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INDIVIDUAL  
SUB-GROUPS  
GROUPS  
AND  
FREEDOM



Mudunuri Bharathi

# *Individual, Sub-groups, Groups and Freedom*

*Mudunuri Bharathi*



**Centre for Documentation, Research and Communication**

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by Mudunuri Bharathi

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## Foreword

The present monograph “Individual, Sub-Groups, Groups and Freedom”, is the third in the series attempting to conceptualize Marxian framework and its micro-foundations. Crucially, it depends on conceptualizing and understanding the evolving human being. If one traces the evolution of the human being from the cave stage to the present, there is an element of commonality in this species and its representative, the human being. Simply put, the commonality is the attempt and strategies by the human being to solve the problems of species survival and enhancement of the species. In the process, human being attempted and acquired certain characteristics which distinguish this species from the other. This distinguishing character is the ability to think and practice what the being thinks. While in the initial stages the capacity to think follows the practices, the thinking capacity gets a degree of autonomy which autonomy human being uses to change the practices. “An immeasurable interval of time separates the state of things in which a man brings his labour-power to market for sale as a commodity, from that state in which human labour was still in its first instinctive stage. We pre-suppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee put to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour process, we get a result that already

exists in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement (Marx, Capital Vol I, Chapter VII: The Labour Process and the Process of Producing Surplus-Value). This process of evolution of changed practices – changed knowledge is the evolutionary path which the human being traces for himself. It will be of some use to recollect what Marx has said on human being vis a vis other species. The practice-thinking-new practices sequence is an unending sequence where the individual with a finite time of its existence contributes to the knowledge of seemingly infinite space. It is like a relay race with the baton being passed on from one generation to the next generation, but with a difference that the baton called the knowledge is not static but dynamic in the sense that each generation adds its share to the knowledge. This is what Bharathi calls a dynamic *trager*. This long evolutionary process is not a simple linear process, but a slightly complex process where the individual and the collective of individuals individually and collectively have to struggle to define the path. Locating in a subject-object framework, the roots of this defining process she posits in the subject receiving the signal from the object. These signals emanate from a lack of motion in the object. In other words, the object is in a crisis trying for a self correction through the subject. The knowledge thus acquired on the object is used in changing the practices and keep the object in motion. The subject in motion primarily addresses the question of lack of motion in the object and in the process acquires more knowledge on the object and also contributes to changed practices. Since the object is in motion, the subject also needs to be in continuous motion.

The role of a *trager* makes it essential for the individual human being to relate with other human beings and in the process the group formation may take place. The essential pre-requisite for the group is the equality of practices among its members. Since practices are same, the object-space of the individuals, i.e., the model on the object they are situated in has a commonality or equality. The group remains as a collection of individuals if the individual members do not themselves visualize that they are members of this group. The group becomes group in itself with a possibility of converting into a group for itself. This conversion may come about either for maintaining stability and reproduction or due to matters of security – security from a hostile nature or from a hostile neighboring community. This transition from group in

itself to group for itself may involve a facilitating device for the individual member and also can be an oppressive device for the individual. This oppression can restrict/limit the individuals to become subject and contribute to improve practices. The very formation of the group is at one step, advancement and it can also be a hurdle.

A group in itself can reflect a form of scarcity, which group can become an economic system as she discussed in the second monograph on crisis. Briefly, natural resources like labour and land can exist with a fixed ontological framework or a system with a flexible ontology as in a capital scarce system. In these systems while liberating in themselves have a restrictive role on the notion of allowing individuals to become subjects. The restrictions can be either in not permitting new knowledge or in practicing with the new knowledge, either by denial to access to resources or access to earlier knowledge. The role of force is important in matters of denial. While in a labour scarce and land scarce system, the force is through traditional rules and practices, the capital scarce system operates through a written/unwritten constitution defining its own fundamental rights. The system/groups based on scarcity of natural resources tend to become isolated local communities with a very limited space in the object world and consequent object-space, the system based on capital scarcity operates on an enlarged space, both in the object world and in the object space. Due to this enlarged space, application of natural laws becomes a dominant feature in matters of production.

The formation of a group and changes thereof is a part of a historical process and a historical necessity, parallelly formation of sub-groups within a group also becomes a historical process. For example, in a labour scarce system, a primary division between male and female is a natural division, and as women become centre for production and reproduction of labour, control on women and through which control on production process becomes centre, leading to patriarchal oppression, indicating a restriction on freedom of women. The sub-groups potentially are male sub-groups and female sub-groups. Whether they exist as two sub-groups for themselves is a debatable question. In addition, every system, as it is an organization of production, always contains human beings who do not participate in production but derives species survival consumption from the system. Two categories, namely children and old people, who cannot contribute in production, form two sub-groups. Here also, they may not form sub-groups by themselves.



In a land scarce economy, in addition to natural sub-groups, there can exist two social sub-groups, one sub-group actually participating in the production while the other sub-group only facilitates the production without participating in it. While the former group consists of peasants in general with knowledge on production process, the other sub-group may be having a controlling property interest on land and on other resources necessary for production. This controlling interest of the sub-group makes it possible for the surplus in production to get accumulated in the sub-group. While in the labour scarce system, the idea of surplus may not exist, either economically or culturally, in the land scarce system surplus and its accumulation become a crucial parameter that generates force which controls the stability and continuity of the system. It is this force that keeps the human being as a mere object and does not permit the human being to become a subject. In the capital scarce system with a flexible ontology, the natural sub-groups and the social sub-groups exist.

The social sub-group namely the actual producer, and the sub-group which has controlling interests namely in capital and circulating capital. The controlling interests of the system rest with the second sub-group which permits the accumulation of surplus to this sub-group. As it operates both on actual scarcity and the idea of scarcity, it permits a degree of freedom to the individual to become subject. This permits a scope for the growth of natural sciences, a growth that is constrained by its usefulness to the production and accumulation of surplus. Unlike in the natural scarcity systems where personal dependency between individuals is important, here the individuals acquire an autonomous and anonymous character and the relations are mediated through money and market structures. Thus, the relations become impersonal. The relations between the sub-groups become the crisis point for the economic system whether it is a financial crisis or unemployment crisis, the system tries a self-corrective approach with some redefining of the relations. This is sometimes done through parameters of the welfare state or greater control on financial institutions or greater incentives to search for new methods of production, thus permitting capital scarce system to continue. The formation of system and groups and sub-groups put enormous restrictions on the human being's capacity to become subjects. In other words, human being in its evolutionary path indicates

**End of Preview.**

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