

1. Negative liberty: freedom from constraint in the form of tangible action against the person or her property or (much more commonly) the threat or fear of such. Because fellow human beings can threaten violence, anarchy poses dangers to negative liberty. (Think of failed states flooded with AK-47s.) Although parents *must* constrain the negative liberty of their children, they can abuse that power. To combat anarchy, intra-family abuse, and other forms of violence among citizens, states are probably necessary. Yet in most of the world, it is the state that can threaten violence most effectively and pervasively. It must be curtailed in the interest of negative liberty.

2. Positive liberty: the freedom to do something. You are not free to travel, for example, unless you can afford a fare. Positive liberty is a matter of degree, since human beings are simply not able to do everything we want. But there may be a list of fundamental [capabilities](#) that everyone should be able to exhibit, and they require external support. You can't learn to read unless someone teaches you. If one has a meaningful right to a positive liberty (e.g., the right to read), then some other person or community has a duty to provide it; and the state may be the best means to enforce that duty. But if I must pay taxes for your kid's education or face imprisonment, then my negative liberty has been curbed in the interest of her positive liberty.

3. Individuality: the freedom to develop and express a unique personality and life-story in both the public and private spheres. Individuality may require a degree of negative and positive liberty, but it also faces threats not yet mentioned. The social norms that are strongest in tight, traditional communities and the mass culture that dominates today's global society both inhibit individuality. Mass culture already worried de Tocqueville, but it has been hypercharged by advertising and technology. The global mass exercises its power less through majority rule at the ballot box than through search algorithms, trendy catchphrases, and addictive tunes.

4. Freedom from manipulation: I am treated as a means to someone else's ends when the other person sways, threatens, or pays me to do what he wants. I am treated as an end when the other person tries to decide with me what we should do. States and markets arrange people as means to each others' ends, perhaps unavoidably. Freedom (in this fourth sense) exists in ethical communities whose members treat each other as ends in themselves. Neither positive nor negative liberty guarantees such communities.