

philosophical approach to morality, while less arbitrary and historically conditioned than purely religious approaches, is again an inherently inadequate basis for developing a functional, sustainable, and evolving human morality. Such a morality must instead be informed by an increasing *factual* understanding of the causes and impediments of sustainable “human well-being.”

Contractarians, and liberal political philosophy more generally, emphasize the need for individual civil and human rights to protect individual “liberties” from potential state tyranny (the so-called negative liberties). These rights are designed to allow individuals to act on their own volition as much as possible without reducing the scope of action of others, as in Rawls’ “liberty principle” of maximum individual liberty consistent with equal liberty for all (Hahnel and Albert 1990, Chap. 1). This has been a historically important political principle essential to the development and survival of democracy, particularly with regard to the necessary protection of “minority rights” that allows democracy to continue and to the general protection of individuals from abuse of state power. But in their sanctioning of the principle of private property and capitalism, liberal contractarians have ignored the direct authority and power of owners to exploit other humans for their own benefit through the labor market, which is, as has been discussed in the introduction, a key, and over time increasing, source of concentrated power and oppression within capitalist market economies.

For example, Kant’s “second categorical imperative” referred to above states that one should:

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ebruary “[a]ct in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end” (Kant 1785). But this imperative fails to recognize that production in modern societies and economies is largely carried out by hierarchical social organizations that are dependent on the managerial authority of some people to direct the work of others to achieve the goals of the organization so that the entire economy and society are based on “using others as means to achieve ends.” The key issue is *not* the means–end relationship but *democracy*. Are the leaders, those who have the power to use others as “ends,” democratically accountable? Do they have the consent of the “governed” to lead on their behalf? (Archer 1995). Worker co-ops like the Mondragon in Spain have managers who are vested with the authority to direct the work of others, but they are hired and annually reviewed by elected representatives of the workers and must pursue