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Polanyi Wollstonecraft Review



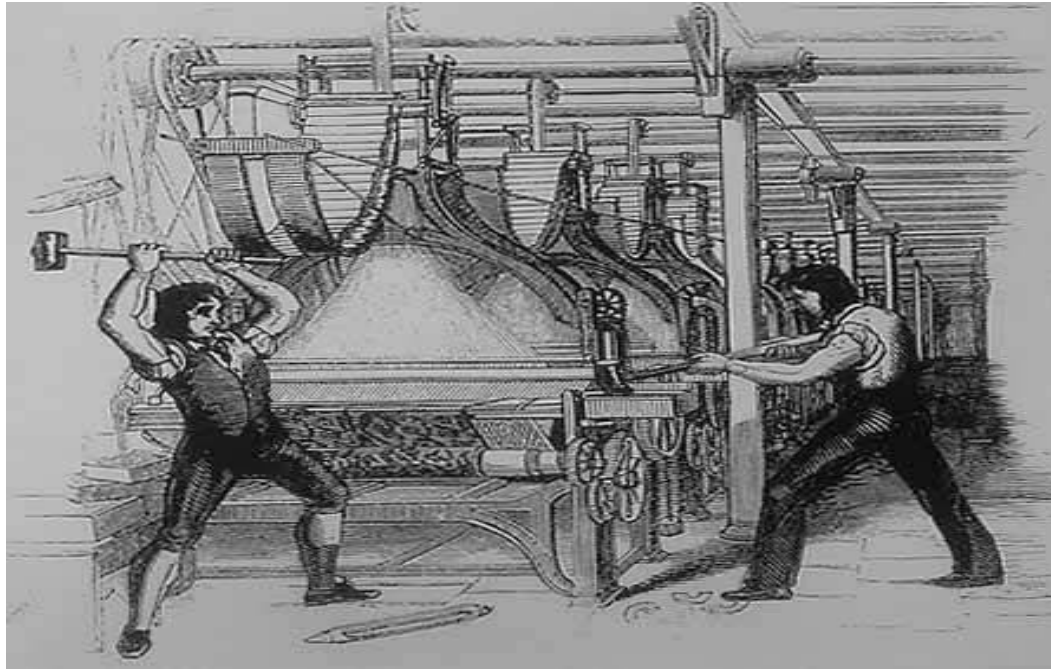
Today's menu

- **Review Polanyi: “Freedom’s” Assault on Community– (or was there really freedom at all?)**
 - Fictitious commodities and expansion of market
 - The “Double Movements” of the 19th Century and today
 - Liberal Theory and Polanyi’s Critique
 - Critique of Polanyi
- **Wollstonecraft between Freedom and Community**
 - Freedom and Equality
 - A theorist of Community?
- **Review: Freedom, Community, and “The Good Life”**
 - Individual Freedom
 - Freedom, Justice, and the Neutral State
 - The Community View: A non-neutral state
 - The Claims of Community
 - Two visions of Political Economy

Results of commodification: Society is now embedded in the Market Economy



The Double Movement example: People fought back against the loss of community



People had to fight back or it would have been the destruction of Human Society!

“Trading classes had no organ to sense the dangers involved in the exploitation of the physical strength of the worker, the destruction of family life, the devastation of neighborhoods, the denudation of forest, the pollution of rivers, the deterioration of craft standards, the disruption of folkways, and the general degradation of existence including house and arts, as well as the innumerable forms of private and public life that do not affect profits”

Double Movement Today: Anti- Neo-liberalism and Anti-Globalization



Fighting Back.....

The Market:
exploits,
Creates Sweatshops,
Destroys democracy
Destroys community



Another Double Movement in the second decade of the 21st century?



Sum: Liberal theory and Polanyi's critique: what is "natural?"

Smith, Ricardo,

1. "natural" Rational (self-interested, profit-seeking) **individual** +
2. Natural propensity to trade (exchange) → spontaneous markets
3. Freedom= removal of political power....it is a barrier to natural exchange)

Polanyi

- **No** ...humans are social beings
- **No** Spontaneous markets. The **"Natural"** human tendency is to preserve humanity, society, and nature
- **NO:** markets had to be **created** by political power (state)
- So.....what are freedom and rationality in a market society?

Sum: Liberal theory and Polanyi's critique: Why the market causes a backlash

Smith, Ricardo,

Polanyi

1. Price mechanism
(information about value)
→
2. Innovation + specialization
(division of labor)
3. Comparative advantage
→
4. Efficiency →
5. Growth →
6. Everyone is better off

- Artificial Commodification of land, labor, capital (creation of property "rights") → destruction of society (community) →
- Some are better off (market winners), more are worse off (market losers) →
- Movements to protect society from markets

Critique of Polanyi?

- Free Market capitalism is resilient, conquering vast new places—even China!
- Real Alternatives no longer beckon
- Was pre-industrial society really so great?
 - They were dependent on the weather!
 - Superstition, luck, no wealth creation.....
- Does Polanyi represent the triumph of Romanticism?

Mary Wollstonecraft: Between Freedom and Community

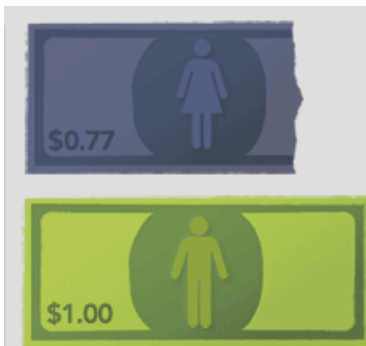


Like Polanyi, Wollstonecraft believes that “community” has been lost

- She was opposed to the commodification of land---private property: it ruined men’s character—(Socrates and Rousseau felt the same)
- She was opposed to hereditary wealth
- Opposed to market encroachment on life: “Love is not to be bought”
- “wealth....blights the tender blossoms of affection and virtue
- She emphasized moral sentiments: benevolence and compassion....heroism
- she emphasized women’s “duty” which resulted from her role in the community: woman, mother, wife.
 - the role was a virtuous one....”discharging the duties of her station”
 - Virtue can only be discharged by duty

But she also believes in Freedom.....

- Reason: She put "**reason**" at the center of human identity and as the justification for rights.
- Women had the same reasoning capability as men
- Therefore women should have the same rights as men.
- Women's dependence on men restricted their freedom—even enslaved them-- and ruined their character.
- Education would free women and develop women's rational powers and moral virtues
- She is an "egalitarian liberal"---wants to create a level playing field.....
- Conflict with her communitarian side.....



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NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

Wage Gap by Education

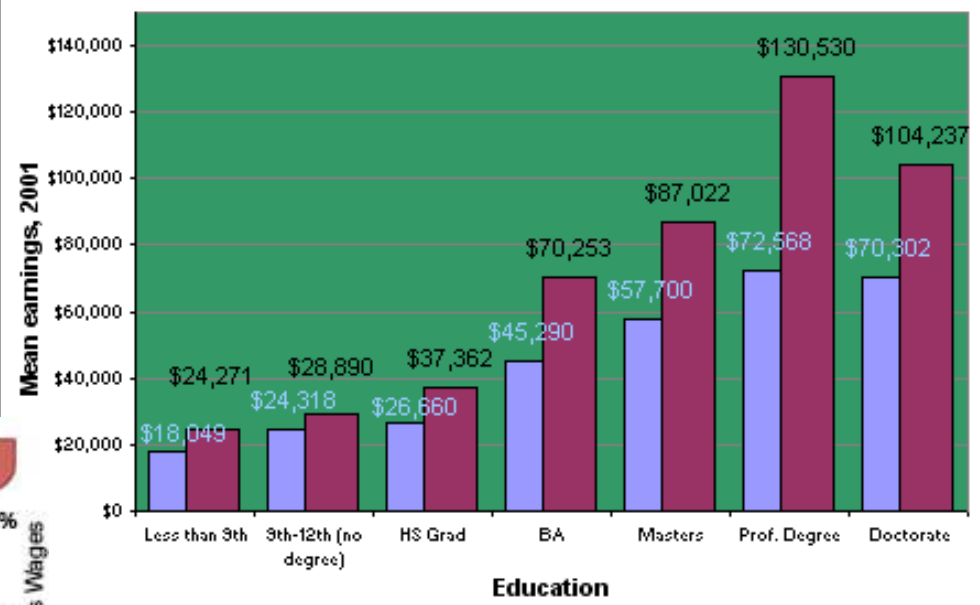
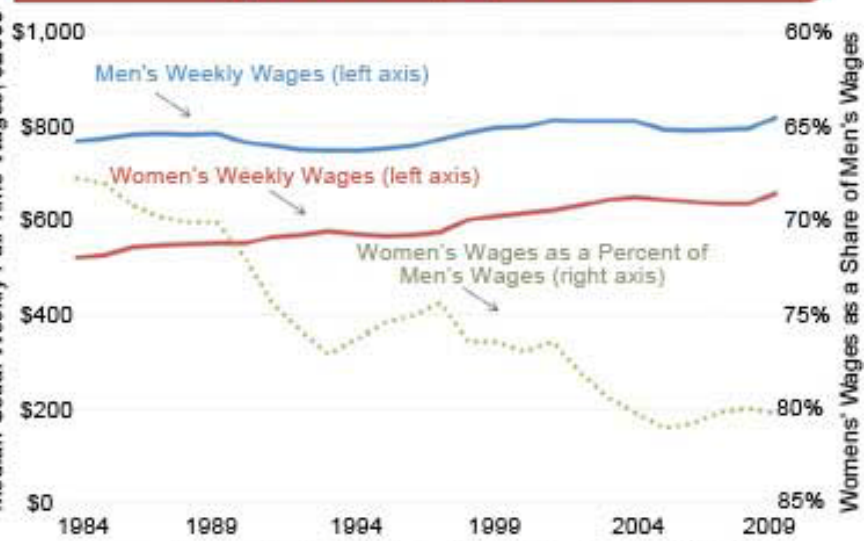


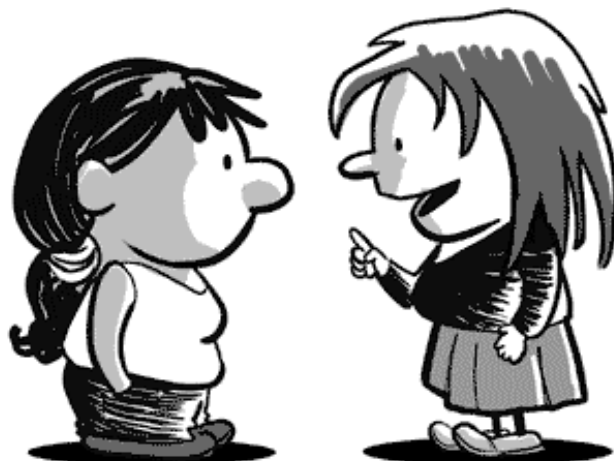
Figure 8. The Earnings Gap, 1984-2009



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics.

**EQUAL WORK
DESERVES
EQUAL PAY !**

THE WAGE GAP HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SEXISM! WOMEN ARE PAID LESS BECAUSE THEY MAKE DIFFERENT CHOICES.



HAVING A FAMILY, FOR EXAMPLE. MANY WOMEN TAKE TIME OFF FROM WORK TO TAKE CARE OF CHILDREN OR ELDERLY RELATIVES...



SO WOMEN WORK LESS, OR WORK PART-TIME, OR NEED MORE FLEXIBLE JOBS, AND AS A RESULT, THEY GET PAID LESS. BUT WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH SEXISM?



COULDN'T MEN DO HALF OF THAT UNPAID WORK?

THAT'S CRAZY TALK!



OKAY, I'LL LET SOMEONE ELSE RAISE MY KIDS.

WHAT KIND OF LOUSY MOTHER DOES THAT?



Review: Individual Freedom

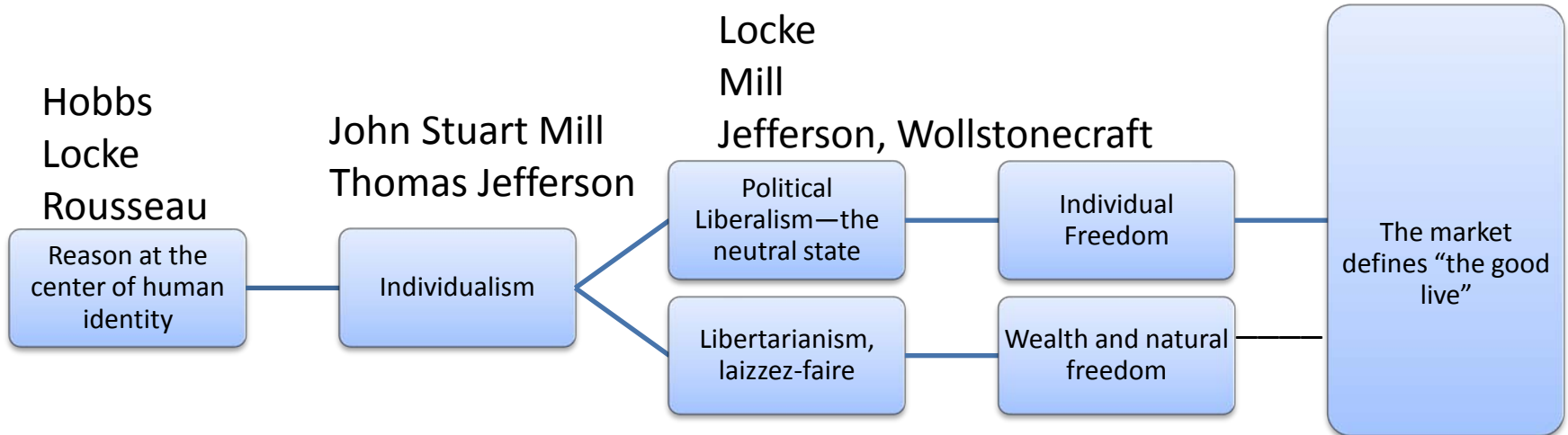
- Does not mean that people are selfish (Hobbes, Smith) but a claim about FREEDOM (John Stuart Mill)
- I am only obligated if I give my consent to be obligated.... (Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau)
- No collective responsibility
- Locke: legitimate authority is based on consent
 - Because “by nature, all free, equal and independent, no one can be put out of this estate, and subjected to the political power of another, without his own consent.”

Justice and Freedom: Liberalism and the Neutral State

- If we are free individuals, Justice means the freedom to define “the good life” for ourselves
- This freedom is the justice that the neutral state should uphold
 - The state should support the freedom of all---men AND women
 - Opposite of what Plato and Aristotle thought the purpose of government is....
 - Should the state tell free individuals what “the good life” is?
- Liberal Government’s role in the market: enable individual freedom—what is the best way to do this?
 - **Egalitarian** views—government should ensure material conditions necessary for free choice (Smith, Wollstonecraft)
 - **Libertarian** (conservative) views
- Is freedom of choice an adequate basis for a just society?

The Theoretical “Freedom” Vision

1780 Last Witch burned in Europe
1784 American Society to Abolish Slavery
1787 British Society to Abolish Slavery
1792 Wollstonecraft “Vindication of Rights of Women”



“How can a man be truly free if the fruits of his labor are not his to dispose of,
But are treated as part of a common pool of public wealth” --Barry Goldwater

Theories of Political Economy in which States define “the good life” for their citizens

- Utilitarianism: The state defines the most desirable way of life.....individuals do not have a choice: greatest happiness for the most
- Aristotle/Socrates: the good life is realizing our true nature, developing our human capacities—construct the kind of state that helps---then develop “rights”
- Hobbes “The Good” is peace and protection—the state must realize that good through power
- Machiavelli: The “Good” IS State Power
- The state’s definition of the good life defines the nature of rights --- definition of the good shapes which rights people should have

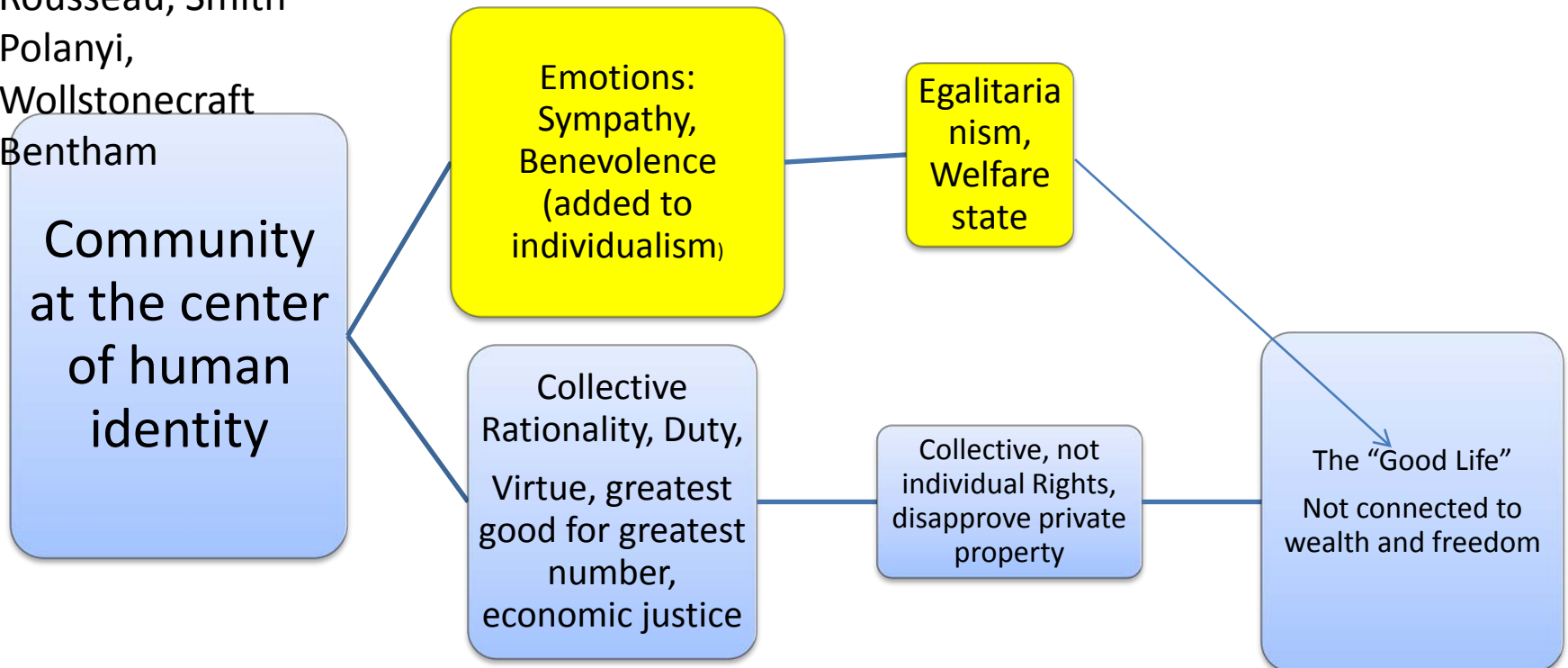
The Claims of Community

- We have obligations beyond our consent—we are bound by ties we haven't chosen.
- We are bound by our emotions, by moral sentiments, or roles in the world
- We can't make sense of these if we buy the “freedom model” of political economy.
- And if our obligations are based on solidarity and emotion, then the decision rule for political economy should not only be freedom but also the “common good.”
- But what is the common good? Who will define it?

The Claims of Community

Plato, Aristotle,
Aquinas
Rousseau, Smith
Polanyi,
Wollstonecraft
Bentham

Smith, Wollstonecraft



Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Polanyi
(and a bit of Wollstonecraft)