

From the institutional contexts of the Malthusian trap to managerial efficiency: A new political economy perspective

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Abstract

In recent decades, numerous studies have explored the linkage between the Malthusian trap and social inequality. However, research explicitly identifying social inequality as a causal factor of the Malthusian trap from a microeconomic remains relatively uncommon. Moreover, although Marxism's applicability to economic construction has been widely questioned, its historical view implying a direct relationship between institutional forms and productivity levels has not been sufficiently revisited or critically examined. These issues form the background of this study, and elucidating them constitutes its primary contribution. This paper critically revisits the notion of the "Malthusian Trap" by examining its historical applicability and the contexts in which it is often invoked. While the traditional view associate's pre-industrial stagnation with resource constraints and population pressures, this study highlights that periods typically labeled as "Malthusian" were also marked by severe social oppression, entrenched hierarchies, and distorted market mechanisms.

Drawing on comparative political economy and management perspectives, the analysis suggests that productivity improvements, institutional structures, and collective psychological factors (such as group mind levels and social organization costs) interact in shaping developmental trajectories. A formalized model is proposed, illustrating that short-term coercive power may overcome long-term efficiency, but that in equilibrium, societies with healthier collective psychological dynamics and more balanced institutional arrangements achieve greater aggregate wealth.

By integrating microeconomics, management theory, and elements of psychoanalysis, the paper develops a new explanatory framework that accounts for how institutional and cultural conditions mediated economic development in different historical periods. This challenges the deterministic interpretation of the Malthusian trap and at the same time opens a broader discussion on the role of governance, management efficiency, and collective mental structures in sustaining long-term growth.

Keywords: Malthusian Trap, Market Equilibrium Value Mechanism, Isoquant Curve, Deadweight Loss Triangle, Group Mind, Economic Development, Comparative Advantage

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The so-called Malthusian trap has never occurred under conditions of balanced social wealth distribution or mild inequality; rather, it has always been accompanied by extreme disparities between rich and poor, severe social hierarchy and oppression, and deeply rooted hierarchical privileges (note: Christopher Ryan and Cacilda Jethá, in their 2010 book *Sex at Dawn*, suggested that the emergence of the Malthusian trap was typically accompanied by social inequality. Branko Milanovic, in his 2013 working paper *The inequality possibility frontier: Extensions and new applications*, demonstrated that during periods of the Malthusian trap, the exploitative behavior of social elites led to high inequality, evidenced by social oppression and stratification. Furthermore, Oded Galor, in his 2022 book *The journey of humanity: The origins of wealth and inequality*, highlighted the historical association between social stratification and the Malthusian trap) Multiple studies in historical economics have demonstrated that what is termed the "Malthusian trap" — prolonged pre-industrial economic stagnation — invariably emerged within institutional environments marked by harsh oppression, rigid power hierarchies, and extreme inequality. For instance, Milanovic, Lindert, and Williamson (2009, 2011, 2013) show in their cross-civilizational studies of inequality that when societies entered stagnation, elite extraction rates approached their theoretical maximum, while the masses were driven close to subsistence. Brenner (1976), in his work on European history, likewise argued that the closed nature of class structures and landholding relations was a decisive cause of stagnation. North, Wallis, and Weingast (2009) conceptualize this in their "limited access orders" model, where elites maintained stability through monopolizing violence and rents, but at the cost of suppressing competition and growth. Taken together, these findings indicate that periods historically identified with the "Malthusian trap" were in fact times

of intensified social oppression and institutionalized predation. Furthermore, Szulga (2012), in *A Model of Exploitation in a Malthusian Serf or Slave Economy*, explicitly incorporated “oppression costs” into a Malthusian serf/slave economy framework, restating the Domar hypothesis and clarifying the systemic coupling between elite exploitation and stagnation under such institutions.

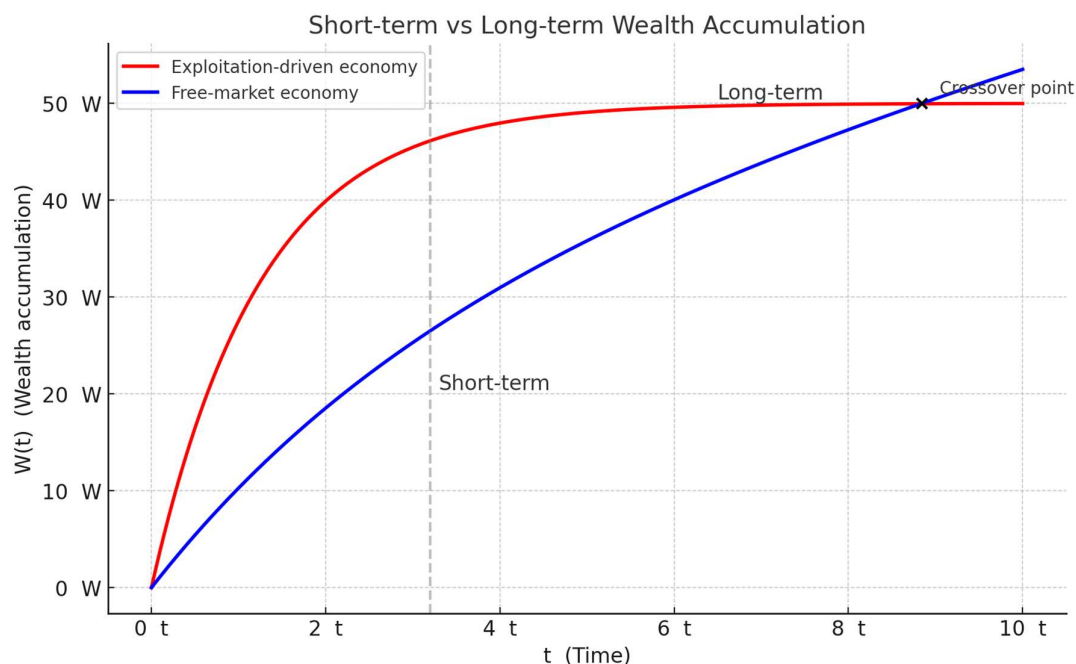
From a simple ecological perspective, the so-called Malthusian trap is by no means a spontaneous tendency arising from ecological balance or natural dynamic regulation; rather, it is obviously the result of distortions imposed by human social institutions. Ecological economics, which integrates ecology and economics, emphasizes that the allocation of resources should follow the principles of sustainability inherent to ecosystems. Feudal societies’ oppressive institutions violated these principles by concentrating power and creating ‘artificial scarcity’ through oppressive institutions. By contrast, matrilineal clan societies, with their practices of resource sharing and reproductive freedom, functioned more like distributed regulation within ecosystems, maintaining dynamic equilibrium between society and resources, and thus avoiding the Malthusian trap. Similarly, modern market economies and societies characterized by operate on this model of open sharing, optimal matching, and mutual enrichment of social resources, resulting in sustainable and mutually beneficial outcomes.

This evidence further suggests that the Malthusian trap did not primarily arise from any “natural” limits of population versus resources. In historical periods where the so-called trap emerged, the phenomenon of “inequality” was not merely a quantitative transfer of wealth from the many to the few. More importantly, it generated qualitatively new mechanisms: the concentration of wealth allowed elites to acquire forms of social power, market-pricing authority, and even dominance over non-monetary forms of value exchange at a pace faster than their wealth accumulation itself. For instance, in social interactions, the poor had to pay disproportionately higher “costs” of signaling their value compared to the wealthy. These forms of “market control,” imposed by monopolistic elites, functioned in effect like an enormous tax on society, driving market prices of all kinds of value exchanges far away from equilibrium levels. In terms of supply-and-demand curves, both curves shifted significantly leftward toward the vertical axis, and the deadweight loss triangle came to occupy nearly the entire area enclosed by the vertical axis, the supply curve, and the demand curve. Consumer surplus and producer surplus were compressed to a negligible sliver, while the narrow rectangular band of economic value between them was captured almost entirely by a small group of rent-extracting elites. Across world history, wherever the so-called Malthusian trap arose, such distortions of the price mechanism of social value exchange were always present. Without such systemic distortions, population levels would have adjusted automatically and incrementally through the self-organizing operation of equilibrium prices, without creating insurmountable contradictions between population and resources. It follows that matrilineal clan societies, characterized by reproductive freedom and open resource sharing, never experienced the Malthusian trap. Their systems were based on free and fair value exchange, which sustained equilibrium pricing, equitable distribution of benefits, and natural adaptive regulation of fertility.

From the above discussion, this paper can extend its perspective to uncover certain political-economic mechanisms throughout history. For instance, taking the Song Dynasty in ancient China as an example—often regarded as the most moderate and civilized in its mode of social governance—the Song did not impose the typical unpaid requisition of labor for feudal lords (since feudal lords in China disappeared relatively early in history), nor did the government (in ancient China referred to as the Yamen, Government and Magistrate's Office) conscript commoners to perform manual labor. Instead, when it came to corvée labor — a form of statutory, state-imposed labor service, such as construction projects commissioned by local authorities, the practice was generally carried out by local militias rather than by exploiting the labor power of the populace. Nevertheless, the Song Dynasty did enforce corvée duties (forced public service obligations—typically burdens such as transporting government goods, tax collection, and delivering official supplies, often imposed on households rather than paid for by the state). In other words, functions that in earlier dynasties had been financed directly by the state—such as collecting taxes, transporting government goods, or meeting fixed quotas of salt or alcohol sales before remitting the revenue to the government—were now shifted onto the private sector. After assessing household property levels, the government would assign such duties to families that were not in absolute poverty, thereby compelling them to bear these costs themselves and, in effect, subsidize the Song administration. As a result, although the Song economy overall experienced significant growth compared with prior dynasties, in reality—outside of a few prosperous metropolitan centers—the vast majority of people in small and medium-sized towns and rural areas remained far from wealthy. This was particularly the case during the Northern Song, when commerce was less developed than in the Southern Song; across the entire empire, the number of cities where ordinary residents could be considered broadly affluent likely did not exceed ten.

However, the “state” of feudal regimes was in no sense the kind of formation that Marxism interprets as arising “in accordance with the needs of productive development.” From the standpoint of economic modeling, the feudal state provided very limited public services while extracting a disproportionately large share of public services for

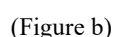
itself. Tax burdens frequently approached the subsistence limits of peasants, offering virtually no support to productivity. In an idealized rational scenario, even a relatively backward agrarian economy could, through exchanges between adjacent regions, operate in a manner akin to international trade and thus realize the effects of comparative advantage, enabling an optimal allocation of resources. In such an idealized state, opportunities for smallholder economies to languish without development would scarcely arise. When the mechanism of market equilibrium value continuously governed production and consumption, the allocation of resources within economic units—such as small rural autonomous communities at a primitive agrarian level, or later, with increasing economic complexity and productivity, within commercial companies—would remain uncorrupted by external distortions of the equilibrium price mechanism. From the standard logic of supply-and-demand curves in microeconomics, it follows that even though the absence of Marx’s “mechanism of exploitation” meant that large concentrations of productive assets could not be rapidly amassed, thereby reducing the frequency and speed of large-scale engineering or reproduction projects, the market as a whole—through the automatic adjustment of equilibrium value—would, over the medium to long term, reduce the deadweight loss triangle to a minimum. In turn, consumer surplus and producer surplus would converge toward their joint maximum, so that the cumulative impact of wealth mobilized into large projects and reproduction activities would, in the medium and long run, exceed those produced under exploitative regimes where distortions of the equilibrium value mechanism exerted a non-negligible impact. In short, $\text{Wealth (short term, free market)} < \text{Wealth (short term, exploitation drive)}$; $\text{Wealth (long term, free market)} > \text{Wealth (long term, exploitation drive)}$, because $\text{Deadweight Loss (free market)} \rightarrow \min$, $\text{CS} \pm \text{PS} \rightarrow \max$. The illustrative diagram (Figure a) is as follows:



(Figure a)

The emergence of states, classes, feudal regimes, and slave societies fundamentally not the result through the linear Marxist schema that attributes them to the development of productive forces shaping the relations of production. Rather, these institutional formations must be understood as the pathological utilization and distortion of productive capacity by collective psychic structures, especially those corresponding to the self-aggrandizing exploitative patriarch described in Freudian terms. In economic language, this distortion can be illustrated through the supply-and-demand framework. Under conditions of free exchange, labor value should be mediated at the equilibrium price where supply and demand intersect. However, feudal and slave regimes function by coercively shifting the supply curve leftward, closer to the origin, through mechanisms such as taxation, corvée, and power-based extraction. The result is the creation of substantial deadweight loss, a triangular zone of wasted social value that is structurally identical to the inefficiency economists describe when markets are distorted. This analysis further requires distinguishing between narrow and broad forms of value exchange. In the narrow sense, value is mediated through monetary prices within markets. In the broad sense, value encompasses social power, status, education, kinship, and marital relations—forms of exchange not always measured by price but nevertheless

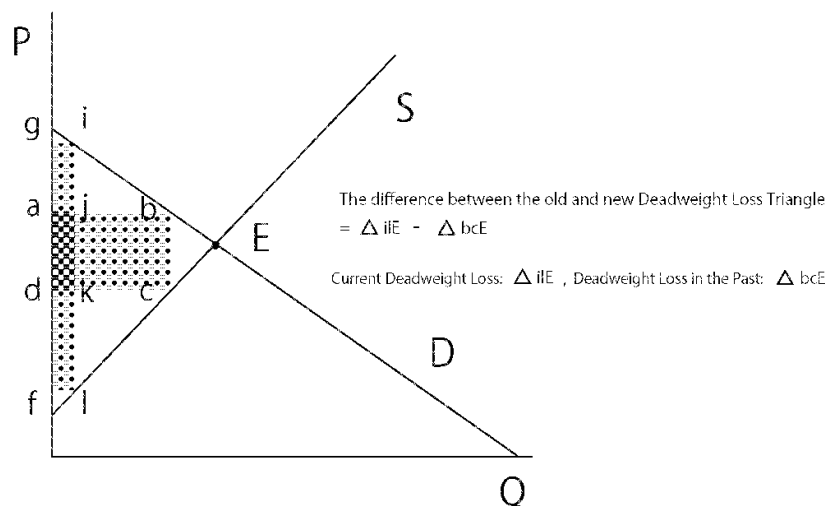
Supply and Demand Curve for Social Burdens in a Market Equilibrium Value Framework



The profits of rulers before heavy social oppression: $\triangle abc$

The profits of rulers after heavy social oppression

(These heavy social oppressions are equivalent to high taxes.): $\triangle ghl = \triangle gja + \triangle dkl + \triangle ajkd$



Result: Rulers rely on harsher taxation to compensate for the loss of efficiency

(Figure c)

Appropriate taxation serves as an integrative tool for maintaining the market's equilibrium value mechanism, acting as a means to prevent the disruption of the order that preserves the free agency of market participants and the sufficiency of information in transactions. (The combination of these two elements manifests as the fullness of market bargaining: that is, market participants, as autonomous and free legal entities, fully compare the pros and cons of market interests, thereby producing mathematical integral effects that drive transaction prices to fluctuate around the market equilibrium value.) Therefore, moderate taxation can be viewed as the “operational cost” of maintaining the market equilibrium value mechanism, and the resulting deadweight loss triangle should be seen as a portion of the short-term economic efficiency sacrificed in the process of sustaining this mechanism's operation. By contrast, the formation of feudal hierarchies, identity privileges, and economic privileges, etc., across domains from tangible wealth to intangible assets (intangible assets: social culture, political power preferences, etc.), all form obviously enormous deadweight loss triangles. Such feudal hierarchies and forms of “oligarchic societies” similar to them disrupt the equality and freedom of market transaction activities. Therefore, market transaction activities driven by oligarchic forms overall deviate from the market equilibrium value mechanism where market participants, in free and equal transaction choices, can freely and fairly (equally) follow the principle of comparative advantage to achieve optimal combinations. Thus, the deadweight loss triangles formed by the “oligarchic society” forms obviously and inevitably far exceed the extent of “a portion of the short-term economic efficiency sacrificed in the process of maintaining the market equilibrium value mechanism's operation”.

At this point in the discussion, one may encounter objections similar to those in Marxism. Critics might contend that the principal economic activities of slave society and feudal society belonged to a natural economy rather than a commodity economy. Therefore, they may argue, the supply-and-demand curve of microeconomics unsuitable would not be appropriate for understanding whether the slave system or feudal system was conducive to organizing production activities and fostering economic development. According to such critics, even in the absence of autonomous market transactions, large-scale production and construction could still be forcibly organized through compulsory labor. To address such potential objections, this article finds it necessary to clarify the inefficiency and wastefulness of “large-scale production and construction forcibly organized through compulsory labor without autonomous market exchange,” by drawing upon the implicit presence of the concept of comparative advantage from international trade in ubiquitous economic activities. Even though consumers are not merchants engaged in international trade optimizing combinations of goods through comparative advantage, the interests of both

producers and consumers can still be explained by the theory of comparative advantage. When merchants sell goods at a price higher than the purchase cost and thereby gain profit, this cannot simply be inverted into the opposite relation—whereby consumers “exploit” merchants when the latter clear inventory at a loss. Nor does it necessarily mean that merchants exploit consumers, because although consumers pay a price higher than the factory price—thus transferring value from the consumer’s side to the merchant’s side in the form of commercial profit—the consumer also enjoys the convenience provided by the merchant’s service. In this way, even if the price is above the merchant’s purchase cost, the consumer gains the benefit of being able to redirect their own time and energy to more efficient activities that generate satisfaction and happiness, in the same way that comparative advantage complementarity to focus on what they do most efficiently. Marxism, by contrast, commits the error in regarding only the direct labor process of workers producing goods as the source of value, while neglecting the opportunities created by capital, as well as the intellectual, managerial, and organizational contributions of capitalists—such as market decision-making—which, though less visible, are highly overarching and greatly enhance the efficiency of value creation. This is akin to denying the contribution of generals and commanders in warfare by saying that battles are fought only through the labor of soldiers while generals “hide in headquarters.” By the same reasoning, when merchants gain profit from selling at a price above cost, so long as the price remains within a reasonable range, the relationship between merchants and consumers is not one of exploitation. Broadly speaking, merchant profit is not merely a zero-sum transfer of value; rather, it expands the overall value space by providing consumers with services that enable them to generate new net benefits more efficiently, and the merchant’s profit is a share of that enlarged “net benefit.” This principle likewise applies to the relationship between wholesalers and producers, and between laborers and capitalists. Similarly, when a merchant clears inventory at a loss, this may be done to save costs and time, thereby seizing the opportunity to pursue future transactions with profits exceeding the temporary losses. This too reflects the operation of comparative advantage in value exchange. In such cases, the framework of comparative advantage in international trade can be transferred to the internal cooperative relations of microeconomic actors within a society, where cooperative relationships of complementary advantages. Accordingly, the supply-and-demand mechanism of microeconomics—foundational to both international and domestic trade—applies equally to economic activities at both macro and micro levels. Therefore, even in slave or feudal societies, where labor production was organized primarily through severe oppression, microeconomic models remain applicable.

Unlike the cooperative relationship of “comparative advantage and mutual complementary efficiency” between merchants and consumers described earlier, under the conditions of a privileged society controlled by feudal hierarchies, or under the severe exploitation of primitive capitalism, markets in both the domains of tangible wealth and intangible assets are subject to various restrictions and oppressions that distort free exchange, equivalent to producing enormous deadweight losses. In such contexts, transactions are either not free and voluntary (as in the form of slavery or feudal society), or even if voluntary, they are do not necessarily imply equal transactions (as in primitive capitalism or crony capitalism). Unequal transactions, in essence, amount to exploitative and value-imbalanced exchanges, merely cloaked in the form of “voluntary” acceptance of exploitation. For example, consider a disabled person who has lost the capacity to work. To raise funds for urgent medical treatment for themselves or a family member, with no access to loans or other exchange options, the only possibility might be the underground black market for organ trade, where prices are harsh and exploitative. Although this person, by selling an organ, inflicts upon themselves long-term chronic ill-health, the acute urgency compels them to accept the highly distorted conditions of this black-market exchange. Such “voluntary transactions,” driven by invisible pressures such as the failure of social security and others, exert a burden on the market participants. Similarly, under monopolized market conditions, consumers forced to pay exorbitant prices for inferior products and services follow the same underlying principle. The case of laborers who, despite facing severe health risks, are compelled to engage in grueling work simply to secure immediate subsistence, likewise follows this logic.

A relatively common example of the “comparative advantage” failing to manifest in everyday transactions is the case of merchants forced to exit with losses through clearance sales, selling goods below their procurement cost—not only forgoing profit but also incurring losses. In such situations, the relationship between merchants and consumers is a voluntary transaction where merchants reluctantly accept exploitation by consumers. If merchants refuse this exploitation, their stock will expire or accumulate, generating costs that fail to produce profit and ultimately result in even greater losses. However, there is undeniably no equal value exchange at this point; the merchant undeniably incurs losses while the consumer undoubtedly profits. This so-called voluntariness is not the same as when individuals freely choose among different forms of profit-seeking activities—varieties of profit types—based on preference, interest, or desired utility. Rather, it is a compelled reluctant choice, reluctantly seeking gain while avoiding harm, aimed at avoiding greater losses by selecting a way to lose less, using a mode of being exploited less severely to evade the larger risk of being exploited more severely. Yet, reducing losses or being less exploited does not mean it ceases to be a loss or exploitation. Transposed into the labor-capital

relationship, this is merely the transaction of labor power between the worker—as the “self-employed merchant” of their own labor—and the capitalist, who acts as a large-scale “consumer” buying the diverse labor commodities from the worker’s small-scale “shop.” The worker’s “voluntary” endurance of exploitation is not at all because refraining from such transactions results in losses while engaging in them yields “gains,” but rather because it involves choosing between greater or lesser losses to avoid the greater risks of unemployment, hunger, and other “losses.” Consequently, workers are compelled to engage in forms of labor in which they have no comparative advantage, which are uneconomical and even brutally harsh from their standpoint, and thus, loss inevitably ensues.

Thus, when confronting the historical development of humanity in the tribal era—an era where market laws were reversed and society increasingly moved toward the evolution of slavery—it is confidently reasonable to assert that, in the course of the formation of the ancient systems of slavery and feudalism, patriarchal clan societies did not directly transition into slavery. Rather, they first shifted from relatively free and democratic patriarchal communal tribes into feudalized emotional and personal subordination within patriarchal extended families, thereby giving rise to chieftain rule with proto-feudal ethics. Only after this transformation did they acquire the capacity to increasingly and severely intensify the enslavement of humankind, merely due to the absence of written records obscuring this process. Yet, the development of social productive forces had actually produced a harmful formation, namely: “when personality was not yet developed, while tools were already sufficient to oppress.” However, such a transformation could not have occurred in a single leap, whereby originally democratic, collectively governed tribes—with their regularly rotating leadership—suddenly submitted to permanent rule under a chief and willingly offered themselves as slaves under the chief’s dominion. There must first be a stage of feudalized personal and emotional subordination dominating the enforcers of order within the tribe, thereby allowing the accumulation of coercive power. In this way, facing a market demand fundamentally aimed at efficient productive development, history nonetheless exhibited development against the trend: to understand the social game whereby “a certain group, within a short span, was able to concentrate resources to establish a coercive power of domination, thereby disrupting the more efficient long-term trajectory of social development, and by exercising despotic control, not only harmed the overall long-term development of society, but also, through oppression, forced the subjugated population to bear not only the loss of their own interests but also the additional economic burdens generated by the long-term impairment of societal progress, thus enabling the ruling group to still extract profits despite overall development being undermined,” we can derive the first formula to be proposed in this paper: when V_f [“productivity’s efficiency in providing violent force” (V = Violence, f = from forces of production)] $>$ H_p [“the degree to which productivity depends on the participation of a healthy personality” (H = Healthy, p = personality / participation)], whenever this condition arises, the historical trend emerges whereby matriarchal societies are gradually devoured by patriarchal domination, and inclinations toward enslavement are strengthened. Conversely, when $V_f < H_p$, trends toward joyful liberation and freedom are strengthened

(as shown in the diagram below).



(Figure Vf,Hp)

Thereafter, as the growth of personality integrity and emotional maturity became increasingly vital within the forces of production, this distanced itself from the earlier form of the late patrilineal clan—"where personalities can not mature and develop, were compelled to serve as human ore to toil, a pattern typical of the late Neolithic period when 'productive forces had advanced enough to generate coercive power to enslave others, yet healthy personality and humanity had not had time to be fully realized in labor,' in which the increasingly barbaric and shameless exploited such loopholes", thus, gradually, slavery softened into a re-emergence of feudal culture, giving rise to larger and more systematic feudal structures, followed by capitalism, and eventually modern civilization. If modern civilization cannot persistently dismantle the narcissistic jealousy in sexual domination and narcissistic authority within marital structures, then the mode of binding others through authoritarian force and enslaving them as dependent subjects will not truly vanish. Instead, there remains the possibility that at some point in the future, such authoritarian forms may cunningly exploit loopholes once more in the developmental stage of productive forces (for example, when AI temporarily substitutes for the healthy human mind and emotional faculties), thereby once again explicitly barbarizing human society and pushing it back toward feudalism or even slavery. Indeed, the excessively extreme forms of high-tech AI-based social surveillance already emerging in certain modern nations exhibit early signs of such tendencies. If human mental and emotional faculties are not adequately free and mature, then whenever technological leaps in productive forces display a temporary tendency of being "less dependent on human mind and emotion," they will always be exploited by immature personalities for pathological endeavors to reconstruct feudal or even slave-like social forms!

Hence, this paper proposes the second formula: when the level of violent technology (V) is greater than the function's output value of $f(\text{Collective Mental/Personality Level CM, Cost of Organizing Authoritarian Relations C})$ —where $f(\text{CM, C})$ is a binary function with collective personality-mental level (M) and the cost of authoritarian organization (C, i.e., its difficulty) as independent variables—then the pathological tendency of slavery and its derivative cultures (including the oppressive rule of modern states through theocracy or authoritarian culture, manipulation of consumer and labor markets by giant capital, etc.) will significantly increase beyond the original level. Conversely, if this condition is not met, then the pathological tendency of slavery and its derivative cultures will be notably weakened relative to the original level.

Here:

$$V = \int [f(Vf) - f(C)],$$

where V = Violence technology level,

Vf = Efficiency of forces of production in providing usable violent capacity,

C = Cost of organizing authoritarian relations (difficulty of sustaining coercive structures),

$f(C)$ = A function of the Cost of organizing authoritarian relations (i.e., the difficulty of sustaining coercive structures). Here, C is not merely a numeric cost, but an institutional/organizational variable capturing the degree of effort, resource expenditure, and structural rigidity required to maintain authoritarian power.

$f(Vf)$ = A function of the Efficiency of forces of production in providing usable violent capacity.

On the other hand:

$$Hp = \int [f(\text{CM}) + f(C)],$$

where Hp = Dependency of productive forces on healthy personality/participation,

CM = Collective mental/personality level (group psychological maturity or participatory mental health capacity),

$f(\text{CM})$ = A function about collective mental's level giving its effect to social life,

$f(C)$ = As above, a function of authoritarian organizational cost, but here considered as a factor constraining or shaping the possibility of healthy personality participation rather than violence capacity.

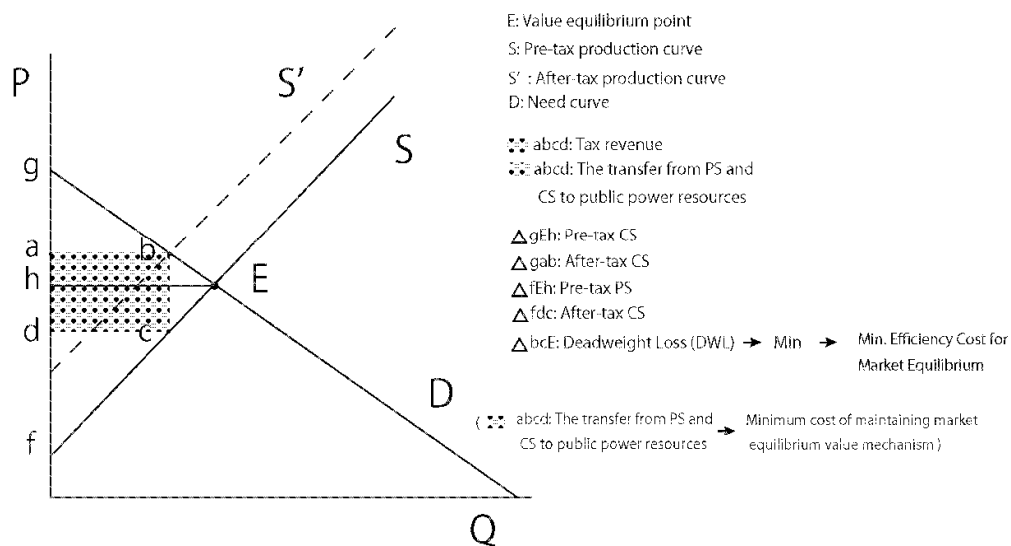
$f(\text{CM})$ expresses how collective mental maturity gives its effect to social and economic production, and $f(C)$ in this context highlights the inhibiting or facilitating role of authoritarian organizational cost on healthy personality engagement.

Conversely, on the other hand: when the emergence of this situation where {Violence technology level (V) < $f(\text{Collective Mental/Personality Level CM, Cost of Authoritarian Organization C})$ } serves as the necessary premise

for reversing the relationship between violent technology level (V) and the function $f(CM, C)$. Only under this premise will the increase in value of collective mental/personality level (CM) and authoritarian organizational cost (C) each be smaller than the increase in value of violent technology level (V), i.e., the condition $\Delta f(CM, C) < \Delta V$ arises. Therefore, when originally $V < f(CM, C)$, it is only when $[Vf > Hp]$ initially emerges that only then emerges the risk of reversing the relative magnitude between violent technology level (V) and $f(CM, C)$. The development of late patriarchal authoritarianism in patrilineal clan societies is precisely a cautionary lesson exemplifying this manifestation.

Once again reviewing the historical trajectory—from the evolution of patriarchal structures in clan society, to the emergence of the state, and further to the formation of despotic authoritarian might within the state apparatus—we can readily discern a pattern of socio-microeconomic evolution. This pattern reveals a process of social degeneration: beginning with moderate taxation, escalating into increasingly severe exploitation and resource concentration, and ultimately breaching the long-term sustenance of a healthy market by mobilizing short-term resources. This degenerative pathway is thus represented by the diagrammatic representation of Figure b → Figure c → Figure d below. The Figure d illustrates how the historical deepening of social oppression has diminished the efficiency of economic development.

Supply and Demand Curve for Social Burdens in a Market Equilibrium Value Framework



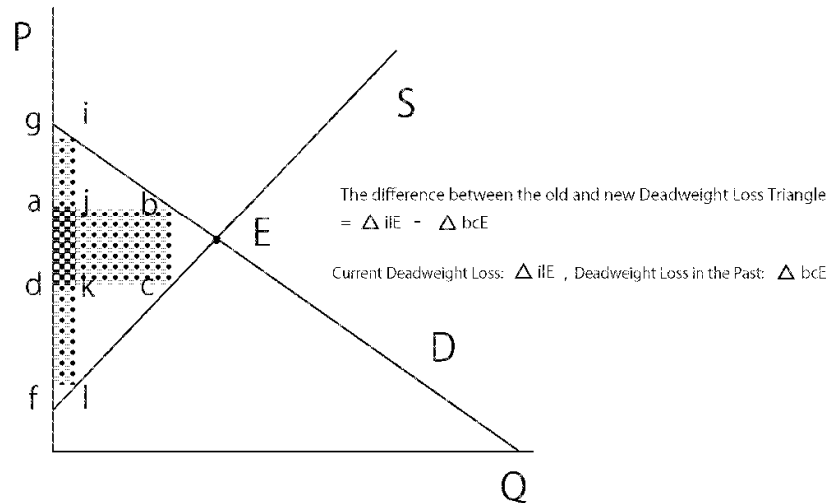
(Figure b)

↓

The profits of rulers before heavy social oppression: abcd

The profits of rulers after heavy social oppression

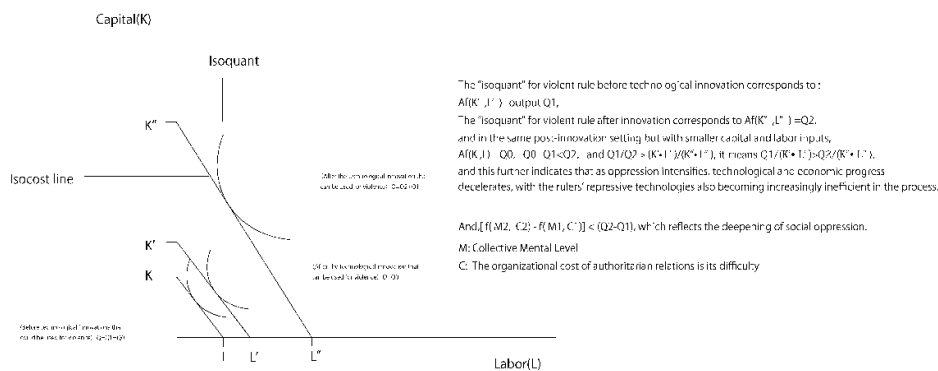
(These heavy social oppressions are equivalent to high taxes): $\text{gijf} = \text{gija} + \text{dklf} + \text{ajkd}$



Result: Rulers rely on harsher taxation to compensate for the loss of efficiency

(Figure c)

↓



(Figure d)

By pairing the historical evolution of political institutions with the development of microeconomic models of value exchange, one can discern that history did not proceed as classical Marxism assumes, through slavery and feudalism being actively necessitated by the productive forces. Likewise, there is ample justification to argue that matrilineal clans were not displaced by "low productivity." On the contrary, it was patriarchal and feudal oppression (emerging solely from patrilineal tribes wielding physical violence) that undermined productive capacity and resulted in persistently low output—which, under a specific historical condition defined as: Violent technology level $(V) > f(\text{Collective Mental/Personality Level CM, Organizational Cost of Authoritarian Relations } C)$, where $f(\text{CM}, C)$ denotes a binary function of collective cognitive-personality development (CM) and the costs associated with sustaining authoritarian organization (C), concentrated vast short-term resources to breach the virtuous cycle of long-term benefits. Under such conditions, authoritarian structures, operating through predatory economies

extracting social surplus (via power monopolies rather than productivity-enhancing market mechanisms), concentrated short-term resources to plunder society, damaging development to centralize benefits and power in the hands of specific oppressors. During the tribal era, this dynamic explains how matrilineal societies—aligned with human affiliative instincts and free agency in value exchange, fostering market-equilibrium-like relations—were pathologically displaced and undermined. Their decline did not stem from “low productivity” but rather from coercive appropriation by patrilineal groups that monopolized violence, under the same condition $V > f(\text{CM}, C)$. In this context, resources were path-dependently shifted into short-term extraction, eroding the institutional basis for long-term sustainability. This mechanism—through which matrilineal societies were supplanted by patriarchal systems marked by narcissistic jealousy and authoritarian tendencies, characterized by high monitoring costs, coercion, and rent concentration, eventually giving rise to slave-based economies—remains persistently latent within modern civilization. Whenever such a technological condition exists where the level of violent technology (V) > the function’s output value of $f(\text{Collective Mental/Personality Level CM, Cost of Organizing Authoritarian Relations } C)$ —where $f(\text{CM}, C)$ is a binary function with collective personality-mental level (M) and the cost of authoritarian organization (C , i.e., its difficulty)—akin to the erosion of liberty and welfare will inevitably emerge. This latent dynamic must be continuously and systematically guarded against.

Ultimately, technology, in its essence, cannot self-organize, nor can it possess subjective personhood. It exists only as an extension of human subjective activity—rooted in the self-directed organizing of mind and emotion—and is therefore structurally dependent on the human subject imbued with personality and soul. In this sense, technology constitutes an organizational form of human activity that is distinguished by varying degrees of separation from human subjectivity and emotional involvement, with the degree of separation being inversely tied to the importance of human mind–emotion in labor processes. Therefore, when technological tools and productive forces are deployed to intensify human-to-human domination and subjugation, the apparent technological progress of productive forces that results from the temporary increase in this separation—namely, the reduced role of human mental-emotional engagement in production—may sustain short-term gains in measured productivity. However, over the long run, since all technological development is fundamentally grounded in human subjectivity, such separation leads to an overall decline in efficiency. Moreover, in this configuration, the material wealth generated by “productivity gains” is also predominantly allocated toward repression and strife rather than toward well-being and health. Consequently, the development of productive forces under such conditions yields, in addition to a quantitative contraction in aggregate long-term outcomes, a qualitative degradation in the nature of human life: the effects manifest as pain, alienation, and morbidity within the human subject. Thus, technological progress detached from or opposed to human subjectivity represents not true advancement but a structurally self-destructive trajectory of development.

Yet this also reflects that human beings are not, as Marxism claims, merely “economic animals.” The fundamental driving force of humans lies in the search for their own biological species’ survival, structured through psychic frameworks with converging integration toward the sexual instinct as their integrative attractor. This psychic schema has its own proactive self-organizing agency; it is not simply a passive adaptation that passively adapts to the automatic translation of “productive forces and market relations” into the human psychological world. Hence, the degree of development of collective mentality and emotional life retains its independence with respect to the level of productive forces. Different levels of collective mentality, even under the same level of productivity, can evolve into markedly distinct social trajectories. The capacity to resist “short-term forces” that may temporarily concentrate power in ways that undermine a far more superior long-term path depends largely on the subjective awareness of collective mentality and forms of social organization. For humans—as biological beings unconstrained by being machines—whose essence lies in physiological adaptation as their aim rather than the maximization of objective material accumulation, the forces that distort the equilibrium of market pricing mechanisms through social inequity emerge precisely by transforming a positive Oedipal complex (which under healthy conditions can optimally balance frustration and satisfaction) into a negative Oedipal complex. In this distorted formation, for instance, the son may, in the position of the daughter, become affectively attached to a father who suppresses him; the daughter may, in the position of the son, display emotional loyalty toward a mother who represses her. Such inverted dynamics foster a reliance on a devoted, quasi-filial attachment to oppressive powers, and thereby generate an abundant proliferation of socio-cultural patterns that actively run against the principles of market value—anti-market economic regularities sustained by pathology. These, in turn, reinforce and amplify the psycho-cultural traditions of social power that perpetuate distorted equilibria in market mechanisms. In the conceptual formula “Violent technology level (V) > $f(\text{Collective Mental/Personality Level CM, Organizational Cost of Authoritarian Relations } C)$,” the level of collective mentality (CM) is inversely correlated with the pathological degree of the Oedipal complex at the social-collective level, in the sense of Freud’s psychoanalytic group dynamics. It also corresponds to the extent to which societies manifest common submission to shared “authoritarian parental figures” under the dominance of a collective Oedipal structure.

[Note: "Violent technology level (V) > f(Collective Mental/Personality Level CM, Organizational Cost of Authoritarian Relations C)" is not a quantitatively measurable equation but a qualitative framework intended to illustrate relational dynamics.]

Reflecting back to conclude, the Malthusian trap and the history of artificially distorted markets have been intertwined throughout. Their emergence traces to the period of formation in the late patrilineal clan phase of feudal–slave societies, and their extinction aligns with the re-domination of market mechanisms in subsequent history. Each recurrence of distortion has been accompanied by the severe social oppression inherent in germ proto-patriarchal structures—which, founded upon these germ structural forms, progressively and severely distorted with cumulative consequences the spontaneous fairness of value exchange within markets. Future research should further clarify the relationship between the Malthusian trap and the formula indicating social hierarchical oppression, "Violent technology level (V) > f(Collective Mental/Personality Level CM, Organizational Cost of Authoritarian Relations C)," with greater specificity. Moreover, a complex group-psychological relationship exists between Collective Mental/Personality Level CM and Organizational Cost of Authoritarian Relations C within the formula. Investigating whether these relationships can be distilled into qualitatively generalizable functions represents a promising direction for further research.

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