
Freedom and Liberalism: Hayek, Buchanan, and Sen Compared

BRIGITTA C. JONES AND ALAIN MARCIANO

George Mason University/ Università di Torino

Abstract: The defence of liberalism remains necessary, again, in the face of rising populism and authoritarian trends that characterize our societies. This article starts from Friedrich Hayek’s seminal work, *The Constitution of Liberty*, to explore two essential elements central to liberty and liberalism: the normative foundation of freedom and the principle of generality. By comparing Hayek’s ideas with those of James Buchanan and Amartya Sen, the paper proposes complementary perspectives on the nature and defence of liberty. While Hayek emphasised the rule of law and spontaneous order, Buchanan advocated for constitutional constraints to protect individual autonomy, and Sen highlighted the expansion of human capabilities as a measure of freedom. Together, these perspectives offer a multidimensional vision of liberty, rooted in respect for individual autonomy and sustained by institutions that promote equality and opportunity. This synthesis provides a robust constitutional framework for the defence of liberalism in contemporary society.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Growing populism from both the right and left, as well as a rise in identity politics seems to be challenging the liberal project (Fukuyama 2022; Karlson 2023; Mounk 2018, 2023; Boettke 2017-2018, 2018). As economist Peter Boettke explained,

True liberalism today faces a serious problem from ideas emerging from a new generation of socialists on the left and from conservative movements on the right, some of which claim to follow liberalism’s own time honoured teaching about the sanctity of private property rights and freedom of association. Both sides are fuelled by populist rhetoric and disillusionment born of discomfort from having to adapt to an ever-changing globalized world (2017-2018, p. 25; 2018, pp. 258-259).

“Liberalism is,” therefore, “in need of renewal” (Boettke 2017-2018, p. 25; 2018, p. 258), a renewal that undoubtedly means going back to its foundational principles, to its core concepts or, even more precisely and more strongly, means going back to its *soul*. That was the claim James Buchanan made in “The Soul of Classical Liberalism” (2000): liberalism, and liberals, need a “vision”. But on what should this vision be

based? Buchanan's answer was clear: "on the central, and simple, notion that 'we can *all* be free'" (2000, p. 117; italics in original). How, then, can liberalism be defended—or renewed—by reenvisioning what it means to be free?

The question is not new. For centuries, philosophers, economists, and political theorists have grappled with its meaning and implications, emphasizing what can be viewed as the dual nature of this concept: on the one hand, the need to avoid coercion (a sort of freedom from) and, on the other, the importance of allowing human flourishing (freedom to). In this paper, we go back to this very question, and to the same claim, arguing that a defence of freedom, from the perspective of liberalism or true liberalism, needs to combine specific institutions and rules and also an ethical rule—namely, Kant's maxim that each person should be treated as an end and not as means.

Indeed, there is the need for a normative foundation—a framework that defines freedom not simply as the absence of constraints but as the enabling condition for individuals to pursue their own goals, irrespective of what those goals might be. Here, a Kantian perspective provides a valuable lens: freedom, in this view, must be conceived as a principle of universal dignity, allowing people to become what they wish to be, even when their future aspirations are unknown. This leads us to a second crucial element that one finds in the works of these three major economists, the principle of generality, which addresses the practical challenge of translating the abstract ideal of freedom into a workable system of rules. Generality requires that laws and institutions apply equally to all, without favouritism or arbitrary exceptions. It demands that we resist the temptations of partiality and ensure that the structures of power are constrained by principles that transcend individual or group interests. This principle is not only a safeguard against tyranny, but also a cornerstone of the trust and predictability necessary for free societies to thrive.

The significance of these two elements becomes clearer when we examine the contributions of three towering figures of modern economic thought whose work also offers profound insights into the nature and defence of freedom: Buchanan, Friedrich Hayek and Amartya Sen. What we want to do in this paper is to start from Hayek's work and derive these two elements that, in our view, are crucial to define or characterize liberty and a liberal project—institutions and generality—and compare them to the views of Buchanan and Sen. This is our way to pay tribute to one of the most important books written by Hayek, his masterpiece, *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960/2011).

Obviously, each of these thinkers approaches liberty from his own perspective, although perhaps from (not so) different intellectual traditions. Hayek saw liberty both as an important end for society, condemning coercion or the lack of freedom as evil, and as an important means for a society's flourishing, taking a consequentialist view with freedom as a key ingredient to progress.¹ Buchanan primarily saw freedom as an end, believing it should be "the overriding objective for social policy" (1975, p. 4). He also saw freedom as a means, in that it allows man to become the man he wants to be. Sen (1999, p. 3) similarly viewed freedom as the 'overarching objective' of society as well as the means by which people are able to live the lives they have reason to value. However, despite these differences, these three economists all, and this is our argument, converge on the two critical elements for a robust defence of liberty mentioned above.

By comparing these perspectives, this article seeks to uncover what is essential for a constitutional defence of liberty. The synthesis of their ideas points to a vision of freedom that is both principled and pragmatic—rooted in respect for individual autonomy yet attentive to the conditions necessary for its exercise. At a moment when liberalism is criticised, such a vision offers not only a theoretical framework but also a roadmap for action, reminding us how urgent and important the defence of liberty is.

2. HAYEK'S POSITIVE FREEDOM AND THE RULE OF LAW

In *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960/2011), Hayek started with the rather ambitious and challenging—but necessary, before embarking on a discussion of the institutions that may protect it—task of defining liberty. Looking for this definition, and explaining why other definitions were not relevant, is a central theme of

the book—as it was of another of Hayek’s important books, *The Road to Serfdom* (1936). It is thus not a surprise that what Hayek said of freedom and liberty drew significant attention.

In particular, among the many aspects of Hayek’s book that were discussed was the way freedom was defined, i.e., as the absence of coercion—for instance, the first section of the first chapter of the book is entitled “Freedom as absence of coercion”. And, more precisely, Hayek was targeting the “coercion” coming from or exercised by other men: individual freedom is the “state in which a man is not subject to coercion by the arbitrary will of another or others” (Hayek 1960/2011, p. 11). Later in the book, Hayek would repeat that he is “concerned in this book with that condition of men in which coercion of some by others is reduced as much as is possible in society. This state we shall describe throughout as a state of liberty or freedom” (Hayek 1960/2011, p. 57). This definition underscores what was crucial to Hayek, the constraints imposed by other individuals or groups, rather than those arising from external circumstances.

The emphasis put on coercion, and its absence, did not go unnoticed. One reviewer, Sidney Sufrin, noted that coercion was Hayek’s “ideological enemy” (1961, p. 201). Others were more precise. Ronald Hamowy argued that Hayek’s book’s “main thesis” was that freedom should be defined “as the absence of coercion” (Hamowy 1961, p. 32; see also Hamowy 1971, p. 352). French political philosopher Raymond Aron (1961, p. 200) also stressed that Hayek’s definition was centred on the “absence of coercion”, as well as economist Lionel Robbins (1961, p. 67) who similarly observed that “Professor Hayek’s conception of liberty, like that of the great liberal thinkers of the past, runs in terms of absence of arbitrary coercion” (see also Viner 1961, p. 231; Stoppino 1961, p. 772; Rees 1963; p. 348).² Thus, as Aron noted, Hayek had adopted a “negative definition” of freedom—“La liberté est définie d’abord négativement par l’absence de *coercition* ou de contrainte” (1961, p. 200; italics in original)³. Robbins made the same comment, adding an important reference to “Sir Isaiah Berlin’s useful classification” and to the fact that Hayek’s definition corresponds to Berlin’s “negative conception” of liberty (1961, p. 67).

Defining freedom in negative, rather than in positive, terms could be problematic. This was precisely a point that both Aron and Robbins, as well as others who did not refer to a negative definition or to Berlin, made. What is it exactly that should be protected, if what has to be protected is characterized in terms of *absence*? This is exactly the criticism Hamowy (1961, p. 32) raised in his review of the book, when he noted the “lack of clarity” Hayek’s distinction has “between coercive and non-coercive acts” because Hayek did not say or define what should be protected from coercion. Charles Hyneman (1961, p. 87) made the same criticism from the perspective of a defence of the welfare state—to avoid coercion one might be obliged to remove “programs that mark the welfare state”. The consequence of such an indeterminacy is the impossibility to distinguish coercion from non coercion. As Jacob Viner (1961, p. 231) wrote, the frontier between freedom and coercion was very difficult to trace.⁴ Freedom becomes a sort of “empty shell,” that lacks substantive content and real foundations. The criticism was raised against Berlin (see Taylor 1985, for instance), and also against Robert Nozick’s definition of freedom (1974): can a negative freedom, can an absence, have foundations? Hardly, said many scholars of Nozick, as John Meadowcroft (2024) reminded us.

The reference to Nozick is useful because, Meadowcroft showed, the criticism does not hold, and because Nozick did address the issue by grounding his theory of liberty in *Kantian* ethics. According to Nozick, Meadowcroft argued, individuals possess rights that must be protected and that ensure they are treated as ends in themselves, not merely as means that others can use to pursue their goals. These rights imply that individuals “are ends and not merely means”. In that case, “they may not be sacrificed or used for achieving of other ends without their consent. Individuals are inviolable” (Nozick, quoted in Meadowcroft 2024, p. 181). We argue that this is also how Hayek’s definition of freedom can be defended: there exists a Kantian foundation of freedom in Hayek’s *The Constitution of Liberty*. One must note it is the absence of positive rights that should be protected, as in Nozick.⁵

Hayek (1960/2011, p. 208) himself seems to have suggested such a possible foundation when he spoke of “a famous maxim” which is precisely Kant’s maxim—“Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only”. That is however not all.

A single reference would not be sufficient to ground an entire analysis. The point we make is rather that Kant is, even if implicitly, present in the way Hayek defined and explained his concepts of freedom and coercion. We suggest that Hayek's claim that free individuals cannot be "subject[ed] to another man's will" (1960/2011, p. 221)—or, conversely, that "[c]oercion occurs when one man's actions are made to serve another man's will, not for his own but for the other's purpose" (1960/2011, p. 133)—implies that freedom requires recognizing others as having their own ends, while coercion involves treating others as mere means.

It is certainly true that Hayek's freedom is "freedom from *subjection* to the will of others, and not as freedom *to do* anything in particular" (Viner 1961, p. 231; italics in original). In Hayek's view, being free does not imply being able to do anything in particular—Hayek criticised Dewey's views of freedom as the "effective power to do specific things" (1960/2011, p. 67)—but to do anything each individual wants to do (without having to face any interference from the others).⁶ This is why Hayek's freedom is also *positive*: "[i]t becomes positive only through what we make of it. It does not assure us of any particular opportunities, but leaves it to us to decide what use we shall make of the circumstances in which we find ourselves" (Hayek 1960/2011, p. 70). The absence of coercion implies that each individual possesses a private sphere and being free means having this private sphere protected—"Freedom thus presupposes that the individual has some assured private sphere" (Hayek 1960/2011, p.61). Hayek thus drew a line around the individuals, an "invisible border" that must not be transgressed. What is inside this sphere, within the border—and Hayek seems to have suggested that this has to do with the ends and means the individuals have—must be decided, chosen by the individuals themselves. Freedom is therefore a matter of individual responsibility. When this sphere is not protected, and an individual or entity (the state, in particular) encroaches upon it, freedom is replaced by coercion.

The point we would like to make is that when freedom is replaced with coercion, when their private sphere is not protected, then individuals are treated as means, and not respected as ends. It seems that Hayek suggested this when he explained "law" and how it should be distinguished from "command" (1960/2011, pp. 214-231).

In Hayek's mind, there is no doubt that command is coercive, and the reason for this is that the individual who has to obey a "command" chooses neither the ends he pursues nor the means to use to reach these ends. A command is oriented towards the realisation of a specific outcome; it results from the objectives, ends and means, of the person who issued it. As a result, it violates Kant's maxim, reducing the individual who has to execute it to a means, a means to reach the ends of someone else. Indeed, a command, Hayek told us, is an "order that tells a man to do particular thing here and now". Or, even more precisely,

The ideal type of command determines uniquely the action to be performed and leaves those to whom it is addressed no chance to use their own knowledge or follow their own predilections. The action performed according to such commands serves exclusively the purposes of him who has issued it (Hayek 1960/2011, p. 218).

This is what happens in primitive societies, Hayek said to illustrate his purpose, where "the chief prescribes on every occasion every detail of the actions of his subordinates" and the latter become "*tools*, without an opportunity of using their own knowledge and judgment" (1960/2011, p. 218; italics added). It also happens in less primitive, or more evolved, societies, whenever the ends the individuals have to pursue are determined by another individual; Hayek cited the case of an individual who is employed by someone else or the example of a servant. Societies ruled by "customs" are also coercive because customs "often prescribe specifically how [the individual] must proceed to achieve particular results, or what he must do at particular times and places" (Hayek 1960/2011, p. 219). Therefore, issuing commands (and organising a society around commands) curtails freedom. Issuing commands is also what the "arbitrary government" of a "collectivist" society does when it "directs the use of the means of production to particular ends" (Hayek

1944/2007, p. 113). In these societies, governments use rules as a means for “ordering people where to go... and commanding people which road to take” (Ibid., pp. 113-114). They use rules to give “specific orders” (ibid., p. 115), to “impose its valuations upon people and... choose the ends for them” (Ibid.). They do not let individuals decide by themselves and make their own choices. This is clearly coercive, and also violates Kant’s maxim: the government does not treat individuals as persons who have their own ends.

The only means to avoid coercion, to protect the individual and their private sphere and thus to respect individuals as ends, is to resort to the “law”. Or, to be more precise, to organise human interactions around what Hayek called the “true law” or the “law of liberty”, that also corresponds to the Rule of Law about which he wrote in particular in *The Road to Serfdom* (1944/2007), when he wrote about the Rule of Law, “one of [the] greatest achievements” of “the Liberal age”, “a safeguard” and “the legal embodiment of freedom” (1944/2007, p. 118).

Hayek insisted on the importance of this type of rules, which differ from the rules of command and also from what we most of the time understand as law and which corresponds to *legislation*, for freedom. By contrast with legislation, and with command too, the “true law” is *not* created by human reason, rather it is the product of a spontaneous process. It results from human action and not from human design, to use a sentence Hayek frequently used. It therefore cannot be issued by anyone with the purpose of imposing ends or objectives on anyone else. The role of these rules, of any government actually, is or should be “to help individuals in the fullest development of their individual personality” (1944/2007, p. 115) and to “assist [individuals] in the advancement of their own ends”. Or, in the different and complementary terms used in *The Constitution of Liberty*, the main, actually only, objective of the “true law” is to fix the “invisible border line... within which the being and activity of each individual obtain a secure and free sphere” wrote Hayek (1960/2011, p. 215) quoting José Ortega y Gasset. And he continued, “a sphere belonging to each individual is determined, not by the demarcation of a concrete boundary, but by the observation of a rule” (Ibid., p. 216). Thus, it is important to note that the “true law” cannot be coercive because it delimits the individual’s private sphere rather than prescribing what individuals must do. The “true law” guarantees the inviolability of the private sphere on which individual freedom is grounded.

That is not all, the most important aspect of this law, of this type of rules, is that it guarantees that each individual is treated as ends and not as means, which gives a Kantian dimension to Hayek’s definition of liberty. This appears rather clearly in how Hayek detailed the term or the concept. Hayek uses it to refer to a specific type of rules, that he called the “rules of the game” (1944/2007, p. 112), which are the “*formal rules* which do not aim at the wants and needs of particular people” (ibid., p. 113) or “[t]he rules [that] merely provide the framework with which the individual must move by within which the decisions are his” (1960/2011, p. 220).⁷ These rules only “specify that in certain circumstances action must satisfy certain conditions; but all the many kinds of action that satisfy these conditions are permissible” (Ibid.). To use the language analogy (see Friedman and Friedman 1980, pp. 44-45; Mittermaier 2020, pp. 47-48), these rules of conduct are similar to the “grammar of a language” that “prescribes how things should be said (done) and not what should be said (done)” (Mittermaier 2020, pp. 47-48). They do not tell individuals what they should do and how they should do it, and hence leave individuals to decide their own ends and the means by which they are going to achieve those ends. They are therefore, and Hayek insisted on these characteristics, “abstract” and “general”. The main feature of this rule, that determines and protects the individual sphere that guarantees that each individual is not treated as a means for others’ purposes, is its *generality*.

It cannot be otherwise: the rules, the laws that have to be useful to many different individuals, all with their own specific goals and ends, cannot be specific; it would imply that different individuals are treated in the same way: “[t]o produce the same results for different people, it is necessary to treat them differently” and thus coercively (Hayek 1944/2007, p. 117). Let us, for instance, take the example of conscription that Hamowy used to show that a law could be general, applying to all individuals without discrimination, and be coercive (1961, 34; see also Hamowy 1971).⁸ What, according to us, Hamowy missed is precisely the Kantian dimension of Hayek’s definition of freedom. Conscription in Hayek’s view can be compatible with a society that protects individual freedom, limiting coercion as much as possible, as long as it follows the

generality norm. If conscription is predictable and enforced regardless of individual circumstances then it follows Kant's maxim and thus is not coercive. Hayek wrote: "if a period of military service is a foreseeable part of my career, then I can follow a general plan of life of my own making and am as independent of the will of another person as men have learned to be in society" (Hayek 1960/2011, p. 210). This offers us a clear line in the sand, if a proposed rule has individuals treated as ends, capable of being the author of their own life and not at the will of others, then the rule follows Kant's maxims and thus is consistent with Hayek's vision of a free society.

3. BUCHANAN, POSITIVE FREEDOM AND THE GENERALITY PRINCIPLE

Unlike Hayek, Buchanan never wrote a specific book in which he defined freedom. It is therefore impossible to find a unique place in which Buchanan would have explained what he meant by freedom. However, Buchanan frequently referred to freedom, up to the point that John Gray suggested to "characterize Buchanan's...research program...as an inquiry into the constitutional preconditions and constraints on individual liberty" (1990, p. 149).⁹

Indeed, his entire work can be interpreted as being centred on defence of individual liberty. A particularly good illustration of this goal is given in the article Buchanan wrote for the *University of Virginia Newsletter* to present the "Thomas Jefferson Center for Studies in Political Economy" (1958), i.e. the research Center in which Buchanan would define what he meant by economics. Buchanan then explained that economists should be political economists and defend the tradition of political economy, which meant to him that their role consisted in "examin[ing] philosophical values for consistency among themselves and with the ideal of human freedom" (1958, p. 5) and in "stimulat[ing] open and lively discussion of how a free society should be organized and preserved" (Ibid.).

When he came to explain what he meant with freedom, Buchanan also—as Hayek had—defined liberty as the absence of coercion: "As Knight has suggested, it seems desirable [...] to define freedom somewhat narrowly as the absence of coercion and unfreedom as the state of being prevented from utilizing the normally available capacities for action" (Buchanan 1954, p. 340). Here, one would notice, Buchanan did not say anything about the reasons that would prevent individuals from "utilizing the normally available capacities for action". He clarified his view later, in particular after the publication of Hayek's *Constitution of Liberty*, redefining freedom in terms of coercion from other individuals. In 1963, for instance, Buchanan spoke of "personal liberty, personal freedom from coercion by other men" (p. 3). Much later, he would insist on "the individual's desire for liberty from the coercive power of others" (2000, p. 117) and equate "genuine liberty" with the absence of coercion by others, arguing that "individuals are genuinely 'at liberty'" when "[c]oercion by another person is drained out" (Ibid.).

Buchanan, like Hayek, had seemingly chosen a negative definition of freedom. There is indeed not much in Buchanan's work, over the years, that is devoted strictly speaking to defining freedom in a different way. One nonetheless finds, maybe indirectly, a positive definition of freedom in the distinction Buchanan made between "behavior" and "choice". In different essays from the 1960s and 1970s, Buchanan explained that individuals could make "genuine" choices or not (1964, 1966, 1969a, 1969b, 1976a, 1976b). The latter—that Buchanan called "behaviors"—are "predetermined" (1969a/1979, p. 40), and consist "in direct response to stimuli" (ibid., p. 44) or, as he also said, are "purely mechanical" (Buchanan 1964, p. 218). One of the examples Buchanan gave was the behaviour of a "consumer in a supermarket": an individual who is confined to a particular place, with a limited number of goods to choose from, and thus has a problem to solve: select the best possible set of goods given his constraints (Buchanan 1964, pp. 216, 217). By contrast, there are what Buchanan called "genuine choice[s]" (1969a/1979, p. 44). Genuine choices, then, are those choices that are obviously neither predetermined nor predictable: "Choice, by its nature, cannot be predetermined and remain choice", wrote Buchanan (Ibid., p. 40). Therefore, behaviours are not free, while genuine choices are. Even if, by contrast with Hayek, behaviours are not adopted in response to

a command issued by another individual, but in response to any kind of constraint that the individual is unable to escape. These constraints coerce individuals into making choices that are not free.

Buchanan clarified the point in another pivotal article to understand his views on freedom, “Natural and Artifactual Man” (1979). “Natural man” is alienated (Marciano and Meadowcroft 2024). He is not free because he does not even question the constraints that determine his behaviour. By contrast, artificial man is the man (or the part of each individual) who is capable of escaping or *freeing* himself from the control of these constraints. Artificial man is making “genuine choices”, to become “different” or a “better” person than the person he is (1969a/1979, pp. 96-97). Or, still in other words, Buchanan also wrote that artificial man is capable of “construct[ing] himself through his own choices” (Ibid., p. 110). And it is precisely in this capacity of *construction* that evidences the positive dimension of freedom in Buchanan’s work. Individuals, in Buchanan’s view, can be said to be positively free because of what they make of their freedom. Indeed, Buchanan concluded “Natural and Artifactual Man” repeating twice (and twice in italics) that “*Man wants liberty to become the man he wants to become*” (1979, p. 112; italics original). Buchanan immediately explained his point by adding that “Man wants liberty... to keep his options open... precisely because he does not know what man he will want to become in time” (Ibid.). Freedom is not meant to achieve something precise. Much to the contrary. In this perspective, freedom can be said to be indeterminate in terms of outcome, to use the word Gray used to speak of Buchanan’s contractarianism (1990), or, in other words, freedom should not be viewed as “instrumental”. Buchanan insisted that freedom should be “the overriding objective for social policy” but “not as an instrumental element in attaining economic or cultural bliss, and not as some metaphysically superior value” (1975, p. 4). A statement that he repeated in a slightly different way a few years later: “Let us remove once and for all the instrumental defense of liberty” (1979, p. 112).

Therefore, it could be said that, in his way of defining freedom, Buchanan made the same journey as Hayek did: he started from a negative definition of freedom, viewed as the absence of coercion, to move towards a positive one, in which freedom is a means to achieve something that does not exist yet, that is not predetermined and not specific.

This journey, and Buchanan’s characterization of liberty as positive, involved a detour via Kant: Buchanan’s positive freedom is indissociable from the respect of Kant’s maxim. Let us recall that the distinction between natural man, the individual who is not free, and artifactual man, the free individual, is rooted in a distinction between “genuine choices” and “behaviors”. The *behaviours* that are mechanical, predetermined, and thus not free, are adopted by individuals who are not primarily interested in exchanging with others. Such behaviours consist in selecting an item in a set of given alternatives to maximize satisfaction or profit. Buchanan said of these individuals that they follow an “expediency criterion” or a “private maxim”, that consists in “act[ing] on the basis of expedient considerations in each particular instance that arises” (1965, p. 2). This means that such individuals, when they interact with others, focus only on their own goals or objectives. They behave as if there were no other individuals or as if others were part of their environment and not different from the objects they can use to maximize their satisfaction. Each individual views and treats others as means, as resources that can be used to pursue his or her ends, and not as ends themselves. As a result, their behaviour violates Kant’s maxim.

Alternatively, being an artifactual man, which means being free, implies being primarily interested in exchange rather than in choice. Or, put differently, exchange is indissociable from making genuine choices.¹⁰ And exchange, or genuine choices, goes with the acknowledgment of the impossibility to reach one’s ends by oneself, implying that one should treat others as *ends*, not as means. Being free means understanding that one “cannot treat other individuals as they can the physical environment” (1966/1979, p. 120). This thus means following Kant’s maxim. Buchanan was very clear about that: the individual who treats others as ends follows “the moral law” that is “something that is akin to the Kantian categorical imperative. [Each individual’s] standard for behaviour will be some version of the generalization principle” (1965, p. 7). Or, in other words, the individual who chooses the moral law,

...commits himself to act in subsequent situations on the basis of something like the generalization principle. That is, he will not act in ways other than those which allow his particular action to be universalized, regardless of the specific consequences (1965, p. 2).

To Buchanan, that “each and every person adopts, and follows, something that is akin to the Kantian categorical imperative...will tend to emerge in a small group” (1965, p. 7). Indeed, Buchanan explained, in small groups, individuals follow the Kantian maxim and treat others as ends and not as means; by contrast, in large groups, individuals ignore others, consider them as an object that would be part of their environment and therefore treat them as means (Buchanan 1965; see Marciano and Meadowcroft 2024, 2025). One way of implementing the generality principle would consist in structuring the society in small groups in which individuals would be free because they would treat others as ends. Buchanan called the society in which all the individuals would follow this moral law the “generalized world” (1965, p. 3) or even more significantly “the idealized Kantian world” (1965, pp. 3, 7). Later, he would also speak of “moral order” (2006) that he characterized as Kantian: in a moral order, “[p]ersons are treated as persons... This conception of an order of interaction finds its philosophical roots in Kant’s precept that persons are to be treated as ends and never as means” (Buchanan 2006, p. 76).

One must not forget, however, that Buchanan was also a “constitutionalist” (1973, p. 4; see also 1975b, p. 25), “a constitutionalist and a contractarian” (1978, p. 29) or even a “constitutional- contractarian” (Ibid., p. 33).¹¹ He believed in the need for a social contract, and more precisely in a social contract that is founded on, that embodies, the generality principle based on Kant’s maxim. Indeed, as Gray rightly explained, Buchanan’s contractarianism is “*indeterminate*” (1990, p. 150; italics in original), i.e. what characterizes his social contract is “its indeterminacy as to outcome” (Ibid., p. 166). Buchanan’s social contract is a frame that imposes no output or outcome—which is very close to Hayek’s rule of law, as defined earlier. In particular, as Gray noted, Buchanan does not include a list of liberties, “fixed and unalterable” (ibid., p. 164) that must be protected by the social contract. Gray’s indeterminacy means that the social contract precisely includes the “generality principle”. This echoes what Meadowcroft (2011, p. 119) noted: “The generality principle... is a constitutional rule that constraints post-constitutional politics by applying the generally accepted principle of equality before the law to politics”.

Indeed, Buchanan was very complimentary of Hayek’s work on the generality norm and saw his own work as a continuation of those ideas. In a 1997 lecture to the Japanese Public Choice Society, Buchanan said,

It is surely time that we read and understand what Hayek was telling us almost four decades past. “The Constitution of Liberty” must embody adherence to the principle of generality, whether emergent in the application of ordinary law or to the operation of majoritarian politics. All citizens must be made to play by the same rules, and all politics must be nondiscriminatory in its application (1997/1999, p. 428).

Buchanan directly built off of Hayek’s generality norm in his *Politics by Principle, Not Interest: Toward a Nondiscriminatory Democracy* (1998)—that he saw as very much influenced by Hayek’s *Constitution of Liberty*. And “Why I Too Am Not a Conservative” (2006) is largely written as a defence of the generality principle.

In this way, Buchanan is a clear proponent of utilizing general and abstract rules to create and sustain a free society. He added onto Hayek’s project by highlighting how the generality norm protects individual freedom in the face of majoritarian politics and collective decision-making. Buchanan’s conception of freedom aligns with Hayek’s and they seem to also be in agreement about how to protect that freedom, through the use of a general and abstract rule of law.

4. SEN: FREEDOM AS OPPORTUNITIES, AND BASIC CAPABILITY EQUALITY

The third scholar of our trilogy is Amartya Sen, a major theorist of freedom whose work is of much interest from a liberal perspective, and from the perspective of a comparison with Hayek and Buchanan. Sen in fact saw freedom, and more specifically “individual freedom” as one of the most important ends for a society. This freedom, which is interesting following on from the previous two sections, is in particular defined by Sen negatively. One finds in Sen’s work evidence of his conviction that the social arrangements that should be built to protect or promote individual freedom must avoid coercion. Thus, Sen unambiguously wrote: “it may be thought to be particularly objectionable from the point of view of *social arrangements* if that inability [to walk in a park] is the result of hindrance or threat by others” (1990, p. 104; italics in original). Thus, freedom entails the absence of coercion “by others”. But that is not all. As was the case with Hayek and Buchanan, though even more clearly and more strongly, Sen gave negative freedom and the need to avoid coercion a positive foundation. Sen indeed never envisaged defining freedom only in negative or, for that matter, in positive terms. He even noted that “[A]n adequate view of freedom would have to be both positive and negative, since both are important (though for different reasons)” (Ibid.). Sen also spoke of “the freedom to act, that is the aspect of “autonomy” to act, combined with “immunity from interference from others” (1994, p. 126).¹² Indeed, the possible hindrance or threat by others Sen mentions is problematic because it implies that individuals cannot do what they want to do, and cannot choose what they want to choose. Individuals should be “free to choose”, noted Sen (for instance, 1990, p. 104), using the very same words of Milton and Rose Friedman (1980).

What is it, thus, that freedom has to protect in Sen’s view? Or, in echo to the preceding quotation, what is it that individuals are *free to choose*? Did Sen use the term “positive” to indicate that freedom could have a specific goal to reach? No, to Sen, freedom has no instrumental value. From this perspective, Sen is no different from Hayek or Buchanan: the positive freedom—i.e. the freedom to do something—he defended is not a freedom to do anything in particular, to achieve or secure a specific and a priori known outcome. Sen is rather clear about that aspect when he characterized freedom positively in the frame of his capability approach. Indeed, although Sen did not refer to freedom when he first developed the concept of capability in “Equality of What?” (1979), it became rapidly clear that the two concepts were connected, and that his goal in developing a theory of capability was “to outline a characterization of *positive* freedoms in the form of capabilities of persons” (1984, p. 315; italics added). Or, in the same way, Sen also explained that paying “attention. . . to the capability set of [a] person... has the effect of taking note of the positive freedoms in a general sense (the freedom “to do this,” or “to be that”) that a person has” (1985, p. 201). Thus, in Sen’s view, freedom has to protect and promote individuals’ capabilities.

One might think that Sen has just taken a step back and that capabilities are meant to achieve specific and well-defined goals, to reach a predetermined outcome. This is not the case. This lack of instrumentality appears clearly in the way capabilities are defined. The capabilities individuals have, and that should be protected to guarantee their freedom, are very general and generic means, the potential individuals have to live the life they value and choose to live, encompassing the opportunities available to them. Therefore, to Sen, freedom has both a positive and a negative dimension. It is both an absence—the absence of external restraints—and a presence—the presence of opportunities for individual growth and fulfilment.

To be a bit more precise, individuals’ capabilities are defined in terms of “functionings,” which represent the various things a person may value doing or being: “A person’s capability set can be defined as the set of functioning vectors within his or her reach” (1984, pp. 200-201). For Sen, freedom is best understood and measured in terms of these achievable functionings: the more functionings available to an individual, the greater their capability and, therefore, the more freedom they possess. Certainly, these functionings can be quite concrete, such as being well-nourished, being healthy, or being literate. However, freedom is not about the specific functioning a person ultimately achieves or the quantity of goods and commodities they obtain. Instead, it is about having access to a broader capability set, meaning more opportunities to pursue various functionings, regardless of the choices they make within that set. Or, as Sen noted, we

should focus “on the freedom that a person actually has to do this or be that—things that he or she may value doing or being” (2009, p. 231). Clarifying this point, Sen wrote:

An affluent person who fasts may have the same functioning achievement in terms of eating or nourishment as a destitute person who is forced to starve, but the first person does have a different “capability set” than the second (the first *can* choose to eat well and be well nourished in a way that the second cannot) (1999, p. 75).

In this sense, freedom derives its value not only from the specific outcomes it enables, but also from the opportunities it provides: “[c]apabilities thus reflect the actual freedoms that people respectively enjoy in being able to lead the kind of lives *they have reason to value*” (Sen 1990, p. 460; italics added).

This seems to lead us to Hayek and his definition of freedom. Sen himself noted a sort of convergence if not agreement with Hayek, when he quoted a passage from *The Constitution of Liberty*—“the importance of our being free to do a particular thing has nothing to do with the question of whether we or the majority are ever likely to make use of that possibility” (Hayek 1960/2011, p. 83, cited in Sen 1999, p. 292). Sen gave the caveat “Hayek may have overstated his case (as he often did)”, but he nonetheless argued that “he was ... entirely right in distinguishing between (1) the *derivative* importance of freedom (dependent only on its actual use) and (2) the *intrinsic* importance of freedom (in making us free to choose something we may or may not actually choose)” (Ibid., italics in original). Elsewhere, Sen insisted that “[t]he intrinsic importance of human freedom, in general... is strongly supplemented by the instrumental effectiveness of freedoms of particular kinds to promote freedoms of other kinds” (Sen 1999, p. xii). Here, instrumental is not used in a narrow sense of the word, but implies giving individuals the agency to use this freedom in pursuit of their own ends.¹³

The parallel with Buchanan might be trickier to establish. Robert Sugden noted the potential difference between Sen’s concept of desiring freedom, so that people can lead the lives they have reason to value, and Buchanan’s view of desiring freedom, which allows people to become who they want to be. Sen’s emphasis on *reason to value* points to the idea that there should be some consensus outside of the individual about what functionings a person would reasonably value. What functionings should be available to people are determined through a process of democratic consensus, allowing Sen to arrive at a more objective metric for social evaluation. Sugden noted that under this system that Sen has described with his capabilities approach, individuals have the opportunity to lead the lives that the majority of their fellow citizens judge to be valuable, and the ability to participate in the democratic process to decide what is valued, but *not* assured of the opportunity to live whatever kind of life *they* desire. Sugden wrote, “My unease about Sen’s proposal is that it licenses collective decisions that override some individuals’ actual desires about how to live their own lives, in favour of other people’s judgements about what those individuals have reason to desire” (2006, p. 41). Thus Buchanan’s conception of freedom can be seen as, in a way, more subjective and open-ended than Sen’s. It nonetheless remains that Sen’s capabilities can be viewed as complementing the capacities Buchanan attributed to his artifactual man, and in particular his focus on creative or genuine choice. As Malte Dold and Paul Lewis have noted, Buchanan’s characterization of the capacities to become an artifactual man remain underdeveloped, and Sen’s notion of capabilities offers an account of the capabilities required by artifactual man if he is to create his own identity in an autonomous way, and be the author of his own life (see Lewis and Dold 2020, sec. 5.2; Dold and Lewis 2023, pp. 947-949).¹⁴

Therefore, as is also the case with Hayek and Buchanan, individuals bear the responsibility of defining their goals and objectives and deciding how to use their set of capabilities—their opportunities, which is similar to Hayek’s private sphere. These capabilities enable them to make genuine choices, à la Buchanan, about who they want to become and how to achieve it. In this sense, a free individual, in Sen’s view—an individual whose capabilities are protected—is not so different from Buchanan’s artifactual man. Both

use their liberty not to realise a predetermined identity, but to shape their own path or, to use Sen's words (1999, p. 11), to "effectively shape their own destiny".

Conversely, in this framework, coercion would mean that individuals are not granted this possibility to define their own ends, as well as the means to reach them, or that they cannot choose their own life that goes with the very notion of capability. Coerced individuals are treated as if they had no ends. For instance, a society, a political or an economic system, is coercive if some of its members are free at the expense of others. This point seems to echo the Kantian aspects one finds in Buchanan and Hayek as noted above. Thus, even if Sen made no reference to Kant and to his famous maxim, he does not seem far from it. He came even closer to such a principle in his analysis of development and basic capability equality.

Departing from the traditional and narrow perspective centred on GNP growth, technological progress, or industrialization, Sen ultimately proposed an approach to development that consists in the expansion of freedoms and capabilities. Which means that "better and more acceptable societies", that is societies in the "process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy" (Sen 1999, p. 3), should aim at promoting a general capability set that is equally accessible to *each and all of its members*. More specifically, Sen advocated for the use, as an adequate guide for societies, of what he called the *basic capability equality* principle. This principle should enable societies to equalize the opportunities available to their members.¹⁵ The capability set serves as a benchmark for societal progress, as a guide for what society can strive for and evaluate itself by. And it can be seen as aligning with Kant's maxim: to Sen, no individual will be treated as a means in a society based on the promotion and defence of capabilities, that is in a society based on the basic capability principle.

In addition to this "appropriate evaluative framework", Sen added that "better and more acceptable societies... also need institutions that work to promote our goals and valuational commitments, and furthermore, we need behavioural norms and reasoning that allow us to achieve what we try to achieve" (Ibid., p. 249). In other words, we need institutions, *social arrangements*, to implement the basic capability principle. Which are they?

A few elements may allow us to understand them, and see how they compare with those of Hayek and Buchanan. First, Sen excluded giving the state a central role and creating a "nanny-state" (ibid., p. 284) which would tell individuals what decisions to make, thus dictating their chosen ends or means—that state would be coercive, and would not respect the Kantian maxim. The role of the institutions should be to "creat[e] more opportunity for choice and for substantive decisions for individuals who can then act responsibly on that basis" (Ibid., p. 284). Freedom consists in allowing individuals to choose their own means and ends, giving them opportunities, not choosing or deciding on their behalf. Having the state, or any other individual, impose their means or ends on others, like we see in the nanny-state, would go against Sen's definition of freedom (and violate Kant's maxim).

Then, and complementarily, Sen defended markets as an organisational principle, as institutions that do not only create wealth and growth but also development (in his sense of the concept) and therefore freedom (Ibid., p. 6). Sen thus believed that *market* exchange is a source of—both positive and negative—freedom.¹⁶ However, Sen did not believe that the relation between markets and freedom was simple, and that the defence of markets was immediate. He saw it as "complex" and difficult (1994). Markets can enhance individual freedoms by allowing choice, only if they were organised in a specific way, that is only if they operate within an institutional framework. For instance, Sen once wrote: "What is needed is not a rejection of the positive role of the market in generating income and wealth, but the important recognition that the market mechanism has to work in a world of many institutions" (2000; see also Sen 1994). And, as the core of these institutions, one finds the rule of law. Or, to put it in different words, Sen's approach in terms of capabilities seems perfectly compatible with a system based on a rule of law.¹⁷ Indeed, if one wants to devise institutions that guarantee the individuals' opportunities, rights that let people choose the life they want to choose, it is necessary to rely on the rule of law. Sen implicitly recognized it when he insists that the law, the legal system, must contribute to the process of development and to the enhancement of

individuals' capabilities. As Peter Boettke and Robert Subrick noted (2003, p. 126), "[t]he rule of law provides the necessary framework which promotes prosperity and human capabilities".¹⁸

Therefore, it seems that Sen has a definition of freedom similar to that of Hayek and Buchanan. Freedom can be seen as a positive concept, one that allows individuals to make genuine choices in pursuit of living the lives they have reason to value. This freedom is one in the Kantian tradition, where individuals treat each other not as means in pursuit of their goals, but as ends in and of themselves. And society protects this freedom through the creation and promotion of general rules or capabilities that equally apply to all persons.

5. CONCLUSION

The defence of liberalism is not merely a theoretical endeavour—it is an ongoing project, grounded in the realization that liberty is essential for human flourishing, economic progress, and social cooperation. The ideas of Hayek, Buchanan, and Sen form a robust foundation for understanding and advancing this defence, particularly in an era when liberal institutions are under attack from both external and internal forces. By synthesizing their contributions, we gain a multidimensional appreciation of liberty as a principle rooted in individual dignity and institutional design.

Friedrich Hayek's conception of liberty provides the cornerstone of this vision. Hayek's insight into the spontaneous order of the market and the necessity of the rule of law highlights the central role of decentralized processes in fostering freedom. His critique of central planning, famously articulated in *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), and his elaboration on the generality principle in *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960), reveal the dangers of coercion and the irreplaceable value of abstract, impartial rules. For Hayek, freedom emerges not from deliberate design but from a system of rules that constrain arbitrary power while enabling individuals to pursue their unique goals. This understanding of liberty as "freedom under the law" serves as a bulwark against authoritarianism, demonstrating the importance of institutional humility and the limits of human reason in crafting complex social systems.

James Buchanan builds on Hayek's foundation by focusing on the constitutional framework necessary to sustain a free society. Buchanan's *The Calculus of Consent* (1962, with Gordon Tullock) and *The Limits of Liberty* (1975) emphasize the importance of constitutional constraints in preserving individual autonomy. His principle of generality, influenced by Hayek, underscores the necessity of non-discriminatory rules that treat all citizens equally. Yet Buchanan's contribution extends beyond procedural fairness. His notion of "artifactual man" reflects the capacity of individuals to shape their destinies through meaningful choices. Buchanan's defence of liberty is thus not only economic but deeply moral: it insists on treating individuals as ends in themselves, consistent with Kantian ethics. This principle provides a powerful response to the threats posed by collective decision-making and the tyranny of majorities.

Amartya Sen complements these perspectives by introducing a substantive dimension to liberty through his capability approach. In *Development as Freedom* (1999), Sen redefines freedom as the expansion of capabilities—the substantive opportunities individuals have to lead lives they value. While Hayek and Buchanan emphasize the procedural and institutional aspects of liberty, Sen draws attention to the social and economic conditions that enable true freedom. For Sen, development is not merely about economic growth or resource accumulation but about creating the conditions for individuals to achieve their potential. His work underscores the compatibility of markets and freedom, provided they operate within a framework of the rule of law that ensures equality of opportunity. Sen's emphasis on the interplay between formal rights and substantive outcomes broadens the liberal tradition, aligning with Hayek's and Buchanan's insights while addressing the inequalities that constrain freedom in practice.

Together, these thinkers present a comprehensive vision of liberty that balances procedural justice, institutional design, and substantive opportunity. At the heart of their shared project is a commitment to the dignity and autonomy of the individual. Hayek's rule of law ensures the impartiality of institutions; Buchanan's constitutional constraints protect against the overreach of majorities; and Sen's capabilities

approach ensures that freedom is not merely formal but substantive. Each contributes to a framework that respects the complexity of human interaction and the necessity of institutions that enable cooperation and innovation.

The practical implications of their ideas are profound. In defending liberalism, we must prioritize the rule of law, resist the temptations of centralized power, and cultivate the conditions for individual flourishing. As Hayek reminds us, liberty is an essential condition for the coordination of knowledge and plans in society. Buchanan adds that such liberty must be embedded in constitutional rules that align incentives and protect against rent-seeking. And Sen emphasizes that a truly liberal society must ensure that all individuals have the substantive opportunities to participate in and benefit from the market process.

In an era of rising populism, economic nationalism, and growing scepticism toward liberal institutions, these insights are more urgent than ever. The defence of liberty requires not only intellectual clarity but also institutional commitment. It demands that we recognize the fragility of freedom and the constant vigilance required to sustain it. The synthesis of Hayek, Buchanan, and Sen provides a roadmap for this defence, offering principles and practical guidance for the renewal of liberalism in the 21st century. As scholars, policymakers, and citizens, we must take up this challenge, drawing on their insights to build a society that respects individual autonomy while fostering the cooperation and progress that only freedom can achieve.¹

NOTES

- 1 In the chapter of *The Constitution of Liberty* where Hayek defined liberty he wrote, “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” (1960/2011, p. 71). Then later, making the consequentialist point, “[i]t is that the case for individual freedom rests chiefly on the recognition of the inevitable ignorance of all of us concerning a great many of the factors on which the achievement of our ends and welfare depends” (1960/2011, p. 80).
- 2 Obviously, Hayek could not have repeated after each review that he disagreed with this interpretation of his definition. He replied only to Hamowy, writing that “[i]t was not the main thesis of my book that ‘freedom may be defined as the absence of coercion’” (1961, p. 70). In his mind, coercion is unavoidable and has to be reduced to a minimum which could hardly be zero. Hayek, as he explained, was “concerned. . . with that condition of men in which coercion of some by others is reduced as much as is possible in society” (1960/2011, p. 11).
- 3 “Freedom is first defined negatively by the absence of coercion or constraint” (Our translation).
- 4 “At what point “freedom” disappears as “coercion” manifests itself it seems, for some phases at least of Hayek’s argument, to depend on whose ox is being gored”.
- 5 The role and place of Kant in *The Constitution of Liberty* has been noted in connection to Hayek’s views of law (see for instance Gray 1981, pp. 76-77). Our argument is different. We refer to Kant from the perspective of his ‘categorical imperative,’ according to which one should always act in a way that amounts to treating others as ends in themselves, never merely as means.
- 6 This is exactly what Berlin intended to say with his definition of negative freedom: “Berlin wanted freedom to be valued more for what it is than for what it does... Freedom—and this goes right to the heart of what Berlin meant by “negative freedom”—should be regarded as an end, a “source of value”(though not the only source) rather than as a means to something else” (Putterman 2006, p. 418).
- 7 In *The Road to Serfdom*, Hayek also spoke of the “framework of laws within which the productive activity is guided by the individual decisions” (1944/2007, p. 113).
- 8 Anthony de Jasay raised a similar criticism on the generality principle in James Buchanan and Roger Congleton’s *Politics by Principle, Not Interest* (1998): “[t]he inconclusive search for generality is inseparable from arbitrariness and discretion” (1999, p. 116). De Jasay used the example Buchanan and Congleton used, i.e. David Hume’s example of two farmers who have to dig a “drainage ditch”. An example of “general rule” could be “that the farmers. . . should dig the same number of days” (1999, p. 115). As a general rule, it will apply to all, including to some “frail, old, or arthritic” farmers, and who would therefore be coerced: his contribution would be relatively more important than the contribution of a younger, stronger farmer. Hayek’s generality principle as explained in *The Constitution of Liberty* leaves room to solve this issue. Hayek writes, “The requirement that the rules of true law be general does not mean that sometimes special rules may not apply to different classes of people

- if they refer to properties that only some people possess. There may be rules that can apply only to women or to the blind or to persons above a certain age” (1960/2011, p. 222). The checks on this are that “[s]uch distinctions will not be arbitrary, will not subject one group to the will of others, if they are equally recognized as justified by those inside and those outside the group” (Ibid.). So there could be a general rule that takes into account the farmers age or health in how much of the ditch they dig, as long as there is consensus and the rule only takes into account general characteristics of the farmers and does not intentionally benefit specific known farmers.
- 9 Gray is even more positive regarding the importance of Buchanan’s work on liberty, concluding his article by saying that “if liberty has a future, it will have been fortified by Buchanan’s work” (Gray 1990, p. 167).
 - 10 Buchanan made the distinction between choice and exchange in “What Should Economists Do?” (1964). What is not always perceived is that this distinction goes with two views of behaviours and two views of freedom (see Marciano 2009, 2024).
 - 11 Part of his constitutionalism was based on a rejection of spontaneous order theories. In the 1970s, Buchanan did not hesitate criticizing evolution, spontaneous order theories and Hayek’s analysis. Thus, in *The Limits of Liberty*, Buchanan (1975a, p. 211) explained that he refused “elevat[ing] the evolutionary process [that leads to the formation of norms] to an ideal role”. Two years later, in “Law and the Invisible Hand”, he criticized Hayek for his “implicit attribution of efficiency to whatever institutions emerge from an evolutionary process” (p. 33), disagreeing that spontaneous interactions among individuals necessarily produce “order”. A decade later, he repeated the same claim, “Acquiescence before the inevitability of spontaneous evolution is a stance that holds, for me, little appeal.” (Buchanan 1988/1991, p. 197; for an analysis of Buchanan’s views on spontaneous order, see Dughera and Marciano 2025).
 - 12 Sen frequently referred to Berlin’s “classic statement of the distinction between ‘positive’ and ‘negative freedom’ (1982, p. 6) or the “important and influential of the distinction between ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ conceptions of freedom” (1990, p. 103; 1994, p. 126; 1999, p. 5). However, one must also note that there are some ambiguities in the terms, obviously; ambiguities as to how it relates to the rest of Sen’s work (see Robeyns 2023, sec. 3.3). Sen himself eventually agreed that his characterization of capabilities in terms of positive freedom was confusing and later put much less emphasis on it.
 - 13 Even when Sen defined the five basic types of freedom each individual must have—political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security—, he did not give them an instrumental role. Their role consist in “help[ing] to advance the general capability of a person” (1999, p. 10; italics added).
 - 14 (On a comparison between Sudgeen and Sen, see Erasmo and Santori 2025).
 - 15 This approach extends Rawls’s framework, which focuses not only on primary goods but also on the actual impact of these goods on individuals’ capabilities. Basic capability equality has advantages over Rawlsian equality, which centres on the distribution of primary goods, as well as utility-based equality, which focuses on the equality of utility (see Igersheim, 2013, 2022 for further discussion of Rawls and Sen).
 - 16 One point he made was that wage labour should be viewed as a source of freedom because it gives workers the possibility, the freedom indeed, to sell their labour to whomever they want. This is an interesting example because it gives the impression that Sen is defending capitalism, a point for which he was criticised (see, e.g. Selwyn 2011, p. 71).
 - 17 Interestingly, although Sen defended the idea that “a competitive market equilibrium is weakly efficient in terms of achievement-freedoms” (1994, p. 130), i.e. of positive freedoms, his arguments were in favour of the market as an institution, rather than as a means to reach an equilibrium.
 - 18 Let us note that Boettke and Subrick are rather critical of Sen’s approach to development.

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ENDNOTES

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