



‘EMANCIPATIONISM’: AN ATTEMPT TO SYNTHESIZE NEO-REPUBLICAN AND SOCIALIST THOUGHT

“EMANCIPACIONISMO”: UMA TENTATIVA DE SÍNTESE DO PENSAMENTO NEOREPUBLICANO E SOCIALISTA

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Abstract. *The republican revival of recent decades, spearheaded by thinkers like Philip Pettit and Quentin Skinner, has brought forth many interesting questions. This article takes up one such inquiry: what is the relationship between neo-republicanism and socialism? On the one hand, there appears to be a number of striking similarities between these social philosophies, such as their shared principal commitment to the liberation of people. On the other hand, however, a number of philosophers have questioned whether an allyship between them is theoretically sound. In what follows is an attempt to fuse these philosophies into a singular project under the heading of ‘emancipationism’. In so doing, it will be shown that not only are neo-republicanism and socialism mutually compatible, they are, in fact, incomplete without one another. Each of these traditions focuses on the eradication of a particular evil. Whereas neo-republicanism tends to highlight the problem of domination, the socialist tradition emphasizes the need to abolish exploitation. Thus, it will be shown that by conjoining the core commitments of these social philosophies, and the language both traditions employ when condemning domination and exploitation respectively, a stronger theory of freedom and justice emerges.*

Keywords: *socialism; neo-republicanism; domination; exploitation; freedom; emancipation.*

Sumário. *O revivalismo republicano das últimas décadas, liderado por pensadores como Philip Pettit e Quentin Skinner, fez despontar várias questões interessantes. Este artigo debruça-se sobre uma delas: qual é a relação entre neorepublicanismo e socialismo? Por um lado, parece existir um conjunto de semelhanças entre estas filosofias sociais, incluindo o seu compromisso partilhado em relação à libertação das pessoas. Por outro lado, contudo, vários filósofos têm vindo a questionar se uma aliança entre as duas é teoricamente sustentável. O que agora se segue é uma tentativa de fundir estas filosofias num único projecto sob a designação de “emancipacionismo”. Ao fazê-lo, demonstrar-se-á que não só o neorepublicanismo e o socialismo são compatíveis, como até permaneceriam incompletos se tomados isoladamente. Cada uma destas tradições tem como foco a*

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erradicação de um mal específico. Enquanto o neorepublicanismo tende a ressaltar o problema da dominação, a tradição socialista coloca o enfoque na necessidade de abolir a exploração. Assim, demonstrar-se-á que, ao conjugar os compromissos nucleares destas filosofias sociais e a linguagem que ambas as tradições empregam ao condenarem, respectivamente, a dominação e a exploração, emerge uma teoria da liberdade mais robusta.

Palavras-chave: *socialismo; neorepublicanismo; dominação; exploração; liberdade; emancipação.*

o. Introduction

Neo-republicanism and socialism, as social philosophies that advance normative principles for the regulation of social life, appear to have a great deal in common both historically and conceptually (Gaus, 2015). First, they share a core aspiration to extend the promise of effective freedom to all members of society (Lovett & Pettit, 2009; Robin, 2018). Second, they claim that a more universal enjoyment of freedom is achieved via the eradication of particular evils: primarily domination and exploitation, respectively (Cohen, 1995; Pettit, 2014). Third, both traditions believe that social life should largely be organized and regulated according to determinations made by democratic institutions (Breen, 2017; Pettit, 1997; Wolff, 2012). These large areas of overlap raise an important question: what is the nature of the relationship between these social philosophies? In what follows, I attempt to present a cursory approach for thinking about how these philosophies might be fused together—a fusion that I will henceforth refer to ‘emancipationism’ as opposed to ‘neo-republican socialism’ or ‘socialist neo-republicanism’.

In brief, the decision to introduce a new label—i.e. emancipationism—is predicated on two considerations. The first is an interest in avoiding the superficial issue of prioritizing one philosophy as more central, which ostensibly occurs with ‘neo-republican socialism’ or ‘socialist neo-republicanism’. In fact, other theorists and historians have used both terms which arguably introduces needless confusion about whether they are writing about different projects (Moss, 1993; O’Shea, 2019). The second, more substantive reason being that neo-republicanism and socialism both uphold a theory of freedom that is fruitfully encapsulated by the word ‘emancipation’. Ikpenwa's (2011, p. 86) introduction to the concept of emancipation notes that, “The *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie* describes emancipation as the deliverance from a form of dependence, deprivation of right

or oppression... [And,] *Il Nuovo Etimologico: Deli-Dizionario Etimologico della Lingua Italiana* adds that emancipation means to set oneself free or render oneself from something: for example, to emancipate oneself from economic dependence.” In what follows, it will become evident how socialism and neo-republicanism conceptualize freedom and social justice in this spirit. In short, these traditions advocate for a civic-based conception of liberty and justice that prioritizes effective escape from relationships of dependency, for such relations result in social ills like ‘subjection to the arbitrary power of another’ and the ‘expropriation of surplus value’. In other words, the freedom and justice sought by these traditions is importantly opposed to the theory of natural liberty that emphasizes pre-social institutions like natural property rights (Lovett, 2017; Pettit, 2014, pp. 22–27). Put another way, neo-republicans and socialists are united in connecting freedom with (legislative) processes that free people from the control of others, as opposed to a liberal emphasis on the maintenance and protection of non-conventional rights (Friedman, 2015).¹

So, what then is the relation between these philosophies? One narrative to have emerged is that neo-republicanism offers a timely substitute for the historically ‘discredited’ or ‘battered’ project of socialism. McIvor (2009, p. 253) argues that republican, “ideas have proved particularly attractive to a left that is struggling to redefine its project after the collapse of state socialism and the declining appeal of a top-down, bureaucratic corporatism and welfarism.” In other words, not only did the collapse of the Soviet Union pose concerns for the viability of socialism, the economic problems that arose in the West during the late 1970s (notably, stagflation) challenged even the more mild socialist reforms. Habermas (1986) remarked that these empirical ‘failures’ have condemned the global Left to the indeterminate throes of a ‘new obscurity’—the melancholy condition of not knowing how to best resist capitalism. The ‘socialist Left’, in the words of Wolin (2010, para. 7), faces an ‘ideological-political impasse’ because, “the traditional left-wing solutions were noble yet flawed; and we remain uncertain in what ways or directions they need to be supplemented.” In such a

¹ An account of the underlying ethics and political consequences of the libertarian natural-rights focus is helpfully outlined in: Mark D. Friedman, *Libertarian Philosophy in the Real World: The Politics of Natural Rights* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015).

turbulent climate, it is no surprise to see some suggest that, “Republican ideas seem to promise a route back to the values of freedom and democracy that the twentieth-century left seemed too often to lose touch with, at the same time as offering a viable and sophisticated defense of political activism and social commitment that could prove newly resonant for contemporary audiences” (McIvor, 2009, p. 253) Therefore, could it be, as some theorists have dared to ask, that republicanism ‘is the left’s [new] big idea?’ (White, 2007).

A second narrative to have emerged, although one that is less explicitly stated, is that these philosophies are mutually incompatible. Indeed, some have argued that Pettit-style neo-republicanism is hardly separable from the high liberal tradition from which it is supposedly distinct – which, if true, casts serious doubt on neo-republicanism as some sort of ally to socialism. Larmore (2001, p. 235), for instance, finds fault in the “opposition [Pettit] sets up between the republican conception of freedom and the modern liberal tradition.” According to Larmore, Pettit is ultimately, “obliged to appeal to recognizably liberal principles in order to define the precise content of his republican conception of freedom” (p. 235). The consequence of this being that neo-republicanism “belongs to the very liberal tradition that he imagines he has transcended” (p. 235). Patten (1996, p. 25) has also suggested the possibility that, “there is no interesting disagreement between liberals and republicans.” It all depends on whether neo-republicanism recommends, “the appeasement of injustices, or by favouring a non-liberal form of patriotism,” it might be sufficiently different, and a philosophy that liberals should reject (p. 44). However, Patten claims that, “in so far as it agrees with liberalism about these issues, and thereby gains in plausibility, it ceases to offer a distinct alternative to the liberal view of citizenship and civic virtue and ends up attacking a strawman” (p. 44). The potential incompatibility of the neo-republican project with a socialist vision is perhaps more evident when developing specific policy proposals, such as workplace regulation (Bogg, 2017).

Finally, a third narrative posits that these philosophies are naturally suited to one another and can be synthesized in a meaningful way. However, those advancing this perspective stress that the suitability of socialism and republicanism is contingent on a more ‘radical interpretation’ of the republican

tradition. As Thompson (2019, pp. 6–7) puts it, republican ideas, “about dependence, domination, self-government and the common good can be aimed at the economic power of elites and a more thorough penetration of democracy beyond the polity itself and into the other spheres of society, namely the economy itself.” In other words, ‘socialist republicanism’ is centered around the notion that the, “republican demand for the abolition of endemic domination cannot be met without a radical transformation of our economic life” —a transformation that (O’Shea, 2019) identifies as the implementation of ‘a socialist programme’. In sum, proponents of ‘radical’ or ‘socialist’ republicanism contend that any serious effort to institutionalize freedom (as non-domination) must go beyond traditionally ‘conservative’ prescriptions—i.e. ‘support for private property’ or ‘market-based solutions to domination’—championed by civic- or neo-republicans (O’Shea, 2019, p. 3). Indeed, a much more ambitious program of political economy would be required to successfully realize a society sufficiently emancipated from domination. In the words of White (2011, p. 575) it is almost certain that, “republicanism is incompatible with any form of laissez-faire or strongly ‘neo-liberal’ form of capitalism.” And furthermore, “republicanism... arguably points us beyond the varieties of ‘welfare state capitalism’ and towards, “some kind of social democratic economic system” (p. 575).

In what follows, I attempt to contribute to the development of the third narrative, but in a markedly different fashion from extant ‘radical republican’ or ‘socialist republican’ projects. That is, instead of suggesting that ‘x interpretation of republicanism embodies or demands socialist principles’ or that ‘y interpretation of socialism captures republican principles’, the aim of this article is to sketch out a *new* vision for the synthesis of these social philosophies under the aforementioned heading of ‘emancipationism’. As will be subsequently explored, neo-republicanism and socialism employ unique entry points in their analysis of social life (the master-slave relationship and the employer-employee relationship), and therefore articulate importantly distinct social evils (domination and exploitation) that ought to be abolished. This ultimately means that these traditions are steeped in the advancement of different principles for the regulation of social life (non-domination and non-exploitation). In what follows, it will be argued that the specific motivations inherent to neo-republicanism and socialism result in each tradition being blind to key insights

that the other brings forth. Thus, the idea behind an emancipationist social philosophy is the recognition that core principles of socialism and neo-republicanism are improved by a fusion into one overarching principle (herein abbreviated to the ‘ERD’ which stands for ‘eliminating relationships of dependency that can give rise to domination and exploitation’). Ultimately, it is this unified, synthesized principle that will serve as the foundation for an ‘emancipationist’ theory of freedom (and justice).

1. The master-slave relationship and the evil of domination

Neo-republicanism and socialism exhibit a key theoretical strength and similarity: namely, both of these social philosophies employ a ‘sociological imagination’ in prioritizing the role particular social relationships play in shaping individual/collective experience(s) (Mills, 2000). That is, in their normative and descriptive analyses of the social order, these traditions underscore the existence of certain types of social relations and explicate how these relationships harmfully condition or mediate the life-world of individuals (and groups/classes). Put another way, the claims advanced within neo-republican and socialist theory are importantly structured around specific ‘ideal’ (in the Weberian sense) relationships that serve as ‘entry points’ into their analysis of the social world. Wolff and Resnick (2012) explain that,

All theories of society confront a complex social totality: a multidimensional mass of diversity. Every theory has to begin somewhere with some selected aspects of or part of society... Every theory makes its particular sense (knowledge, understanding, truth) of society from (and partly depending on) the perspective of its particular entry point. (p. 151)

The subsequent analysis should make evident that whilst the entry points for socialism and neo-republicanism differ in content, they overlap in form—and this overlap presents a key opening for the possibility of synthesizing these two traditions. With respect to form, neo-republicanism and socialism are both principally concerned with the significance that certain kinds of social relationships have on individual freedom and justice. However, in terms of content, neo-republicanism draws heavily on the master-slave relationship, whereas socialism is generally predicated on the propertied-propertyless relationship. Thus, whilst these social philosophies are unified in their structural

orientation—as opposed to other traditions inspired by methodological and substantive individualism such as liberalism and libertarianism—they are attentive to the harms associated with different types of relations (Spicker, 2013). The idea of emancipationism, in part, involves the suggestion that what both unites neo-republicanism and socialism—i.e. a shared commitment to a relational analysis – and what differentiates them—i.e. a focus on different relationship types—is what ultimately makes these two social philosophies suitably compatible. In other words, a shared commitment to abolishing freedom-endangering relationships implies that the theoretical grounding of these traditions is non-conflicting; yet, their respective focus on distinct types of relations insinuates each tradition can learn from the other. Let us first explore the foundational entry point in neo-republican thought, and then subsequently explore the entry point employed in the socialist tradition.

Recent histories of Ancient Rome have argued that the fundamental entry point for Roman republicanism is the relationship between master (*dominus*) and slave (*servus*). Connolly (2017, pp. 27-28), explains that Roman writers, “conceived of the freedom of the citizen” by their “capacity to live not *in potestate domini*, not ‘in the power of a master’”—a condition epitomized by plight of the slave. Pettit (2014, p. 3) echoes this point, noting that, “... the Romans, who were familiar with the institution whereby a master of *dominus* held power of his slave... argued that to live *in potestate domini*, in the power of a master, was enough in itself to make you unfree.” In short, the freedom of the Roman citizen is understood, on a fundamental level, in opposition to the social position of the slave. The status of citizen is regarded by republican writers as the embodiment of freedom itself for the very reason that it guaranteed protection against the unfortunate aspects of a slavish existence (Wirszubski, 1968). Connolly (2017, p. 28) therefore indicates that this concept of ‘living without a master’ functions as one of the “axial Roman ideas.” At the core of neo-republicanism—the contemporary project spearheaded by figures like Quentin Skinner and Philip Pettit to revive and recover the insights of Roman republican thought, including the contributions of neo-Roman thinkers of Renaissance Italy through the American Revolution (Laborde, 2013) —is the aim of elucidating and further developing what this axial Roman idea of ‘living not in *potestate domini*’ means for the promotion of goods like freedom and social justice. Thus, the most

pernicious relationship known to human civilization, the master-slave relation, constitutes the central entry point by which neo-republicanism begins to construct a normative philosophy for the regulation of social life.

Neo-republicanism therefore holds as a ‘first principle’ that the condition of the slave—or to live a slavish existence—constitutes the ‘archetype’ of unfreedom. Although it isn’t explicitly stated as a ‘first principle’ in the works of leading neo-republican theorists, it is, in fact, the (social) mechanics and implications of this master-slave relationship that functions as the foundation upon which the neo-republican theoretical system is built. What, exactly, makes living *in potestate domini* so profoundly and uniquely objectionable? Simply, the slave is archetypically unfree because (s)he is completely subject to the arbitrary whim(s) of a master—she is, to use the favored neo-republican term, a victim of *domination*. Another way of describing the slave’s condition is that she is ‘dependent upon an arbitrary social power.’ This second description discloses that the recipe for a slavish existence—according to neo-republican thought—is comprised of two component parts: dependency and arbitrary power. With respect to the first ingredient, it is clear that the details of the slave’s existence are wholly dependent upon the dictates of her master. For every question that could be asked about her present and future condition—will she be fed, how will she spend her time, what work will be assigned to her, etc.—the answer will always be, ‘it *depends* on what her master decides’. The second ingredient of domination is that the master’s power can be exercised in an arbitrary manner. That is, the master’s private whims (can) inform his answers to all of those questions that shape the slave’s existence. He could, for instance, decide that his slave is to work eight hours a day, and then on a whim increase her workload to twelve-hour days.

The terribleness of this relationship for the slave is manifestly apparent. Each and every day she confronts a reality entirely cooked up by the private whims of her master. It should be emphasized that the state of uncertainty is an integral part of her domination because it points to a key distinction in neo-republican thought between ‘domination’ and ‘interference’. Neo-republicans take great care to emphasize that the slave’s unfreedom (or domination) is fundamentally the result of her being at the mercy of an arbitrary power (i.e. her master)—*not that the slave experiences coercive interference*. This stands in

distinction to the liberal tradition that condemns interference *simpliciter* as the source of unfreedom. Beginning with thinkers like Hobbes and Grotius, and continued in the works of Locke and other liberal reformers, freedom is argued to be a condition associated with the preservation and maintenance of natural rights (E. F. Paul, Miller, & Paul, 2005, p. xiii). According to this view, people should be ‘free’ to do as they please, so long as their actions do not violate the freedom (i.e. natural rights) of others. Accordingly, the antithesis of liberty becomes (forceful) coercion, as one’s rights can only actually be violated through an act of physical violence. Individuals are therefore made unfree, according to the liberal view, when others (threaten to) employ force so as to (a) make an individual do something they would prefer not to or (b) prevent them from pursuing an objective the wish to execute.²

Neo-republicanism rejects the view that freedom is compromised by instances of forceful interference. Instead, unfreedom is demarcated by a social status, namely, being dependent on a power that can arbitrarily interfere in one’s choices. This exact point is vividly demonstrated in republican literature via the employment of an oft-cited and simple, but formative thought experiment. Imagine slaves (a) and (b) have markedly different experiences in their servitude of a master. (A) has a relatively hands-off master that grants her considerable free reign from day to day; whereas (b) has a highly controlling *dominus* that frequently uses the whip to instill fear and compliance. Can we say that because (a)’s master is less commanding on the average day, (a) is freer than (b)? Should the liberal be right in equating unfreedom with instances of forceful interference, then, it would stand to reason that the slave of a more benign master, (a), is freer than the slave of a more punitive master, (b). But clearly there must be something wrong with that view. As Lovett (2017, para. 10) poignantly remarks: “Some find this conclusion deeply counterintuitive: if there is anything to the idea of political liberty, one might think, surely it cannot be found in the condition of slavery!”

What the liberal fails to recognize is that both slaves occupy a relationship in which they are completely and utterly at the mercy of another agent’s arbitrary

² Natural rights libertarians maintain that only physical aggression constitutes coercion. Rothbard devotes an entire chapter in *Ethics of Liberty* to critiquing Hayek for suggesting that coercion could include soft manipulation, such as employers using their power to fire employees as a means of altering an employee’s behavior. See: Murray N. Rothbard, *The Ethics of Liberty* (NYU Press, 2015), 219-230.

whims. Of course, there is no denying that (a) is luckier to be living a less painful life. However, (a) also knows that she could end up in the same position as (b) at any moment—and this a crucial horror of her existence as a slave. Her master might be lenient today, but that doesn't necessarily mean he will be tomorrow. Furthermore, (a) might know that if she attempts to do something that would upset her master, punishment might quickly follow. Therefore, every day she censors her own behavior from trying to do that thing. Thus, she can prevent physical aggression from her master, but only because she is actively restricting her own freedom by means of self-censorship. Conversely, we could imagine the possibility that (a)'s master is actually disposed towards using the whip to instill fear and compliance, but (a) knows that if she engages in certain behavior, the master will be less likely to act on that disposition. Thus, each day she might be forced to do something she would prefer not to – gravel, flatter, kowtow, etc.—in order to avoid potential violence. (A)'s condition of living in uncertainty, having to self-censor her actions, and engage in non-preferred behaviors is the result of living in a state of dependence on an arbitrary power—and this ultimately makes her unfree and the subject of domination. Pettit (1997) helpfully summarizes this point in the following manner:

The opposition between slavery or servitude on the one hand and freedom on the other is probably the single most characteristic feature of the long rhetoric of liberty to which the experience of the Roman republic gave rise. It is significant, because slavery is essentially characterized by domination, not by actual interference: even if the slave's master proves to be entirely benign and permissive, he or she continues to dominate the slave. Contrasting liberty with slavery is a sure sign of taking liberty to consist in non-domination rather than in non-interference. (p. 32)

We conclude this section by again reiterating that it is the existence of relationships wherein one party is sufficiently dependent on the other that poses a threat to individual liberty and constitutes a relation of 'domination'. Dependence on an arbitrary power, not the presence of mere coercion, is what spells unfreedom (as domination).³

³ This language, 'freedom as the absence of dependence on an arbitrary power', is how Quentin Skinner frames his neo-republican interpretation of classical republicanism. See: Quentin Skinner, "Freedom as the Absence of Arbitrary Power," in *Republicanism and Political Theory*, ed. Cecile Laborde and John Maynor (John Wiley & Sons, 2009).

2. The propertied-propertyless relationship and the evil of exploitation

To conceptualize socialism as a ‘social philosophy’ is to potentially invite controversy. Socialism is no simple ‘ism’. To some, it is an ideology, to others it is an economic project or theory, and to still others it is an historical movement. On what grounds then is it appropriate to reduce socialism to just one of its many multidimensional faces? As Wolff (2020, p. 14) appropriately emphasizes, ‘anyone referring to *the* socialist position... is making a major mistake.’ The view taken here is that speaking of socialism as a social philosophy in no way implies that it is *not* all of those other things. Instead, all that is being suggested is that socialism embodies, at least in part, an analysis of ‘principles for the regulation of social life.’ In so far as socialism can be said to be a force that deals with the question of how social life should be regulated, it can be appropriately considered as belonging to the domain of social philosophy—even if it is many other things as well. Moreover, it is difficult to see how socialism can be a social movement or an economic vision without also upholding ideas about how social life ought to be organized.

In this article, we take the principle of non-exploitation to be the animating impetus that ultimately grounds the myriad expressions of ‘socialism’. In other words, socialism functions as a social philosophy by upholding the normative prescription that social life should be regulated so as to eradicate exploitation—an injustice inherent to the capitalist economic mode of production. Arguably, this poses another point of controversy: there are social theorists who may point to other animating principles as grounding the socialist project—such as institutionalizing radical egalitarianism or a communal ideal freedom, for instance (Cohen, 2009; Connolly, 1977). But, to repeat our earlier point, in taking non-exploitation as a centrally defining socialist commitment does not inherently deny the existence of alternative objectives that others may associate with socialism. Instead, it merely proposes that socialism, in various forms, can be (and often is) predicated on the non-exploitation principle, so we will conceive of socialism as such herein.

Just as with our exploration of neo-republicanism, we begin with the entry point of socialist theory: namely, the propertied-propertyless relationship.

Socialists have long maintained that wherever the privatization of resources and assets occurs, including the means of production, injustices will abound. It should be fairly obvious that when one group obtains private ownership over resources that are necessary for social reproduction—i.e. water, land, minerals, tools, etc.—and consequently another group is deprived of access to those resources, the latter group becomes inherently and profoundly dependent on the former group, even to the point of maintaining survival itself. Widerquist (2006) elaborates that in contemporary capitalist economies:

When a person without property appears on the scene, everything with any material value is already owned either by the state or by an identifiable group of private individuals. She has nothing of her own. This fact might not give any one member of the ownership group any great personal power, but it gives the propertyless a distinct lack of power over their own lives. The propertyless worker does not face the choice of whether or not to interact with the class that controls property. Her freedom is limited to the choice of which one to serve. (p.19)

The propertyless members of society, as Widerquist (2006) notes, have no option but to accept some sort of arrangement with the property-owning class that will ultimately grant the propertyless access to those resources required for their continued existence. Bargaining theory tells us, quite plainly, that the propertyless class is in an inferior bargaining position when seeking to negotiate a mutually acceptable arrangement with the propertied class. The determinants of bargaining outcomes favor the property-owning class immensely: they can negotiate with greater patience, with less associated risk of breakdown, they have asymmetric information, they have greater outside options (due to their being more potential employees than employers), and so on (Muthoo, 2000). The preferable bargaining position of the propertied class thus allows them to negotiate favorable conditions for themselves, and ultimately extract surplus value produced by the propertyless members of society. From this initial division of the propertied-propertyless relationship spawn numerous iterative relationships that are defined by exploitation.

One such example is the employer/employee relationship. Just as Roman republican writers living in a slave society developed a thorough analysis of the master-slave relationship, theorists living in 19th century capitalist Europe began to closely inspect the employee-employer relationship burgeoning in industrial centers. The scientific socialists, most notably Marx and Engels, systematically interrogated how the capitalist system organizes economic production and their

findings came to be foundational for the development of contemporary socialism. Marx’s magnum opus, *Capital*, “defined a fundamental injustice—exploitation—located in capitalism’s core employer/employee relationship” (Wolff, 2020, p.11). In this historic work, he demonstrated that the logics of the capitalist production site necessitate that the value of workers’ wages is less than the value they produce for the capitalist who employs them—otherwise the capitalist has no reason to offer employment in the first place. The capitalist production process, Marx argues, is comprised of two inputs. First is the value added by, “laborers in production—those whose brains and muscles directly converted raw materials and means of production into finished products” (Wolff, 2017, p. 33). Second is the, “values embodied in the raw materials and means of production used up in production” (p. 33). Ultimately, then, “the ‘value added’ by the direct laborers plus the value of used-up means of production equaled the value of the output” (p. 33). From this elegantly simple formula, Marx articulates how labour is exploited by the capitalist:

For Marx and his value theory, the value of the capitalist product is simply the addition of two components. The first is the value carried over to—embodied in—the finished product from the used-up portion of the raw materials, tools and equipment. In effect, production relocated the values of the used-up means of production into the product. The second component is the value added by living labor as it worked, transforming raw materials by means of tools and equipment. *Exploitation exists in capitalism, Marx showed, because the value added by direct laborers in their labor activity during production generally exceeds the value paid to the direct laborers for performing that labor activity* [emphasis added]. (Wolf, 2017, p. 33)

In short, profits (can) reflect extracted surplus value from underpaying labour. The reason that labour submits to an exploitative employment contract is because they have no alternative option to guarantee their survival. People require access to the means of production in order to make the goods and services that sustain life. If those means are privately owned by a capitalist class, then labour is forced to accept the best possible contract they can obtain—which, as we have already noted, will always contain an element of surplus extraction by the capitalist employer. Thus, in pursuit of ending the evil of exploitation by surplus-appropriation, socialism came to embody the call for “replacing the employer/employee relationship with an alternative production organization in which employees functioned democratically as their own employer” (Wolff, 2020, p. 23).

The employer-employee relationship, however, is just one modality of exploitation found in a capitalist society. That is, exploitation in capitalist systems is not an injustice exclusive to the workplace. The landlord-renter relationship is another species of the propertied-propertyless genus—one chastised even by political economists now viewed as the earliest celebrators of capitalism.⁴ The payment of land rent to landowners is, pure and simple, a mode of wealth extraction made possible by virtue of mere ownership itself. Simply, those who enjoy a legal title over a given plot of land can charge rent for others to live or work on that land. On top of that, the yearly rental value of land usually increases from year to year due to rising locational value resulting from surrounding productive activity (Murphy, 2018). These rental payments by the renter constitute a form of *unearned income* enjoyed by the landowner. They are ‘unearned’ because there is no corresponding cost of production for ‘providing land’. That is, the landowner didn’t have to do anything *productive* to acquire that income. Instead, they could leverage their ownership of that asset, which means they enjoy a payment for the non-productive activity of owning something. The landowner thus appropriates some share of the surplus produced by the (usually) laboring renter. In short, “the unearned income of the [landowner] depends on producers producing a surplus over and above what they [the renter] consume themselves” (Andrew, 2015, p. 51).

We could point to numerous other relations of exploitation— ‘species’ of the propertied-propertyless ‘genus’—within our current capitalist economy beyond the employer-employee and landlord-renter relationships: creditors-debtors, monopolies-consumers, digital labour platforms-taskers, governments-taxpayers, and so on.⁵ Due to a lack of space, we cannot consider each of them individually here. The important point to be stressed is that an economic system with structures of ownership that divide people into a propertied class and a dependent propertyless class will result in the proliferation of relationships where the former exploit the latter.

⁴ Adam Smith famously remarked that, “landlords love to reap where they have never sowed.” See: Mark Skousen, *The Big Three in Economics: Adam Smith, Karl Marx, and John Maynard Keynes*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2015), 58.

⁵ For a wide-ranging exploration of the many possible ways unproductive wealth extraction takes place, see: Guy Standing, *The Corruption of Capitalism: Why Rentiers Thrive and Work Does Not Pay* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2017).

3. Eliminating relationships of dependency (ERD)

We are now in a position to begin apprehending the compatibility of neo-republicanism and socialism and to understand how fusing them together results in a grander social philosophy. In terms of their compatibility, we have seen that these traditions are unified not only in that they both utilize types of relationships as entry points in developing social principles for the regulation of social life. Beyond that, both of these traditions identify *relationships marred by dependency* as a necessary social structure for the evils of domination and exploitation to manifest. The neo-republican theory of domination, developed from a close analysis of the master-slave relationship, identifies that the conjunction of (a) the slave’s total dependence on her master and (b) the master’s capacity to exercise his power in an arbitrary manner, is what makes the slave’s existence an archetype of domination and unfreedom. The socialist theory of exploitation, predicated on the propertied-propertyless relationship similarly demonstrates that the capitalist institution of private property makes non-property-owners dependent on the property owners for their survival, which allows the latter to extract surplus value in exchange for permitting the former access to their property.

That both neo-republicanism and socialism identify relationships which generate dependency as intrinsic to domination and exploitation, respectively, implies that any theoretical project which tries to bring these traditions together must, at its core, emphasize the potential harms of dependency in social relations. In other words, the emancipationist vision must give central priority to the reality that relationships of dependency function as the springboard for both the social evils of domination and exploitation to arise. From this critical observation about dependency, paired with the specific accounts of domination and exploitation identified by neo-republicanism and socialism, a formative principle for emancipationism comes into view: (justice or freedom requires) *eliminating relationships of dependency that can give rise to domination and exploitation*. This principle achieves two critical objectives: (1) it captures core aspirations of non-domination and non-exploitation at the heart of neo-republicanism and socialism, and (2) it concurrently denotes that the path to realizing those aims lies in the transformation of social relationships characterized by dependency.

To be sure, there is arguably much to be gained by developing a singular guiding principle for a theory of emancipationism. Pettit has often and accurately noted that an importantly beneficial feature of the neo-republican project is that it all stands upon one, over-arching principle: to promote freedom as non-domination (Pettit, 2014). Indeed, this is an alluring theoretical feature as evidenced by the surprising success of other social philosophies in the public sphere. Wolff (1991, p.1), whilst discussing the classic ‘philosophical battle’ between Robert Nozick and John Rawls, noted that “Nozick has won few followers among academic political philosophers. Nevertheless, in practical political terms we have... seen a [societal] move away from left-wing welfarism defended by Rawls. It is Nozick who seems closer to the political spirit of the present age.” To be sure, a great deal of libertarianism’s political success—in the ‘real world’—is arguably due to the simplicity of its theoretical structure: namely, the positing of natural rights and the consequent correlative duties—what Nozick means by ‘side constraints—that external social actors have to respect those rights (Nozick, 2013, pp. 28–34). In fact, in a pursuit of maximum simplicity, some thinkers go so far as proclaim that from one ‘fundamental rule’ it is possible to “deduce the entire corpus of libertarian theory” (Rothbard, 2000, p. 116). Whilst many have rightly criticized this framing of libertarianism, there is much to admire about the effort to simplify libertarian thought by funneling the complex array of principles into an all-encompassing ‘maxim’—and the success it has brought (Zwolinski, 2016). Thus, a formulation of emancipationism that is predicated primarily on the acceptance of a singular, guiding declaration seems compelling. We therefore propose that emancipationism be anchored by the objective of ‘eliminating relationships of dependency that can give rise to domination or exploitation’, or the ‘ERD’ principle for short.

Having now sketched out an emancipationist framework, anchored by the ERD principle, we can now begin to explore how the synthesis of neo-republicanism and socialism importantly addresses the respective weaknesses of these philosophies on their own—or put another way, how neo-republicanism and socialism can learn from one another. This is achieved by considering the social dynamics and implications of two hypotheticals: the benign capitalist employer and the dominating worker self-directed enterprise. These cases demonstrate that it is possible for there to exist a relationship of dependency that

can be non-dominating but exploitative, and conversely, a relationship of dependency can be dominating but non-exploitative. In short, the possibility of a non-dominating relationship that is exploitative suggests neo-republicanism would benefit from exposure to the socialist critique of capitalist production, and alternatively, the possibility of a dominating relationship that is non-exploitative suggests that socialism would benefit from a neo-republican understanding of arbitrary power.

Furthermore, our consideration of these hypotheticals also reveals what neo-republicanism and socialism, in more concrete terms, view as necessary to actually realize the eradication of the evils of domination and exploitation. Recall that the ERD calls for the ‘eradication of relationships of dependency that give rise to domination and exploitation’. This raises the all-important question of how that is to be achieved. Fortunately, the neo-republican and socialist literatures offer robust consideration of that question, and we will consider (some of) their suggestions below.

4. The benign capitalist employer and the insufficiency of non-domination

Recall that neo-republicanism is principally concerned with the problem of domination and holds its elimination—the promotion of non-domination—as a primary principle for the regulation of social life. Further recall that it defines domination as a slavish existence demarcated by dependence on an arbitrary social power. One is likely to notice the improbability of any society ever eradicating all relationships of dependency in their entirety. The social world is simply rife with relations of dependency: children are dependent on parents, students on teachers, citizens on governments, patients on doctors, employees on employers, among numerous other examples. This means, then, that a central obstacle to the promotion of non-domination is removing the second ingredient of the domination recipe—that is, to prohibit the powers on which people depend from *arbitrarily* interfering with dependents. Here, republican theorists confront a conceptually fraught philosophical dilemma of identifying when a power on

which people depend is, in fact, arbitrary. Lovett (2012) spells out the problem in the following manner:

What counts as arbitrary power? This question... is of special concern to contemporary civic republicans. Civic republicans argue that an account of political liberty or freedom as consisting in the absence of domination... Domination, in turn, is usually understood as a sort of dependence on arbitrary social power. Thus one central criterion... for characterizing a person or group as subject to domination is that some other person or group has the capacity to exercise arbitrary power over them. (p. 137)

Lovett helpfully inverts the dilemma at hand by framing it in negative terms: “...if we imagine that social power is arbitrary by default, we will want to know what the necessary and sufficient conditions are for rendering it non-arbitrary” (p. 137). Simply put, we must clarify what it would take to ensure that in all relationships of dependency—teacher/student, doctor/patient, employer/employee—the dependent is protected from the harms of being subjected to the private whims of a *dominus*. Arnold and Harris (2017) summarize three general prevailing views on how interference power becomes non-arbitrary and thus non-dominating in neo-republican literature:

According to the first, championed recently by Frank Lovett, power is arbitrary insofar as it is unconstrained. According to the second, advanced most prominently by Philip Pettit in his recent work, power is arbitrary insofar as it is uncontrolled by those subject to it. According to the third, found in Pettit’s early work, power is arbitrary insofar as it is not forced to track the interests of those subject to it. (p. 55)

Let us consider the case of the employer/employee. Neo-republicans of all stripes seem to accept that employers constitute an arbitrary power on which employees depend. But of course, there is widespread disagreement about what is necessary to insulate an employee from arbitrary interference by their employer. Thinkers like Pettit believe that the combination of competitive labour markets and dependency-mitigating policies like a universal basic income or robust unemployment insurance effectively forces employers to track the interests of employees, thus rendering the power of employers non-arbitrary. Pettit specifies that, “in a well-functioning labor market, no one would depend on any particular master, and so no one would be at the mercy of a master. . . . [Any given worker] could move on to employment elsewhere in the event of suffering arbitrary interference” (Pettit, 2006, as cited in Arnold, 2017, p. 119) In other words, if labour markets are fluid and healthy, employees have the option of migrating to employers that treat them in a non-dominating manner. This results

in a market dynamic that encourages good treatment of employees because dominating employers will not be able to attract the labour necessary for the functioning of their business. As Arnold puts it, “when workers have viable exit options, they are less dependent on their current employer, greatly reducing—and perhaps even eliminating—that employer’s power over them” (p. 119). A universal basic income, it is argued, would have the same effect. If people are no longer dependent on employers—because they enjoy an independent income source—and can ‘exit’ dominating workplaces, then employers will be forced to adopt non-dominating practices. Some neo-republicans thus argue that through legislative policies we can instill market dynamics that necessitate employers track the interests of employees and thereby render the power of employers non-arbitrary.

Other neo-republicans, like Lovett, suggest that power becomes non-arbitrary—and therefore non-dominating—if it is subject to procedural or institutional constraints. For instance, an employer’s power could be, and often is ‘constrained’ by employment and labour laws determined by an independent legislature. Such measures have the effect of blocking an employer from *arbitrarily* imposing an absurdly harsh punishment on an employee they personally dislike or a worker that has rubbed them the wrong way for whatever reason. Examples of this include anti-discrimination laws mandating equal pay across sexes or restrictions against arbitrary termination which necessitate that employees can only be fired if there is ‘just cause’. Even internal company policies that specify procedures managers must follow when exercising their managerial prerogative, such as not shouting at employees when mistakes are made, render managerial power non-arbitrary. These are only three potential examples of numerous possible constraints that might be put on an employer to prevent their discretionary power from transforming into domination. According to Lovett (2012), so long as these ‘effective rules, procedures, or goals’ have the effect of ‘reliably constraining’ employers, they reduce the arbitrariness of the employer’s power and domination in the workplace.

Yet other neo-republicans stress that dependents require some form of control over the powers they are subjected to in order for those powers to become non-dominating. Workplace republicans, for instance, advance this view when

arguing that employee voice in the workplace is necessary to achieve a non-dominating work environment. Thinkers of this variety, like Nien-hê Hsieh, see managerial discretion employers wield over employees as necessary but also a serious risk of domination, and agree with the likes of Lovett and Pettit that their power can, in part, be rendered non-arbitrary, “by external legislative restrictions on workplace interference and opportunities for individual legal redress in courts” (Breen, 2017, p. 476). However, workplace republicans maintain that whilst legal measures are helpful, they are woefully insufficient, as “these restrictions and opportunities cannot cover every eventuality and often involve considerable expense” (p. 476). Furthermore, workplace republicans argue that, “an effective right of protection would require a regime in which workers are able ‘to contest managerial decisions that result in severe forms of interference not only ex post, but also as part of the decision-making process internal to economic enterprises’” (p. 476). Breen (2017) clarifies that, “workplace republicanism does not entail employee control of enterprise policy, but instead their participation in decision-making processes in ways which guarantee that their voice will find register” (p. 476). This might include the creation of ‘adjudicative bodies’, ‘work committees’, and “even employee representation on boards of directors, as is the case in continental European systems of co-determination” (pp. 476–477).

The point to be stressed here is that under multiple different accounts of how to eradicate domination from the workplace in the neo-republican literature, the evil of exploitation as outlined in the previous section remains in place. That is, we can imagine workplaces that meet all of the different conditions above—i.e. employers are forced to consider employee interests due to market factors; employers that are constrained from arbitrarily interfering with employees because of labour and employment laws; and employers that frequently confront and respond to the voices of employees—and yet employers are still free to expropriate the surplus labour of those they employ. In fact, it seems as though in certain sectors, especially the tech industry of Silicon Valley, it is fashionable practice for employers to try and obscure the inherent exploitative relationship embedded in capitalist production by trying to ‘be the non-dominating boss’. Silicon Valley campuses are known for their lavish ‘campuses’ designed to encourage workplace creativity, free thinking, minimize stress, and grant employees considerable workplace discretion (Naddaff-Hafrey, 2016). Perhaps a

Silicon Valley employee feels non-dominated and well-compensated, yet the fact remains they are still being exploited via appropriation of their surplus labour.

The blindness to the social ill of exploitation within neo-republicanism represents a serious limitation. Oddly enough, the neo-republican theory of domination, developed from an analysis of the master-slave relationship, does not emphasize the simple fact that the slave’s output is unjustly appropriated by her master, nor does it include this as part of what it means to experience domination itself. Instead, the neo-republican tradition focuses on how interference from an arbitrary power typifies a slavish existence. It was mentioned earlier that by choosing different types of relationships as entry points, the neo-republican and socialist traditions develop independent insights, opening up the opportunity for these philosophies to benefit from one another. This occurs with the unification of these insights into a larger theory, such as emancipationism. The ERD must specify that relations of dependency which give rise to domination *and exploitation* because, as we have witnessed, domination can be conceptualized in a way that omits the injustice of appropriation of surplus value.

5. The dominating WSDE and the insufficiency of non-exploitation

We have just considered the limits of the neo-republican commitment to promoting non-domination. It was observed that it is possible, according to neo-republican thought, to construct a non-dominating workplace that still involves employers (capitalists) exploiting employees (workers). We now observe that the reverse problem plagues the socialist aspiration to promote an economic system committed to non-exploitation: namely, that a non-exploitative system could still retain dominating elements from a neo-republican view. Recall that exploitation in the strictly Marxian sense, “...is the appropriation by capital of a share of the value produced by the laborers” (Carchedi, 2017, p. 45). We expanded our understanding of exploitation to include the appropriation of value via payments to non-productive factors like ownership of (scarce) assets in the form of rent. Before considering how a socialist, or non-exploitative system may still embody dominating relations, a key admission is in order.

As mentioned above, socialism is rightly considered much more than a social philosophy concerned with advancing the negation of exploitation as a principle for regulating social life. It also has large numbers of historical representatives across the globe, ranging from trade unions, political parties, revolutionary and reformist governments, activists, and social theorists all participating in a struggle to replace our capitalist economic system with a new mode of economic organization that emancipates people from the exploitative conditions perpetuated by capitalist logics. Each of these participants constitutes an addition to an amalgamation of ideas, concepts, events, institutions, and movements that are invoked by the word ‘socialism’. Thus, any attempt to theorize about—let alone demonstrate the limitations of—a potential post-capitalist ‘socialist’ system is always liable to criticism on the grounds that ‘other models’ constitute a better socialist vision. Indeed, the variety of ‘socialisms’ developed over the past few centuries – centralized planning, decentralized planning, regulated capitalism, socialized property, worker-owned enterprises, and so on—is stunningly rich and complex (Wolff, 2015). Nevertheless, we have presented socialism here in perhaps its most narrow iteration as the negation of exploitation, and therefore consider a post-capitalist proposal that seeks to realize that objective—and inquiring as to whether it could benefit from the neo-republican theory of domination along the way.

David Schweickart offers one concrete proposal for a post-capitalist or socialist system, and he attempts to clearly explicate how the transition could be made. In his earlier works, Schweickart theorizes capitalism as an economic system characterized by ‘the bulk of the means of production [being] privately owned’, ‘most products are exchanged in a market’, and ‘most of the people who work for pay... work for other people who own the means of production’ (Schweickart, 2011, pp. 24-25). In later works he presents a simpler picture of capitalism as embodying three distinct markets: a market for goods and services, a market for labour, and a market for money (financing, capital, investment, etc.) His envisioned post-capitalist order, a proposal he refers to as ‘economic democracy’, involves a system, “that keeps the first set of institutions in place, i.e., competitive markets for goods and services, but a) replaces (most) wage labor with cooperative labor and b) replaces those out-of-control financial markets with a more democratic mechanism for handling investment” (Schweickart, 2016, p.

2). In short, preserve the goods and services market, but get rid of the labour and money markets.⁶

Schweickart argues that history offers a strong case in support of preserving the market for goods and services. In his view, “Historical experience makes it clear that markets are a necessary component of a viable socialism. Central planning does not work for a sophisticated economy” (Schweickart, 2011, p. 3). Although, newer developments with advances in computing powers—and ironically the practices of multinational corporations—might provide cause to re-examine this claim (Phillips & Rozworski, 2019). The second market, the market for labour, should be abolished, a feat accomplished with the conversion of workplaces to worker self-directed enterprises (WSDEs). The idea is that, “each productive enterprise is controlled by those who work there... [and] decisions concerning [how the firm is run] will be made democratically” (Schweickart, 2011, p. 49). Thus, “when you join a firm, you have the right to vote for members of a worker council” tasked with managing the firm, “just as you have the right to vote for the city or town council governing your place of residence” (Schweickart, 2016, p. 3) Finally, the money market also must be abolished, and replaced with social control of investment. In the economic democracy model, “funds for new investment are generated by a capital assets tax and are returned to the economy through a network of public investment banks” (Schweickart, 2011, p. 49). Democratic oversight of investment means the community sets the objectives and conditions of lending and borrowing—replacing the exploitative nature of our current financial institutions.

We cannot explore in the limited space available how or whether economic democracy would end the exploitation inherent to every iteration of the propertied-propertyless relationship considered above (employee/employer, landlord/renter, creditor/debtor, etc.) However, what is clear is that the proposal of economic democracy targets the structures of ownership that allows for exploitative relationships to proliferate. With respect to the employer/employee relationship, for example, the practice of employers charging a fee for access to the means of production in the form of appropriating surplus value from the

⁶Naturally, Schweickart acknowledges that “This will be the “basic model.” To be clear: this will be a simplified model of an alternative, noncapitalist economy. Real-world economies will always be more complicated than the models that describe them.”

laborer would come to an end. As Wolff explains, in an “alternative system built upon WSDEs... the workers who produce the surpluses collectively appropriate and distribute those surpluses” (Wolff, 2012, n.d.). This means that worker self-directed enterprises, “are, to make use of Marx’s precise term, nonexploitative organizations (class structures) of production because they do not involve one group of people appropriating the surplus produced by another” (n.d.).

The socialist ideal of non-exploitation is thus achieved by the replacement of capitalist workplaces – where employees sell their labour power to an employer in the form of a contract of service—with WSDEs for the significant, but nonetheless simple reason that surplus labour becomes distributed by those who produce it. So far so good. But herein lies the reverse problem of the previous section: does this solution to the problem of non-exploitation—i.e. that appropriators and distributors of surplus are identical with those who produce it—*necessarily* (or sufficiently) imply that workplaces will become non-dominating environments? It is not at all obvious that the mere transformation of workplaces from their current capitalist mode to democratically operated organizations will necessarily result in workers being emancipated from all aspects of a slavish existence identified in neo-republican theory. Democracy is not a magic bullet for all social ills, including the propagation of domination.

It was noted earlier that employers in capitalist workplaces have a wide-ranging capacity to interfere with employees on an arbitrary basis. Examples might include withholding bathroom breaks, assigning new job duties, slashing hours, revoking pensions or health insurance, retaliation for trade union organizing, and even termination at will. Would these practices continue in a WSDE? It stands to reason that if management decisions are ultimately accountable to all workers in the firm because they occupy an ‘elected’ position, managers would be constrained by democratic functions from engaging in such tactics. Simply put, workers would not stand for such treatment and would oust those who engage in it via the electoral process. Yet, observation of other democratic structures shows that this mode of reasoning is often disturbed by the complications and complexities of social life.

The experience of immigrants in western democracies proves to be one such example. Even with legal standing and voting rights, immigrant communities are

often unfairly targeted or unfairly ignored in the construction of social policy. Because immigrants can be, and often are perceived as 'outsiders' by native populations, governments might place restrictions on their recourse to public funds, for instance (Kofman, Lukes, D'Angelo, & Montagna, 2009). Additionally, local communities may elect police chiefs and prosecutors that focus their energies on monitoring and regulating immigrant neighborhoods (El-Enany & Bruce-Jones, 2015). In fact, minority groups in general are disposed to suffer from the dictates of majoritarian rule and suffer from the sociological reality of in-group out-group dynamics. Can we not imagine that WSDEs, as small self-governing democratic institutions, could also engender dominating policies for workers perceived as 'outsiders'? What if WSDEs adopt policies that are exceptionally biased to new workers who join the enterprise, just as political communities react to the influx of immigrants? What if workers elect management that is overly surveillant of new workers—and thereby interfere with them on an arbitrary basis—so as to ensure that 'they actually belong' and are making 'an appropriate contribution'? What if WSDEs democratically determine payment schemes by seniority so as to effectively benefit the 'native population' within the firm? The potential reply that employees can simply go and work for other WSDEs that don't engage in these practices ironically mirrors the capitalist response to the dominating conditions of capitalist workplaces—the classic 'vote with your feet' argument.

The point in need of emphasizing is that the inculcation of non-exploitation in the functioning of an institution does not in and of itself mean that domination is also ameliorated. That is, the mere transformation of workplaces from the capitalist model, where surplus labour is appropriated and distributed by private employers, to a WSDE, where surplus labour is appropriated and distributed by those who produced it via democratic mechanisms, does not in principle entail that all workers are safe from arbitrary interference by those who manage workers. The potential blindness to arbitrary interference (or domination) in the socialist solution to worker exploitation is also a serious limitation. Even in WSDEs, workers will confront elected managers, but managers, nonetheless. While the socialist program of economic democracy potentially ensures that the presence of a superior does not result in exploitation, it does not guarantee protection against domination understood as arbitrary interference. Because

socialism takes the propertied-propertyless relationships as its entry point, it arguably misses the social ills revealed by the entry point of a master-slave relationship. Again, we see the necessity for an emancipationist theory—and the ‘ERD’—to emphasize the elimination of relationships that give rise to the evils of exploitation *and domination*.

6. Conclusion

The objective of this article was to consider what the relationship between neo-republicanism and socialism might be, given their considerable similarities. In pursuance of this aim, a thinly defined theory of how they might be brought together under the heading of ‘emancipationism’ has been the result. At the core of emancipationism is the significance of social dependency. Both neo-republican and socialist theory employ certain kinds of relationships as entry points in their analysis of social life – the master-slave and propertied-propertyless relationships, respectively. The fact that these traditions utilize disparate entry points means they identify and offer resolutions to disparate social evils, namely, domination and exploitation. Our analysis concluded by showing that neo-republicanism’s concern with domination and socialism’s concern with exploitation results in each tradition having a potential blindness to the other tradition’s insights about their respective objects of ire. Thus, in calling for the elimination of relationships of dependency that give rise to domination and exploitation (the ERD), as a principle for the regulation for social life, emancipationism carries forward the strengths of these philosophies whilst shedding their key limitations.

To be sure, there is much that still needs to be considered in the development of an emancipationist social philosophy. What we have discussed here only begins to scratch the surface. There are other philosophical schools, like ‘radical republicanism’ or ‘labor republicanism’ that could be fairly characterized as also bringing together the neo-republican principle of non-domination and the socialist commitment to non-exploitation. In what ways does emancipationism differ from other projects, such as those proposed by Alex Gourevitch (2013) or Michael Thompson (2015, 2019)? Additionally, how, exactly, would a socialist

program like Schweickart’s (2016) economic democracy satisfy the imperative to eradicate the possibility of domination in worker self-directed enterprises? Should the neo-republican proposal to increase the exit power of workers through a universal basic income be considered as a worthwhile addition to the economic democracy proposal—something Schweickart (2011, p. 73) opposes? Or maybe the whole idea of emancipationism is misguided on the grounds that the individualist and negative conception of freedom in neo-republicanism is fundamentally at odds with the socialist ideal of collective freedom as advocated by thinkers like Gilbert (2013)? To quote Arnold (2017), “these are issues worth exploring.”

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