

Leadership Seminar III: The Economic Organization of a Good Society

Group 6 Critical Appraisal: Capitalism and Freedom by Milton Friedman

Country: Cameroon

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Uighurs minority in China have been maltreated by the government for a long time now, forced to work in factories for free or little money. (Sudworth, 2021) Aside from infringing on their rights as citizens, the centralized government prevents the economic freedom these people deserve as citizens. This is in total contrast to Friedman's ideas of economic autonomy. *Capitalism and Freedom* by Milton Friedman educates how important economic autonomy is. Friedman also argues that the only way to achieve political freedom is through competitive capitalism because significant civilization advancements have been achieved through a decentralized government.

Friedman is transparently and unapologetically a man of liberty and human rights. He encourages independence without turning away government rule by stating that it plays a vital role in every country by being essential in moderation. His philosophy of a decentralized government that allows individual creativity promotes self-love, accomplishment, and self-empowerment, which feed into a good society. If people are free (liberty) to be creative and put in the work, they will be efficient and should be able to live as a community and build a society with the government's help who should defend this freedom.

We could say that Friedman is a libertarian and an advocate for capitalism as he advocated for citizens' rights and economic freedom. While he acknowledges the government's role in an economy, he believes that a centralized government is a danger to the economic freedom of the people. We agree with this for, if the citizens are not economically free, are they living in a good society? For instance, if Ghanaians were to be under the North Korean government, they would suffer as North Korea has a curfew policy that dramatically restricts citizens. Citizens will not be able to work for the maximum possible hours, and this will affect production in the country, which will, in turn, affect the economy. Besides, people cannot work and earn more for themselves and raise their living standards and esteem. Imagine the hardships and limitations, which are what Friedman speaks against.

We agree with most of Friedman's economic liberty ideas (free market) and the enforcement of decentralized government, which contribute to political freedom and allow people to control production and benefits factors from their outputs. However, these ideas of a free market and allowing people to make as much profit as they wish without any regulations will interfere with our belief in protecting the environment. We believe that climate change is real, and the government should regulate factories when it comes to how much carbon dioxide should be emitted per year, for example, for each company. These regulations will go against Friedman's idea of a free market. However, at the same time, they will protect natural resources and ensure a safe environment for future generations and the continuation of industrialization for years to come. Life is all about trade-offs; in as much as we would like to operate under a free market, we also have to acknowledge different moral obligations we have, such as preserving the environment at all cost.

References

Sudworth, S. (2021). *'If the others go I'll go': Inside China's scheme to transfer Uighurs into work*. from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-56250915>