



Forget the Wall Street Protesters: Why We Should Hate “Capitalism”

As you know, in the eyes of many, “capitalism” has become both a four-letter word and the target of such. For example, *New York Magazine* questioned a group of Wall Street protesters on October 2 and found that 37 percent believed capitalism was “inherently immoral.” If you find this unremarkable for Woodstock-meets-Wall Street rabble, consider a 2009 Rasmussen poll [showing that](#) “only 53% of American adults believe capitalism is better than socialism.” Yes, our schools have done their job magnificently. Unfortunately, it’s a job that doesn’t exactly align with the interests of America.



Yet the problem isn’t entirely substance — it’s also style. Proving that there really is something in a word, another 2009 Rasmussen poll [found that](#) “just 35% of American voters believe that a free market economy is the same as a capitalist economy.” What this indicates is that if Americans were asked if a “free market” were better than socialism, more than 53 percent would say yes. Clearly, “capitalism” needs a good marketing team and a rebranding.

Of course, it isn’t surprising that the word would be an albatross around the neck of what it describes. It was popularized by a good marketing team — one comprising sworn enemies of the Natural Economy.

The first ones to use “capitalism” in the *modern sense* were French socialists Louis Blanc and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. Blanc believed that society’s evils were the result of pressures created by competition and originated the principle “From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs” (Karl Marx got it from Blanc). Not to be outdone, Proudhon actually corresponded with Marx, until the two had a falling out, and believed that “property is theft.” Of course, taking the ball and running with it, Marx then popularized “capitalism.”

It’s not surprising that leftists would encourage the use of “capitalism.” After all, if you want to replace the Natural Economy with your ism, communism, it’s easier if you cast the former as just another ism itself. And here is how the con works: Place the two economy types in the same category, that of systems (isms); this makes them seem more interchangeable. Then, to increase the chances that the targeted economy will be discarded, give it a wholly unappealing name. And “capitalism” fits the bill. For one thing, since the best known synonym of “capital” is “money,” many could interpret “capitalism” as “moneyism.”

I don’t know about you, but I’d rather not have to defend “moneyism” — especially since it doesn’t accurately describe the kind of healthy economy I advocate. Sure, we have a monetary system, but we also have production and consumption. Yet no one thinks our economy could be characterized as “productionism” or “consumerism.” A simplistic, one-dimensional term will always be insufficient to



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on October 17, 2011

describe the wide-ranging fruits of economic freedom.

Of course, the Natural Economy and communism aren't even close to being in the same category — and not just because communism is evil. It's also because the two aren't "systems" in the same sense.

Communism is a system that you could call Unintelligent Design; in practice it requires a large, all-encompassing, command-control government that can micromanage people's economic activity. In contrast, the Natural Economy is what results when people are afforded freedom; they will as a matter of course produce, sell, buy and consume; they will satisfy others' needs and wants while satisfying their own. Thus, it is more like an ecosystem in that it is closer to a naturally occurring phenomenon. Hence what I have dubbed it: the Natural Economy.

So the embrace of "capitalism" is a real communist coup: It was meant as a pejorative, and we curse our "system" every time we utter it. So why do we talk the red talk?

Wise rhetoricians have long understood that the side that defines the vocabulary of a debate wins the debate. It's a bit as if two cultures, a French one and a German one, were vying for primacy in the same geographical area. If the Germans could convince all the Frenchmen to speak German, wouldn't they have already won half the culture war before it had even begun?

Yet, whether it's underprivileged instead of poor, pro-choice instead of pro-abortion, gender instead of sex, or "capitalism" instead of Natural Economy, traditionalists willingly, unthinkingly use the Lexicon of the Left. And then we wonder why we're losing our culture war.

People rarely ponder why we use the words we do. But we'd do well to remember that much of our terminology has been woven into our culture by leftist institutions, by universities that craft new language and media that disseminate and popularize it.

So we need to watch our mouths. And we can start by understanding that if we want to fight against socialism, "capitalism" has got to go.



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