutral, or negative. By one's own moral judgment one exercises free will, which is synonymous with liberty. Our consciousness is the enabling aspect that creates the experience of liberty. Unless one is not physically able to follow through with an action, nothing but one's own conscience is keeping him or her from carrying out their desired action. That being said, how does information affect liberty? Information causes individuals to act. Coercion of individuals is perpetrated by corrupted information which distorts the metaphysical sense of liberty. By information not being free of constraint via coercion, liberty is not attainable. Rather, an artificial response within the human being is created by the corrupted information. Coercion leads one to act in a way that is desired by the will of the information's source. Thus, free will is infringed upon in a subtle way. Think about it, if individuals make decisions based upon half-truths does one have the ability to exercise liberty without constraint? Coercion is the dehumanization of one's free thinking because corrupted Information causes one to act in corrupted ways. Hayak explains the metamorphosis of liberty by coercion, " Coercion is evil precisely because it thus eliminates an individual as a thinking and valuing person and makes him a bare tool in the achievement of the ends of another"(Hayak, P. 21). Hayke is describing a propagandist's intent; one who leads individuals to act in ways which serve an agenda. However, when an individual acts upon corrupted information he or she will wholeheartedly believe it as truth, if that information strikes accord with their personal belief system. Consequently

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individual liberty is being swayed as well. The action of coercion on a political level has an equal reaction affecting individual liberty. Coercion can be difficult to bring into perspective on a societal scale because individuals are bombarded with soundbites, articles, and newsflashes, which create instilled opinions and beliefs. These types of media messages create world views for individuals. Berlin would describe the machine of propaganda as the mechanism of a societal socialization through coercion. Berlin calls this negative liberty which are obstacles, barriers, constraints or interference from others. I would argue that personal liberty is not attainable under these circumstances because coercion fosters constraint. Hayek explains individual choice by if one is free or not, "Whether he is free or not does not depend on the range of choice but on whether he can expect to shape his course of action in accordance with his present intentions or whether somebody else has power so to manipulate the conditions as to make him act according to that person's will rather than his own" (Hayak, p. 13). Hayek makes an insightful argument for freedom by defining what he thinks liberty is in terms of political freedom. This thought of political freedom can be applied to individual liberty as well. It is believed that individual liberty operates outside the system of political liberty. Independent liberty is also, thought of as essentially independent of coercion, but is it? When an individual is socialized within a matrix whether it be a state, a society, or any sort of human construct; information is controlled to a varying extent. The information which connects individuals to shared experiences will enforce the idea of shared behavior, or social norms. However, personal liberty isn't all that personal because the individual still operates within a matrix of information shared by others. One could argue social norms are a form of

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constraint, which can and will sway belief systems. Ethical moral judgment needs to be valued on a societal scale for liberty to combat coercion. If moral judgment is exercised with the greater good in mind, individuals will take the liberty to choose not to accept coercion. Liberty is a choice guided by moral judgment. liberty is the power to make one's own choice, to decide for oneself the direction in which one wishes to lead their life. Dworkin explains how humans should live within a society, " It is intrinsically, objectively, and equally important that human beings lead successful lives; important that once any human life has begun it flourishes rather than founders, and, above all, that it is not to be wasted" (Flikschuh, Chapter 5. P. 121). If individuals value equality, justice, and freedom in a morally corrupt system they will also aspire to experience those ideologies, which would shift the collective paradigm. References Flikschuh, K. (2007). Freedom: Contemporary Perspectives. Malden, MA: Polity Press. Chapter 1, " Isaiah Berlin: Two Concepts of Liberty?" Flikschuh, K. (2007). Freedom: Contemporary Perspectives. Malden, MA: Polity Press. Chapter 5, " Ronald Dworkin: Liberty as an Aspect of Equality" Hayak, Friedrich. (1978). The Constitution of Liberty. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Zinn, Howard. (1991). Declarations of Independence: Cross-examining American ideology. Perennial.